



By Tom Fuszard

Police officers must be able to rely on their equipment, whether it's radios, firearms, or cars. For those on the water all day, a reliable boat engine is a must.

The Jacksonville (Fla.) Sheriff's Office marine unit pushes its engines hard, and has come to rely on Evinrude E-TEC engines.

The greater Jacksonville area covers 840 square miles and is home to more than 1 million people. Responsibility for patrolling this area falls to the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. With the St. Johns River running through the heart of the city, the Sheriff's Office marine unit plays an integral part.

The marine unit's core boats consist of six Boston Whalers, all outfitted with Evinrude E-TEC engines: A 21-footer with a single 250 hp, two 22-foot boats with single 250 hp, two 24-foot boats with twin 200 hp, and a 26-footer with twin 250 hp engines. Rounding out their collection are a 20-foot ProLine with a 225 hp Evinrude E-TEC and their speed boat, a 32-foot Donzi with twin 250 hp Evinrude E-TECs.

It's a busy area, says Dep. Keith Nazworth, a 16-year veteran. Regular events include a jazz festival, concerts, fireworks displays, the World of Nations cultural event, and football games at Alltel stadium, home to the Jacksonville Jaguars. Their jurisdiction, covering more than 700 square miles, includes a marina, two naval air stations, and a port.

Of the 1,700 deputies in the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, six are assigned to the marine unit. They typically run three shifts from 4 a.m. to midnight, but will

Evinrude E-TEC engines help marine unit maintain order in and around Jacksonville, Fla.

put all boats in the water for the Kingfish tournament, which draws approximately 1,000 boats during the four-day event. "We have a lot of special events," Nazworth says, "because there's so much water here."

They also assist the county's bomb squad, dive team and SWAT team, and have helped the Coast Guard and FWC (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission). They're heavily involved in search and rescue, and investigate four or five boating accidents each year, Nazworth says.

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Such work is demanding on engines, and for that the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office relies on Evinrude E-TEC engines, which are purchased directly from BRP every two years. By that time they have 1,200 to 1,300 hours of use. "We definitely test 'em," Nazworth says.

Service work is handled by Beck's Outboard, Inc. in Jacksonville. Beck's, which has been a factory-certified service center since the 1970s, began doing warranty work for the Sheriff's Office in 2004; they added service work in 2005. Brian Beck says the arrangement works just fine for the family owned firm. "We have a really good working relationship with them," he says.

Prep work includes rigging, water testing, and propping. Following standard procedure, the engines are brought in every 200 to 250 hours for routine maintenance and at 400 hours to replace the water pumps.

Despite the tough conditions under which the engines are used, they perform well. "They put [the engines] through the mill," Beck says, "and they hold up."

Nazworth says that the fuel economy seems better with Evinrude E-TEC and that they don't use as much oil. "If I had a personal boat, it would have an Evinrude E-TEC," he says. Nazworth, who has been a member of the marine unit for three and one-half years, has known of Beck's Outboard for 20 years, and enjoys working with the firm. "They take good care of us," he says. "They're one of the best in the Southeast."

It's impressive to know the marine police who protect the residents of the greater Jacksonville area depend on Evinrude E-TEC engines and Beck's Outboard to always be at top performance.



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