

**2009 Investigators of the Year**  
**19<sup>th</sup> Annual IAMI Training Conference**  
**Portland Oregon**

Marine police tend to be busy people. Very busy. So when someone walks into a Sheriff's office and says he suspects his ex-employer – a manufacturer of jet boats – is shady, it would certainly be easy to dismiss the guy as just another disgruntled ex-employee getting back at his old boss. But when the ex-employee told this year's investigators of the year that the boat manufacturer was switching HINs and using multiple MSO's – Manufacturer Statements of Origin – to defraud customers, they took the time to listen and then launch a comprehensive investigation that would take many months and cover Oregon, Alaska, California, Washington, Montana, Nevada and even faraway Michigan.

It was learned that the manufacturer in question was taking previously registered used jet boats and selling them as new. The investigators confirmed that altered HINs and new MSO's – Manufacturer's Statement of Origin – were being used to eliminate the boat's title histories. Of 350 boats assigned HINs from this factory, investigators found that only about 225 of them actually existed. The other boats were "reborn" with new HINs. Boat buyers were defrauded. Financial institutions were defrauded. And, because the manufacturer failed to pay employee's federal taxes, even the IRS had been defrauded. That was a big mistake. All together, it was estimated that the boat builder had swindled an astounding \$3.5 million from unsuspecting victims with their old-for-new fraud scheme.

The 2009 Investigators of the Year had all received IAMI training, the same sort of training we've all been involved in for the past four days. Would their investigation have succeeded without the IAMI connection? Maybe. But thanks to IAMI, the many details that can make or break a complicated fraud case were all uncovered and handled masterfully. IAMI also provided another benefit – contacts in other states, both law enforcement and non law enforcement, which helped them put together an iron-tight case against the boat builder.

This year's Investigators of the Year are:

Sergeant Tom Turk

Lieutenant Pat Rowland

Detective Sergeant Colin Fagan

Detective Jim Tattersal

Of the Jackson County Sheriff's Office; Medford, Oregon