

D5NR Auxiliary Public Affairs Exhibit 2013 Burlington County Farm Fair After Action Report

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Event Synopsis

The Burlington County Farm Fair is an annual event and 2013 is the third year at its current location in Springfield, New Jersey. The 2013 fair began on Wednesday, July 17 and ran through Saturday, July 20.

D5NR, Division 13, the host unit; received invitation to participate in June, 2013, after show management consented to a no-fee request. Auxiliary scheduling and planning began on June 17, 2013.

While no documentation exists, this event may mark the first attempt by Flotillas, Divisions and District to collaborate on a single PA event in D5NR.

35 Auxiliarists from 7 Divisions in the 5NR Central and Eastern Areas contributed a total of 243 hours during the 4 day period. It is estimated that over 11,000 coloring books, pamphlets, brochures and CDs were distributed to the public. The Auxiliary exhibit consisted of a 10' x 20' tent containing 3 display tables, a 20' Auxiliary patrol vessel on trailer and a 10' x 10' tent which served as storage and staff break area. In addition, a computer and monitor were present for the playing of Auxiliary boating safety videos.

Auxiliary mission forms (7030) were filled out by each shift, collected daily and submitted for input. Visitor Inquiry forms were made available to public, collected, summarized on a spreadsheet and distributed to Flotillas for follow-up.

Auxiliary staff were asked to offer comments, concerns and possible solutions; and results are included in this report.

Show management placed attendance at the 2013 event at over 50,000. Vendor application and schedule dates for the 2014 fair were delivered to Auxiliary staff at the event on Fri., July 19.

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Event Narrative

The Fifth Northern District Auxiliary presented a Recreational Boating Safety Display Booth at the 2013 Burlington County Farm Show (BCFS) from Wednesday, July 17th thru Saturday, July 20th at the BCFS Fairgrounds, in Springfield Township, NJ. It was the first appearance by the Auxiliary at this event, and included members of 7 Divisions, representing the Eastern and Central Areas of 5NR.

The initial contact between event management and Auxiliary was made by Flotilla 13-07 VFC Robert Kanzler on June 7, 2013. Of particular note was the attendance of the 2012 show, put at 100,000 by the fair management. Realizing the scale of the event, VFC Kantler contacted Division 13 DCDR Jerry Goldkrantz; who then contacted D5NR DSO-PA Robert Babezki. This initiated a series of communications which resulted in a single cooperative Auxiliary effort to promote the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and its outreach programs at this new venue. It was agreed that Division 13 would host the event, D5NR Public Affairs team would coordinate the effort and Auxiliary Divisions from the Central and Eastern Areas would be requested to provide staffing from their membership. The Auxiliary plan used at Atlantic City Indoor Boat Show served as a model in planning for this show. DSO-PA Bob Babezki presented the District show coordination plan to Divisions 6 & 13 at their June Division meetings.

ADSO-PA (E) Al Revy issued the first appeal for assistance 4 weeks prior to the event dates. The staffing schedule was finalized on July 10. The short planning phase affected decisions, such as number of shifts each day, minimum numbers of staffers at each shift and other logistical concerns on coverage.

35 Auxiliarists from 7 Divisions, in the Central and Eastern Areas, assisted in staffing the event for a total of 243 hours. Table #1 presents staffing breakdown by Division.

Because of the event size, perceived opportunity and short planning cycle; several new steps were introduced in planning and scheduling for the event. For the first time the D5NR Everbridge System was used to effectively broadcast a request for staffing, selectively directed at members of Divisions 2, 4 and 6 in the Central Area and Divisions 3,7, 8, 13 and 16 in the Eastern Area. This saved valuable planning time by delivering the message directly to the individual Auxiliarists in the selected Areas. Another step was the early recognition of local staffing limitations and quick adoption of District project coordination offers.

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The display consisted of a 10' x 20' tent housing the presentation and a 20' Auxiliary Patrol vessel, and a 10' x 10' tent which served as a combination storage and staff rest area; all provided by Division 13. In addition, a computer and monitor were present for the playing of Auxiliary boating safety videos, provided by District.

Distribution of Information

Informational and educational handout materials for this event were selected to best reflect the four themes outlined in the 2013 D5NR PA Plan: *Always Wear a Life Jacket, Attend a Boating Safety Class, Obtain a Vessel Safety Examination and File a Float Plan*. Also available were Coast Guard and Auxiliary recruiting materials. Additionally, because of the physical location of the event, handout material included paddle sports safety and Operation Clear Channel flyers. The show locale region includes many lakes, creeks and smaller rivers which are popular with paddle sports devotees and the area is within easy commute to the Delaware River and Bay and its commercial shipping channels.

Division 13 provided the bulk of the literature supplies by drawing on the Division's Flotilla supplies, and ordering from ANSC and National Safe Boating Council. In addition, USCG Sector Delaware Bay provided material on Coast Guard recruiting and the U. S. Coast Guard Academy. Auxiliary staffers were invited to provide material of their choice.

Supplies of material dealing with paddle sports, Coast Guard/USCG Academy were exhausted by visitors. Also, popular were the children's coloring books, tips for anglers/hunters/campers and "You Are in Command." It is estimated that over 11,000 items were handed out to the public. Table 2 provides a sampling of the 5 most popular handouts and estimated quantities.

Event Mission Report/Inquiry Data

Auxiliary staffers were asked to complete a 7030 Mission Report for each shift worked. These forms were picked up daily and arrangements made for entry into AUXDATA. It is believed this process captured over 95% of the actual 10J (PA - COMREL) mission hours expended.

Visitor Inquiry Sheets were available where visitors could provide contact information and ask about Boating Classes, VSCs and the Auxiliary. These sheets were entered on to a spreadsheet and issued to Flotillas for follow up.

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Event Assessments

Several staffers mentioned visitors asking "basic" questions regarding the Auxiliary, its makeup and purpose; a subject they do not normally encounter in their home areas. It was felt that the show locale was an "inland " area, where there may be minimal interaction with or knowledge of the Auxiliary; and offers a new untapped opportunity.

In general; staffers, peripheral supporters and aides agree the event was a success. No one relayed any negative reports; from either visitors or members. There was some concern regarding the excessive heat, but no report of difficulties. Approximately 25% of the Auxiliary staff were asked to provide additional input as to their thoughts, concerns or suggestions on the event. Table 3 provides an overview of Concerns and Solutions.

All respondents agree that an event of this magnitude could not be conducted successfully at the Flotilla level, extremely difficult at Division level and requires complete cooperation, coordination and communication between units/levels. The success of this particular event is a direct result of all these conditions being achieved.

Visitor Inquiry Summary

Visitor Inquiry forms available during the event. All entries were condensed to a spreadsheet document and copies issued to District DSO Officers for HR, PE and VE. Over 40 visitors made requests. Some requests were lacked complete contact information and the inquiry form is being reviewed to reduce or eliminate this possibility in the future.

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Table 1: Staffing & Hours by Division

Division	# Members	Hours
3	2	12
4	1	6
6	4	31
7	5	26
8	3	29
13	12	76
16	8	63
Totals	35	243

Table 2: Popular Material & Qty. Handed Out

Item/Subject	Est. Quantity
Various Coloring Books	5000+
You Are in Command pamphlet	1000+
Var. pamphlets on Selection & Use of PFDs	3000+
Boating Safety Tips:	1000+
Anglers/Hunters/Campers	
Recruiting CD (USCG & USCGA)	200+

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Table 3: Concerns/Suggestions

Concerns/Comments	Suggestions/Resolution
Health of staffers, high heat experienced at event. Staff area was welcomed.	Insure adequate supply of water & liquids. Provision needed to offset these unexpected costs. Staff tent proved useful.
Longer planning phase, shorter staff shifts (4 hr. max.), add set-up & takedown to schedule.	Longer planning phase will offset most of these concerns. 2014 show schedule is known & planning phase to be implemented a min. of 3 mos. prior to event.
Shortage of some handouts, over supply of others.	Longer plan phase should help with selection & ordering. Host unit may try to provide temporary storage site (better inventory control)
Review control of completed forms (7030, Visitor Inquiry)	Longer plan phase will aid. Visitor Inquiry form being reviewed.
Recognition of staff, unit & individual efforts.	Process is available for recognition of individual efforts, and has been used. Unit recognition programs need to be identified and employed when possible.
Need attention-grabbing banners, displays, promotional material, etc. Substitute for defunct 5NR Fulfillment Ctr. items.	Review possible grant(s), alternate sources. Create resource directory.