

# **UNOLS Committee Reports**

**October 2007**

**Arctic Icebreaker Coordinating Committee  
Research Vessel Operators' Committee  
Research Vessel Technical Enhancement Committee**

## **Arctic Icebreaker Coordinating Committee Report October 2007**

USCGC HEALY completed three cruises during the 2007 season: the BEST project from April 10-May 12 (Ray Sambrotto, Chief Scientist), the northern Bering Sea cruise from May 16 – June 18 led by Jackie Grebmeier and Jim Lovvorn, and the a Law of the Sea seafloor mapping cruise on the Chukchi Cap/Arctic Ocean from August 17 – September 15 led by Larry Mayer. All three cruises were very successful, with all chief scientists offering high praise to the ship, the Captain, and the crew. The Mayer cruise benefited greatly from the record low ice cover of 2007. USCGC POLAR SEA supported the ODEN during last year's Deep-Freeze cruise. USCGC POLAR STAR remains in caretaker status at the USCG Base in Seattle.

Scheduling of the icebreakers for 2008 will occur later this month. At present, it is expected that HEALY will support spring and summer BEST cruises in the Bering Sea. She also has been requested for Law of the Sea mapping in the Chukchi/Beaufort Seas and some short mooring deployment cruises.

AICC considered the upgrades to HEALY's science instrumentation and working spaces proposed by Dale Chayes at the January 2007 meeting and provided summary rankings of priorities.

Efforts to foster communication between the icebreaker science community and the local Alaskan communities adjacent to the science study areas continue. The 2007 Healy Chief Scientists, Dave Forcucci (USCG representative), and Carin Ashjian (AICC Chair) attended the 2007 Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission Mini-Convention in February 2007 to discuss the Healy cruise plans for 2007. Discussions with Harry Brower, AEWK Chair, have been initiated for a similar exchange prior to the 2008 cruises. In addition, discussion continues with the Department of State regarding how to improve notification to local communities of approvals for foreign vessels to operate in US Arctic regions.

AICC will meet in Seattle in November 27 & 28, 2007. Until then, the Committee is working on our action items from the January meeting and the debriefs from the 2007 cruises.

*The AICC can be reached by writing to the Chair (carin@whoi.edu) or to the UNOLS Office (office@unols.org).*

Report submitted by C. Ashjian.

**RVOC Report to the UNOLS Council**  
**October 11, 2007**

**Matthew Hawkins, RVOC Chair**

The next RVOC meeting has been set for April 22-24, 2008 at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. Between now and then, the RVOC has a number of items that are in progress:

1. **Transportation Workers Identification Credentials (TWIC) Exemption:**  
RVOC has begun the process of seeking fleet-wide exemption from the TWIC program as “government-owned/non-commercial” vessels. Pursuit of this exemption has been led by members from the University of Rhode Island and the University of Washington. Discussions with the US Coast Guard Sector Southeastern New England appear to be supportive and they have agreed to discuss the issue with Headquarters in Washington. The primary advantage of this exemption will be regarding the science party since the requirements of this program would be prohibitive to routine operations when in port. All documented mariners will still have to comply, and it may be advantageous for marine technicians to comply as well.
  
2. **Final review of the RVSS by the Safety Committee and the UNOLS Office.**  
This revision of the *Research Vessel Safety Standards* (RVSS) has been a major effort and has taken significantly longer than anticipated. The overall format has been radically changed to reduce ambiguity, fill apparent gaps in the regulations, and to make some requirements more binding. Among other changes, “Required Under RVSS” and “Recommended Best Practices” sub-sections have been added in each chapter to denote these different levels of compliance. In addition, two new chapters have been added; “Personal Safety” and “HOV Submersible Safety”.

The current plan is to include the newly developed UNOLS Wire Safe Working Load Standards, and the UNOLS Load Handling System Design Standards as appendices to the RVSS. The wire safe working load standards have just completed final community review with both RVTEC and RVOC. Results will be presented at the RVTEC meeting in November. Over the next several months, a detailed comparison of 46 CFR “Sub-chapter U”, American Bureau of Shipping (ABS), and other design standards (ISO, DNV, etc.), will be conducted by Glosten Associates as part of development of the load handling system design standards appendix.

Target date for completion and adoption is now early 2008. Special recognition and thanks go to both the UNOLS Office and Jon Alberts for the time and effort spent on this revision and the required regulatory review.

3. **Personnel Recruitment and Retention:** In July of this year, the Chairs and Chair-elects of RVOC and RVTEC presented the UNOLS Council with a report outlining the current crisis in personnel throughout the marine industry. In the case of the UNOLS fleet, this includes both crew and technicians. Since then, more information has been gathered and possible solutions particular to the UNOLS fleet are now being formulated. This is a highly complex issue and a single, simple “fix” is not possible. Creative solutions within current budgetary constraints must be developed. A more detailed presentation will be given during the October Council meeting.
  
4. **Group Purchases:** RVOC members continue to undertake group-purchases through their Shipboard Scientific Support Equipment (SSSE) grants in an effort to save resources, raise standards, and promote commonality of equipment. This year’s group purchases include a long list of personal safety equipment (led by HBOI), large diameter hanging blocks (led by UD), and man overboard recovery systems (led by OSU).

**RVTEC Report to UNOLS**  
**Submitted by Bill Martin, RVTEC Chair**

The annual RVTEC meeting for 2007 was held shortly after the UNOLS Annual meeting. The meeting was condensed to a one-day agenda from the normal three-day because the meeting was held in conjunction with INMARTECH2006. INMARTECH2006 had over 120 participants from 14 countries. The meetings were informative and received complimentary feedback.

The 2007 RVTEC meeting will be held Nov 6-8 this year at Moss Landing Marine Laboratories. The agenda has been posted on the UNOLS website and we anticipate an informative and active meeting.

The RF Frequency Subcommittee sent their report to Dr. Peter Wiebe this past summer. Dr. Wiebe forwarded the report to Dr. Otis Brown but Dr. Brown is no longer the contact to receive this information. Dr. Brown forwarded the report to the new officers but I have not received any information about the new contact nor how we should proceed. The subcommittee is addressing one issue, gathering information from the scientific community. However, this discussion continues and a solution has not been suggested.