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East Chicago Marina Teamsters Save Man's Life **Man Resuscitated by CPR-Trained Heavy Equipment Operators**

A fisherman from Indiana who headed out on the lake on a leisurely fishing trip is alive today, thanks to a group of Teamsters in East Chicago, Indiana.



East Chicago Marina workers and Teamsters Local 142 members (l to r): Remigio "Hetio" Nava, Higenio "Beto" Martinez and Paul Jacquez.

Boating on the waters of Lake Michigan, the man had a heart attack and fell over the side of his boat headfirst into the lake.

Higenio "Beto" Martinez was just pulling a boat out of the water at the East Chicago Marina, when he saw the man fall into the water. Martinez acted quickly and pulled the man out of the lake and onto the pier.

With the help of co-workers Paul Jacquez and Remigio "Hetio" Nava, and a marina security guard, Martinez resuscitated the man using a defibrillator. An ambulance arrived moments later and transported the man to a local hospital for further treatment.

"It happened so fast, but thanks to the training we had, nobody panicked," said Martinez. "We were able to keep the situation under control and went through the proper procedures to resuscitate the man."

Jus two weeks prior to the incident, the workers at the East Chicago Marina underwent extensive CPR training. The city of East Chicago had also purchased the defibrillator used to save the man's life. The Teamsters' names were put in a Congressional record in recognition of their efforts.

Formerly known as the Pastrick Marina, the East Chicago Marina is located on the Lake Michigan shoreline in Lake County, Indiana, just miles from Chicago and accessible from major highways and the Skyway.



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“The marina is one of the city’s best-kept secrets,” said Nava. “It’s a small marina—it’s very mom-and-pop. Everyone knows everyone.”

The Teamsters at the marina are heavy equipment operators who run a busy operation at the dry storage facility.



The heavy equipment operators at the East Chicago Marina use forklift trucks to haul boats carefully onto the dry stack.

The facility is an inside dry rack system with an in-and-out service provided by the Teamsters. The workers launch and haul out watercraft by means of dry sack and Travelift services by using special equipment and boat handling skills.

“These Teamster members provide a very unique service,” said Ted Bilski, Local 142 Business Agent. “They conduct boat operations that no other city provides using municipal employee Teamsters. It’s like a valet service for boats.”

The workers care for the boats from the moment of delivery through winter storage. It is the attention to detail and careful handling that keeps the customers coming back every year.

“We handle these watercraft as though they were ours,” said Jacquez, who is also a Local 142 steward. “Some of these boats are worth at least \$65,000. You have to be extremely careful when setting these boats down on the dry stack or you will damage them.”

The equipment operators use 15,000- to 20,000-pound forklift trucks and a 50-ton marine Travelift, which hauls boats up to 100,000 pounds. They also pressure-wash the watercrafts at the end of the summer season as an additional service to marina customers.

“This job requires an operator to have an excellent depth of perception and alertness,” said Nava. “We are hauling more than a thousand boats a year into storage. We have to be very precise so we don’t put boats into the dry stack too low,” he explained. “The fiberglass bottom of a boat can easily be damaged if an operator is careless.”



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Nava added that additional damage, such as stress cracks in the boat, can develop if the operators don't lift the craft right at the points.



In addition to the 15,000- to 20,000-pound forklift trucks, the East Chicago Marina equipment operators use a 50-ton Marine Travelift, which hauls boats up to 100,000 pounds.

At the end of the season, the boats are winterized and taken out of the housing area. In the spring the heavy equipment operators pick up the boats and put them back into dry dock storage.

Martinez, Jacquez and Nava have been with the Teamsters for more than four years. They all agree that life is better at the marina with the union backing them up.

“We were underpaid and underappreciated. This was a job that no one wanted before the union came in,” said Jacquez. “This job used to start at \$6.50, and when we got the first Teamster contract the wages jumped. We are now making \$16 an hour. I'm sure people can understand why we love the Teamsters just for that reason alone.”

Throughout the years at the marina, the men have developed a solid working relationship and

have avoided injuries and accidents in their work.

“We have to all know our jobs inside out, and we do it well,” said Martinez. “It's all about teamwork, safety and coordination. That's what makes our crew so efficient in getting the job done.”

Teamsters Local 142 represents approximately 5,400 members in northwest Indiana in the construction, warehouse, commercial service and freight industries and the public sector. It is an affiliate of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, which represents 1.4 million hardworking men and women throughout the United States and Canada.