



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Marine Industry Veterans Paxson St. Clair and Dave Connolly Join Judging Panel for 2025 EPIC Awards**

**Chattanooga, TN – July 28, 2025** — The Soundings Trade Only Group is pleased to announce the addition of two distinguished industry leaders, Paxson St. Clair and Dave Connolly, to the judging panel of the [2025 EPIC Awards](#). Formerly known as the Most Innovative Marine Company Awards, the EPIC Awards recognize companies that are driving the recreational marine industry forward through bold leadership, purposeful innovation, and a commitment to meaningful change.

Paxson St. Clair is a seasoned marine executive, best known for guiding Cobalt Boats as its long-time president where he upheld its reputation for quality craftsmanship and dealer-focused leadership. After Malibu Boats acquired Cobalt in 2017, he transitioned to a strategic board of directors' role, stepping back in 2019 to prioritize family while remaining connected to the brand. In 2020, he co-founded DuraTek Boat Lifts with his sons, focusing on high capacity, engineered lift solutions with national dealer distribution. His industry contributions extend to board membership at HydroHoist and award-winning recognition, including the coveted Irv Rosenthal Award and *Boating Industry's* Mover & Shaker of the Year.

Dave Connolly brings over four decades of experience to the judging panel, having spent 44 years at Thomas H. Connolly and Sons, Inc., America's first and longest-standing marine manufacturers' sales agency. As senior partner, Dave helped shape the trajectory of independent marine sales representation. He is a past president of the National Marine Representatives Association (NMRA) and currently serves on the boards of the Sea Tow Foundation, The Manhattan Cup (a veterans-focused fishing tournament), and Oasis, a nonprofit supporting women and children in Paterson, NJ. A lifelong learner and avid outdoorsman, Dave is a member of the Catskill 3500 Club and contributes as a proofreader for select authors.

The EPIC AWARDS—an acronym for Exceptional, Purposeful, Innovative, Compassionate—highlight organizations making meaningful change across a range of areas, including:

- Altruism/Social Awareness
- Development & Technology
- Work Culture
- Manufacturing Process/Supply Chains
- Start-ups
- Sustainability
- Other
- Mix of categories

The 2025 EPIC Award winners will be announced during the IBEX Show. Honorees will include one overall winner, a Top 10 list, and category-specific awardees. Winning companies will be profiled in the November issue of *Soundings Trade Only* and featured online at *TradeOnlyToday.com*, with additional recognition benefits provided.

*"Each year, the EPIC Awards illuminate the transformative work being done across our industry," said Gary Reich, Editor-in-Chief of Soundings Trade Only. "We're thrilled to welcome Paxson St. Clair and Dave Connolly, both of whom bring deep expertise and respected perspectives, to our 2025 judging panel."*

In addition to invited guest judges, the panel will include senior editorial and publishing leaders from the Soundings Trade Only Group and parent company, Firecrown Media.

The awards will consider company achievements and initiatives occurring between August 16, 2024, and August 15, 2025. Entries may be submitted through August 15, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. ET.

To learn more about the 2025 EPIC Awards, preview the entry form, or submit an application via the flexible online platform (which allows updates until the deadline), please visit:

[www.tradeonlytoday.com/enter](http://www.tradeonlytoday.com/enter).

## **The Soundings Trade Only Group**

The Soundings Trade Only Group is a marine business-to-business multi-media brand, with a mission to provide information to grow your business. It includes a monthly print publication, digital entities including a daily e-newsletter, web, and social media sites, and marine industry events. *Soundings Trade Only* offers the latest business news, and information about products, trends, statistics, management, and marketing insights, designed to reflect, inform, and inspire the marine industry. It is part of Firecrown Media, a global media platform for affluent enthusiasts and includes both consumer and trade marine titles. For more information, about the Soundings Trade Only Group, please visit [www.tradeonlytoday.com](http://www.tradeonlytoday.com), for your free subscription please visit [www.tradeonlytoday.com/subscribe](http://www.tradeonlytoday.com/subscribe).

### **About Firecrown:**

Firecrown isn't just the leading media platform for affluent enthusiasts; it's pioneering the fusion of content and commerce. With more than fifty prestigious publications in the marine, aviation, and hobby markets, Firecrown goes beyond traditional media. Its business encompasses e-commerce, finance, and real estate, all tailored to the communities engaged by its media outlets. Serving more than 24 million U.S. households classified as affluent enthusiasts, these consumers have considerable disposable income and are keen to invest in their passions and adventures. Firecrown is headquartered in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

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