



**International Association
of Marine Investigators**
Committed to Training Investigators Worldwide

www.iamimarine.org
a 501(c)(3) nonprofit

2012 Investigator of the Year

This year winning investigation began with a routine traffic stop of a car that was towing a personal watercraft a PWC on a trailer. The officer who made the stop noticed that the PWC was missing a HIN. He soon found the confidential HIN and discovered that the PWC had been reported stolen.

For the next few weeks and months, the officer would work with fellow Investigators of the year to uncover a huge theft ring that had been stealing PWC's and other watercraft and moving them to a "chop shop" in Texas where they were given new HIN's and forged titles. After being cleaned up, the various boats were shipped to Arizona, a non-title state, given a new Arizona title, and then shipped back to Texas where they were sold to unsuspected clients. No one can be sure how many stolen boats were fenced using this technique, but this year's Investigators of the year recovered almost a dozen that were in various stages of being altered and re-titled. The Investigators also received a computer, which in addition to information on stolen boats, had child pornography as well as instructions on how to make methamphetamines. This theft ring was being run by some bad guys.

What did it take to break up the theft ring? First it took tenacity. The investigation led to a storage facility, then to a remote Texas ranch, and finally to another state. Each stop meant more stolen boats were recovered and more evidence was unmasked. Breaking up the theft ring also took training "IAMI Training". Where else do you learn how to recognize cooperation with insurance companies and law enforcement agencies was the exception. As IAMI's founder Dave McGillis, said, "What was the point of filing a report if it was only going to be shoved in a drawer and forgotten".

The exception is not the rule. IAMI Training Conferences, like the one that was just held in San Diego, have helped to put a face on the Voice at the other end of the telephone. A phone call is now far more likely to get results, positive results, like it did with this investigation. Congratulations to this year's winners for your outstanding investigation.