



## United States Power Squadrons Educational Department

Date: 16 November 2011

To: Squadron and District Leadership

Subject: Emphasis on Classroom Education

Concerns and misconceptions have been raised regarding the priorities and direction of the Educational Department regarding classroom education, especially with regard to the alternatives of on-line and home study.

Simply stated – the primary advantage of USPS is having local squadrons and local instructors to deliver quality material to boaters. In order to get members, we need to emphasize face time with those who we train. In other words, we want people in the classroom. To illustrate, the Department Structure Committee report unanimously approved at the Greensboro Governing Board meeting clearly shows the intent of the Educational Department leadership to support classroom learning in USPS. Their position is:

“The Department’s highest priority is to increase the frequency of classroom courses and seminars and the number of students participating in them. Reversing the decline in classroom activity is a daunting challenge, particularly given the fact that DEOs and SEOs feel over-burdened and under-supported.”

The Board of Directors in its June Strategic Planning Session also places priority on building squadrons and squadron membership.

We also recognize that emerging boaters are of a generation that often favors eLearning and self-paced learning. Together, we need to find ways to attract them while integrating them into the squadron and classroom. We need to offer material on-line and via direct sale to reach out to them and gain their attention. We also need tools to attract them into squadron life. This is one of the reasons we are working so hard developing on water training programs (something they cannot do on-line) and other hands-on programs. We are also looking at “blended learning” which merges on-line and self-study with classroom activities.

It is very important that we maximize our visibility to boaters and potential members using our leading-edge educational materials as a hook to gain their interest, and then use engaging and hands-on programs to get them to the squadrons. We are also addressing other ways to support the squadrons and seek input and assistance in making this successful.

The Department also has formed a Marketing Advisory Team to provide compelling information and strategies to our marketing and PR staffs to better attract boaters to USPS. We invite broader participation in these activities.

Contact the Bob Sweet, Gene Molteni or Bob Palmer with questions, comments or suggestions.