

WATERFRONT NEWS

South Florida's Nautical Newspaper since 1984

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The times they are a-changin'...

Next month we become Waterfront Times.

New name, new design... same quality.

Boat sales tax bill expected to give state a boost

BY BETH FEINSTEIN-BARTL
Waterfront News Writer

A bill with the potential to create more jobs in the marine industry and drive boat sales revenue into the state is awaiting Florida Gov. Charlie Crist's signature.

Marine industry executives and organizations are optimistic about it becoming law. Crist, who's voiced past support, has until June 1 to approve the bill. If so, it then becomes effective on July 1.

The boating provision is one of 34 measures in the Jobs for Florida Bill (CS/SB-1752). The marine portion keeps the sales and use tax at 6 percent but places a first-ever cap of \$18,000 on boat buys — regardless of size and price tag.

The Florida Yacht Brokers Association and the Marine Industries Association of South Florida label the legislation as "landmark."

"It's a win-win-win," said Jeff Erdmann, legislative committee chair for the Florida Yacht Brokers Association. "It will boost revenue for the state, boost sales and boost jobs and services for people who work on boats."

Currently, an FYBA study shows 63.4 percent of the boats sold by Florida brokers and dealers did not pay any sales tax, meaning the vessels were sold outside Florida in states and countries with more competitive tax poli-

SEE BOAT TAX P. 7



Photo Courtesy/OFFSHORE EVENTS

Open ocean racing

The Third Annual Sunny Isles Beach Offshore Powerboat Challenge: This year's event weekend takes place June 10-13 off Sunny Isles Beach. Events include the Bimini Ocean Challenge, and the Legends of Racing Reunion & Night of Mayhem, which is open to the public. Race sponsors Offshore Events are trying to raise funds to restore the Miami Marine Stadium. For more information call 305-332-5900 or visit www.offshoreevents.net.

New America's Cup boat: fast, cost conscious, unique

BY BERNIE WILSON
AP Sports Writer

SAN DIEGO (AP) — One, two or three hulls? More than 60 feet long, or right around 90?

In the most significant step toward creating a new class of boat for the 34th America's Cup, some of the world's leading yacht designers and engineers discussed three different options: multihulls of approximately 66 and 82 feet, and a monohull class of up to approximately 89 feet.

The group met in Valencia, Spain, where American syndicate BMW Oracle Racing routed Alinghi of Switzerland in two races in February in a showdown between two of the biggest, most powerful sailboats ever built.

It's unlikely the America's Cup will ever see the likes of those 90-foot giants again, especially winner USA, a trimaran that was powered by a radical 223-foot wing sail. USA, owned by software tycoon Larry Ellison of Oracle Corp., humbled Alinghi 5, a sleek and equally immense catamaran owned by Swiss biotech tycoon Ernesto Bertarelli. The boats pushed the limits of design, performance and, of course, cost.

That showdown was spawned by a bitter court fight between Ellison and Bertarelli, two of the world's richest men. Because the match defaulted to the stipulations of the 19th century Deed of Gift, their design teams faced only a handful of limitations for building their space age-looking boats.

For the 34th America's Cup, BMW Oracle Racing and

other interested parties are preaching harmony while at the same time looking for a fast, high-performance boat that will play well on TV and not require a staggering bankroll.

"The teams want a new boat. The fans deserve one too," BMW Oracle Racing CEO and four-time America's Cup winner Russell Coutts said in a statement. "It will not be a 'defender's boat.' It will be the product of genuine discussion and dialogue."

Regardless of the design, America's Cup insiders are looking for speed. Whether the final choice is a single-hulled boat or a multihull — most likely a catamaran — it is expected to be faster than the 90-foot monohulls that sailed in the 2007 America's Cup, the most recent traditional, multi-challenger regatta.

"The America's Cup is the pinnacle of our sport, so the boats should be physically demanding to race well and produce fast, competitive racing to engage new fans," said BMW Oracle Racing design coordinator Ian Burns, who chaired the Valencia meeting.

The new concepts were conceived by Bruce Nelson and Morrelli & Melvin, both Southern California-based designers of previous America's Cup-winning yachts. Besides their expertise, Nelson and Morrelli & Melvin were chosen because they are not aligned with either BMW Oracle Racing or the Challenger of Record, Club Nautico di Roma, and its racing team, Mascalzone Latino.

Besides being fast and dynamic, the requirements for

all three concepts are that they be distinctive to the America's Cup, versatile enough to sail in any venue in winds from 5 to 35 knots; requiring a high degree of athleticism to sail, able to be transported to a regular series of regattas around the world and be built with advanced, efficient and cost-effective technologies.

The specific class will be chosen by the end of September. The venue for the 34th America's Cup, which likely will be held in 2013 or 2014, is expected to be announced by the end of the year.

San Francisco — home to Golden Gate Yacht Club, which backs BMW Oracle Racing — is considered the leading contender to host the America's Cup, although preliminary regattas could be held in various ports around the world. Other ports, including San Diego, are ready to step in if San Francisco can't host the America's Cup match.

Coutts said a versatile boat is needed to minimize disruptions due to weather conditions.

"Delays and postponements kill interest," Coutts said. "America's Cup boats shouldn't be the last to start racing and the first to quit while other classes are still racing. They also need to be designed from the outset to unleash the full potential of television."

The World Sailing Teams Association has been asked to help write the rules for the new class. Nonaligned experts will be used to ensure fairness to all teams, which will have the chance to review the new class rule before it is finalized.