

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 22, 2025
Contact: Melissa Danko
P. 732.292.1051

The Marine Trades Association of New Jersey Elects its 2025-2026 Officers and Directors and Presents Sponsor Awards

Brielle, NJ - On April 17th 2025, the Marine Trades Association of New Jersey (MTA/NJ) held its Annual Dinner & Elections at The Lobster Shanty in Point Pleasant Beach and elected its 2025-2026 Officers & Directors. The Association also presented three Top Sponsor Awards.

Brian Houf of MESCO will take the helm as President of the Association. Jerry Bench of Wintron Electronics in Manasquan will assume a new role as First Vice President, and Karen Gruppuso of Coastal Environmental Consulting in Toms River will assume a new role as Second Vice President. Ed Harrison, III of Baywood Marina in Brick remains the Treasurer and Raymond Bogan of Sinn, Cantoli, Bogan, & Steuerman in Point Pleasant Beach continues as Secretary. Colleen Blake of All Points Marina in Point Pleasant Beach will continue to serve on the board as Immediate Past President.

Two new directors were elected to the board: John Leek of Viking Yacht Co. & Valhalla Boatworks in New Gretna, and Pat McGovern of Mack Boring & Parts Co. in Somerset. Mark Cassidy of Cassidy's Breton Woods Marina in Brick and Pat Salinas of Morgan Marina in Parlin were re-elected to serve another two-year term as directors. The following directors will continue their terms: Lou Cecchini of Offshore Marine in Branchville, Aaron Held of Octopus Yachts: Marine Electrical Systems in Wall, Eric Traber of Pier 47 Marina in Wildwood, and Eliot Walters of Dillon's Creek Marina in Island Heights.

The active Past Presidents that will continue to serve on the Board include Greg Wright of John B. Wright Insurance Agency in Manasquan, Fred Brueggemann, Jim Cerruti, Ed McCarthy of McCarthy's Marine Sales in Brielle, Don Ditzel of Comstock Yacht Sales & Marina in Brick, Ed Harrison, Jr. of Baywood Marina in Brick, Tom Leaming of Leamings Marina in Waretown, Paul Terzian of Causeway Marine Sales in Manahawkin, and Rick Traber of Pier 47 Marina in Wildwood.



“From my humble beginnings in the marine industry, 41 years ago as a dock boy, the changes that have been made in the industry are quite remarkable,” stated Brian Houf, the newly elected President. “There have been some amazing advancements from boat construction, engine development and electronics, and also countless hurdles along the way. I am honored to accept the position of President of the Marine Trades Association of New Jersey and look forward to where we go from here.”

Houf continued, “Along with my fellow board members and the hard-working staff of the association, we will do our best to protect and work for a better marine industry in New Jersey.”

MTA/NJ Members also heard from the association’s lobbyist, Rob Nixon of State House Strategies. Nixon provided a Legislative Update: *The 2025 Political Landscape and What’s on the Horizon*, including exclusive insights into government developments and a sneak peek at what’s ahead for this November’s gubernatorial election. “Rob’s insightful guidance and unwavering commitment have done more than just safeguard our interests, they’ve opened doors to progress,” stated Executive Director Melissa Danko. “His remarkable history of policy successes speaks volumes, but what truly sets Rob apart is his genuine dedication to championing our industry at every level.”

The MTA/NJ also held its Sponsor of the Year Awards at the Annual Dinner. The MTA/NJ established this award over twenty years ago to show its appreciation and to recognize the leading sponsors and supporters of the Association. This year, the MTA/NJ was pleased to be able to award three very deserving and supportive companies. The Top Sponsor of the Year awards went to Pettit Paint and

ValvTect Marine Fuel in Greensboro, NC, John B. Wright Insurance Agency of Manasquan, and Travelers Ocean Marine Insurance of Edison.



“We are deeply grateful for the remarkable generosity of our sponsors and we are honored to present our Top Sponsor awards each year,” added Danko. “Their steadfast support propels our mission, strengthens our industry, and creates a lasting impact on our businesses and the wider community.”

About the MTA/NJ

The Marine Trades Association of New Jersey (MTA/NJ), established in 1972, is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting, advancing, and protecting the recreational marine industry and waterways in the State of New Jersey. The MTA/NJ is dedicated to the interests of the industry for the benefit of its individual members and the consumers whom they serve. In addition to many accomplishments, the MTA/NJ produces two boat shows, the Jersey Shore Boat Sale & Expo held in September at ShoreTown Ballpark in Lakewood and the New Jersey Boat Sale & Expo held in February at the New Jersey Convention & Expo Center in Edison. The MTA/NJ proudly endorses the Discover Boating Atlantic City Boat Show produced by the National Marine Manufacturers Association.

For more photos from the Annual Dinner & Elections, visit the MTA/NJ on [Facebook](#).