

ANNOUNCER: You've tuned into another edition of The Break Room. A weekly conversation about how the City of St Augustine works from those who do the work every day. Hosted by the City of St Augustine's Communications Director Melissa Wissel. The Break Room offers a closer look at the different city departments and provides updates on current and upcoming projects and events. And now your host Melissa Wissel. MELISSA: Welcome to The Break Room. Thanks for tuning in. I'm Melissa Wissel, Communications Director for the City of St Augustine. Summer is underway and in St Augustine that means getting out on the water. Some folks head to the beach others head out on their boats. And while it's mostly fun in the sun there are some important things to remember to play it safe when you get behind the wheel of a boat or even if you're just getting on board. This week, I've invited St Augustine Police Department's Marine Operations Officer Pat Harvey to join me this week. It is his first appearance here in studio. Pat, welcome to The Break Room. PAT: Thank you, Melissa. Nice to see you. MELISSA: It's great to have you. First time, like I said, for you to be on air with us. But there's a lot going on on the water. Lots of boats, lots of new boaters. We got a lot to talk about. Let's start about the first real basics really the stuff that most folks should know about living in Florida, but we do also have a lot of new residents who may not be familiar with how hot things can get. Let's start with heat, heat exhaustion. PAT: Well as you know living here, the heat is a big problem for us. When you go out on the water, the breeze is a little cooler, you don't feel the heat as much as you normally would. You jump in and out of the water, the salt water which also takes liquids from your body. People get themselves in trouble very quickly. It can take about 30 minutes without hydration for you to get where you may have to be transported to the hospital for heat exhaustion. MELISSA: Wow, 30 minutes. MELISSA: Yes ma'am. MELISSA: So, we want to keep lots of hydrating liquids, water, gatorade. PAT: Anything with electrolytes. Water is the best, of course. But gatorades and things like that. MELISSA: So, we've got the dehydration. Also sunburn. I mean again, people who have been here, we get that first one or two weeks out in the sun, we get that initial burn, and we all think we're invincible for the rest of the summer. We don't need sunscreen, not the case. PAT: Not the case. That's even faster with the sun being where it is now, 10 to 15 minutes you'll start to burn. Like I said, those of us who live here, we know that. Those are visiting, our first timers, they've got to be very careful with the sun, keep anything with 30 plus spf on, because it can happen in 10 minutes. MELISSA: And you're out on the water every day, where those few things we were just talking about, I guess I would refer to as sort of the human factors, things that we can really individually control. But you're out on the water and seeing all the boaters, seeing all of that activity. We don't even know necessarily who's on the water in terms of boat owners, boat renters, do they know what they're doing, do they not know what they're doing. What what can you share with us, just some of what you see on the water that we all should be aware of? PAT: The rules of the road are the same basically on the water as they are on land. But there are so many inexperienced boaters. They either have just purchased them or are renting them. That we have to be very careful with what everyone else is doing even more than we're used to on the road. Because boats are very difficult to control they work totally different than a vehicle does. And if you're not familiar with that it can be very challenging. So you as a boater have to make sure you're watching diligently everyone else that is around you even more than you normally would. MELISSA: What are you seeing out there? You've been on the water how long now? PAT: I've been in this position since December. MELISSA: Okay, so we've, we had an officer that was out as well. Lots of other responsibilities. The position that you're in now has changed and evolved that you really have an entirely different role than your predecessor. And what is it, what is your responsibility being out on the water? So people know what to expect when they see you out there. PAT: My responsibility is the safety of all the boating public. So we do enforce the laws and the

rules out there. But our biggest thing is education, to make sure that everyone is doing what they're supposed to and they're enjoying their day on the water. That's what it's meant for. That's why people have boats and jet skis. But I'm on the water every day, a certain schedule throughout the week and holidays and whatnot. But we do patrol, we patrol the waterways. And we're out visually there so that people understand we're there, so enforcing those rules. But more of an education piece to make sure everybody understands what's right. MELISSA: And if I'm a boater, experienced journey. Do I have to have a license? PAT: Yes, in the State of Florida, they have a boater safety card. Everyone who was born after July 1st, I'm sorry, January 1st 1988, has to be in possession of one of these at all times while on the water. And that is something that we can check for if we stop you. And that's what we will ask you for. You can get one, everyone can get one, you go to FloridaBoatingCourse.com or through the fwc website. That'll also there'll be dropdowns for that as well. You can do it online and they'll send you the card in the mail. MELISSA: Okay. What do you, what do you see? I mean, are you, this is a funny question, do you, let's put it in terms of policing. If I'm speeding down the highway, I might get caught because you might be sitting behind a bridge, you know, stanchion and I don't see you and you come in behind me. What are you looking for, or are you necessarily looking? You're just out watching what people are doing? What gets your attention. PAT: A lot of what gets our attention is is people that are being reckless, which is easy to spot on the water. Melissa, I know you're a boater, so you've seen that, as well. The reckless stand out very quickly, people turning sharply, doing things that that cause attention to be given to them. A lot of it is also no wake zones. They're very well posted and especially those who don't and are not used to it, they go through them very quickly and near the mooring fields, the bridges, there's always no wake zones by the bridges. And that's what we watch out for, is kind of the reckless operation, and overweighted and overloaded boats. MELISSA: And just like you say, that that kind of crazy behavior, do we. You're talking about the boating cards and 1988 in terms of a birthday. Is there a minimum age or their criteria that I have to be of a certain age to operate a boat? PAT: 16. 16. That that goes on horsepower of the vessel. Anything with 10 horsepower or less, that changes. But the the rules take place when you start hitting 10 horsepower and bigger. MELISSA: And being being careful. I mean, just simple things like life jackets. We, I think a lot of us take for granted, I don't need a life jacket, it's a big enough boat. Nothing's really gonna happen. Do we have to wear life jackets? PAT: If you are six and under, it's required by Florida law that you have your life vest on all the time. Obviously you have to have a life vest on the vessel for everyone who is accounted for. But it has to be also accessible. A lot of folks think, well, I don't need them. I'll put them in the back hatch or I'll put them down below under the cooler under the cooler. Right, that's exactly the best... MELISSA: That weighs 50 pounds because it's got ice and drinks. PAT: Exactly. If it's not accessible to you, then it's not a safety thing for you. It's not going to help you out if things go wrong. And on the water things go wrong very quickly. MELISSA: Very quickly. They do. Another one I'm going to ask you about, hanging your feet over the bow of a boat. So much fun. PAT: So much fun. MELISSA: So illegal. PAT: So illegal and so dangerous, so dangerous. It is illegal. There are, there is a caveat to that. And I'll get talk to that in a second. If you're hanging over the front or the bow of the boat or the side of a boat and a wave is to hit you or someone loses control of the vessel, you can very easily, even if there's a rail, slide through there and get hung up underneath the vessel. It's a very dangerous thing to do. The caveat to that is if you were in a sanctioned sailboat race, obviously for balance reasons, sail boaters have to hang off the side of the boat. That does not apply. You can still do that on your. MELISSA: You're not gonna come get us in the middle of our race. PAT: No, no ma'am. MELISSA: The, so much fun on the water. By the way if you're just now tuning in, you are listening to The Break Room and we have St Augustine Police

Department's Marine Operations Officer, Pat Harvey in studio with us. I want to circle back a little bit to the no wake zones and talk about that. Remind our listeners not only what they are where they are and let's talk a little bit about Bird Island or Julia's Island or Hospital Creek. That really popular area where everybody loves to hang out. PAT: Okay, excuse me. First off, all of the bridges that we have in the City. The Villano Bridge, the Bridge of Lions, and the 312 bridge. They all have a no wake zone, 500 feet on either side of the bridge. It's posted, you can read those signs. It's 750 feet by downtown because there's a fuel dock. That those things change. But just remember every bridge is in no wake zone. That means slow speed no wake there's just no questions asked. It's not a little faster or a little slower, it's no wake. MELISSA: And that includes salt run. PAT: That does include salt run. When you get around the corner the s corner of salt run and get to in front of the Conch House Marina, there is a sign there that says slow speed no wake, that extends all the way, I guess that's South, through Salt Run, until you get to the Lighthouse Boat Ramp. So that is all a slow speed no wake the whole way. MELISSA: So you don't go past the Conch House and then kind of pick up speed. You really got to stay slow. PAT: The whole way. MELISSA: And I, I was not on the boat, but I had friends take out my boat one time, and they did get stopped. So I can attest, my friends can attest, they're, they are serious about that. And to also point out to folks, whether you're the boat owner or the person on the receiving end of those wake zones. It's not always just about the speed but it's about what you push out on that wake. PAT: Yes, no matter where you are in the zone that you're in, even if it is a place where you are allowed to go fast. You are ultimately responsible for your wake, any damage it may cause or injury that it may cause. And that means if you're near paddle boarders or kayakers or so forth like that. But people need to understand that that wake is yours and you own it until it hits the shore. MELISSA: And those big black letters on the bow of your boat are easily seen by people's security cameras or passers-by or.. PAT: Yes, and if you've loaned your boat out, we will be coming knocking on your door and not whoever.. MELISSA: Not on my friend who was driving. PAT: Yes ma'am. MELISSA: Let's talk a little bit about Bird Island. I know that's a real popular spot for folks to hang out. PAT: Okay, Bird Island, if you go on the inside of Bird Island, which would be the north side of Bird Island at low tide, it's both both beaches are very packed and everybody likes to hang out there. That currently is a non-regulated zone. We're in the process of doing studies to try and change that, but right now it is a non-regulated zone. However, boating etiquette does come in play. If there are folks, again, remembering your wake is your own, if it's lined up with folks as it is on a daily basis, you still want to be careful of your wake. There are kids bathing they're in there having a good time and all those boats are tied together up on the beach. So we are in there quite often. Myself and our partners with other agencies in the area. But again remembering, and I can't say this enough, you own what you put out on your vehicle or your vessel so the wake is yours. But be careful with the boat and we've spoke before about boater etiquette. MELISSA: Nobody, nobody likes to be on the receiving end of that wake. So you got to think about it from the standpoint of you don't like it when somebody does that, you're having a nice sit down or relaxing, and that just comes in and woosh. PAT: Let's remember, too, Melissa, that also goes for jet skis. The jet ski is also responsible for everything that they put out, as well. MELISSA: Hospital point, that's a funny little spot back there. PAT: Yes. MELISSA: Do you find people get themselves stuck or trapped? PAT: Well, I think a lot of the times when we have visitors that either have rentals or rental jet skis, there's no way out. Once you get back by the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind on the end, there's really no way out. Most of the folks that go back there either are lost or the fishermen, local fishermen, go back there. But it is a peculiar spot and we're also doing some studies back there as well for speed and wake. MELISSA: So before we sign off, because I can't believe we've already run out of room, anything you want to just mention to our

listeners, something that you're seeing that you want to make a little observation about? A call to our call to our boaters? PAT: Yeah, slow down, enjoy the water. That's what we're all out here for. We live in a great place. Our waterways are awesome. But just slow down and remember why you're there, to enjoy yourself. Don't overload your boat and just relax. MELISSA: And who else is out there helping you police? PAT: We work very closely with the Florida FWC, the St Johns County Sheriff's Office, and both Fire Departments, City Fire and County Fire both have boats on the water, as well. So you know, we're out there for everyone. MELISSA: And you're not responding to too many emergencies? People doing pretty well out there? PAT: No, I think everybody's enjoying themselves and understanding that we're all out there to have fun. MELISSA: Good. Well, it's a pleasure having you come to The Break Room, keep keep safe on the water, and help keep us safe, and we appreciate you, what you do all the time. PAT: Well thank you for the invite. MELISSA: Yeah if. As we wrap up another edition of The Break Room. Did you know that we are now a podcast? If you missed part of this broadcast and want to listen from the beginning or share it with your friends, you can subscribe to The Break Room wherever you find your podcasts. We are on Spreaker, Spotify, iHeartRadio, Apple Podcasts, and more. You can find a complete listing and our past episodes on our website at CityStAugRadio.com. We want to keep you informed about what's happening in and around the city and that you hear it hear from the people doing the work and making it happen every day. Stay up to date with us on our social media platforms. You'll find the City on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @CityStAug and you will find the Police Department on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, also you will find them @StAugPD. Until next time. ANNOUNCER: Thanks for tuning in. You've been listening to The Break Room, a weekly program addressing projects and programs offered by the City of St Augustine. Join us each week as the City's Communications Director, Melissa Wissel, has in-depth conversations with the people who make our town work to meet the needs of our community. The Break Room is produced by Communications Specialist for the City of St Augustine, Cindy Walker. See you at this time next week for another edition of The Break Room.