



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE	CONTACT: Lori Schmidt, Office 480-312-1817, Mobile 480-272-1710
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“Wear-It” Boat Creator Honored by Drowning Prevention Coalition

For more than 20 years, the Drowning Prevention Coalition of Arizona (DPCA) has worked to reduce the number of child drownings and increase awareness of what all of us can do to practice water safety. The work is collaborative and multi-dimensional with members doing all they can to provide families with the tools to protect their loved ones. Even though the effort is not made by any single person alone, there are individuals whose contributions lay the foundation for the work of others and deserve recognition.

Today, the DPCA honored **Tim Baumgarten of Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD)** with the *Linda S. Kirby WATER Award* for his outstanding work in the community to promote water safety. This special recognition goes to individuals who consistently hold up the tenants of the award: Willing, Attentive, Tenacious, Enthusiastic, and Resourceful.

Baumgarten is noted for his professionalism and watercraft law enforcement expertise. His dedication to safety on the water is unparalleled and his impact to the AZGFD boating safety program is monumental. He is a 28-year-veteran and is a knowledge expert on boating safety and impaired boater enforcement and worked for years along the Colorado River, where he promotes sober responsible adult boating and life jacket wear by our youth. While his accomplishments and credentials are impressive, Tim recently stepped away from the familiar law enforcement role when he had an inspired public relations vision to make Arizona waterways a much safer place for the children of Arizona.

Baumgarten envisioned an innovative project to draw in and engage young audiences with a drown-proofing message tied to life jacket wear and boating safety. His vision involved removing the engine and fuel systems from a surplus patrol jet-boat and retro-fitting the beast into a “kid friendly” bells and whistles “Wear-It” show boat. Using US Coast Guard grant dollars, Baumgarten worked for two months to realize his patrol-boat-for-kids vision in time for “Public Safety Days” at the Arizona State Fair this year. This LED encrusted ex-patrol boat is arguably the most successful boating safety outreach campaign implemented at AZGFD.

To date, the boat has accounted for well over 5000 quality one-on-one life jacket awareness contacts and for good measure exposed 150,000 Arizonans to the message in just two short months. The unexpectedly high popularity of the boat has revealed a seemingly endless statewide deployment opportunities at community events and holiday parades.

“Tim’s efforts to promote water safety at our lakes and rivers with the “Wear-It Boat” have been an exciting addition to the educational tools at our disposal,” says Lori Schmidt, DPCA President. “It is our pleasure to honor Tim with the WATER award. His contributions are immeasurable.”

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The Drowning Prevention Coalition, a community based organization comprised of parents, health and safety professionals and business leaders, exists to provide a forum to prevent drowning and near

drowning through the promotion of education, legislative action and enhanced product safety. Check out our website at www.preventdrownings.org for more information.