VESPER MARINE’S VIRTUAL AIS BEACON DEFINES COURSE PERIMETER FOR 34th AMERICA’S CUP

Safety Electronics Leader’s Virtual AIS Beacon Greatly Enhances Public Safety at World Class Sailing Event

Auckland, New Zealand – Vesper Marine, a leading manufacturer of innovative marine safety products, announced today that its Virtual AIS Beacon for Aids to Navigation has been selected by the America’s Cup Event Authority to provide critical safety information at the Louis Vuitton challenger series and the 34th AC Finals held this September on San Francisco Bay. A truly innovative technology, the Vesper Marine Virtual AIS Beacon will be used to establish a Virtual Aid to Navigation perimeter that clearly outlines the racecourse for AC event. Broadcast using the international standardized marine Automatic Identification System (AIS), changes to the course can be made in real time ensuring the ultimate in safety for spectators and other local San Francisco marine traffic.

Complementing a private system already used by AC organizers to manage the race and notify race boats of approaching boundaries, Vesper Marine’s technology has been implanted to address safety concerns for on-the-water spectators and general marine traffic that uses the busy waterway. Authorized race officials will collect real time information from race marshals, calculate condition-dependent course boundaries and, using Vesper Marine’s application programming interface (API), send information to the beacon automatically. The beacon will establish a virtual fence around the course and broadcast this information to the public using AIS frequencies, essentially painting the course on surrounding vessels’ dedicated AIS displays and navigation systems to clearly outline boundaries and other critical safety information. As a result, spectator and official vessels can quickly and easily see their own positions relative to the course boundaries on their navigation displays to ensure they are safely outside the course at all times.

“Vesper Marine's Virtual AIS Beacon proved its worth during the 2012 America’s Cup World Series races on San Francisco Bay allowing America’s Cup Race Management to communicate the location of the race boundaries,” said Stan Honey, director of technology for the 34th America’s Cup and one of the inventors of televised football’s ‘first-down’ technology. “We used it to broadcast the location of the boundaries around the racecourse to the spectator fleet, similar to the way we use graphic overlays to show the same boundary locations to those enjoying the race on TV. We are confident that Vesper’s technology will continue to greatly improve operations and communications for everyone during the main event!”
As part of its 15-month collaborative relationship with the America’s Cup organization, Vesper Marine has also worked closely with the US Coast Guard to implement a technological first in advanced marine safety warnings, Area Special Messages. Providing the ability for authorized personnel to quickly overlay shapes, shading and annotation -- in real time -- to electronic navigation charts using the Virtual AIS Beacon; passing traffic receives instant Area Special Messages notifications of temporary closings, danger zones and any other information considered vital to public safety. An exciting advance in real-time chart updates for optimal situational awareness, Vesper Marine is working closely with the US Coast Guard to demonstrate the future effectiveness of its technology beyond the America’s Cup.

"The ability to provide mariners real-time electronic marine safety information sent directly to their navigation displays represents a significant advance in our ability to quickly and effectively keep the public informed," said Jorge Arroyo, Program & Management Analyst for the U.S. Coast Guard and vice-chair of the AIS Working Group for the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation & Lighthouse Authorities (IALA). "Vesper Marine’s Virtual AIS Beacon is now equipped with the added capability for transmitting circles, boxes, lines and other shapes to mark spills, hazards, work zones, temporary closures and more. We envision a number of exciting new ways of employing this technology in the months and years to come."

A proven technology currently being used in applications around the globe, the Vesper Virtual AIS 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 AIS display, chartplotter or other receiving equipment within range of the transmitting equipment. A vessel’s onboard equipment can then alert crews if they are on a collision course with the marked 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.

“We are extremely pleased to have our virtual AIS technology selected by the America’s Cup Organizers,” said Jeff Robbins, CEO, Vesper Marine. “Our work with governments, ports, and private enterprise around the world has allowed us to continue to push the boundaries of what we can deliver with our technology. It is exciting to see our Virtual AIS Beacon used in a growing number of new and innovative applications. We look forward to extending the success of our work with the America’s Cup Event Authority and the United States Coast Guard into new solutions with organizations throughout the world.”
For more information on the Vesper Marine Virtual AIS Beacon, Vesper’s award-winning line of AIS products, or to learn more about Vesper Marine and 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 manufactures affordable practical electronic solutions that enhance boating safety and save lives in potentially dangerous marine situations. www.vespermarine.com

Vesper Marine Virtual AIS Beacon

WatchMate Vision Displaying America’s Cup Virtual Course Boundaries

This image and others are available as high-resolution JPEGs or TIFFs

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