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Phoenix Bass Boats™ Rise from the Ashes

TULLAHOMA, Tenn. – A veteran team of boat builders announced today the formation of Phoenix Bass Boats™, which rose from the ashes of another independent boat manufacturer.

“Phoenix will produce top-of-the-line bass boats with special attention to customer service,” company President Gary Clouse said. “Our plan is simple: We’ll build a company people trust because we design and manufacture high-quality boats that are offered at competitive prices without compromising customer service.”

Clouse is joined in the venture by Hank Baker and Teresa Johnson, both of whom served on the management team of Stratos Boats with Clouse until leaving in February 2006. Rounding out the Phoenix executives is Greg Strahm, previously a part of the Stratos design team.

Phoenix Bass Boats will be headquartered at the former Bumble Bee plant, which closed its doors earlier this year.

“We didn’t buy Bumble Bee, but we were able to acquire their equipment and molds, and lease their modern 50,000-square-foot factory where they had previously been,” Clouse said.

That allows Phoenix to get up and running quickly, putting out a boat line based on the acquired molds.

“Our first boats will be the Bee Line series, which will include eight models ranging from 15 to 21 feet long,” Clouse said. “The first of those boats will be on the market by Oct. 1.”

The Bee Line series will be built by many of the same employees who worked for Bumble Bee, and will be priced for the entry-level angler.

“A 21-foot Bee Line with a 225-horsepower outboard will retail in the \$35,000 range,” Clouse explained.

This is not a stripped down model: The boat will include much of the equipment that many other manufacturers only offer as options or sell for a much higher price.

At the same time, Phoenix will provide service to current Bumble Bee owners.

“We can’t assume Bumble Bee warranties, but we’ll do whatever we can to help owners of those boats and would welcome a call if they have any issues with their boats,” he said.

The first all-original, performance-based Phoenix Bass Boat designs will be ready for market by the spring of 2008, with 18- and 21-foot versions being released first. Two new models will then be marketed every nine months for the next four years to bring the Phoenix stable up to 18 models, Clouse said.

“We’re going to design these boats for serious bass anglers,” the one-time professional angler said. “My experience goes back to using the product, and I am constantly looking for new ideas to make our day on the water better. We’ll be introducing innovations not seen before in the bass-boat industry.”

“These won’t be cookie-cutter, mass-produced boats.”

He said obvious areas on which designers will concentrate include improved hole shot and running stability, but Clouse stressed that Phoenix Bass Boats will completely redefine “performance.”

“We’ll be looking at all-around handling performance: how the boat runs in rough water, how easy it is to fish out of, how tackle systems are integrated and many other things,” he said. “The whole package is my definition of performance.”

Dealer selection is ahead of schedule, as Phoenix dealers are coming on board daily.

For more information on Phoenix Bass Boats, log onto www.phoenixbassboats.com or call (931) 455-2014.

Phoenix Bass Boat™ Team Biographies

• **Gary L. Clouse**, President -- Clouse has more than 30 years of experience in the bass –fishing industry. He comes to Phoenix Bass Boats from Genmar, where he served as president of Stratos Boats and Champion Boats. Clouse led design, manufacturing, marketing and sales at the two Genmar subsidiaries. After a four-year stint in the early 1980s as a professional angler on the BASS, U.S. Bass and Operation Bass Tours, he joined Stratos Boats in 1988 in customer service and worked his way to national sales manager by 1997. In early 1998, he became national sales manager of the newly formed and ultimately highly successful Triton Boat Co. In 2001, he took the reigns of Stratos and assembled a team that took the company to a respected position in the industry, before leaving to start Phoenix Boat Company.

• **Teresa Johnson**, Vice President of Marketing and Business Development – Johnson has been in the bass-boat business since 2001. After completing her bachelor’s degree in Political Science and master’s degree in Organizational Management, Johnson worked in the legal profession, in human resources, in manufacturing operations and in marketing management. These experiences have built the business acumen to successfully start and execute the strategy for this new venture. Previously, Johnson has been responsible for multi-million annual operating budgets for marketing of bass boat companies, and she was responsible for all advertising, show/event displays, advertising through the professional fishing circuit and in-house production of all sales/marketing collateral including brochures, catalogs and print advertising.

• **Hank Baker**, Vice President of Sales – Baker has been involved in the bass-boat business for the last 30 years. After a stint in the military, Hank began working for Lowrance Electronics in sales. He was brought in on the ground floor of Stratos in 1984, and remained the company’s sales director until Jan. 31, 2006. Hank has been responsible for annual sales of more than \$100 million through 150 dealers while managing a force of seven outside sales representatives and internal sales staff.

• **Greg Strahm**, Director of Design, Engineering and New Product Development – Strahm has been in the research and development side of the bass-boat industry for 35 years. At the age of 13, Strahm worked as a chopper gun operator in his father’s Kansas boat company, Strahm Boats. He moved to Nashville in 1987, working as the chief tooler crafting all the original Stratos and Javelin models before being named plant manager for Sprint Boat Co. In 1997, he was hired to tool Triton boats, then a start-up company. He designed and tooled the complete Triton lineup for the next five years. In 2001 Strahm accepted a post at Stratos and Champion as a key member of the design team developing a new look and performance enhancements for the brands. He served in that position until 2007.