

Busy ATA Show Marks 20 Years

By Amy Hatfield, Director of Content Marketing

ARCHERY TRADE ASSOCIATION

To celebrate its 20th year, the ATA Trade Show returned to the city where it started: Louisville, Kentucky. In 1997, the event's inaugural year, every major bow manufacturer was present and accounted for and, as if by design, the same was true in 2016 with the return of Mathews Archery.

The show marked a year of milestones and none were more gratifying than the record number of archery shops attending. Here are the main member categories for 2016, along with the table comparing this year's attendee numbers to numbers from previous years.

In 2016, there were:

- 1,168 retail and distribution buying companies
- 9,950 total attendees
- 631 exhibiting companies
- 228,892 square feet of brands, products and innovation

"We've had a fantastic show," Joel Maxfield of Mathews Archery said. "We're glad to be back at the ATA Show and it's been a phenomenal experience. We've been really welcomed and well-received. A lot of the manufacturers welcomed us back, too. The attendance has been great."

Lance Potsma, a retailer from Top of Utah Archery in Logan, Utah, said the ATA Show is critical to his business.

"The ATA Show helps me maintain a good margin and compete against a big box store that moved in four blocks away from us and another big sporting goods store that's two blocks away," he said. "With the show's help, I've increased my profitability enough that I'm not worried about them being there. In fact, I think it helps us."

He also loved that the ATA added USA Archery Level 1 and Level 2 certification; "I actually put that in my recommendations for four straight years,

TABLE 1. Counts individuals who actually attended the ATA Trade Show. Data prior to 2010 is available upon request.

Badge Type	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Retailer/Buyer/Distributor	2,753	2,985	2,724	2,988	3,193	3,401	3,565
Exhibitor	3,281	3,838	3,818	3,982	4,160	4,462	4,466
Non-exhibiting Manufacturer	149	103	94	46	58	38	98
Press	387	379	408	343	320	362	422
Non-Profit	N/C ¹	N/C ¹	N/C ¹	N/C ¹	48	29	85
Outfitter/Guide	N/C ¹	N/C ¹	N/C ¹	N/C ¹	17	29	27
Sales and Service	221	400	425	485	555	553	630
Sales Rep.	185	204	206	213	234	258	272
Supplier	N/C ¹	N/C ¹	34	42	75	101	118
ATA Staff / Volunteer	53	95	74	76	63	82	68
Guest	14	176	150	78	221	235	199
Total Verified Attendees	7,043	8,180	7,933	8,253	8,944	9,550	9,950

Footnote:

1. N/C indicates badge type was not counted.

so I'm excited ATA added it. We did our Level 1 certification at the show this year."

The show has an unlikely sense of mystery, too, thanks to the hopes and ambitions of entrepreneurs.

"You never know what will happen next," Malcolm Snyder, vice president and marketing director at Pape's Inc, said. "You're sitting in your booth, talking to a dealer and you see a guy over there with a briefcase, waiting to meet you. You assume he's got nothing but what if he's about to hit the next home run? The dealer leaves and the briefcase runs over and asks five minutes of your time. He opens his briefcase, you look, and you say... 'How many can you make and when can you deliver them?' That happens more often than you would think."

While the show continues to evolve and grow, ATA President and CEO Jay McAninch said its core purpose remains unchanged. "It's a focused event, which is why we qualify everyone who gets a badge," he said. "Everything is geared toward business and efficiency to maximize time and opportunity for companies attending."

And just like in the beginning, during those first lean years of the show, the event continues to benefit from great volunteers. Gregg Brown and his team from Suburban Whitetail Management of Northern Virginia manage the show's shooting lanes. Many family members of ATA staff volunteer, too. McAninch's wife, Janet, has worked in the ATA booth every year except one since 2001. Tina Stratmann, Michelle Zeug's mother, has volunteered for over a decade. Carla King, Mitch's wife, has volunteered since 2007. Mitch Lewis, Maria Lewis's husband, helps every year; and so does Luann Nelson, John Nelson's wife.

"This year, we had over 40 volunteers working in nearly all areas of the show and every one of them is important to our success," McAninch said. "They helped keep our staffing costs very low and in return, they got a few hours to enjoy the show since they all love archery and bowhunting."

The efficiency has made the show a fundraising machine. During the past decade, it has provided nearly \$13 million in funds, staff expertise and resources to state agencies, city and



The 2016 show marked the 20th anniversary of the archery and bowhunting industry's chief business and social event, which now annually draws about 9,500 retailing, manufacturing and marketing professionals.

county parks-and-rec departments, archery and bowhunting organizations and other well-vetted groups. Those funds and resources have been used for building archery ranges and archery parks and operating after-school and community archery and bowhunting programs, such as the National Archery in the Schools Program.

The show also helped fund the creation and implementation of programs like Explore Archery, Explore Bowhunting, Explore Bowfishing and the Retail Growth Initiative.

"By attending the show, everyone invests in our sports' futures," McAninch said. "Today, each show generates net proceeds of about \$2.2 to \$2.3 million to help grow archery, bowhunting and the industry itself. And it's working. Between 2012 and 2014, our sports grew from 18.9 million archers/bowhunters to 21.6 million, a nearly 15 percent increase. Since we began this effort, the number of Americans shooting bows and arrows has increased by nearly three times. Every ATA member should take pride in those numbers."

How Big Was It?

The 2016 ATA Trade Show played host to 615 exhibitors, who booked a record 228,892 square feet of booth space. In other words, you'd need four NFL football fields, laid goal post to goal post, to accommodate just the

show's booths, minus the aisles. In fact, if you crammed all those booths on the 4.5 acre flight deck of the USS Harry S. Truman, you'd still need half of a football field for the spillover.

Archery Academy Quietly Becomes a Top Feature

With dynamic, informative speakers, the show's seminar series continues to grow and attract attendees early, before the show floor opens each morning. Of the 33 seminars, those sessions filling the most seats included George Ryals IV's "Professional Tuning and Archery Form Technique," Larry Wise's "How to Cope with Target Panic/Release-Aid Management Skills," Nicole Nash's and Michelle Zeug's "Grow Your Business and Create Supplementary Income" and QDMA's Kip Adams's "The State of the Whitetail: Trends in Harvest and Management Programs."

The ATA Trade Show returns to Indianapolis in 2017. Show dates are set; mark your calendars for January 10-12. Indianapolis is a favored show site among ATA members. In a 2014 survey by Responsive Management, ATA retailers ranked Indy as the number one show site.

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