

# UNITED STATES POWER SQUADRONS<sup>â</sup>

## National Planning Committee



**2006**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

## Table of Contents

Mission Statement and Organizational Beliefs	page	1
Vision Statement		2

## Strategic Goals and Suggestions

Awareness	4
Communications	6
Education	9
Financial Stability	11
Government and Partner Relations	13
Leadership	15
Membership Growth and Retention	17
Strategic Planning – The Next Phase	19

### Notes:

The revision of the Strategic Plan was completed in 2006 and approved by the Governing Board at various stages of completion.

A goal for Financial Stability was added. The goals for Member Involvement and Retention and Membership Goals were combined into one goal: Membership Growth and Retention.

## Mission Statement

USPS Mission is:

To promote recreational boating safety through education and civic activities while providing fellowship for our members.

## Organizational Beliefs

USPS Beliefs are:

- ◆ Educated boaters are safer boaters
- ◆ USPS must maintain a quality educational program
- ◆ Membership in USPS enhances boating enjoyment
- ◆ Participation fosters creativity, accomplishment, and member satisfaction
- ◆ Together everyone accomplishes more
- ◆ Members need to be recognized for their contributions and accomplishments
- ◆ Civic activities promote substantial benefits to the boating public
- ◆ USPS social activities enrich members' lives and foster lifelong friendships
- ◆ Change is necessary for continuing success

## **VISION STATEMENT**

### **The New USPS**

After nearly a century of offering introductory boating classes to new boaters and advanced education to public class graduates who became members, United States Power Squadrons has re-engineered itself to become the most recognized and respected provider of boater education and training in America. It has expanded its market, reaching out not only to new boaters but to boaters with all levels of experience in all sorts of recreational boats from kayaks and canoes to power and sail boats of all sizes.

A new initiative called USPS University offers educational programs designed as a total immersion learning process that blends classroom instruction, distance learning and on-the-water training. Instruction is provided by certified volunteers meeting rigid educational requirements and possessing years of practical experience. Subject matter ranges from the most basic to advanced training for offshore sailors and those seeking Coast Guard Licenses. USPS University courses and seminars are recognized and certified by boating experts around the world. As technology and regulations change, USPSU continually adds new courses, seminars and skills training curricula to keep 21<sup>st</sup> century boaters informed, aware and prepared.

The new USPS reaches out to provide education for members of boating groups all across the country, from fishing and hunting clubs to sailing groups and yacht clubs. When boaters across America need to polish their skills and update their training, they call USPSU. This outreach program has added a whole new dimension to an already strong program of squadron social activities. And, just as it taught navigation to the Navy and Merchant Marine during two World Wars, the new USPS continues to provide government assistance keeping nautical charts up to date, reporting serious boating weather conditions and providing vessel safety checks for all recreational watercraft.

An integral part of the transformation of USPS was recognizing that the practical delivery of all USPS services, whether teaching, training or performing government and civic service, is done by USPS members working at the local level. To insure the success of those efforts, USPS has empowered its local squadrons to manage their own affairs to best meet the needs of boaters in their local communities. USPS districts now concentrate on providing assistance to their local squadrons and the national organization has been restructured to insure that it responds quickly and efficiently with a continual stream of new programs and products to address diverse needs at the local level.

A direct result of the recognition and respect USPS has earned for this major expansion of its educational and civic service programs has been our ability to add to our partnerships with other boating organizations and, through cooperative agreements,

greatly enhance the benefits of USPS membership. Selected marinas recognize the value of educated tenants and offer lower moorage fees for USPS members. New programs have been developed with insurance carriers which provide enhanced coverage as a consequence of our safe boating record. Our large membership equates to significant buying power and this is used to negotiate attractive discounts with national marine supply chains. We seek certain courtesies with selected boat dealerships, and on a local level, we continue to expand affinity group benefits from suppliers of goods and services. Our aim is to build a boating organization with the highest value to its members.

The **new** USPS represents a major transformation of a great organization for the 20<sup>th</sup> century into a greater one for the 21<sup>st</sup>!

Notes of the Goals and Supporting Commentary as Suggestions:

Each goal has supporting commentary as suggestions. These suggestions are included but are not part of the Strategic Plan. The items listed are current areas of concern expressed by many sources and may not take into account some activities may now be in progress. The list is a starting point for planning by national, district, and squadron members. Other items will continually come to light in the evolutionary process of USPS.

## **Strategic Plan for Awareness**

### **GOAL**

To increase public and business awareness of the United States Power Squadrons by expanding partnership relations with governmental agencies, for-profit and non-profit boating organizations, the boating manufacturing industry, and retail after-market outlets for the purposes of satisfying the mission of USPS and to share the benefits accrued in conjunction with partnering and membership in USPS.

The Marketing and Public Relations committee(s) of USPS will ultimately be responsible for the development of the strategies and plans for the awareness program, and for working with other departments and committees of USPS to identify need.

### **Suggestions for Awareness**

Suggestions in support of the awareness effort are included as separate documents, but are not a part of the USPS Strategic Plan.

1. It is suggested that the Marketing and Public Relations committee(s) in support of the Awareness portion of the USPS® Strategic Plan of the organization create their own *Mission and Vision* statements in support of the goal for Awareness.
2. Solicit input from other committees and departments of USPS on the needs of the organization and its mission.
3. Research the market for the needs of members and potential members to insure proper product development of educational, civic service and social needs.
4. In concert with the Government Relations Committee, work toward partnerships with government organizations in the furtherance of financial and political support of the USPS mission and vision.
5. Develop partnerships with the boating manufacturing industry to gain financial and political support for USPS in the pursuit of increasing boating educational classes, and to aid in boater understanding of the value of safety through education.

6. Work toward relationships with retail, after-market outlets to promote USPS public educational offerings, provide financial support and sell USPS products to the public.
7. Work with the Member Benefits, Membership, and Education Department as a partner in research and development of products and services that will promote membership growth and retention.
8. Investigate boater activity outside the conventional power and sail markets such as the paddle boating arena that may provide new opportunities for USPS educational products and services to promote membership growth and retention in USPS.
9. Create marketing programs for squadrons to aid in promoting USPS to the general marketplace.
10. Explore with Membership, new and innovative advertising products such as billboards, posters and handouts that will promote USPS and membership in the organization.
11. Using the resources within the organization, create a writer's bureau and library of articles which can be regularly rotated amongst the various boating industry publications.
12. Establish a cadre of writers and group of magazines that will regularly publish editorials and/or articles of interest to the boater.
13. Work with outside agencies and companies to ascertain the educational needs of the paddle, fishing and hunting boater to aid in raising the level of knowledge and safety for these growing water sports.
14. Establish and maintain a continuing flow of communication with marine electronic manufacturers, NMMA, NMEA, on the changing marketplace in boat interest so that USPS becomes the a selected resource by the boating public for new and innovative educational products to improve boater skills and proficiency.
15. Review curriculum on a continuous basis with the Educational Department to make improvements, delete superfluous materials, and make the progression through the various offerings within USPS seamless with a smooth flow toward a meaningful and useful set of skills.
16. Help the Educational Department identify materials and programs which address the individuals' style of learning (visual, auditory, hands-on) while publishing the materials in a variety of modes (print, electronic, video, internet, etc.)

## **Strategic Plan for Communication**

### **GOAL**

To create, maintain, and use effective, two-way internal and external communications systems which support rapid and accurate information exchange with USPS members, partners, commercial interests and the general public.

Each department and committee is responsible for defining the communications capabilities it requires to achieve this goal and the other goals of the USPS Strategic Plan. These requirements will be used by the Secretary's Department to formulate and implement an overall Communications Plan for USPS. Successful completion of this goal will facilitate the fulfillment of the USPS mission.

### **Suggestions for Communication**

Suggestions in support of the communications effort are included as a separate document, but are not a part of the USPS Strategic Plan.

1. It is suggested that a general communication policy and plan be formulated by the Secretary's Department in order to insure a reliable communication system whereby information is transmitted and replies are received by the appropriate parties without interruption.
2. Redesign the USPS Web site to have a common look and feel. This should provide a common navigation system which, when moving from committee to committee does not give the impression of a separate Web site, requiring a learning curve for each location.
4. Include the USPS mission and vision statements as part of the opening portion of the Web site to inform members and non-members alike of our purpose and view of the future.

4. Redesign the Public portion of the USPS Web site to be more informative and appealing. This could be done with the help of USPS marketing and public relations committees in order to maximize the Web sites effect on public opinion and interest in USPS.
5. The collection of ideas from the districts, not in the form of resolutions, is contained in reports from the C/C's representatives. A more accurate and general method of collecting ideas might be in a "Bright Idea" form that could be provided to the chief's representative to be filled out and returned to the C/C or a review committee for review and action.
6. Create a system of information gathering that can forward ideas and suggestions to the appropriate location. A standardized form or dedicated location on the Web site on which one can submit an idea and get a response to a question might be appropriate. Such a process might be made continuous by placing the "Bright Ideas" form on the Web site where it could be answered by a designated team who follows up on the suggestions.
7. Create a set of Job Descriptions and User Manuals that can be modified by squadrons and districts allowing new officers to better accomplish their jobs. A set of standardized manuals which is reviewed by a squadron manuals committee or on the district level, on a regular basis, could prevent the manuals from being lost also allowing for updates by such a committee.
8. Transform the Ensign into a vehicle used not only to transmit information to the members but a tool to survey, and receive ideas from members. The paper version of the Ensign could have a place for a survey that various committees could use or a suggestion page with appropriate form that could be sent into USPS HQ.
9. Place the Ensign in an electronic format on the USPS Web site and allow members to receive their copy through this method thus saving money on printing. This gives the feel of a 21<sup>st</sup> century organization.
10. Place the Ensign in a prominent position on the Web site with the latest copy in the public area so potential members, partners and the public may see what we are doing.
11. Investigate the distribution of a limited numbers of copies of the Ensign to Boater's World, West Marine, etc. for sale or possibly free distribution in order to expand USPS name recognition.
12. Create a central repository of USPS knowledge for USPS questions. This may best be done on a section of the USPS Web site. It should contain all forms, documents, reports, surveys, survey results and a list of FAQs.

13. Create a question of the day, week or month that has a response area capable to be used to obtain a sense of the membership when questions of policy need to be explored for general understanding and acceptance.
14. Create a section in the USPS Web site which addresses relevant issues of USPS policy or proposed changes where the issue is presented in a complete and logical way so the members get the entire picture of any topics under discussion.

## **Strategic Plan for Educational Development**

### **GOAL**

To educate members and potential members regarding safe boating, using the latest materials, delivery methods, and teaching techniques necessary to address diverse educational needs and skills.

Each committee within USPS that is involved in the educational effort will develop its own strategies to achieve the goals.

The Education Department of USPS will ultimately be responsible for the development of curriculum working with other departments and committees of USPS to identify need.

### **Suggestions for Educational Development**

Suggestions in support of the educational effort are included as separate documents, but are not a part of the USPS Strategic Plan.

1. It is suggested that the departments/committees in support of the Educational Development of the organization create their own *Mission and Vision* statements in support of the goal for educational development and in support of the USPS Mission statement.
2. Solicit input from other committees and departments of USPS on the needs of members and non-members for new and expanded educational programs.
3. Research the diverse educational needs of members and potential members.
5. Make available a curriculum of study leading to a meaningful set of skills which boating members and non-members of USPS will eagerly embrace and be desirous of pursuing.
6. Have more than twenty-two percent (22%) of our members complete an internal educational course per year.
7. Teach one public boating student per active member each year.

8. Develop a curriculum of materials for paddle boaters, hunters and fishermen.
9. Create a standard for squadron instructors.
10. Explore the possibility of creating a series of recurrent training courses, which could be a refresher, given by every squadron, every year for the main areas of safety to update the members on the most recent changes to rules and regulations. It could be a downloadable PDF file that could eliminate the cost of printing. It would keep the members connected to the education leg of our organizational triangle.
11. Review the Junior Navigator and Navigator course offerings and consider making these subjects available as supplemental programs or elective courses.
12. Consider offering a Coast Guard license course at the basic or potentially multiple levels.
13. Work with outside agencies and companies to ascertain the educational needs of the paddle, fishing, and hunting boater to aid in raising the level of knowledge and safety for these growing water sports.
14. Establish and maintain a continuing flow of communication with marine electronic manufacturers, NMMA, NMEA, on the changing marketplace in boat design and building, navigation and electronics manufacturing techniques, and new product offerings.
15. Review curriculum on a continuous basis to make improvements, delete superfluous materials, and make the progression through the various offerings within USPS seamless with a smooth flow toward a meaningful and useful set of skills.
16. Develop materials and programs that address the individuals' style of learning (visual, auditory, hands-on) while publishing the materials in a variety of modes (print, electronic, video, internet, etc.).
17. Make available both classroom and specifically designed self study programs for advanced grade and elective courses.
18. Develop a series of hands-on supplements relevant to seamanship, piloting, and navigation.

## **Strategic Plan for Financial Stability**

### **GOAL**

To create and maintain a sound financial base from which the United States Power Squadrons (USPS) can fulfill the organizational mission, provide funding for the day to day operation of USPS, and provide the resources to allow capital expenditures for the benefit of the organization.

Each committee within USPS that is involved in the financial programs and health of the organization will develop its own strategies to achieve the goals.

The Finance and Treasurer's departments will ultimately be responsible for the financial stability and health of the organization.

### **Suggestions for Financial Stability**

Suggestions for the Treasurer's and Finance departments are included as separate documents, but are not a part of the USPS Strategic Plan for financial stability.

1. It is suggested that the departments/committees in support of the Financial Stability of the organization develop their own *Mission and Vision* statements in support of the goal of financial stability and in support of the USPS Mission statement.
2. Achieve financial stability and remove dependency on dues.
3. Have a short, medium and long-range financial plan.
4. Index dues based on a nationally published index.
5. Develop internal opportunities to contain expenses and increase funds.
6. Develop external opportunities to partner with businesses offering financial benefits.
7. Work to develop a strategy and executing a plan to provide the resources to provide operating and capital expenditures for the benefit of the organization.

8. Work out a plan to support the development of the Century Fund.
9. Strive to make Headquarters Annual/Anniversary Billing a 100% objective
10. Work on development of a cost-of-living dues link.
11. Work toward a program for Life Members encouraging them to donate the equivalent of their annual USPS dues to the Century Fund.
12. Develop strategies leading toward a self supporting *Ensign*<sup>®</sup> .
13. Work toward a Partnering Program leading to outside ongoing fund raising.
14. Develop a program of external sales of Educational products to the non-member public including, but not limited to, electives, seamanship, and piloting .
15. Investigate the financial implications of a decreasing scale of dues based on member longevity or merit marks. This might be funded by the elimination of the Life Member as a dues classification.
16. Explore the possibility that Life Member dues be funneled directly to the Endowment Fund through credit cards.
17. Explore the possibility of providing USPS service to members such as discounts on equipment, fuel, docking, insurance, etc.
18. Explore the possibility of creating a series of recurrent training courses to be given by every squadron every year that would be a refresher for the main areas of safety and update the members on the latest changes to rules and regulations. It could be a downloadable PDF file that would eliminate the cost of printing. It would keep the members connected to the education portion of our organization.

## **Strategic Plan for Government and Partner Relations**

### **GOAL**

Be proactive on governmental issues and regulations, as well as partnerships, which impact USPS and the boating public. Assume a leading role in monitoring and responding to proposed recreational-boating legislation, expand recreational boating and governmental alliances, and continue to garner educational and organizational memorandums of understanding.

The Government and Partner Relations Committee of USPS will ultimately be responsible for the development of the strategies and plans for achieving these goals and for the working with USPS officers and personnel as appropriate.

### **Suggestions for Government and Partner Relations**

Suggestions in support of government and partner relations are included as separate documents, but are not a part of the USPS Strategic Plan.

1. Secure State Legislative Representatives for most all states who would monitor legislative issues, oversee compliance with existing memorandums of understanding, and occasionally represent USPS in their respective state capitals.
2. Provide ongoing education and training to Legislative officers and Liaison officers at the district and squadron levels regarding ways to monitor, interpret and report on state legislative and boating issues, as well as foster a USPS presence in local communities.
3. Procure mutually-advantageous partnerships and memorandums of understanding with recreational boating organizations, state regulatory agencies, and marine manufacturers and dealers.

4. Expand the current NGPRCom Web site as a recommended view-regularly resource for all USPS members with such information as USPS policies and procedures, USPS position statements on national issues, and breaking legislative news on a state-by-state basis.
5. Monitor homeland security issues, apprise national, district, and squadron officers accordingly, and encourage the adoption and support of homeland security initiatives throughout USPS.
6. Create a political action committee arm of USPS to lobby state and federal legislative bodies.
7. Start an [Adopt-a-legislator](#) program at the district and/or squadron level.
8. Publish state and federal legislators= names and e-mail addresses by squadron geographic location.
9. Create an assigned district position that is approved to monitor and lobby state legislature on issues that effect USPS.
10. Link USPS Web site to state legislative Web sites.

## **Strategic Plan for Leadership Development**

### **GOAL**

To foster and enhance interest in leadership positions throughout the organization, and to better prepare officers with leadership skills by organizing local programs of information and instruction.

Provide leadership training to all squadron members interested, focusing on squadron administrative officers, and to provide professional life and business relevant leadership training to all incoming squadron commanders.

USPS Administrative Department through the auspices of various districts will provide and presenting training seminars.

### **Suggestions for Leadership Development**

Suggestions in support of leadership development are included as separate documents, but are not a part of the USPS Strategic Plan.

1. Develop a series of leadership training seminars and presentations for district, squadron, and individual use.
2. Develop a combined Leadership and Operations Training program using modern technology and current human resources practices.
3. Develop alternative methods of presentation to meet the varying needs of our members considering the USPS job held, time available, learning styles, etc. on: CD-Rom, Video, Power Point, and Web site instruction.
4. Develop officers' mentoring program using the expertise of past officers.
5. Involve only capable and willing members as Training Presenters.

6. Have all the National Training representatives attend a training exercise/session to be qualified before conducting a leadership seminar at the district conferences.
7. Have the districts form a true team of leadership mentors to get involved in the training of squadron officers.
8. Present these seminars in a retreat-like atmosphere to the incoming squadron commanders, executive, and administrative officers.
9. Invite Administrative Officers to leadership training sessions.
10. Develop and publish a Do and Don't list for good leadership emphasizing the common best practices.
11. Publish helpful and timely tips in *The ENSIGN* on Leadership from members as well as other experts relating their experiences.  
i.e.:
  - What Makes a Good Meeting?
  - How to Get the Most of a Boat Show
  - So You are the New VSC Chair
  - Want a Successful Cooperative Charting Outing?
  - How to Lead From the Front
12. Apply to the USPS Century Fund for grants to develop a leadership seminar program.

## **Strategic Plan for Membership Growth and Retention**

### **GOAL**

To create and maintain the membership in the United States Power Squadrons® with a target of 1% net growth annually beginning in 2006.

Each committee within USPS that is involved in the membership and member retention areas will develop its own strategies to achieve the goals.

The Membership Committee of USPS will be ultimately responsible for the membership growth and retention of the organizations members.

### **Suggestions for Membership Growth and Retention**

Suggestions in support of membership growth and retention are included as separate documents, but are not a part of the USPS Strategic Plan for membership growth and retention.

1. It is suggested that the departments/committees in support of the Membership Growth and Retention of the organization develop their own *Mission and Vision* statements in support of the goal of growth and stability and in support of the USPS Mission statement.
2. Eliminate barriers to membership.
3. Increase/improve member benefits.
4. Improve member activities to promote member satisfaction.
5. Develop a *Power of One* or similar campaign focused specifically on retention.
6. Look at organizational structure to determine if it is conducive to member retention.
7. Continue the *Power of One* campaign but work toward an extension or similar program with greater focus on retention.

8. Review members dues and consider alternate plans such as:
  - Life member voluntary dues deposited directly to Endowment Fund.
  - Life members asked to contribute dues equivalent to the Century Fund.
  - Develop a diminishing dues schedule based on longevity or merit marks earned.
9. Consider a single classification of membership, eliminating the Life Member classifications as it relates to dues.
10. Work to understand the impact of uniforms on retention and membership.
11. Help members understand the value of education on boating safety and confidence.
12. With the current focus on youth, recommend how the organization will look in the future with a base of young adults, ages 20 through 45.
13. Prepare a white paper on squadron best practices for member retention and share that with squadrons.
14. Develop a sociability program to help integrate new members.
15. Accepting our desire to include paddle boaters into USPS, develop ways to include them in squadron life, including social, educational, and civic service.
16. Look to the development of a classification of member who is a financial supporter only.
17. Meet with leaders of other similar fraternal/charitable organizations to garner ideas for retention and study member benefits for possible ideas.
18. Increase member benefits.

## Strategic Planning – The Next Phase

*“Phase IV – Renewal (2005) A new strategic plan will be crafted by reviewing the original. The new document will continue to be refined with fresh ideas from a new group of task force members for the betterment of our organization.”*

The National Planning Committee began Phase IV, the renewal phase, in 2005, to revise the Strategic Plan. We have written a new vision statement and have revised the original seven goals and added a new goal, Financial Stability. The two membership strategies were combined into one goal, Membership Growth and Retention. Accompanying the revised goals are supporting commentaries and suggestions that we believe offer a helpful means for committees and departments at all levels to carry out the goals; they are not action plans or directives that must be followed or implemented, only suggestions.

### The Revised Strategic Plan

We have a new Vision Statement for our future that showcases USPS as the definitive educational organization while stressing the importance of civic activities and the social aspects of membership. The revised Strategic Plan is a coordinated plan that can lead us to the fulfillment of our goals. Our vision can only succeed with the support of our leaders. It is each department’s responsibility to understand and support the plan.

### Future Strategic Planning

We suggest that a Marketing Team (in the Office of the Chief) take on the responsibility of further refinements in strategic planning. As overseers of the plan, they are in the best position to understand our market and make modifications to direct us accordingly towards success on an ongoing basis. Another portion of their responsibility would be to receive timely (quarterly) progress reports as needed from department heads which should be incorporated into their refinements. The plan can then be revised and renewed as needed when our markets, customers, organization, etc. change to insure USPS meets both its Mission and Vision for its present and future.

We suggest the continuum of a five-year strategic planning cycle as follows:

- Phase I 2007 Completion of Renewal at the Annual Meeting
- Phase II 2007 Implementation Stage of the revised plan  
(with Quarterly Monitoring Reports and refinements suggested)
- Phase III 2010 Renewal

