

BY JOHN A. WITTE JR., PRESIDENT, AMERICAN SALVAGE ASSOCIATION

RESOLUTIONS TO KEEP

First and foremost, on behalf of the membership of the American Salvage Association (ASA), I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and healthy 2009. As we are all painfully aware, 2008 did not end on an uplifting note but being a salvor and optimist, I have high hopes for 2009.

Out with the old, in with the new and all those metaphors aside, the world moves on. In the business of marine salvage, even when things are not proceeding as planned, any successful salvor must stay positive. I have been involved in projects where a positive mental attitude and desire to succeed is just as important as a sound operations plan.

When faced with worsening conditions, in most cases, the best alternative is to stay positive and aggressive and continue with the original plan of action while hoping for the best outcome. The concept embodied in the phrase, "I'd rather be lucky than good," is one that every successful salvor has felt in the past when things are just not going our way but ultimately end on a positive note.

As is traditional at this time of year, the majority of us make New Year resolutions. The ASA is no different. In an effort to keep up this time-honored tradition, I offer the Top 5 Resolutions for the New Year from the perspective of the ASA:

1) Resolve to have the pending modifications to OPA-90 enacted. As a result, the professional marine salvage commu-

nity will have the necessary regulatory support to continue to be in a position to provide services the marine community depends upon to keep commerce moving, regardless of the circumstance.

2) Resolve to continue to professionalize our industry to a point where we are universally considered a part of the cure.

3) Resolve to continue to expand our relationships with organizations such as the United States Coast Guard, U.S. Navy Supervisor of Salvage and Diving, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Administration (NOAA) – Office of Response and Restoration to name a few, in an effort to assist them, where and when appropriate, with the formation of regulation and procedures which impact and improve our industry.

4) Resolve to continue to work with sister trade organizations whose primary mission lies in the realm of marine services in an effort to create a more uniform marine environment.

5) Resolve to have our membership be ready, willing and able to meet the marine salvage related needs of our country and the marine community at large, no matter what is involved, where it is located and the circumstances of the casualty.

As we begin the New Year, it is a reminder that as time continues to move forward so do the needs of regulators, users and service providers who participate in marine salvage. At the end of the day, the objective of the ASA is to contin-

ue to grow with the needs of our clients and regulators as well as the regulatory process

itself so that when the need arises, we are ready to respond in a way that meets or exceeds appropriate regulatory requirements and expectations.

As the New Year begins, we must refocus and recommit to the industry we



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have chosen to participate in; an industry, that as a result of increased vigilance by vessel owners and operators, shrinks on a yearly basis, but continues to offer challenges that become more diverse and difficult as time goes on.

So, in conclusion, as the New Year begins amid concerns of our today as well as our tomorrow, rest assured that the ASA remains interested, involved and dedicated to its missions and its resolutions.

There is just no other option. **ML**

Editor's note: Mr. Witte can cross off one of his resolutions for the New Year. On Dec. 31, the Coast Guard Final Rule on Salvage and Marine Firefighting Requirements; Vessel Response Plans for Oil was published in the Federal Register. He'll update you in his next column.

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