

# ATA Show Supports Annual Summit

By Shannon Rikard

The ATA Trade Show is, by far, the Archery Trade Association's most publicized event, one that's been called "Christmas morning for archers and bowhunters." However, one of the show's goals is less about "presents" and more about the archery industry's future.

"The trade show model is designed to accomplish two different goals," ATA CEO/President Jay McAninch said. "One facet of the show must meet today's business needs and do everything possible to offer an efficient, cost-effective venue for the industry to network, write orders, extend branding and otherwise do business. The second facet of the show must drive revenues for tomorrow's growth opportunities."

Many of those "growth opportunities" are already in place and working toward a common theme: grow archery.

## Many Targets. One Goal. Grow Archery.

This theme was splashed all over the 2015 show in Indianapolis and it encompasses how agencies, companies, organizations and other partners are working to make archery as mainstream as soccer or baseball in communities nationwide.

Since the ATA adopted a new business model in 2004, the Show has generated more than \$15 million. Over \$5 million of show proceeds have been used for direct investments that created facilities for archers and bowhunters and funded hundreds of projects that put bows into the hands of new archers.

Whether it's for a state wildlife agency building community archery parks or a nonprofit group recruiting hunters through mentoring programs, the goals are clear and unifying. They

can also be electrifying, which was evident during the December 2014 Archery and Bowhunting Summit in Louisville, Kentucky.

## ATA Shows and Archery Summits are Connected

**Question:** How is a meeting of representatives from state wildlife agencies, archery companies and non-government agencies (NGOs) connected to the archery and bowhunting industry's largest trade show?

**Answer:** The ATA organizes both events and revenue from the ATA Trade Show funds the Archery and Bowhunting Summit. The ATA has held 10 summits since 2001 and each summit provides forums to discuss programs, parks and other growth opportunities.

Greg Johnson, commissioner of Kentucky's Department of Fish and Wildlife, was the first speaker at the 2014 summit. He began by asking everyone to stand, extend his or her left arm and pat him- or herself on the back for all they've accomplished collectively. He also said archery is benefiting from a "perfect storm" of hype about the sport and an industry that was prepared for that burst of interest in recreational archery.

"Blockbuster archery-themed movies helped generate interest from a new audience and we were ready," Johnson

said. "When Louisville's own Jennifer Lawrence carried her bow and arrows on the big screen, thousands of kids were already carrying their bows and arrows to already scheduled practices. We hope to keep the perfect storm rolling by creating gun and archery ranges statewide and by facilitating public-private partnerships that capture archery interest."

## What Happens at an Archery and Bowhunting Summit?

During three days packed with meetings, networking events and hands-on activities, the 90 attendees learned about topics including:

**The National Wild Turkey Federation's "Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt" initiative**

**Easton Sports Development Foundation Archery Centers and Affiliate Facilities**

**The Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports (CAHSS)**

**Archery and bowhunting recruitment successes in Kentucky**

**National recruitment, retention and re-engagement efforts**

**Olympic Archery in the Schools - League Program**

**Explore Archery and USA Archery Clubs**

**The National Archery in the Schools Program**

**Greg Johnson (center), commissioner of Kentucky's Department of Fish and Wildlife and other KDFW staff members updated Summit attendees on archery and bowhunter recruitment successes in Kentucky.**



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## The Salvation Army Outdoors Program Scholastic 3D Archery

Industry representatives reported on “the state of the industry” and ATA staff provided updates and answered questions about social media, content marketing, the Retail Archery Academy, the Archery Retailer Program, archery park development and the Explore Bowhunting and Explore Bowfishing programs.

After hearing so much about their favorite sport, many summit attendees were ready to pick up a bow and shoot targets. Their wishes came true on the Explore Bowfishing range.

Standing in a small hotel meeting room with ornate wallpaper, plush carpet and crystal light fixtures, six people at a time stood side by side to shoot bowfishing equipment at foam fish. This demonstrated how little space is needed to set up an archery range. The reactions of participants, many of whom had never tried bowfishing before, proved that archery’s excitement and the thrill of hitting a target are universally appealing.

Whether you’re hitting an intended target or accomplishing a common goal, growing archery is the foremost objective of those in the industry.

### 2014 Summit Attendee Responses

*BJ Wolf, senior national account executive for Plano Synergy Outdoors, brand manager for Barnett Outdoors and ATA Board member*

Wolf didn’t know why he waited until 2014 to attend a summit.

“This is my first archery summit and I’m kicking myself for not coming to one in the past,” he said. “Blown away’ is an understatement. I’m amazed and energized by the effort these organizations are putting forward to promote archery. I’ve worked in the automotive industry and the airline industry but I’ve never been part of an industry that does so much to drive the retailer to be better and that provides the tools to be better.”

*Kathy Garland, archery education coordinator for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources*

Garland was surprised by the wealth of information provided at her first summit.

“I’m excited about a lot of program updates, like the Level 2 instructor trainer certification through USA Archery,” she said. “And I’ve had opportunities to meet other people who have experienced the same challenges I have and they’ve offered insights and answers I can take back to work to grow my programs.”

Garland said the summit also changed her mind about Explore Bowfishing.

“I said I wouldn’t offer Explore Bowfishing in 2015 but trying the bowfishing activity and having all my questions answered at the summit changed my mind,” she said. “I can implement Explore Bowfishing right behind NASP because both programs use the same equipment. Offering the program won’t cost the state any more money. Plus, it’s fun!”

*Ryan Shutts, category manager for archery at Cabela’s*

Shutts also experienced his first summit in 2014 and said the event was better than he expected.

“I thought the meetings would be more state-by-state reporting but they’ve been more about presenting ideas developed for use by the state agencies,” he said. “Retailers like Cabela’s can learn what states are struggling with and figure out how to help. I’m excited about Explore Bowhunting and about NASP delving into 3-D tournaments with their International Bowhunter Organization partnership. Those are big opportunities for hunting stores like ours to reach new archers.”

*Mike Barnes, vice president of Bohning Archery*

Barnes also gained new ideas he plans to implement at work.

“The content-marketing aspect of our discussion hit home for me,” he said. “That was something I hadn’t thought of before. As a company, we struggle with whether an ad in a magazine does any good. I definitely want to talk to Bohning’s marketing department about content marketing.”

Barnes, a member of the Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting



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Sports (CAHSS), attended the summit to understand what's happening throughout the industry.

"We get so wrapped up in our day-to-day things that we don't see outside the box," he said. "You're in your own little cube and worried about your company and it's nice to come here and see all the other work the ATA, the NGOs and the states are doing. It's all about expanding our future. If we don't have bowhunting, bowfishing and shooting, we won't have an industry."

*Tammy Sapp, director of communications at Bass Pro Shops*

Sapp, a first-time summit attendee, also mentioned the importance of uniting diverse organizations to benefit archery.

"Anyone with an interest in recruiting, retaining and reactivating archers and bowhunters will want to attend ATA's Archery and Bowhunting Summit," she said. "With attendees from state and federal wildlife agencies, archery and bowhunting organizations and the industry, this meeting is a fantastic networking platform. It's also a great opportunity to hear a diversity of voices coming together to share ideas, plans and updates that help ensure the future of hunting, conservation and recreational archery."

*Dave Parker, director of sales and strategy at Kinsey's and recently elected ATA Board member*

Parker attended the first Archery and Bowhunting Summit held in 2001 and returned in 2014 to stay informed about the industry. He was excited to

see how many early conversations held in brainstorming meetings years ago are now being implemented with tangible results.

"Being a lifelong bowhunter, it's valuable for me to see Explore Bowhunting grow from an idea into an outreach program that's spawning interest in other outreach programs like Explore Bowfishing," Parker said. "It's incredible to see that and know the efforts and time everyone is putting into this are going a long way toward growing our sport and benefiting the whole archery community."

Parker was especially interested in the archery shootout, a contest held in November 2014 that pitted YouTube stars Dude Perfect and Brittani Taylor against each other in a video showdown and gave prizes to viewers who voted for their favorite.

As of Dec. 13, 2014, 18.9 million people had viewed the videos and 20,000 had voted.

"In a few weeks, 17 million people viewed the Dude Perfect video alone," Parker said. "That's six minutes of archery content that was viewed by 17 million people. I don't think it's sunk in yet for many people. Look at the cost of buying 30 seconds of airtime during a Monday Night Football game and you'll realize the value of six minutes of content seen by 17 million people who chose to watch the video. To me, that shows an incredible opportunity that's there and waiting for us to figure out how to navigate into that audience."



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