

Crossing the Brow: Coast Guard Sector St. Petersburg Holds Open House

Story and photos by PA3 Rob Simpson, PADET St. Petersburg, Fla.

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. -- Coast Guard Sector St. Petersburg and Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater, Fla., hosted their second annual open house at Sector St. Petersburg Oct. 20.

Crewmembers from Coast Guard Cutters *Vise* and *Kodiak Island*, both home ported in St. Petersburg, gave tours of their cutters to more than 500 members of the Tampa Bay community.

During a tour of the *Vise*, guests were introduced to a less seen side of the Coast Guard, aids to navigation (ATON). Crewmembers explained to visitors how Coast Guard members maintain ATON and how different channel markers help boaters stay in safe waterways. Crewmembers also gave guests tours of the galley and showed them fire-fighting equipment used to combat fires on the cutter.

Crewmembers aboard the *Kodiak Island* showed attendees various areas of the cutter, including a detailed “hands-on” view of the pilothouse. The 15-member crew explained how the equipment works and how it is used to accomplish the cutter’s many missions.



ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. - Seaman Robert Testa, a *Vise* crewmember, demonstrates to a tour group the automatic rotation for light bulbs on a light for an aid to navigation. The belt inside of the light is designed to rotate once a bulb burns out, moving a fresh bulb to maintain lights to illuminate channels in America's navigable waterways. *Vise's* crewmembers maintain aids to navigation along the west coast of Florida. Coast Guard photograph by PA3 Rob Simpson.



ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. - Petty Officer 3rd Class (AST3) Jody J. Chamberlain talks with kids inside of the HH-60 Jayhawk rescue helicopter from Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater on display at the St. Petersburg Air Show. Chamberlain explained to visitors the missions of Coast Guard aviation in their area of responsibility which spans Florida’s west coast from Apalachicola, Fla., to Cuba and the Bahamas. Coast Guard photograph by PA3 Rob Simpson.

Guests were also able to see the cutter’s weaponry.

Coast Guard Station St. Petersburg crewmembers displayed a 25-foot rescue boat and answered questions about the station’s missions, which range from search and rescue, law-enforcement boardings and homeland security.

Crewmembers from Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater displayed an HH-60 Jayhawk helicopter at the St. Petersburg Air Show, held at neighboring Albert Whitted Airport, showing curious attendees the equipment used during Coast Guard rescue operations.



ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. – Petty Officer 2nd Class Chase Stockton, a *Kodiak Island* crewmember, explains to a tour group the equipment in the pilothouse and how it is operated. The 15-member crew stationed aboard the *Kodiak Island* operates mainly in the Florida Straits between Florida and Cuba supporting alien migrant interdiction operations. Coast Guard photograph by PA3 Rob Simpson.

Coast Guard Auxiliarists, recruiters and pollution response personnel were also available to answer questions about the Coast Guard’s missions in the Seventh Coast Guard District.

“Our annual open house is a great outlet for the public to interact with us,” said Lt. Miguel Torres, open house coordinator at Coast Guard Sector St. Petersburg. “It lets them ask us questions about what we do, and it gives us a chance to help educate the public about our missions by interacting with the very people we work with, live with and protect everyday.”

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