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## Jim Moore COO, Aluminum Chambered Boats

*MarineNews talked with Jim Moore, President and Chief Operating Officer of Aluminum Chambered Boats, Inc., (ACB) about how he started in the industry 35 years ago and how business is going today. ACB, in Bellingham, Wa., builds patented aluminum boats for government, recreational and commercial customers on a global basis.*

### **How did you get involved in the industry?**

After my discharge from the U.S. Army in 1974, I was looking for an interim summer job prior to resuming college. I wound up working for a distributorship selling sporting goods including marine equipment. Two lines they carried were Lund and Grumman. Lund manufactures a premium line of recreational fishing boats. Long story short, I was recruited by Lund as a District Sales Manager, became VP of Sales and Marketing and eventually President in 1988, working in the midwest.

In 1991, the 20 and 30 below zero winters of Minn. finally got the better of me and I took the opportunity to purchase a retail recreational business in Orofino, Idaho. After selling this business in 1995, I purchased the assets of Weldcraft Marine in Clarkston, Wa. Weldcraft manufactures heavy gauge welded aluminum sport fishing boats in both outboard and inboard jet from 17 to 30 feet. In 2000 I merged Weldcraft with Duckworth Boats to form Renaissance Marine Group, Inc. and took the company from less than \$1m in sales and substantial losses to over \$15m in sales and profitability with an independent dealer network of nearly 50 dealers throughout the Pacific Northwest.

I retired in October of 2007, and was just getting into wall-eye fishing when the cell phone rang while I was on my way to a tournament in S.D. My wife had conspired with Larry Wieber of Aluminum Chambered Boats in Bellingham, Wa., and they put me back to work in July of 2008. In truth however, I saw an opportunity with a ground breaking, up-and-coming company that builds a superior product above and beyond the competition – a company that has barely touched its potential in the market place.

### **How are you weathering the economic storm?**

Actually we are having the best year in the history of the company in terms of both revenues and profitability. The



competition for government contracts has gotten a little stronger as many recreational builders seek ways to find new business in the down market, but it is a difficult segment to enter and takes significant time and resources to be successful. Our investment for the future is mainly in our people, their training and our process improvements.

### **What are your top priorities for ACB in the next year or two?**

Creating a balanced base of business between the segments we are currently in, improving our processes so we can be more competitive in the global markets and educating our employees for a more skilled workforce.

**Do you see any emerging opportunities?**

There are a number of global opportunities both military and commercial. The oil exploration and service industry will remain strong unless someone presents the miracle alternative next week. Counter-piracy and counter-terrorism requirements in the littorals also present small boat opportunities.

**What is the most important legislative issue you face?**

The cost of government regulation in the U.S. adds more than 20% to the cost of manufacturing (compared to competitors in the rest of the world) over and above our wage base. Fortunately we have productive workers and creative management for the most part that help compensate for this. Our lawmakers need to carefully consider the shrinking manufacturing base in this country every time they consider legislation that places additional burdens upon U.S. businesses.

Also of concern are workman's compensation and insurance issues which have significant impacts on the cost of doing business.

We provide health insurance, medical, dental and vision for our employees on a shared cost basis. The increases in the cost of health insurance have significantly outpaced inflation for many years now. This is not an easy problem to address and there are many strong points on all sides of the issue that need to be carefully considered.

**ACB's 21-ft Law Enforcement Vessel (LEV). Available with an air or foam hybrid collar for fendering and additional flotation, the LEV was designed by marine patrol officers specifically for maritime law enforcement. (Photos courtesy Aluminum Chamber Boats)**

