



Kate Donadic
Director of Marketing & Communications, IBEX
kated@ibexshow.com

Andrew Golden
PR Contact
Rushton Gregory Communications
agolden@rushtongregory.com

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IBEX ENERGIZES MARINE INDUSTRY WITH SUCCESSFUL 2026 SHOW

Technical Education and Industry Connections Strengthen Successful Show as IBEX Prepares for New December Dates in 2027

Tampa, FL - The International BoatBuilders' Exhibition and Conference (IBEX), North America's leading trade event for the recreational marine industry, announced today it closed its 2026 Show with year-over-year increases in attendance and show-floor traffic, exhibitors reporting strong business, and high praise for its expanded program of technical education and industry networking. Held October 6-8 at the Tampa Convention Center, the Show brought marine professionals together to evaluate new products and address the challenges facing their businesses in an ever-evolving landscape.

IBEX 2026 welcomed more than 7,700 industry professionals from over 55 countries and featured 701 exhibitors, including 103 first-time exhibitors. Among the newcomers were 21 international exhibitors. Nearly 100 students participated in IBEX Career Day, produced in collaboration with the American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC), connecting future marine professionals with industry employers, technologies, and career opportunities.

"IBEX is at its best when the industry comes together to share ideas, tackle challenges and move our businesses forward," said Mary Velline, IBEX Show Director. "That energy was evident throughout this year's show, from the conversations happening on the exhibit floor to the enthusiasm around our education programs and new opportunities to connect. We're proud of what we accomplished together in 2026, and even more excited about what's ahead. Our move to December 2027 gives us an opportunity to build on that momentum, expand the IBEX experience and bring even more of the recreational marine industry together."

"IBEX 2026 was an outstanding success for Uflex," said Michael Benedek, VP & GM, Uflex USA. "The event provided an excellent opportunity to meet with key customers from both domestic and international markets, while also finalizing several strategic business initiatives. We were pleased to finalize multiple important agreements that had been developing in the weeks leading up to the show. Without question, this was one of the most successful IBEX's in Uflex's history. We are looking forward to the new December 2027 dates and are excited to reconnect with everyone there."

"IBEX was hands-down the best show we have ever attended," said Annie Brown, Co-Founder of Marquatica. "We had many meaningful discussions, made great introductions and thoroughly enjoyed the experience."

IBEX's world-class Technical Seminar Conference, produced in collaboration with *Professional BoatBuilder*, The IBEX Technical Journal remained a highlight of the Show. Expert-led sessions explored practical solutions in boatbuilding, design, systems, and repair, alongside emerging technologies including artificial intelligence,

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automation, and 3D printing. New for 2026, eight state-approved seminars offered eligible Florida-licensed insurance professionals up to 16 continuing education hours, expanding the program's reach into marine risk, liability, claims, and accident investigation.

The Marine Ideas Exchange (MIX), presented by IBEX and *Soundings Trade Only*, explored leadership, technology, and changing customer expectations. The new Main Stage and exhibitor-led Tech Talks offered additional insights, demonstrations, and practical applications on the show floor, free with an exhibit hall badge.

The new Emerging Marine Leaders Lounge, sponsored by *Boating Industry*, was a welcome addition to IBEX's existing Emerging Marine Leaders program, giving developing professionals a dedicated space to connect with peers and established industry leaders.

The Show's dedicated pavilions were a successful part of the exhibit experience, helping attendees explore specialized products and connect with suppliers in areas including composites, electronics and next-generation power & propulsion. The International Pavilion, presented in collaboration with Metstrade, connected international suppliers with the North American marine industry. The U.S. Market Accelerator, developed with the National Marine Representatives Association and Marine Marketers of America, complemented those connections by introducing international exhibitors to U.S. sales representatives and marketing professionals.

Industry connections began before the exhibit halls opened, with a pre-show happy hour sponsored by SeaPower bringing participants together ahead of the three-day event. Opening Night sponsored by Wet Sounds, and the Mid-Show Mixer sponsored by Roswell Marine provided additional opportunities to reconnect with colleagues and build new relationships after show hours. A standing-room-only Pitch the Press connected exhibiting companies with marine media, while the *Professional BoatBuilder* Issue #216 launch party brought readers and the IBEX community together with the journal's editorial team.

Product discovery remained central to the IBEX experience. The 2026 IBEX Innovation Awards recognized 12 winners and three honorable mentions from 100 entries at the IBEX Industry Breakfast. Recognized innovations ranged from reloadable adhesive cartridges designed to reduce waste to navigation lighting with wireless power delivery and modular electrical distribution systems designed to simplify installation and troubleshooting. Innovation Way displays and the Innovation Meet & Greet gave attendees additional opportunities to explore new products, ask questions and meet the people behind their development. The full list of award recipients, along with judges' insights on what distinguished the winning products, is available in the Innovation Awards announcement. Marine professionals can explore all of this year's entries through the online IBEX Innovation Showcase.

IBEX will return to the Tampa Convention Center December 7–9, 2027, marking the start of a new December schedule. The change creates more opportunities for outdoor demonstrations and hands-on learning, with plans to expand IBEX Docks and increase marina, yard, refit and repair technical programming. Moving beyond hurricane season also mitigates weather-related risks and supports more reliable planning for exhibitors and attendees.

Alongside the annual event, IBEX is continuing to expand its digital and year-round offerings through *Professional BoatBuilder*, The IBEX Technical Journal, and IBEX 365. These platforms keep technical knowledge, product developments and industry news accessible between shows, extending IBEX's commitment to connection, education and innovation throughout the year.

About the International BoatBuilders' Exhibition & Conference (IBEX):

IBEX (International BoatBuilders' Exhibition & Conference) is the marine industry's leading B2B platform connecting professionals to the technical knowledge, products, innovation, and community shaping the future of boatbuilding and marine technology. Guided by a mission to bring the industry together and accelerate growth, IBEX delivers value year-round through its annual event, *Professional BoatBuilder*, The IBEX Technical Journal, and its expanding digital platform. For more information, please visit www.ibexshow.com.



For imagery and other editorial requests, please contact:

Andrew Golden
Rushton Gregory Communications
617-413-6521
agolden@rushtongregory.com