VESPER MARINE EXPANDS RANGE FOR 2012 AND UNVEILS WORLD’S FIRST TOUCH-SCREEN WIRELESS AIS TRANSPONDER

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At METS 2011, Vesper Marine, a leading manufacturer of Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) for marine collision avoidance, will unveil its product line-up for 2012. This includes a preview of the advanced WatchMate Vision™ Class B transponder, which is being released in 2012. WatchMate Vision will be the world’s first dedicated Class B AIS with touch-screen control and is designed to deliver accurate safety information for leisure vessels and work boats.

The WatchMate Vision has been specifically designed to overcome the challenges of operating at sea and for users requiring remote access to AIS information via their wireless devices. Vesper Marine has designed the WatchMate Vision to be easy-to-use in the marine environment. Users place pressure on the WatchMate Vision screen to perform an action, negating the possibility of misplaced movements causing an operational error. In practice, the system is incredibly user-friendly and can be accurately controlled with ease, even when hands are wet or wearing gloves. The full colour touch-screen is capable of operating in direct sunlight, providing a rich user experience with minimal power consumption.

The new touch-screen interface is based around the intuitive WatchMate Wheel, an adaptive system that recognises the specific menu needed for the given situation, ensuring users have access to the most appropriate information quickly and easily. Because the user has the ability to control the WatchMate Wheel from outside the visible screen area, important information is not hidden by the user’s finger. The system provides all the content and functionality of the proven WatchMate family, including four unique alarm profiles: Harbour, Anchor, Coastal and Offshore. These can be customised so the user can easily switch between profiles and receive warnings regardless of whether their vessel is moored or out at sea.
WatchMate Vision also allows AIS clutter to be removed from the display, so that only the targets that have a current collision risk are shown. The user can customise the powerful filter features to their current situation as well as view coastal outlines, for enhanced content and location awareness. A magnifier automatically pops up when necessary and enables targets to be selected and viewed in closer detail without losing position context and scale.

In addition to leading the way in touch-screen operation, the unique WatchMate Vision is the first dedicated display-based AIS transponder to integrate WiFi functionality, allowing AIS interaction with any wireless smartphone, tablet or laptop. It can be operated as a WiFi device in two ways, either as an Access Point to send data to be displayed on wireless devices, or act as a wireless Client to seamlessly integrate into an existing network with other marine electronic systems. The WatchMate Vision can also be connected via USB as well as NMEA 2000® and NMEA 0183.

Mike Ogle, General Manager of Sales and Marketing for Vesper Marine comments on the company’s latest development: “We are adding to our existing product line-up with a touch-screen version whilst keeping the same values of the incredibly successful easy-to-use approach of WatchMate, which incorporates our unique feature for the filtering of targets at the user’s discretion. We continue to offer the full WatchMate family of intuitive AIS devices to suit the differing vessel types and courses that owners take. Users can be assured that whichever WatchMate device they choose, each version provides filtering techniques that reduce the amount of clutter on screen and so enhance safety by ensuring that users focus only on the objects and vessels that are relevant to their safe passage.”

The new WatchMate Vision is the latest addition to the WatchMate family that also includes the WatchMate 850 with built in GPS to ensure users are seen at all times as well as easily track and avoid other vessels. The WatchMate 750, an integrated display and AIS receiver with dual parallel channels is available, and provides maximum range and accuracy of data for making safety decisions. There is also an AIS display, WatchMate 670, to improve collision avoidance capability for users with an external AIS receiver or transponder.

WatchMate Vision is on stand 02.230 at METS for demonstration in advance of its launch during 2012. The entire WatchMate range, comprising the WatchMate 850, 750 and 670, is also on display.