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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

IBEX ANNOUNCES JUDGING PANEL FOR 2018 INNOVATION AWARDS

Awards Presented at Industry Breakfast with Special Guest Rich Karlgaard of Forbes

TAMPA, FL, August 28, 2018 – The 2018 Innovation Awards, managed by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) and judged by Boating Writers International (BWI), will be presented at the International BoatBuilders' Exhibition and Conference (IBEX) during the annual Industry Breakfast. The breakfast is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, October 2, 7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Tampa Waterside Marriott Hotel. Each of the eight BWI judges comes to IBEX with demonstrated backgrounds in technical boating products. New Products submitted to the IBEX Innovation Awards will be displayed along Innovation Way, aisle 2200, inside the exhibit hall at the Tampa Convention Center throughout the Show.

Honoring achievement in product development in 16 areas of the marine industry, Innovation Awards categories include: Boat Care and Maintenance; Boatbuilding Methods & Materials; Boatyard and Marina Hardware and Software; Covering; Deck Equipment and Hardware; Electrical Systems; Entertainment; Furnishings and Interior Parts; Inboard Engines; Lighting; Mechanical Systems; OEM Electronics; Outboard Engines; Propulsion Parts, Propellers; Safety Equipment; Trailers, Parts and Trailer Accessories. Innovation awardees are considered for a special 'Pitch the Press' session where new products and services noted by judges on the show floor are spotlighted to media and buyers.

"The Innovation Awards are a really exciting opportunity for tradespeople to view the cutting-edge technology, services, and products that are continually being offered to the marine industry," said Anne Dunbar, IBEX Show Director. "Taking a close look at these products and honoring their commitment to innovation at the Industry Breakfast is a highlight of the Show."

The panel of judges for the 2018 IBEX Innovation Awards are:

- **Alan Wendt (Chair):** Past President of Boating Writers International, Alan does new product testing for *Lakeland Boating*. A journalist in print, radio, TV and online for more than 40 years, he has served as a judge for NMMA's Innovation Awards since 2001.
- **Zuzana Prochazka (Co-Chair):** Past President of Boating Writers International, Writer and photographer who freelances for over two dozen boating and travel magazines. A USCG 100 Ton Master, Prochazka is the founder of Zescapes.com, a charter and flotilla organizer. She has

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served on the board of *Boating Writers International* for the past 12 years and heads up judging panels evaluating new boats and gear in the U.S. and abroad.

- **Capt. Sergio Atanes:** Capt. Sergio Atanes holds a 100 Ton USCG Master Captain's license and has over 45 years of experience fishing. He is the radio and TV show host of the #1 rated national Hispanic radio and fishing show and contributes monthly fishing articles for *Marine Times Magazine*, *Florida Mariner*, *Coastal Angler*, and *Woods 'N Water*.
- **Phil Gutowski:** A marine journalist, onboard systems professional, and cruising sailor. His business, BoatRx, provides hands-on electrical and mechanical services for customers in Boston, Massachusetts.
- **Glenn Hayes:** A second generation journalist specializing in editorial content for marine, water sports, outdoor, RV and travel publications both in print and online. He contributes a monthly electronics column for *Lakeland Boating*.
- **Heather Maxwell:** She grew up in the sportfishing industry—her first job was on the fuel docks in Rudee Inlet, Virginia. Since then Maxwell has worked as a diesel service writer, boat builders purchasing agent and tournament director. Today, she manages the Pirate's Cove Billfish Tournaments and the International Masters Angling Tournament, writes freelance for several magazines and stays busy marketing boat builders and charter fishing on the Outer Banks of North Carolina.
- **Craig Ritchie:** Full-time journalist with more than 30 years of experience in magazines, books, television, radio and digital media. Canadian correspondent for *International Boat Industry* magazine and plus.ibinews.com since 2013, his byline has appeared in dozens of publications and websites serving the recreational boating market worldwide.
- **Ben Stein:** Contributing editor for Panbo.com and an avid cruiser. He, his wife and two daughters completed the great loop in 2017 having covered about 7,500 miles over 14 months. Ben continues to cruise the waters of the United States.

"With the many mergers and acquisitions in the marine industry this year, anticipation is high for never before seen products," said Alan Wendt, chair of judging panel and past president of Boating Writers International. "We get to see the future in new marine technologies and an enthusiasm for evolving products."

Attendees of the IBEX Show can join hundreds of marine industry colleagues at the popular IBEX Industry Breakfast held on October 2nd. The program includes the State of the Industry address, delivered by NMMA President Thom Dammrich, followed by several short presentations of important industry awards including the IBEX Innovation Awards. Keynote speaker Rich Karlgaard, *Forbes* publisher and Global Futurist, Economic Leader, Entrepreneur and Author will talk about the events changing the world and how they're impacting the marine industry. Tickets are \$40 per person. To register for IBEX and the Industry Breakfast, [click here](#).

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About the International BoatBuilders' Exhibition & Conference (IBEX):

IBEX, Where Better Boats Begin (www.ibexshow.com), is the marine industry's largest technical trade event in North America and is powered globally by METSTRADÉ, the world's leading platform and community for professionals in the leisure marine equipment industry. IBEX is owned and produced by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (www.nmma.org) and RAI Amsterdam (www.rai.nl). The 2018 IBEX is scheduled to take place at the Tampa Convention Center, October 2 – 4, in Tampa, FL USA. For more information, please visit www.ibexshow.com.

About Boating Writers International (BWI):

BWI is a professional organization consisting of writers, editors, publishers, photographers, broadcasters, public relations specialists and others in the communications profession associated with the boating industry. Members are active marine journalists across the United States, Canada, Europe and beyond. Visit www.bwi.org for details.

IBEX 2018 Dates and Times:

Tuesday and Wednesday, October 2nd and 3rd – 1st and 2nd Floor: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., 3rd Floor 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Thursday, October 4th – 1st and 2nd Floor: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 3rd Floor 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



For hi-res images, as well as additional editorial requests, please contact:

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