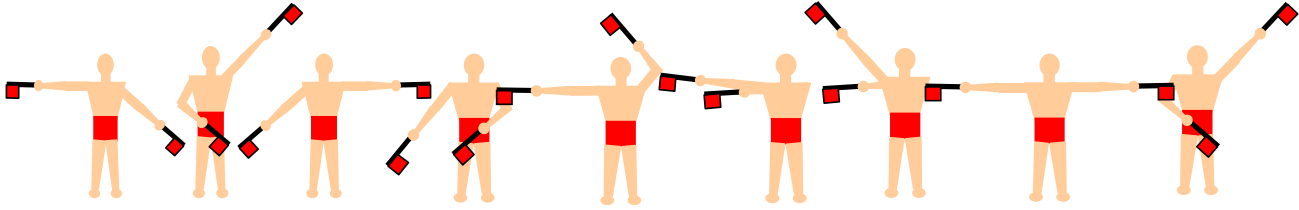


Ocean City Beach Patrol



Edition 49

Newsletter

Spring-2010



Over Eighty Years
of Saving Lives.

Maintain Your Role
in this Fantastic
Tradition!

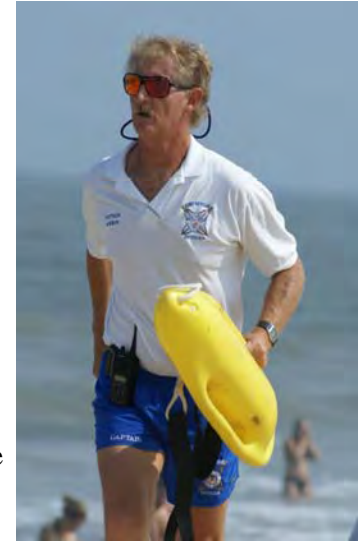
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Message From the Captain

Values Define the Person

The values that a person holds define who the person is. Organizations, in turn, are defined by the people of whom they are comprised. At a time when individual values, responsibility and accountability are seen as less concrete and more situational, I feel that we need to emphasize the core values that have made the Beach Patrol a great organization. The most important value is integrity. If you look up the meaning of this word you will see several definitions, but I am most interested in the working, or applied definition. Integrity is doing what is "right" even when no one is watching and no one will ever find out how you responded to a situation. Then the question comes up, what is "right"? With so many people trying to rationalize their own behavior the idea of a standard "right" has given way to, what they think is "right" for them at the time. However, when it comes to an organization, the definition of "right" is solidified in the rules, policies and procedures of that organization. When you agree to become part of an organization, you should also understand that you will have specific rules and responsibilities that go along with your role. If you do not want to abide by those "norms" then you should not become part of that organization. Why would you go through the trouble of becoming accepted into an organization, knowing that you did not intend to accept the requirements of membership? As a beach patrol we have many policies and procedures that have developed over our history that have enabled us to maintain our high standards of professionalism. Although, you may not fully understand why a policy is in place or you may not even agree with it, as an employee you are expected and required to abide by all of the policies. One example is the policy that requires all SRTs and SBFs to stand when any Beach Patrol vehicle passes their station. This policy evolved from past events and has helped to solve a problem that existed. Even if you don't understand or don't agree, you are required to follow this policy. Of course, others see your actions, and failure to comply is immediately evident. In contrast, some policies may be seen as less visible and it is only your integrity that compels you to comply. Why would a person of integrity sign a written policy statement and then look for ways to break that same policy, hoping not to get caught? I don't know the answer to that question, but I do know that signing your name and giving your word should have value. So every time you sign your name or give your "word" make sure it has value and that you mean what you say. In addition to integrity, Beach Patrol employees must possess the personal values of dedication, commitment, honesty and professionalism. Without these values in each one of our people, regardless of position or tenure, the Beach Patrol will never achieve its greatest potential.



Invitations to return included with Spring Newsletter

submitted by: Captain Butch Arbin



Again this year, this spring newsletter mailing includes the "official" Letters of Invitation for returning employees and Letters of Intent for those who have been appointed to the 2010 Surf Rescue Academy. Although, I have sent several e-mails asking for information through Google Docs, such as change of address and dates of availability, responding to this mailing in writing is critical if you wish to be employed this season. Make sure that you read everything carefully, because there are some new requirements for being hired. This year we are requiring "official" confirmation of your last day of full-time work to be returned with your Employment Agreement. Employment Agreements, letters of Intent and Proof of Last Day must be returned to Captain Arbin at his La Plata, Maryland address using the enclosed, pre-addressed, stamped envelope, by Friday, April 30, 2010. If your signed Employment Agreement is not received by the due date, you may not be given employment this season. We have a long waiting list and I need to let these people know ASAP about whether they have a position or not. Additionally, well over 100 people are asking to test for a position, including several past employees who missed a year or two, and I need to determine whether or not we will be holding additional testing. Don't let them take your position because you didn't bother to reply to this mailing. Please take the time to complete all paperwork accurately and be aware that your availability will have an impact on our ability to hire you this season. If you are interested in applying for a part-time position, in requesting a particular stand, or if you are seeking a promotion, you must indicate this on your employment agreement. Once your agreement is received, a second packet will be mailed to you including information based on your responses to the first mailing. Also included with the second mailing are directions to access and complete employment forms, that will be available on-line and must be completed before reporting for registration and equipment issue.

REMINDER: Invitations are only sent to those employees who received an "A" summative rating. Employees who do not receive an invitation, but who wish to return to the Beach Patrol this season, must contact Captain Arbin directly to set up a meeting. This is not a change in policy and has been explained to every employee by me personally.

Applicants for Assistant Crew Chief are Being Sought

submitted by: Captain Butch Arbin

The Beach Patrol is seeking Surf Rescue Technicians with Ocean City Beach Patrol Surf Rescue Association (OCBPSRA) Basic certification to apply for leadership roles as Assistant Crew Chiefs. It is our intent to select Assistant Crew Chiefs prior to the start of the 2010 season, Saturday May 29, 2010.

The position requires the appointed Surf Rescue Technician to switch crews if necessary, and to assume all the responsibilities of the Assistant Crew Chief position. They will also be required to attend a training session, along with the Crew Chiefs, scheduled for the evening of Sunday, May 30, 2010.

Serving successfully as an Assistant Crew Chief for a season is a requirement of OCBPSRA Advanced certification, which itself is a prerequisite for the Crew Chief position. The Assistant position provides the candidate pool from which future Crew Chief promotions are made.

There are 17 positions each season, and it is my desire to fill those slots with 17 first-time Assistant Crew Chiefs, whenever possible. However, if we do not have 17 qualified first-time candidates, we will choose former assistants that have applied. Therefore, if you are interested in being considered for a second appointment to Assistant Crew Chief, make sure that you apply.

Assistant Crew Chiefs will be compensated at the rate of \$15.69 per hour. Each position will be filled by appointing an SRT I to the rank of SRT I - Assistant Crew Chief with all the responsibility and accountability that the position carries. This is a training position and is designed to be a one-season appointment. In the following season, if a candidate is not promoted to Crew Chief, they will be returned to the position on the pay scale were they would have been, had they not been an Assistant Crew Chief with full credit for days worked at the Assistant Crew Chief position.

The first step in the process is to apply in writing, indicating your desire to be considered for the position. A selection committee will then make the appointments, and the candidates will be notified as soon as the selections are made.



Our Shared Values

Submitted by: Tom Shuster



In October 2009 I attended the National Recreation and Parks Congress in Salt Lake City. Many of the educational sessions scheduled during the Congress focused on keeping sustained funding for recreation and parks during hard times.

One of the sessions I attended was titled “Keeping Your Agency Off the Chopping Block” presented by Tom O’Rourke.

The session certainly dwelled on the topic of securing and keeping funding during tough times. However, Tom’s main point was to “get the public on your side and you win”. But how to do that was the insight I came away with.

You can’t get the public “on your side” if you can’t tell them what you stand for. That’s where Mission and Values come into play. Our Department, like any organization, has to have a Mission Statement to summarize what we do. The Mission essentially tells the world what we do and for whom we do it.

But the organization needs more than a mission. It needs values. The values of an organization come from the people in the organization; that is all the employees and volunteers who make us greater than the sum of all our parts.

When I returned from Salt Lake City I was energized to focus on our Mission and Values. We have a Department mission statement that pre-dates my joining the organization in 1998. I asked Susan Petito and others from our staff that was familiar with the development of that mission to review it and suggest updates to it that would reflect all the changes we have made as an organization over the last 12 years. We have since discussed it, reviewed it and edited it over the last several months. Finally, in a recent meeting of the senior leadership of the Department, we agreed on that mission. Here it is.

Our mission is to provide quality
recreational, cultural and social opportunities,
as well as safe, clean, enjoyable parks, beaches and facilities
to enhance the quality of life for Ocean City residents and
visitors.

We had no written or obviously stated values for Recreation and Parks, but I knew they existed within each and every one of our employees. So, I asked the Division Managers to discuss what our values were with their staff. I offered some examples of values that others had used. These helped stimulate discussion and encourage formation of our own values.

A draft list of possible values was discussed with the

senior staff and subsequently shared with other full time staff members. Next, many of the full time staff was asked to rank the list so as to create a consensus over what were our leading values. At this point a total of 23 possible values were reviewed, edited and ranked. From that list a final draft of 12 values was developed. We discussed that list in some detail at staff meetings in January, February, and March of 2010. Finally, we reached consensus of a list of eight values. Here are our values:

Team Work – We believe that by working together we can achieve our common goals and that we will produce the most desirable outcomes for our customers and our community. We work with shared purpose and mutual support of our colleagues.

Quality – We provide quality experiences and services, paying attention to details and aiming for excellence in all that we do.

Integrity – We believe in treating people with respect and ethical behavior. We demonstrate a high degree of professionalism and honesty as we work to earn the trust of those we serve.

Innovation – Welcoming change, we remain aware of current trends in order to keep our programs, events and facilities inviting to both current and potential customers. We remain flexible, ready to adapt to meet new challenges and open to new opportunities.

Safety – The safety of those in our programs, those using our facilities, our beaches, golf course and parks, and that of our employees and volunteers is important to us. We will remain alert, aware, and observant at all times. We promote safe behavior and will intervene appropriately, when necessary, to keep people safe.

Stewardship – We will use the human and financial resources entrusted to us responsibly. We will use our natural resources in sustainable ways, while preserving those resources for future enjoyment.

Accessibility – We recognize the diverse needs and interests of our community, customers and co-workers. We will be open minded in our efforts to make our programs, services and facilities useful for, and accessible to all.

Fun – We believe that it is fundamental to healthy and happy living that people have fun! Providing opportunities for people to enjoy and enrich themselves is our core responsibility. Through our positive attitudes, friendly service, and enthusiasm for our work, we promote and encourage healthier lives.

This process has been as much a bottom up as top down driven. I believe all our employees want a say in our future. And I believe that every employee that has a say has a stake in our success.

I truly know that our Mission tells the public what we do and our Values tell them what we believe. If we convey this Mission and Values to the public they will be “on our side”. So, join me in telling the story of our Mission and our Values. When we do we will surely win.

OFF-SEASON ACTIVITIES

“Right Sizing” all Town of Ocean City operations – a budget update

submitted by: Captain Butch Arbin

City Manager Dennis Dare has been using the term “Right Sizing” to describe what the Town’s departments need to do during the current state, national and international economic crisis. We are still in the midst of what economic experts have called the worst economy since the Great Depression, which none of us was around to experience. The Town of Ocean City is not isolated from these severe financial hardships and since the Beach Patrol budget is totally funded by the Town of Ocean City, we also feel any economic impacts that the Town experiences. For the Town of Ocean City, the biggest factor affecting how much money the Town has on which to operate on is the income derived from several tax sources, most notably, the 50% of the budget that is raised by property tax revenue. With property values dropping and Ocean City in the second year of the most recent property tax assessment (it runs in a three year cycle, and Mr. Dare expects this problem to exist through the next 3 year cycle also) the nearly 50% of the operating budget for Ocean City derived from these taxes, has seen a 5 million dollar reduction. As a result, the City Manager has made many changes to Town operations that will help to bring the Town in under budget. Most recently Mr. Dare has reorganized several areas of the City’s government and has maintained a hiring freeze on full-time employees. Mr. Dare’s cost saving measures have not spared his office. Recently long time City Clerk Carol Jacobs (sometimes seen riding a quad and inspecting beach boxes) took the City’s offer of a retirement incentive. Her replacement is Cathy Mathias who is currently the Administrative Assistant to the City Manager. However, she will not be replaced in his office but will instead perform many of the duties of both positions. Additionally, for the second budget in a row, full-time city employees will not receive either “step” (longevity) increases or Cost of Living Adjustments. Although not affecting Beach Patrol employees, many other temporary positions had their pay rates reduced. During our current budget we have reduced our spending by several measures: We limited the number of personnel working the extended patrols from Sunfest to Columbus Day, eliminated off-site testing which saves on facility rental, transportation of testing personnel and salary expenses. In conjunction with this reduction we also limited our participation in job fairs, out-of-area recruiting and advertising efforts. We also continued other cost saving measures that we started last year.

I can assure you that it is the highest priority of the City to

continue to provide the best Beach Patrol and the safest beaches in the world and cost is never a consideration. In fact, during our budget hearing with the City Manager he accepted our budget, as proposed, with only slight alterations, and will be presenting it to the Mayor and City Council for their final approval sometime in May. However, we need to do our fair share in reducing the overall operating expenses of the Town and “Right Sizing” Beach Patrol operations whenever possible. One example would be to limit the number of SRTs assigned to JBP and Camps while still maintaining safe ratios of campers to instructors.

Another way of assisting with the budget crunch is to increase tourism and generate income for the businesses that support the Town’s tax base. Each of you can make a significant impact in this area by simply letting everyone you come in contact know that “we’re glad they are here”. After all, you are Ocean City’s Ambassadors.



CC Atwood and CC Hammond-Brabitz greeted hundreds of visitors with a friendly smile and beach safety tips at the MSTA convention this past November.



City Manager, Dennis Dare and Wayne Evans, Director of Human Resources came to Strategic Planning to speak on behalf of the town.