

Marine businesses form strategic partnership

Norwalk's All Season Marine Works and Westport Outfitters will cross market products and services

By **CHRIS BOSAK**
Hour Staff Writer

NORWALK — In an industry not known for cooperation between competitors, two Norwalk boating businesses have teamed up to form a "strategic partnership."

Norwalk's Westport Outfit-

ters and All Seasons Marine Works, with locations in Rowayton and Westport, have announced an alliance whereby they will cross market and refer products and services. The partnership, the owners said, allows the businesses to take advantage of their respective areas of expertise to offer customers better service.

"At the end of the day, we've created a venture that we not only benefit from economies of scale, but the customers benefit from the experiential approach," Eric Johnson, owner of Westport Outfitters,



said. "Traditionally the marine services industry as a whole has been very closed, not sharing ideas or customers. People generally are not interested in being friendly competitors."

Westport Outfitters, located



within Norwalk Cove Marina, is more of a complete fishing and boating outfitter and guide, while All Seasons Marine Works has a larger boat service operation. Both businesses sell boats.

"Now we have boats available in all categories, from recreational to tournament fishing," Johnson said. "It's a strategic partnership that allows us to cross market brands. I promised I wouldn't use this word anymore after leaving the corporate world, but there are synergies between the businesses."

Johnson took over Westport Outfitters nearly three years ago and has often used unique ways to attract customers, including offering fishing sem-

See MARINE, B11

From B10

inars and donating his time to get children interested in fishing.

"So many people in these businesses never even try to do something different," he said. "It's a business that happens to involve fishing. The marine service traditionally is blinded, not thinking out of the box."

All Seasons Marine Works was founded in Rowayton in 1996 by Ted O'Neill and Gary Arcamone, and Nathan Gottlieb later became part owner. They opened a location in West-

port in 2003.

Gottlieb said Johnson is like-minded when it comes to keeping customers happy.

"It seems that we're all cut from the same cloth," Gottlieb said about his partners and Johnson. "We're very service and detail oriented, and put the customers first. With the partnership, it's like we're all opening up a new location."

Under the agreement, Westport Outfitters will exclusively recommend All Seasons Marine Works for all service obligations and commissioning of new boats. In turn, All Sea-

sons Marine Works will work exclusively with Westport Outfitters when it comes to outfitting new boats with gear and tackle.

Also, All Seasons Marine Works customers will be able to utilize Westport Outfitters' education programs and guide services.

They will also offer boats from brands such as Hydra Sport, Ranger, Parker, Sea Hunt, Bristol Harbor, Pilot, Bristol Skiff, Maverick, Pathfinder, Hewes Yamaha Motors.

Before Johnson purchased

Westport Outfitters, he was a customer of All Seasons Marine Works. Johnson also picked the brains of the owners before leaving the corporate world to buy the business.

"Since he started, we've been helping each other out," Gottlieb said. "We sell boats and service boats, but we don't really have a retail capacity. That's his forte. It's been a great relationship."

On the Web:

www.westportoutfitters.com

www.allseasonsmarineworks.com