



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 7, 2015

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Brett Farrell, 907-957-0692

SITKA HARBOR SYSTEM CERTIFIED AS FOURTH ALASKA CLEAN HARBOR IN STATE *Award presentation to Sitka Assembly on December 8*

SITKA, AK – A year and a half after signing the Alaska Clean Harbors pledge, the ACH Advisory Committee certified the Sitka Harbor System as an Alaska Clean Harbor during their October meeting. The ACH Advisory Committee, the certifying body for the statewide program, includes representatives from Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program, Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources, Cook Inletkeeper, Green Star, Marine Exchange of Alaska, NOAA's Restoration Center, and the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators (AAHPA).

Alaska Clean Harbors is a voluntary program providing valuable pollution prevention tools for local communities to protect the marine resources that support coastal economies. Through participation in the program, harbormasters complete a self-evaluation and are scored on 88 best management practices (BMP) related to pollution prevention and waste management for their facility. Harbor staff then work with ACH to improve their score and meet program criteria by implementing new BMP, leading to substantial long-term cost savings, improved commitment to pollution prevention, increased waste reduction, and ongoing promotion of clean boating. Currently ACH only works with facilities that have permanent moorage for boaters. At this time, boatyards, cruise ship docks, and loading-type facilities are not included.

Sitka Harbormaster, Stan Eliason, initiated the Sitka Port and Harbor application process, with the support of the Sitka Harbor Commission and the Borough Assembly. Their application highlighted the single-stream recycling, and educational signage. The Harbor system now has educational signage at all gangways and on the tidal grid. Eliason says of the process, "Very often we're asked "where can I dispose of diesel,





recyclable items, etc” and now the pamphlets and signage will help answer those questions. Ultimately, we want to protect our marine resources for future generations. I also want to thank Deputy Harbormaster, Chuck Hackett and Maintenance Supervisor, Ron Pratt for putting in a lot of effort to get us certified. It was a timely task, but we feel relieved that it’s done.”

Advisory Committee member Brett Farrell, Assistant Director of the Marine Exchange of Alaska, said of their efforts, “Sitka has been very proactive recently in improving their harbor’s infrastructure, their services to local and visiting mariners, and their regulatory compliance program. The time and effort they have dedicated to obtaining this designation of an ‘Alaskan Clean Harbor’ shows their continued commitment to provide the Sitka community with a quality and environmentally-responsible harbor operation.”

Rachel Lord, coordinator for Alaska Clean Harbors, says there is a lot of enthusiasm for the program around the state. “Sitka is now the fourth certified Clean Harbor in Alaska, following Homer, Seward and Haines. We’re currently also working with Cordova, Valdez, Kodiak, Dillingham and others on their certification efforts. The commitment made by harbors to become certified Clean Harbors opens the door to improving services to all boating fleets so that everyone can have tools on-hand to protect the marine environment.”

ACH Advisory Committee member Brett Farrell (Marine Exchange of Alaska) will present the Sitka Harbor with their award at the December 8, 2015 Borough Assembly meeting in Sitka. More information about Alaska Clean Harbors can be found at their website: www.alaskacleanharbors.org.

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