AUGUST IS ALMOST OVER AND WITH THE LABOR DAY WEEKEND JUST A FEW DAYS AWAY, WE MARK THE TRADITIONAL END OF SUMMER.

THANKFULLY, WE HERE IN SOUTH FLORIDA CAN STILL LOOK FORWARD TO SEVERAL MORE WEEKS OF WARM WEATHER, AND THAT BRINGS WITH IT LOTS OF BOATING ACTIVITY IN OUR BEACHES AND WATERWAYS.

THIS SUMMER HAS ALSO BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION AN INCREASED NEED FOR RAISING AWARENESS FROM THE BOATING AND GENERAL PUBLIC ABOUT WATER SAFETY AND THE DANGERS OF MIXING BOATING AND ALCOHOL.

HAVING SPENT OVER 25 YEARS AS A FIREFIGHTER, I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT WE WERE ALWAYS TAUGHT AND TRAINED ON *PREVENTION*, AND ON THE NEED TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO AVOID DANGEROUS SITUATIONS.

THE BEST WAY TO AVOID AN ACCIDENT IS TO *PREVENT* ONE.

THIS IS WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT THAT BEFORE OUR RESIDENTS HEAD OUT TO OUR BEAUTIFUL WATERS TO ENJOY BOATING ACTIVITIES...

THAT THEY TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS BY AVOIDING BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS.

WE ALL KNOW THAT DRINKING AND DRIVING NEVER MIX...

DRINKING AND BOATING DON'T MIX EITHER.

DUI AND BUI ARE BOTH ILLEGAL, AND THEY MAKE A VERY DANGEROUS AND SOMETIMES EVEN LETHAL COMBINATION.

ACCORDING TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FLORIDA RANKS SECOND IN DEATHS DUE TO BOATING ACCIDENTS WHERE ALCOHOL WAS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR.

HERE IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, ALCOHOL IS A FACTOR AND HAS AN IMPACT ON THE LARGE MAJORITY OF BOATING ACCIDENTS.

IT IS RARE THAT CARELESSNESS ALONE IS THE CAUSE.

OUR POLICE CHIEFS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY HAVE ALL REDOUBLED OUR EFFORTS AT PATROLLING OUR WATERS AND ENFORCING BUI LAWS.

THIS IS A PERSONAL MATTER FOR CHIEF CHARLES PRESS FROM KEY BISCAYNE, WHO KNOWS FIRSTHAND THAT BOATING ACCIDENTS CAN HAPPEN AT ANY TIME.

CHIEF PRESS IS A VETERAN OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AND WHEN HE BECAME PRESIDENT OF THE MIAMI-DADE CHIEFS LAST MAY…

HE MADE SURE THAT PART OF HIS AGENDA WAS TO BRING TOGETHER A MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL USE OF MARINE AND LAND ASSETS TO INCREASE ENFORCEMENT AND BRING GREATER SAFETY TO OUR WATERS.

ALL THE CHIEFS AGREED THAT THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR COOPERATION AND THE BUI TASK FORCE WAS BORN, WITH SHARED WATER AND LAND ASSETS WORKING TOGETHER.

THIS EFFORT LEADS UP TO LABOR DAY WEEKEND WHEN OUR LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES WILL BE OUT ON THE WATER REMINDING FOLKS THAT WHILE IT’S OK TO HAVE FUN…

WE NEED TO TAKE ALL STEPS POSSIBLE TO PREVENT FUN TURNING INTO A TRAGEDY.

TODAY, I AM FURTHER ANNOUNCING THAT WE HAVE BROUGHT TOGETHER SEVERAL AGENCIES THAT ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR WATER SAFETY ENFORCEMENT:

THESE INCLUDE THE U.S COAST GUARD, THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION, THE CITIES OF MIAMI AND MIAMI BEACH, NORTH MIAMI, AVENTURA, BAL HARBOR, KEY BISCAYNE...

AND WE HAVE FORMED AN INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUP SO WE CAN FIND MORE WAYS TO WORK TOGETHER TO PROMOTE WATER SAFETY.

WE ARE ALL LOOKING AT WAYS TO MAXIMIZE OUR SHARED RESOURCES, INCLUDING LOOKING INTO CROSS UTILIZATION OF TRAINED STAFF...

SO THAT ALL MARITIME LAWS ARE ENFORCED, AND OUR WATERWAYS ARE SAFE FOR EVERYONE TO ENJOY.

LET ME REMIND EVERYONE THAT IT IS A VIOLATION OF FLORIDA LAW TO OPERATE A BOAT WHILE IMPAIRED BY ALCOHOL.

ANYONE OPERATING A BOAT THAT IS SUSPECTED OF BEING UNDER THE INFLUENCE MUST SUBMIT TO SOBRIETY TESTS TO DETERMINE BLOOD OR BREATH ALCOHOL CONTENT.

AND AS WITH DRIVING A CAR, IN FLORIDA A BOATER IS PRESUMED TO BE UNDER THE INFLUENCE IF THEIR BLOOD OR BREATH ALCOHOL LEVEL IS AT OR ABOVE .08.

ALSO, ANYONE UNDER 21 YEARS OF AGE WHO IS FOUND TO HAVE A BREATH-ALCOHOL LEVEL OF .02 OR HIGHER WHILE OPERATING A BOAT IS IN VIOLATION OF FLORIDA LAW.

THE MIAMI-DADE POLICE DEPARTMENT AND ALL THE AGENCIES REPRESENTED HERE ARE FULLY COMMITTED TO ENSURE THAT EVERYONE WHO ENJOYS OUR WATERWAYS DOES SO IN THE SAFEST WAY POSSIBLE...

AND THAT BY FOLLOWING ALL WATER SAFETY LAWS, WE CAN AVOID BOATING ACCIDENTS AND TRAGEDIES, SO THAT ENJOYING OUR BEACHES AND WATER REMAINS A FUN AND SAFE FAMILY ACTIVITY.

THIS IS A TEAM EFFORT SO I WANT TO MAKE SURE I THANK ALL OUR VARIOUS PARTNERS WHO MADE IT OUT HERE TODAY:

MAYOR FRANK CAPLAN FROM THE VILLAGE OF KEY BISCAYNE.

ACTING MAYOR PHILIPPE BIEN-AIME FROM THE CITY OF NORTH MIAMI.

COMMANDER MICHAEL CORTESE FROM THE U.S. COAST GUARD AND MAJOR ALFREDO ESCANIO FROM THE FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION.

OUR MDPD DIRECTOR J.D. PATTERSON.

AND MDFR CHIEF DAVE DOWNEY.

CITY MANAGER ALEEM GHANY AND CHIEF LEONARD BURGESS FROM NORTH MIAMI.

VILLAGE MANAGER JOHN GILBER, AND CHIEF CHARLES PRESS FROM KEY BISCAYNE...

OFFICER ALEX MACIAS FROM THE MIAMI POLICE DEPARTMENT.

CHIEF MARK OVERTON AND CAPTAIN MIGUEL DE LA ROSA FROM BAL HARBOR POLICE.

AND OFFICER MIKE JAMES HAYTON FROM THE CITY OF AVENTURA.

AGAIN, A SPECIAL THANKS TO CHIEF PRESS FOR HIS CONTINUED EFFORTS AND LEADERSHIP ON BOATING SAFETY.

THANK YOU ALL FOR JOINING US IN THIS IMPORTANT EFFORT…

AND WHETHER YOU’RE ON OR OFF THE WATER, I WANT TO WISH EVERYONE A SAFE LABOR DAY WEEKEND!