Vesper Marine Virtual AIS Beacon receives 2nd 2012 Award for Innovation

Vesper Marine, a leading manufacturer of innovative marine safety products, announced today that its Virtual AIS Beacon for Aids to Navigation has been awarded Special Commendation at the New Zealand Hi-Tech Awards 2012 in the State Government of Victoria, Australia Innovative Hi-Tech Hardware Product category. Recognized with this year’s Professional Mariner Samuel Plimsoll Award for Innovation earlier this Spring, Vesper Marine’s Virtual AIS Beacon was honored with the New Zealand Hi-Tech Award for effectively introducing an exciting new hardware product to market that is clearly differentiated from the competition, and for its demonstration of sustainable future growth and business success for the company. Judged by an international panel that included original Facebook investor and Paypal founder Peter Thiel; the director of engineering for Google in New York, Craig Nevill-Manning; and Cisco's senior vice president, Howard Charney, the awards seek to provide the premier showcase and networking opportunities for the producers of New Zealand's high technology.

“We are thrilled that the Virtual AIS Beacon has received this prestigious honor,” said Jeff Robbins, founder, Vesper Marine. “Our Virtual AIS Beacon significantly improves safety and navigational awareness for both commercial and recreational mariners. We are dedicated to innovation and committed to enhancing safety on the water by continuing to bring cutting-edge AIS systems to the marine market. The recognition of the New Zealand Hi-Tech Awards coupled with Professional Mariner’s Samuel Plimsoll Award is exceptional validation we are on the right track.”

The innovative Vesper Marine Virtual AIS Beacon establishes a Virtual Aid to Navigation (VAtoN) based on the international standardized marine Automatic Identification System (AIS), which all large ships must use, and smaller vessels are now choosing to use for safety and collision avoidance benefits. The virtual beacon delivers a proactive electronic marker of dangerous visible and invisible hazards such as bridges, piers, rock outcrops, reefs, as well as any fixed underwater hazard or moving hazards such as sandbars, to regularly provide changes in location and alert warnings. The virtual markers have no environmental impact and do not require a physical location to be mounted or powered. When a navigational hazard is marked by a Vesper Marine Virtual AIS Beacon, it is displayed on a vessel’s chartplotter, AIS display or other receiving equipment within range of the transmitting equipment. A ship’s onboard equipment is then able to alert crews if they are on a collision course with the marked navigational hazard. Shore stations house Vesper Marine’s Virtual AIS Beacons and are managed by administration software; multiple stations can be used to extend network coverage.

The Virtual AIS Beacon has also been nominated for a 2012 IHS Safety at Sea Award. In addition to its extensive recognition, Vesper Marine’s WatchMate Vision™, the world’s first dedicated Class B AIS transponder with touch-screen control, received the 2012 National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) Innovation Award at the 71st Annual Progressive Insurance Miami International Boat Show earlier in the year.