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Friday, January 20, 2006

Welcome to the Coast Guard Innovation Database

In his inaugural speech the Commandant said that he wanted to develop a "Culture of Innovation" in the Coast Guard. The **Commandant's Innovation Council** (CIC) was tasked with spearheading this initiative. The Area Commanders have also taken this to heart and re-invigorated their own Innovation Councils. Working together, the CIC, **Pacific Area Innovation Council** (PAIC) and the **Atlantic Area Innovation Council** (AAIC) developed this database to further the development of an innovative Coast Guard culture.

This database will be the central repository for innovative solutions and methods submitted by all Coast Guard members. It was created to assist innovators with the exploration, development, and submission of innovative solutions that improve the way the Coast Guard does business. It will also be used to track the review and possible implementation of these ideas. It is intended to create a collaborative environment Coast Guard-wide where we all can contribute and learn from each other and bring solutions to the field more quickly. Anyone may submit an idea directly. The idea is to set no limits. We want you to submit:

- Process improvements
- Best practices
- New ways of using old equipment
- Application of new technology
- Any other innovative idea

Your idea does not have to be Information Technology based. For example, the mechanical chain stopper used on all Coast Guard buoy tenders was developed by Coast Guardsman Niels Thompsen, the namesake for the annual Innovation Awards. The mechanical chain stopper standardized buoy deck operation, saved countless work hours in working aids and significantly improved the safety of operations on the buoy deck.

In addition, ideas with limited application are also welcome. There have been many instances when small incremental changes produced more savings than large grandiose restructuring. Also, today's impractical idea could be tomorrow's next big thing. Don't worry if an idea seems impractical to implement – we still want to hear it.

We want to get people thinking and sharing ideas. The process established here could also save valuable time. For example, we often waste time "re-inventing the wheel" simply because we do not know that someone has already developed an easier more efficient way of doing something. In the future we hope that this database will be the first stop by people looking for a better way of doing something.

On the right, you can see that we have provided some canned views to review the submissions. Once you select one of these view you will be able to sort on numerous fields by simply clicking on the column heading. You can also see more information about a specific submission by clicking on the Title. To submit an idea just click here: **Submit Innovation**. You be linked to a description of the submission and review process and which contains links to the **submission form**. You then simply fill out the submission form and the process is started.

We have tried to make this process as simple as possible by minimizing levels of review and making it easier for submitters to track the process from beginning to end. Where possible everything will be done online using web forms and email.

We now invite you to take a look at the many ideas already submitted and enter one of your own. Working together we can improve the way we do business and truly develop an Innovative Coast Guard Culture.

For questions, comments or suggestions please E-mail **Captain David Ely**

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