Boat Show cruises into Greenville this week

Its a buying show where 'best' deals of year will be found, retailer says

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After recent frigid temperatures, this week feels almost like spring boating weather.

That's a plus for the 40th annual Upstate South Carolina Boat Show, scheduled Thursday through Sunday at the Carolina First Center.

The four-day show will be open from noon to 9 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday and noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets are $6 for adults and $5 for senior citizens 65 and older and children 7-12. Children 6 and under are admitted free. Parking is $5.

January "is what kicks off the boating year," said John Hall, general manager of Sea Ray of Greenville, with shows usually held in January and February all over the country.

Most of the major boat dealers in the Upstate will participate in the show, which is organized by the dealers, he said.

Visitors to the boat show will see the newest recreational, fishing and ski boats as well as cruisers, personal watercraft, marine electronics and boating accessories. Also, a Bass fishing tank will be available. They can compare models and see what is new.

"The show is critical" to the success of the year, said Hall, who plans to have 18 boats at the show.

Boat dealers like all other retailers have experienced a tough year and some have closed, he said.

"We've been affected by the turndown in the economy," he said. But the Upstate Boat Show is a "buying show. This is when people get the best deals of the year."

Newcomers to the boating field will find plenty of people available to help them find a boat to fit their needs and their budgets, he said. Boats available will probably range in price from around $15,000 to more than $300,000.

Buyers, however, can finance a boat under $25,000 for 12 years; one between $25,000 and $50,000 for 15 years and one selling for more than $50,000 for 20 years, Hall said. Interest rates run from 6 percent to 7.99 percent for buyers with good credit ratings.

For more information, visit www.upstatescboatshow.com.