



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AUXILIARY DISTRICT ELEVEN SOUTHERN



Michael D. Bozarth
District Commodore

20 AUGUST 2024

Dear Shipmates,

Having just returned from NACON and about to attend the D11 Senior Leader Conference in Monterey, it has provided me the opportunity to reflect and report in on what we all have accomplished together. It is an honor to represent you by reporting up to the Auxiliary senior leadership and the Active Duty D11 Command. Today, I wanted to take a moment to report up to you, the Members who make all this happen, on the progress we are making internally, the impact we are having on the public, and our contribution as a critical component of Team Coast Guard.

The remainder of this letter summarizes some highlights of what the District has achieved over the past 20 months. I believe it demonstrates what is possible when, in the face of significant challenge, what a well-articulated change program can accomplish when implemented with intensity, creativity, compassion, and professionalism.

Going into 2023, Eleven Southern's most formidable challenge was membership morale resulting in a double-digit attrition rate. As a result, our entire District Operational Plan was targeted at resolving this issue and centered around three priorities:

1. The Engagement priority and its deliverables motivated our Members by offering opportunities to work alongside active duty, take on tasks that are clearly aligned with our Sector's priorities, and create a sense of worth by articulating the value in everything we do across our augmentation and RBS mission sets.
2. The Leadership Priority directed the adoption of a Servant Leadership Style by putting the Member first. It insists on a "hi-touch" approach with our Members to demonstrate our sincerity in embracing this new leadership style, offers meaningful opportunities to assist in the success of our individual Members, and dramatically improves our communications. By adopting a servant leadership style, we committed to putting the Member at the center of everything we do.
3. The Forces Priority took on our retention and recruiting challenge. While success in our Engagement and Leadership priorities has gone a long way to improve our retention, mentorship and meaningful recognition have also made a tangible impact. Likewise a more streamlined recruiting process, improvements in our onboarding process, and a targeted recruiting strategy are all making a difference in our numbers. We are now running a net positive growth for the second time in two decades.

As a result of our efforts and the implementation of a number of ‘firsts,’ Eleven Southern is experienced a significant rebound in 2023 and continues to see further increase in momentum in 2024. This includes but is not limited to the following:

ENGAGEMENT

- ◆ Member Activity - With an emphasis on a new leadership style and providing meaningful engagement opportunities, the Members of D11S contributed 180,000 hours in 2023. This represents a 35% increase over 2022.
- ◆ Request For Forces (RFF) - We implemented our first formal “RFF Program” that engages with our Sectors and Stations to fulfill our augmentation mission. This began with the establishment of an “RFF Front Line” by dedicating 30 of our Members to our ASC/AUC cadre. As a result of working directly with the Active Duty CO's, we accumulated 17,500 augmentation related hours in 2023. This figure represents a 60% increase over 2022, making D11S (the 7th largest District) #3 in the country for augmentation mission hours. Our run rate in the first six months of 2024 is ahead of 2023 by an additional 10%.
- ◆ Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) - While a strong emphasis was placed, for the first time, on Active Duty Augmentation, we placed an equal sense of urgency and importance on reengaging

RBS Snapshot

Program	2023:2024 YTD Performance			2022:2023 Annual Performance		
	2023 JUL	2024 JUL	VAR	2022	2023	VAR
Program Visits	1379	1787	30%	2,275	2,835	25%
Vessel Exams	1598	1883	18%	1,811	2,621	45%
PE Graduates	552	615	11%	770	815	6%
Surf/Ops Hours	712	802	13%	1,366	1,388	2%
Mbr Training Hours	753	814	8%	1092	1460	34%
New Members	60	65	8%	89	106	19%

with our RBS mission set. We clearly articulated to our Members the value we provide to the public and encouraged our Members to reengage. All of our RBS Programs were in significant ‘rebound’ in 2023. Even after a very strong year, the momentum continues with *double digit increases across all our Programs in 2024*:

LEADERSHIP

- ◆ Servant Leadership Workshops - To help our Members transition to a new leadership style, and recognizing that leadership can come from anyone in any role, we now conduct a two hour *Servant Leadership Workshop at DTRAIN that all Members can attend*.

- ◆ Unit Commander Round Tables - FC Round Table and DCDR Round Tables are now a regular part of our DTRAIN. Both round table discussions are 2 hours long and facilitated by the DCO. The first hour is dedicated to a discussion around the state of the district. The second hour is a chance for the Unit Commanders to share their challenges and successes with one another. This forum allows for *real-time problem solving, a chance to develop personal leadership relationships, and promote collaboration among Units.*
- ◆ Future Leaders Academy (FLA) - Funded by the District and taught by experienced Leadership Development Center instructors, this 3-day course is our investment in our leadership pipeline. Two newer Members are nominated from each Division to attend during DTRAIN. Our first graduating class of 2023 resulted in *100% of the students going onto serve in leadership positions.* Based on the interest the academy has generated in our new Members, we taught FLA again in 2024 to a full roster and expect similar results in 2024 and beyond.
- ◆ District Operations Committee - Made up of the District EXCOM, DDCs, and ASCs, this working committee meets monthly to maintain a pulse on the District, advise on course corrections, and Member messaging. Including the DDCs and ASCs provides RFF & RBS Programs the visibility they deserve and promotes collaboration among Units and Programs. Equally important, the OPCOM provides the opportunity to establish a *unified District leadership team (i.e. common language, common messaging, stronger personal relationships).*
- ◆ Succession Planning - A formal Succession Planning process is underway and a *three-deep pipeline and plan* will be completed by end of year for Unit Leaders (DCO, DCAPTs, DCDRs & FCs). This will be done as part of the management and tracking process for all the upcoming District, Division, and Flotilla Election process. Once in place, this same program will be implemented for Program Leaders (DDCs, DSOs, SOs & FSOs) as part of the 2025 appointment process.
- ◆ State of the District - Another first for D11S, we developed a comprehensive document that provides our Members an insider view of what our District looks like, highlights of our past performance, sets priorities for the next year, and offers a deeper dive on the performance of a select number of RBS Programs. It is my intent to establish an annual “State of the District” Report to the Members that can be released at future DTRAINS, so that it can then be discussed openly among the Members at their next Unit Meetings. It is my hope that providing our Members an opportunity to understand and identify with their District’s capabilities, priorities, and accomplishments *will create a stronger sense of Esprit de Corps.*

FORCES (Recruiting, Retention)

- ◆ Recruiting Intake - We dedicated a single resource and developed a more disciplined process that leverages the Automated Applications Management System (AAMS). These actions helped facilitate a *45% increase in new Members.*
- ◆ “Sinbad” - To better recognize the hard work of our Members, we developed an Artificial Intelligence Chatbot to assist Members with completing nominations for Coast Guard Auxiliary Awards. The awareness created by an AI ChatBot that helps facilitate this process resulted in a *300% increase in nominations* over 2022.

- ◆ New Member Academy (NMA) taught virtually every quarter. The goal is to improve onboarding of our new Members and to assist Members (new and old) to quickly move from AP to BQ status. The class assists new Members with basic knowledge on Coast Guard Customs and Courtesies, Uniforms, and Core Training. 25 new Members signed up for the first NMA taught June, 2024. *This first class alone addressed 25% of our AP backlog.* The second NMA is scheduled for September.
- ◆ Exit Interview & Reporting - We designed and implemented a formal Exit Interview process. This program is now a *requirement in D11S* and will be managed by our DSO-HR in cooperation with Flotilla Commanders.
- ◆ Targeted Recruiting Strategy - Development is currently underway to establish a recruiting program that the Divisions and Flotillas can leverage. This will provide for a consistent look and approach to our brand and marketing messages. The units can then take what has been developed and augment local messaging that caters to the needs of the individual Unit. The Program design principles include *target demographics, markets, and channels that are driven by RFF & RBS skills based needs.*

I could not be prouder of what the D11S Members have accomplished in the past 20 months. The privilege to serve as your District Commodore has been rewarding, educational, and humbling. The amount of hard work and support I witnessed has made an impact on me that I never expected. Frankly, irrespective of whatever measured success previously achieved in my former professional career pales in comparison to the honor bestowed on me in being given the opportunity to lead the outstanding women and men of District Eleven Southern.

Bravo Zulu to you for having the courage to change, devoting your valuable time, and your dedication to the most noble cause - saving lives.

Very Respectfully,

Michael D. Bozarth
District Commodore