

TOWA

The Official Publication of the **Texas Outdoor Writers Association**

TOWA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Port Aransas Conference Features Stimulating Program, Perfect Weather

By Bob Lusk, President

Fantastic! Educational, entertaining! These were just but a handful of the descriptions bouncing all over the 2011 TOWA Conference in Port Aransas. The program was timely, well thought out and stimulating. Pitch in the perfect weather, salt water, a family atmosphere and we thought we were on vacation.

The event started with a Thursday evening reception, courtesy of the Port Aransas Chamber of Commerce, followed by a fish fry, hosted by the Port Aransas Boatmen. The boatmen made a short presentation about disappearing oil rigs in the gulf. The TOWA presented the boatmen's group with a \$500.00 check for their scholarship fund.

Port Royal Resort was the host facility, which won praise from every



Bob Hood shows off his custom-made knife that he received after being named the 2011 L.A. Wilke Award winner. Photo by David Redwine. Additional photos are available for viewing at (no charge for prints for TOWA members) at Redwine's website of www.daveredwineimages.com.

time and well worth the effort to be here. We love this venue." Clyde Hopkins, with Toyota, said, "We are proud to support the TOWA. This is my 17th consecutive event with the Texas outdoor writers and this may have been the best one, ever." Pretty strong words from key supporters of the TOWA.

The conference committee took

a slightly different approach for this conference. High octane speakers shared their expertise in hour-long sessions, a change from past conferences where many speakers had shorter amounts of time. This strategy led to more interaction with attendees.

David Garlock, University of Texas Senior Lecturer in the Journalism department, had a lively exchange with his topic, "Why Magazines Will Not Die and the Best Writing is NOT online." Next, three successful book authors loaded a table panel discussion

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CALENDAR

April 17 - 18 – Annual Spring Fling and TOWA Board Meeting in Rockport-Fulton, hosted by the Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce.

July 9 - 11 – The 84th annual Outdoor Writers Association of America will be held at the Snowbird Ski and Summer Resort, Salt Lake City, UT. Details available at www.owaa.org.

Aug. 10-13 – The Professional Outdoor Media Association business conference will be held at Ogden, UT. Details available at www.professionalooutdoormedia.org.

"This is my 17th consecutive event with the Texas outdoor writers and this may have been the best one, ever."

— Clyde Hopkins, Toyota representative

supporting member.

Craig Eppling, with Chevrolet, said, "This event was highly organized, on

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TOWA was formed in 1958 as a professional/social organization for those who communicate about hunting, fishing and other outdoor pursuits, as well as those in business and industry connected with the outdoors.



The TOWA Newsletter is proudly sponsored by Gulf States Toyota. For information, go to www.buyatoyota.com.



NATIONAL OUTDOOR NEWS

Kevin Howard Receives 2011 NWTF Communicator of the Year Award

NASHVILLE, TN – The National Wild Turkey Federation has honored Howard Communications President Kevin Howard with its 2011 Communicator of the Year Award at the 35th annual NWTF National Convention and Sport Show held Feb. 17-20.

Howard and Howard Communications are veteran TOWA supporting members and were awarded the TOWA Supporting Member of the Year Award in 2009.

Each year, the NWTF recognizes a communicator who answers the call to promote the NWTF's mission of promoting wild turkey conservation and preserving North America's hunting heritage.

"I am deeply honored to be recognized as the NWTF Communicator of the Year," Howard said. "To be placed in the company of past recipients, many who are long time colleagues and friends, is very humbling.

"Having a career that deals with spreading the word about the outdoors, wildlife conservation and hunting has been a dream come true. Along the way I have had the pleasure to work with many people, companies and the outdoor media in promoting the outdoors. I also have had the pleasure of working with many of the people at the NWTF over the years to help promote the conservation of the wild turkey and our hunting heritage.

"Thank you for the recognition of my efforts that includes everyone who works at Howard Communications. We will continue to work at promoting the outdoors and the hunting lifestyle in the ever-changing world of communications."

Howard Communications, Inc. is a public relations firm representing several outdoor companies including: Birchwood Casey, Browning, Winchester Repeating Arms, Danner, LaCrosse, D.T. Systems, Hunter's Specialties, Mossy Oak, Nestlé Purina PetCare, Pursuit Channel and Bushnell Outdoor Products who sells its products worldwide under the Bushnell, Tasco, Uncle Mike's Law Enforcement, Stoney Point, Hoppe's, Butler Creek, Uncle Mike's, Final Approach, Simmons and Millett brand names.

"Kevin's knowledge of and experience in the outdoor industry is apparent in virtually every conversation he's involved in," said NWTF Editorial Director Burt Carey. "One look at the list of clients he represents shows his dedication and passion for the wild turkey and the NWTF. I couldn't be happier that the NWTF Board of Directors looked beyond traditional media to recognize Kevin's accomplishments and the important role he plays as a PR professional."

Howard has spent the last 26 years working in the outdoors industry. He founded Howard Communications in 1999. The company is known by the outdoor media for its quick response to requests for information and attention to detail.

Past NWTF Communicator of the Year Award recipients include: Tom Fegely (2002), Ron Schara (2003), J. Wayne Fears (2004), Grits Gresham (2005), Jim Zumbo (2006), Jim Casada (2007), Glenn Sapir (2008) Col. Tom Kelly (2009) and Ronnie "Cuz" Strickland (2010).

The NWTF is a nonprofit conservation organization that works daily to further its mission of conserving the wild turkey and preserving our hunting heritage. Through dynamic partnerships with state, federal and provincial wildlife agencies, the NWTF and its members have helped restore wild turkey populations across the country, spending more than \$331 million to conserve 15.9 million acres of habitat for all types of wildlife.

For more information about Howard Communications, email Howard at khoward@howardcommunications.com or Mike Capps at mcapps@howardcommunications.com.

Two Dan Klepper Memorial Scholarship Winners Selected for 2011



Matthew Abernathy, left, and Joseph Lewis are the recipients of the 2011 TOWA Dan Klepper Memorial Scholarship.

As part of the annual TOWA conference awards banquet ceremony, two winners of the annual TOWA Dan Klepper Memorial Scholarship were announced and will receive a scholarship check of \$1,500 each from the TOWA Youth Scholarship and Outdoor Education fund.

The 2011 winners are Matthew Abernathy of Kingwood, who is majoring in Marine Resource Management at Texas A&M University – Galveston; and Joseph Lewis of Klondike, who is a Wildlife Conservation and Management major at Texas A&M University – Commerce.

Among the criteria that impressed Scholarship Co-Chairwomen Marianne Odom and Judy Mills were the winners' career goals that include communications and directly impact the outdoors, environmental conservation or wildlife management and conservation. Both submitted letters of recommendation that attested to their potential for success in attaining those goals. Both of the selectees have taken advantage of opportunities to use mass media to communicate their knowledge of the outdoors and have been involved with professional organizations related to the outdoors and their majors.

Abernathy is an Eagle Scout who grew up with a love for the outdoors, particularly snakes, and earned a bachelor's degree in ocean and coastal resources at Texas A&M – Galveston. A year teaching fifth graders the wonders of the outdoors at the Houston School District's Outdoor Education Center convinced him that he wanted a career in outdoor and environmental education.

In addition to his studies, he works as an education programmer at Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center in Humble. He provides presentations on nature and conservation, while teaching Texas Parks & Wildlife Department junior angler, boater education and hunter education courses.

As the resident herpetologist, Abernathy shares his expertise on local reptiles and amphibians with various groups, and volunteers at

Sheldon Lake State Park with the Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Program and the Katy Prairie Partnership.

He has written articles for the park's volunteer newsletter and is submitting a short article about a sea turtle documentary – "The Heartbreak Turtle Today" – to the Texas Wild Network. He helped develop the "210 Bio-Blitz Amphibians and Reptiles" program at the park and has contributed information and photos to the website.

Of his career aspirations, he wrote in his application: "I've spent most of my life around Houston and the upper Texas Coast, and I want to help people realize how amazing this area is and ensure that future generations will be able to get as much enjoyment from this area when they are older."

In addition to his studies, Lewis is researching American alligators at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge on Lake Worth to determine the population status and habitat selection.

He honed his media skills when he was interviewed by the Fort Worth Star Telegram and a Dallas television station after alligator sightings in the area in June 2010.

Lewis, who was born in Lawrenceburg, IN, earned a Bachelor of Science degree in natural resources and environmental science from Ball State University and has traveled around the country studying various species.

He worked at the university's Field Station and Environmental Education Center and Versailles State Park in Indiana. He has researched the endangered Indiana bat at various habitats in that state and has studied bison for the Nature Conservancy in South Dakota.

Lewis said he would like to work as a manager of a wildlife refuge or park in a job that would also allow him to continue doing research, adding that a Ph.D. program may be in his future.

"I am really interested in working with big game and would jump at any opportunity to pursue another degree in that field," he wrote in his application.

TOWA Members Shine In 2011 EIC Contest

Congratulations to all the winners in the 2011 TOWA Excellence in Craft contest that showcases the best works of our members each year and gives everyone an opportunity to see the variety of talent in our organization. This year's contest was judged by members of the Florida Outdoor Writers Association and coordinated by EIC Chairman Kendal Hemphill. The winners of the categories are listed below and examples of the first place entries will be published in future edition of the TOWA newsletter.

CATEGORY 1: OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHY – PEOPLE

First: **Will Leschper** – “Lucky Ling” – *San Angelo Standard Times*
 Second: **Lefty Ray Chapa** – “Fly Fishing Expo” – *San Antonio Express News*
 Third: **T.J. Greaney** – “Cody Teaching” – *KOZ Newsletter*

CATEGORY 2: OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHY – WILDLIFE/ NATURE

First: **Chester Moore** – “Crappie Angler” – *The Orange Leader*
 Second: **John Jefferson** – “Love Sick” – *Open Seasons Newsletter*
 Third: **John Goodspeed** – “Taking A Bath” – *San Antonio Express News*

CATEGORY 3: OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHY - OPEN

First: **Lefty Ray Chapa** – “Fly by Night” – *San Antonio Express News*
 Second: **Will Leschper** – “Fighting Mad” – *San Angelo Standard Times*
 Third: **Sam Caldwell** – “Turtle Release” – *Currents Newsletter*

CATEGORY 4: OUTDOOR RADIO

First: **Bill Olsen/Harold Gunn** – Linda Campbell, guest
 Second: **Chester Moore** – Outdoors
 Third: **Bill Olsen/Harold Gunn** – Carter Smith, guest

CATEGORY 5: OUTDOOR TELEVISION - VIDEO

First: **Alan Fisher** – “The International Pursuit” – *TP&W Television*
 Second: **T.J. Greaney** – Kayla

CATEGORY 6: OUTDOOR ILLUSTRATION/GRAPHIC

First: **Sam Caldwell** – “Tide cover” – *Tide magazine*
 Second: **Christopher Blum** – “Backlash” – *Saltwater Texas*
 Third: **Christopher Blum** – “Live vs. Artificial” – *Saltwater Texas*

CATEGORY 7: OUTDOOR PUBLICATION – UNDER 25,000

First: **Jonette Childs** – *Saltwater Texas*
 Second: **Ron Behnke** – *Saltwater Angler*
 Third: **John Jefferson** – *Open Seasons newsletter*

CATEGORY 8: OUTDOOR PUBLICATION – OVER 25,000

First: **Ted Venker** – *Tide Magazine*
 Second: **Bill Olsen** – *Texas Outdoors Journal*
 Third: **Diane Parks** – *Texas Outdoors Journal*

CATEGORY 9: OUTDOOR FICTION/HUMOR

First: **Mike Holmes** – “Feral hogs invade coastal waters” – *Saltwater Texas*
 Second: **Will Leschper** – “The reason for the season” – *Abilene Reporter News*
 Third: **Judy Bishop Jurek** – “Gotcha!” - *Tracks*

CATEGORY 10: OUTDOOR COLUMN/OPINION WRITING

First: **Ted Venker** – “Battered Champ Needs A Helping Hand” – *Tide magazine*
 Second: **Bill Olsen** – “Looks & Sounds Like Texas” – *Texas Outdoors Journal*
 Third: **Jim Steiert** – “Steam-Generated Electricity: A Brook Trout Jump Start” – *Hereford Brand*

CATEGORY 11: NEWSPAPER FEATURE

First: **Will Leschper** – “Guest in the Shallows” – *Bryan-College Station Eagle*
 Second: **Shannon Tompkins** – “Once Bitten, Twice Shy” – *Houston Chronicle*
 Third: **Shannon Tompkins** – “Wild About These Cats” – *Houston Chronicle*

CATEGORY 12: MAGAZINE FEATURE

First: **John Goodspeed** – “The Nutty Professor” – *Texas Parks & Wildlife Magazine*
 Second: **Chester Moore** – “Secrets of the Crappie Bite” – *Texas Fish & Game Magazine*
 Third: **Judy Bishop Jurek** – “Sprucing Up Deer Camp” – *Texas Trophy Hunters Magazine*

CATEGORY 13: OUTDOOR FEATURE - OPEN

First: **John Jefferson** – “The Ballad of Billy Sandifer” – *Texas Parks & Wildlife Magazine*
 Second: **Shannon Tompkins** – “Wild about these cats” – *Houston Chronicle*
 Third: **David Sikes** – “Through the eyes of a true artist” – *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*

CATEGORY 14: OUTDOOR NEWS REPORTING

First: **David Sikes** – “Fishing trip turns into a matter of survival” – *Corpus Christi Caller Times*
 Second: **Will Leschper** – “Frozen Fish” – *Bryan-College Station Eagle*
 Third: **Jim Steiert** – “Northern Pintails” – *Hereford Brand*

CATEGORY 15: OUTDOOR BOOK

First: **Kendal Hemphill** – “The Buck Never Got Here”
 Second: **Jim Pepper** – “Not Your Ordinary Fishing Stories”
 Third: **Bink Grimes** – “Sunrise Sunset”

CATEGORY 16: OUTDOOR WEB PAGE

First: **Bill Olsen** – *Texas Outdoors Journal*
 Second: **Ralph Winingham** – *ralphwiningham.com*
 Third: **Ron Behnke** – *Salty Angler*

CATEGORY 17: SPECIAL PROJECTS/ CONSERVATION

First: **David Sikes** – “An Unlikely Hero” – *Corpus Christi Caller Times*
 Second: **David Sikes** – “Conservation Done Right” – *Corpus Christi Caller Times*
 Third: **Jonette Childs** – “What’s up with Cedar Bayou?” – *Saltwater Texas*

CATEGORY 18: ORIGINAL INTERNET STORY/BLOG

First: **John Goodspeed** – “Extinct McQueeney vampire fish? Not quite” – *www.MySanAntonio.com*
 Second: **Shannon Tompkins** – “Sometimes, unintentional mistakes are unbearable” – *HoustonChronicle.com*
 Third: **Chester Moore** – “Concealed Carry: Handguns and Pit Bulls” – *Fishgame.com*

2011 Toyota Texas Bass Classic to Provide at Least \$250,000 for TP&W

ATHENS—The Toyota Texas Bass Classic will return to the Lone Star Convention and Expo Center in Conroe Oct. 28-30, with the event proceeds to benefit the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and its outdoor recreation programs.

The classic has raised \$1 million in donations to TP&WD during the past four years. The 2011 donation will be a minimum of \$250,000.

“The focus of these programs is to expose kids and non-traditional users to the sport of fishing and the conservation efforts upon which all good fishing depends,” said J.C. Fassino, president of the Texas Bass Classic Foundation.

“These funds play a vital role in TP&WD’s efforts to bring fishing close to home for millions of Texans,” said Dave Terre, chief of management and research for TP&WD’s Inland Fisheries Division. “The Toyota Texas Bass Classic donation pays a large share of the cost of the Neighborhood Fishin’ Program as well as the Texas State-Fish Art Contest and



other programs designed to get more people involved in outdoor activities.

“At a time when the state is struggling with a huge budget deficit, these funds are more important than ever.”

The classic will continue to host family-friendly live music performances by noteworthy artists. Event activities at the Lone Star Convention and Expo Center appeal to a wide range of spectator interests and include a kids’ area with outdoor activities and exhibits featuring instructional clinics and the latest in equipment and accessories.

The tournament functions are operated by the Professional Anglers Association with technical assistance and support from TP&WD’s Inland Fisheries Division. Title sponsor for the event is Toyota.

Corporate partnership opportunities are available for 2011. For additional information, visit www.toyotatexasbassclassic.com or call (866) 907-0143.

Artists & Exhibitors Sought for June 25 National Art Expo in East Texas

ATHENS – The Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center and Wildlife Forever need artists and exhibitors to participate in the 13th annual National State-Fish Art Contest Expo to be held concurrently with the 2nd annual Art’s Better Outside event on June 25 at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens.

Booths are available on a first-come, first-served basis. All artists are welcome to exhibit and offer their work for sale to the public.

Booth fees are underwritten by the Toyota Texas Bass Classic Foundation, sponsor of the Texas division of the State-Fish Art Contest. Artists are encouraged to actively demonstrate their craft or offer a hands-on art-related activity for the visiting public and the young artists.

The purpose of the event is to acquaint young artists from across the nation with the range of artistic endeavors available to them either as a career or a hobby.

All the students in attendance will be winners of their state contest in one of three grade levels: 4 to 6; 7 to 9; or 10 to 12. About 50 young artists are expected to attend. With families and the general public, total attendance is projected to be between 750 and 1,000.

Deadline for students to enter the contest is March 31, with winners to be announced April 22.

To learn more about becoming involved in the event as an artist or exhibitor, contact Jim Booker at (903) 670-2266 or at james.booker@tpwd.state.tx.us.

For more information about the event, contact Zoe Ann Stinchcomb at (903) 670-2238 or at Zoeann.stinchcomb@tpwd.state.tx.us.

For information on the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center and the Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest, visit <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishart/> or www.wildlifeforever.org/contest.

Hunter's Specialties Earns 2011 Cabela's Lifetime Business Achievement Award

LAS VEGAS – Hunter's Specialties, one of the world's largest manufacturers of hunting accessories, has been chosen as the recipient of the 2011 Cabela's Lifetime Business Achievement Award. The presentation was made during a Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade Show reception at the Venetian Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

The award was accepted by Dave and Carman Forbes, founders of Hunter's Specialties, and was presented by Tommy Miller, president of Cabela's Inc.; Mike Callahan, president of Aspen Partners and chairman of the Outdoor Business Council; and Bud Pidgeon, president of the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance.

"Hunter's Specialties has been built on the passion for hunting and the outdoors. In today's world, protecting our hunting heritage for our generations to come has been a long standing commitment by Hunter's Specialties," said Dave Forbes. "We are honored to receive the Cabela's Lifetime Business Achievement Award."

The U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance and its Outdoor Business Council created the award in 2006 to honor the Cabela family's dedication to protecting outdoor sports, including hunting, fishing, and trapping. It is presented to companies that demonstrate the same passion and commitment to protecting America's outdoor heritage as the Cabela family has shown.

"This is our way of honoring the Cabela family and other leaders, such as Hunter's Specialties in the outdoor business community for their efforts to defend our rights," Pidgeon said.

Hunter's Specialties, founded in 1977, is one of the nation's largest makers of hunting accessories. For over 30 years and with over 900 products to its name, Hunter's Specialties lives by its company motto, "For Sportsmen, By Sportsmen." It has been on the cutting edge of product development including calls, scents, scent elimination, archery equipment and action-packed videos. Examples of this innovation include the highly successful Camo-Compac and the Scent-A-Way line of products.

For years Hunter's Specialties has proven a major supporter of conservation. Its support of USSA's Outdoor Business Council, a coalition of businesses dedicated to protecting outdoor traditions, has made a large impact on hunting and shooting programs from coast to coast.

Cabela's, known as the World's Foremost Outfitter, has grown and prospered from simple beginnings to become the world's largest direct marketer and a leading specialty retailer of hunting, fishing, camping and related outdoor merchandise.

For more information about Cabela's, visit www.cabelas.com and for more information about Hunter's Specialties, visit www.hunterspec.com.

The U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance is a national association of sportsmen and sportsmen's organizations that protects the rights of hunters, anglers and trappers in the courts, legislatures, at the ballot, in Congress and through public education programs. For more information about the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance and its work, call (614) 888-4868 or visit www.ussportsmen.org.

NSSF Hails 3.6 Percent Increase in 2009 Hunting License Sales

NEWTOWN, CT – The National Shooting Sports Foundation, trade association for the firearms and ammunition industry, calls the 3.6 percent rise in paid hunting license holders for 2009 one of the most encouraging signs for hunting in recent years.

"This is great news for our industry and everyone associated with hunting," said Steve Sanetti, president and chief executive officer of the NSSF. "Many efforts are at work to build hunting participation, and they are paying off. More people are enjoying the outdoors and sharing the tradition of hunting with family and friends. Also, more hunting license sales translate into more funds for wildlife conservation."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has reported a total of 14,974,534 paid license holders for 2009, the largest figure since 2002 and an increase of 526,494 over 2008. The 3.6 percent rise in paid license holders represents the largest year-over-year increase since 1974. (A "paid license holder" is one individual regardless of the number of licenses purchased.)

NSSF cites several reasons for the increase, ranging from programs launched by many state wildlife agencies over the last decade to



Source: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

increase hunting participation to a difficult economy that motivated hunters to fill their freezers with game rather than store-bought meat. Also, hunters who were among the unemployed or had their work hours reduced used some of their free time to go hunting.

Coordinated efforts of state wildlife agencies, conservation organizations and the firearms industry appear to have halted a decades-long decline in hunting license sales, which since 2005 have held at the 14.5-million level until the jump in 2009.

NSSF has played a key role promoting hunting participation with its programs and websites. Through its Hunting Heritage Partnership program, NSSF has provided state agencies with \$3.8 million to fund initiatives designed to encourage hunting among all age groups.

Through Families Afield, a partnership effort started in 2004 with NSSF, the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance and National Wild Turkey Federation, 30 states have made it easier for youth to begin hunting at a younger age with licensed adults. NSSF websites such as www.WingshootingUSA.org make it easy for hunters to locate game bird preserves, where youth can easily get started in hunting and where

inactive adult hunters can revive their interest.

Another positive sign for hunting is that contrary to claims of a wholesale decline in hunting participation, paid license holders have increased in 24 states in the five-year period from 2005 to 2009.

"Due to continued urbanization and changes in our culture, hunting will face significant challenges for the foreseeable future, but at the same time hunting remains an extremely important activity in the lives of millions of Americans, as the latest hunting licenses sales figures confirm," Sanetti said.

The actual number of hunters who go afield in any given year is greater than the total of paid hunting license holders in that year. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service figures do not account for certain state exemptions for purchasing a hunting license. Many states allow landowners and active military to hunt without purchasing a license; also, lifetime license holders and youth hunters who do not fall within the required license purchasing age are not included in the figures.

According to an NSSF-funded study carried out by Southwick Associates, the pool of hunters in America is much larger than previously

thought. The study, released last fall, estimated that 21.8 million people purchased a hunting license at least once in the last five years.

Hunters are the backbone of conservation funding in America, contributing more than \$1 billion each year through the purchase of licenses, tags, permits and stamps and through excise taxes paid on firearms and ammunition. For example, proceeds from the sale of Federal Duck Stamps, a required purchase for migratory waterfowl hunting, have purchased more than 5 million acres of habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge System.

NSSF, using its new 12-state hunting license sales index, anticipated the national increase in paid hunting license holders by reporting a 3.5 percent increase in license sales last spring.

"It's gratifying to see how accurate our state index was, which gives us confidence in future index-based hunting license sales figures," said Jim Curcuruto, NSSF's director of industry research and analysis.

NSSF will announce its state index hunting license sales report for 2010 this spring.

Record-Setting SHOT Show Indicates Potential for Good Year Ahead

LAS VEGAS – The 2011 SHOT Show soared above expectations by setting records for buyer attendance at 31,769 and media attendance at 2,074.

Overall attendance of 57,390, comprising buyers, exhibitors, media and guests, ranked the show as the third largest ever behind the 2008 and 2010 events. In this sluggish economy, the SHOT Show demonstrates the resilience of one of America's oldest industries and the popularity of its products.

"The importance of the SHOT Show to the firearms industry cannot be underestimated," said Steve Sanetti, president and chief executive officer of NSSF, which owns the trade show. "The SHOT Show is simply the must-attend business event for all segments of our industry. Based on what we're hearing, industry has every reason to think that 2011 shows promise of being another strong year."

Filling the Sands Expo and Convention Center to capacity with 1,600 exhibiting companies covering 630,000 net square feet with their booths, SHOT Show brings together all facets of the \$4 billion industry.

Many companies use SHOT Show, the largest trade show of its kind in the world, to announce new products and services. Buyers and media members are able to handle and discuss products that include firearms, ammunition, outdoor and tactical clothing, optics, knives, related accessories and law enforcement equipment.

A number of changes were made to exhibition halls to make navigating the huge show easier, including widened aisles, better signage and a new escalator. Those changes received widespread positive responses.

"There was much better traffic flow," said exhibitor George Trulock, whose choke tube company booth was set up on the lower floor. "The changes that were made worked."

Comments from exhibitors and buyers confirmed that the 33rd SHOT Show was a success.

Bob Morrison, president and chief executive officer of Taurus, captured the mood with his comments in a local television interview: "We are having

terrific growth right in the middle of this recession, and I'm delighted to be in this business."

Other industry professionals were just as upbeat about both the show and their prospects for the year.

Lea L. Ramthun of Beretta said, "Busy is the word. Dealers are excited about our new products. We've seen a lot of smiling, happy faces;" while Paul Pluff of Smith & Wesson said: "The show has been an extremely positive event, very busy-almost busier than I have ever seen it. We anticipate a great year due to a very successful SHOT Show."

Their comments were echoed by Randall Pence, of Sturm, Ruger, who said, "Traffic in our booth has been super. Our Scout rifle has been of big interest, and our LC9 pistol has been the hit of our booth. We're sensing a very positive attitude from everyone."

Blake Mecham of Browning added, "Foot traffic is up, attendance is great, we've had good buzz about our products and our 1911-22 was the hit of the show for us. This SHOT Show has put us in a good position for the year."

More than 100 countries were represented at the show. Steve Collings of New Zealand-based Steve's Wholesale said, "We import a lot of ammunition and gunpowder, so it's very important to come and talk to my suppliers, to find new products, to get updates, to get a heads up on a change in metal prices. It's absolutely essential to be here."

Retailers do more than purchase products for their stores at the show. They improve their business skills at SHOT Show University, which was sold out, and at seminars where representatives from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives review regulations that apply to federally licensed retailers. For the second year, law enforcement professionals were provided with their own series of educational seminars.

With media at an all-time high, a larger press room, including a new working press area, was widely praised. Media also turned out in force at Media Day prior to the show, where they could test new models of firearms

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TOWA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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about what they did to write, promote and sell their books. Marika Flatt, from PR By the Book, explained the value of social media.

Of course, there was the TP&W round table with staff. Another lively session, with Andrew Sansom and NRCS Wildlife Biologist Ricky Linex, discussing Texas water. That topic will continue to be on the forefront of many of our keyboards for years to come.

There were the social aspects as well. Sam Caldwell revived the Liar's Den in the conversation room.

The EIC received 184 entries in 18 categories. Prize money of \$5,000 was sponsored by Chevrolet. The banquet was highlighted by John Thompson's presentation of the L.A. Wilke Award to long time Star Telegram writer, Bob Hood. It was a touching moment. By the way, the food was outstanding.

In addition, Board Member T.J. Greaney was selected as the 2011 recipient of the Bass Pro Shops "Pass It On Award."

The board of directors had two slots to fill at the conference. Mike Price's term expired and Steve Lamascus had resigned to take care of family business. Those two slots were filled by election. Congratulations to Ralph Winingham and Cody Greaney.

As the meeting drew to a close, supporting member Tom Hewitt said, "This was an outstanding conference with excellent sessions. I'm looking forward to New Braunfels in 2012." Next year's conference will be at the Courtyard by Marriott on I-35, next to the Guadalupe River.



Displaying their Excellence in Craft Awards received for their works during the past year are, from left, David Sikes, Shannon Tompkins and John Jefferson. Photo by David Redwine. Additional photos are available for viewing at (no charge for prints for TOWA members) at Redwine's website of www.daveredwineimages.com.



Checking out the latest baits from Stanley during a meet-and-greet with supporting members are, from left, John Jefferson, John Thompson and his wife, Joyce. Photo by David Redwine. Additional photos are available for viewing at (no charge for prints for TOWA members) at Redwine's website of www.daveredwineimages.com.

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and other products.

Highlights from the show included:

About 2,000 industry guests attended the NSSF State of the Industry Dinner sponsored by the Outdoor Channel at which NSSF reviewed its accomplishments over the past year. Comedian Jeff Foxworthy provided entertainment.

NSSF announced its 50th anniversary celebration and publication of "The National Shooting Sports Foundation: A History 1961 to 2011, 50 Years of Promoting, Protecting and Preserving Hunting and the Shooting Sports by NSSF, the Firearms Industry's Trade Association." An accompanying film, which will soon be available online, was shown at the NSSF State of the Industry Dinner.

Doug Painter, NSSF's longest-serving employee and former president

and chief executive officer, who will retire this spring after 37 years with the Foundation, was honored for his service to the industry and the organization.

Bob Behn, 41-year industry veteran and former Marlin president and chief executive officer, was presented the NSSF-Ken Sedlecky Achievement Award.

Michael Bane, television host, blogger and author, received the Professional Outdoor Media Association-NSSF Grits Gresham Shooting Sports Communicator Award.

The NSSF Retailer of the Year Award was given to Sportsman's Warehouse in Rocklin, California.

The 2012 edition of the SHOT Show will be January 17-20 at the Sands Expo and Convention Center in Las Vegas.