

RESEARCH VESSEL OPERATORS' COMMITTEE ANNUAL UPDATE:

By: Tim Askew, RVOC Chair

The RVOC would normally be holding the Annual Meeting the month of October; however, at the 2004 Annual Meeting it was decided to change the date to April, 2006. This one time delay will ultimately allow the membership to attend meetings during a less demanding time of the operating year, leaving the September through November window open for maintenance/overhaul planning, and proposal writing.

The 2005 year has been busy on several fronts. Group purchases of radars were handled by Oregon State University (OSU). This purchase provided Furuno radars to seven vessels. Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) has ordered Furuno Doppler Speed logs for eight vessels and due to the long lead time the Speed logs have not yet been received. WHOI also did a group purchase for life rafts. Stability reviews for all UNOLS vessel's that don't have a recent review in place is in the works by Scripps Institution of Oceanography. The plan will be to include eight vessels in 2005 and ten vessels in 2006.

The science van construction is progressing nicely with the East Coast pooled aluminum isotope van being completed along with the aluminum isotope van for a University of Rhode Island scientist, and the steel general purpose van for a University of Delaware Scientist. Construction is in progress on the WHOI aluminum hydro van and scheduled to begin on a 10 foot isotope van for University of Minnesota / Blue Heron.

Regulatory issues still remain high on the RVOC list even though the deadlines are long past and all the effected vessels over 500 GRT now have Vessel Security Plans (VSP), port facilities have Facility Security Plans (FSP) where required, and Non-Tank Vessel Response Plan (NTVRP) for vessels over 400 GRT. The NTVRP in some cases is still being reviewed by the U.S. Coast Guard but the vessels have a provisional letter in the interim.

The Spring RVOC Meeting Agenda is currently under development with crew retention and soaring fuel costs being hot topics. The meeting will be hosted by the University of Washington in Seattle. The meeting dates are April 25 through 27, 2006.