VESPER MARINE AIS VIRTUAL BEACONS TO BE USED IN NEW ZEALAND’S BAY OF PLENTY

Marine Safety Leader’s Cutting Edge Technology Used to Mark Hazardous Reefs Following Devastating Oil Spill

Auckland, New Zealand – Vesper Marine, a leading manufacturer of innovative marine safety products, announced today it has been awarded the contract to provide Virtual Automatic Identification System (AIS) Beacons to mark seven reefs hazardous to shipping in the Bay of Plenty, as well as provide a coastal monitoring capability. The beacons will alert both ships’ crews and the local government’s Regional Council that a vessel is heading towards a charted danger or entering the no-go zone around each hazard. This contract is in response to the October 5, 2011 events that resulted in the worst environmental disaster in New Zealand’s history, when the container ship Rena struck Astrolabe Reef spilling much of the ship’s cargo and fuel into the ocean causing immediate and long-term effects on the ecosystem. The ship was carrying 1,368 containers, as well as 1,700 tons of heavy fuel oil and 200 tons of marine diesel oil.

Vesper Marine’s Virtual AIS Beacons, which are used to create Virtual Aids to Navigation (VAtOn), will be installed in early 2015. To be located on the existing Minden communications site, the Virtual AIS Beacon will project markers identifying Astrolabe Reef, Brewis Shoal, Okaparu Reef, Penguin Shoal, Pudney Rock, Tūhaua Reef and Volkner Rocks, which will be displayed on nearby ships’ AIS systems.

“The Rena disaster was a terrible tragedy, both for the environment and for the people that live close by,” said Jeff Robbins, CEO, Vesper Marine. “We know that nothing can undo the damage already caused, but our Virtual Aids to Navigation may be able to prevent it from happening again. Regardless of the weather conditions, our beacons will be seen by most ships well before they get close to these reefs. It’s a small part to play, but we are proud to help safeguard the marine and coastal environment of the Bay of Plenty.”

“This will be a substantial step forward in maritime navigational safety in the Bay of Plenty,” said Peter Buell, Bay of Plenty Regional Council Harbour Master. “We can expand the system as needed without interruption of service, and more and more ships are using AIS to supplement their radar, sonar, electronic charting and collision avoidance systems. I feel the timing is right for us to make this vital change.”
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For more information on Vesper Marine, or its entire product line, please visit www.vespermarine.com.

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About Vesper Marine:
Based in Auckland, New Zealand, privately held Vesper Marine is a global provider of marine safety products. Committed to rigorous R&D and innovation, the company designs and manufacturers affordable practical electronic solutions that enhance boating safety. www.vespermarine.com