

# TOWA

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

## TOWA SPRING BOARD MEETING

### 2012 Spring Fling Combines Business, Fun

**T**he Texas Outdoor Writers Association Board of Directors kept with tradition by holding the Spring Board Meeting at the Best Western Inn By the Bay in Rockport, Texas, prior to the annual Spring Fling hosted by the Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce. Following are the minutes from the board meeting.

**1. The meeting was called to order** at 12:10 p.m. by John Goodspeed, Chairman of the Board. The following officers, board members and committee chairs were present:

David Sikes, President  
Larry LeBlanc, Executive Director  
Bill Mills, Treasurer  
Peggy York (2014), Recording Secretary  
Kendal Hemphill (2013)  
Cody Greaney (2014)  
Bob Hood (2014)  
Susan Ebert (2013)(on conference call)  
Pam LeBlanc, Scholarship Committee  
Judy Mills, Scholarship Committee  
Ralph Winingham

**2. Copies of the minutes** of the last meeting were distributed. A motion was made by Bill Mills and seconded by Cody

Greaney to accept the minutes without change. Motion carried.

**3. Executive Directors Report:**

Larry LeBlanc distributed several documents, explaining each in detail. The operating account bank balance to date is \$30,709.22 and the Scholarship Fund balance is \$30,708.61.

**4. President's Report:**

Davis Sikes asked that the Executive Director position either follow the Bylaws or that the Bylaws be changed to reflect current duties required of an Executive Direc-

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Celebrating one of the TOWA rites of spring, participating members enjoyed the bounty of the Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce's annual Spring Fling, which kicked off on Sunday, April 22 with the Spring Fling Expo and fish fry supper at Paws and Taws, followed by a Charlotte Plummer's breakfast and fun day of fishing on Monday. The event was capped off with a feast at the Fulton Harbor Boiling Pot. LEFT: Member Herman Brune wrangles a big red while fishing with David Sikes and John Thompson with guide Raymond Appel. RIGHT: Capt. Jamison Parker nets a fish caught by John Ross, with The Fishing Lights Co., while Billy Olson shoots photos for *Texas Outdoors Journal*.

## TOWA OFFICERS, BOARD

### PRESIDENT

David Sikes (361) 886-3616  
[sikesd@caller.com](mailto:sikesd@caller.com)

### PRESIDENT-ELECT

TJ Greaney (512) 789-3838  
[tj@countrylinemagazine.com](mailto:tj@countrylinemagazine.com)

### TREASURER

Bill E. Mills (281) 448-5811  
[offtheroad.mills@earthlink.net](mailto:offtheroad.mills@earthlink.net)

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Larry J. LeBlanc (936) 445-9438  
904 W. Montgomery, Ste. 4 cell (936) 524-0761  
Willis, TX 77378

[towa@suddenlink.net](mailto:towa@suddenlink.net)

## BOARD MEMBERS

### BOARD CHAIRMAN

John Goodspeed (210) 573-7460  
[john@johngoodspeed.com](mailto:john@johngoodspeed.com)

Susan Ebert (2013) (512) 431-2013  
[susanebertink@gmail.com](mailto:susanebertink@gmail.com)

Cody Greaney (2014) (512) 576-2200  
[cody@texasoutdoorzone.com](mailto:cody@texasoutdoorzone.com)

Kendal Hemphill (2013) (325) 347-6440  
[jeep@verizon.net](mailto:jeep@verizon.net)

Bob Hood (2015) (817) 228-5952  
[bobhoodoutdoors@yahoo.com](mailto:bobhoodoutdoors@yahoo.com)

Judy Bishop Jurek (2014) (979) 541-7776  
[redhawkconsulting@yahoo.com](mailto:redhawkconsulting@yahoo.com)

Peggy York (2012) (210) 647-7053  
[peggy.york@sbcglobal.net](mailto:peggy.york@sbcglobal.net)

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

### CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN

David Sikes (361) 886-3616  
[sikesd@caller.com](mailto:sikesd@caller.com)

### CONFERENCE PROGRAM CO-CHAIRMAN

TJ Greaney (512) 789-3838  
[tj@countrylinemagazine.com](mailto:tj@countrylinemagazine.com)

### SCHOLARSHIP

Judy Mills, Marianne Odom (281) 448-5811  
[offtheroad.mills@earthlink.net](mailto:offtheroad.mills@earthlink.net);  
[marianneodom27@hotmail.com](mailto:marianneodom27@hotmail.com)

### MEMBERSHIP

Bob Hood (817) 228-5952  
[bobhoodoutdoors@yahoo.com](mailto:bobhoodoutdoors@yahoo.com)

### SITE SELECTION

Jonette Childs (361) 729-0239  
[saltex@pyramid3.net](mailto:saltex@pyramid3.net)

### AUCTIONS

TJ Greaney (512) 789-3838  
[tj@countrylinemagazine.com](mailto:tj@countrylinemagazine.com)

### EIC AWARDS

Kendal Hemphill (325) 347-6440  
[jeep@verizon.net](mailto:jeep@verizon.net)

### TOWA PHOTOGRAPHERS

Gerald Burleigh and David Redwine

### TOWA HISTORIAN

John Thompson

*TOWA News is published monthly by the Texas Outdoor Writers Association and edited by Susan L. Ebert. Layout by Susan Ebert, [SusanEbertink@gmail.com](mailto:SusanEbertink@gmail.com). Contributors are urged to submit material by the 15th of each month. For advertising information, contact Susan L. Ebert at (512) 431-2013 or [SusanEbertink@gmail.com](mailto:SusanEbertink@gmail.com). TOWA News is emailed to members and mailed first class, if requested, from Porter, Texas. 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.*



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tor. This is a complicated issue. After much discussion it was determined that a deadline of June 22, 2012 would be set for the committee to review and determine the changes needed to fill the position.

### 5. Treasurer's Report:

Larry LeBlanc previously reported on the finances. Bill Mills concurred with the numbers.

### 6. Old Business:

Now that we are in compliance with the IRS, Larry said he would apply for a sales tax number so we can sell TOWA member merchandise or organization merchandise.

### 7. New Business:

a. The Board agreed to propose adding a membership category for retired members. David volunteered to describe in detail what the requirements of this category would be and have them published in the next newsletter.

b. The Board also agreed to propose adding a membership category for volunteers. David also volunteered to describe in detail what the requirements of this category would be and have them published in the next newsletter.

c. It was also agreed that a mid-year General Membership meeting is often needed. The Bylaws state that the President can call said meeting. Balloting can be electronically for those not in attendance where a vote is taken. Advance notice will be made to allow such changes.

d. A new membership chairman is

needed since David is now President. Bob Hood volunteered. David thanked Bob and offered to send him the records he has and the supplies he will be needing.

### 8. Report of Standing Committees:

• Site Chairman – No report

• EIC Chairman – No report

• Scholarship – Judy Mills reported that the Scholarship recipient was published in the Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine. She and Marianne Odom will be updating all documents and recruitment letters.

• Internet Media – Cody Greaney reported that few members have accessed the web site.

• Website – Cody Greaney and Susan Ebert have offered to complete a business plan. The board determined no plan was needed and agreed to sell an advertising banner on the site. This banner could range from \$2,500 to \$4,000, depending on the size. Larry LeBlanc and Kendal Hemphill will accept this challenge.

• Applicant Screening – Bob Hood, new chairman had no report. David Sikes stated that Shane Townsend has moved from Associate member to Active member. A vote will be taken at the next General Membership meeting.

• Executive Director search has already been discussed.

10. A motion made by Kendal Hemphill and was seconded by Cody Greaney to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.

— Peggy York, Recording Secretary

## DSC TOPS \$1 MILLION FOR CONSERVATION IN 2012

DALLAS (March 21, 2012) — In 2012, Dallas Safari Club (DSC) will grant more than \$1 million for conservation, education and hunter advocacy efforts worldwide. It's the first time that DSC's annual grant budget has topped the million-dollar mark. The 2012 figure represents a 27 percent gain over 2011.

DSC's record commitment follows major growth in its annual convention and expo. The 2012 event, held Jan. 5-8 at the Dallas Convention Center, set records for event size, attendance and total fundraising.

"Supporters of Dallas Safari Club have raised the bar again," said Ben Carter, DSC executive director. "Together, our convention exhibitors, attendees, members and volunteers continue to drive our club's amazing growth. This trend is something very special for DSC itself, but even more importantly, for the causes of wildlife and habitat conservation around the world."

More than \$67,000 in DSC grants will support homegrown Texas Parks and Wildlife Department initiatives such as desert bighorn sheep restoration, Operation Game Thief and other law enforcement programs, Hunters For The Hungry, hunter education courses and more.

Finally, funding also will support DSC's own mission delivery programs, such as the Dallas Ecological Foundation's popular Outdoor Adventures program, which is expanding conservation curriculum in Texas schools.

DSC's total funding commitment for 2012 is \$1,002,411.

For more information, visit about Dallas Safari Club (DSC), visit [biggame.org](http://biggame.org).

*A tip o' the TOWA brim to Kendal Hemphill, for "Butt Feathers," the EIC Winner in the Outdoor Fiction/Humor category. Said the judges: "Kendal Hemphill's 'Butt Feathers' is enjoyable and only a real outdoors person will see the humor in his favorite fishing and hunting tools being used in the wrong way. It's so wrong, you all."*

# Butt Feathers

Kendal Hemphill

Once, after a column in which I pointed out that mascara is made from bat guano, I got several letters from women who were livid that I would say such a thing. Of course, I apologized up, down, and sideways, and promised never to make that mistake again. And I haven't. Well, not often, anyway.

But the truth is that I didn't make that up. Bat guano really is one of the main ingredients in mascara, and that won't change whether I write about it or not. So, if you happen to be a woman of the female gender, and you're offended by this column, I hope you'll be somewhat comforted by the fact that I am not making any of this one up, either. This story was sent to me, or at least posted on Facebook, by the editor of *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine, who happens to be, her very self, a female type person. And a darn good guitar picker and singer, to boot.

According to this story, that evidently started with the *Seattle Times* and is sweeping the country, there seems to be a national shortage of hackles.

Now, hackles, in case you don't waste large sectors of your time tying flies, are feathers used in fly-tying. I have gleaned, from my extensive research on the subject, that these particular feathers come from a certain part of a chicken, known technically as the 'butt.' Actually, I figured that out from reading the article Louie Bond posted, but that's what passes for extensive research in my office.

For years flyfishers have been using hackles for their flies. Fishing flies only need maybe a couple of small pieces of feather each, so even with lots of people tying their own flies we've been able to get by for years without taxing the nation's chickens too heavily. Sure, there have probably been some birds walking around with bare backsides at times, but then, sacrifices must be made. And if those sacrifices have to be made by chickens, I'm OK with that.

But now things have changed. Women, en masse, have started using hackles as hair accessories. As I understand it, this involves something called 'hair extensions,' which would probably be a good name for a rock band. But then, so would butt feathers.

Hair extensions, though, are a little out of my area of expertise. I always thought there were basically just two choices if you wanted longer hair – you could either let it grow out, or wear a wig. So I asked my wife about hair extensions, and learned that it involves weaving other peoples' hair into your own, to make your

hair longer. And, apparently, some women like to weave feathers in there, too, for decoration. Why not?

If you buy a hackle at a fly shop it will run you maybe five bucks. The same hackle at a hairdresser joint might set you back a C note. So we're talking a lot of difference in price, for the exact same feather.

Plus, it turns out, you can't just pull the hackles and let the bird keep pecking. The unique roosters that grow these feathers are specially raised, and have to be whacked to harvest the hackles. But the main problem is that it takes a year for them to get big enough to grow proper butt feathers.

So the U.S. supply of hackles is being seriously depleted by women who want to pay big bucks to put rooster butt feathers in their hair. It's getting so fly shops can't keep the feathers, and fly fishers are having a hard time finding the hackles they need. No one is necessarily happy about this situation, and as far as I know, the roosters haven't even been consulted yet.

Something has to be done, and quick. Women are going into fly shops and buying out an entire season's worth of hackles at once, sometimes paying far more than the going price. In some places women are being banned from these shops, or if not banned, the owners won't sell to them, which is further escalating the problem.

One rooster farm in Colorado, which raises the special roosters, told the *Seattle Times* they are killing over 1,500 roosters a week now, and they still can't keep up with the demand from hair salons. That's just wrong.

And it may not stop at feathers. Any woman who would put a chicken's butt feather in her hair may decide to throw in a lead weight or two, and maybe a handful of plastic worms. Before you know it there may be a shortage of topwaters or shiners or jigs. The entire pro bass fishing circuit could be shut down to keep the country's women in disgusting hairstyles. We could end up shipping in boatloads of angling supplies from China or the OPEC nations. And you think oil is a problem. The black market on colored feathers could easily outstrip the drug trade in terms of law enforcement man-hours involved.

If we don't deal with this problem it's liable to do us in, and Congress does nothing. Maybe when women start raising their own bats to keep themselves in mascara, our leaders will decide to intervene. In the meantime, keep your chickens in the coop, and your tacklebox locked up in your gun safe ...

# Hobie Mirage Pro Angler 12

## Hobie's Most Versatile Fishing Boat Ever

**OCEANSIDE, Calif., April 15, 2012** – Advancing its vision for new heights in fishing, Hobie unveils the lightweight and compact Mirage Pro Angler 12 that may be the most versatile fishing boat to ever come out of their Oceanside, California factory. Its target customer is anyone who wants to fish lakes, rivers or open ocean with no boundaries. At 120 pounds fully rigged, the 12 foot long, 36 inch wide hull sports a 500-pound weight capacity and delivers new levels of innovation packed full of must-have angler features. These include such things as the Hobie MirageDrive® pedal propulsion system, the all new Vantage Seating, "Lowrance® Ready" Fishfinder Installation System, Pivoting Tackle Management System and vertical/horizontal storage for six rods. MSRP: \$2549. The Pro Angler 12 is proudly made in the U.S.A.

"Our team is made up of several extremely creative and experienced individuals who strive to put forth the best in fishing technology. After months of hard work and testing, it is our conclusion that the following features truly combine to make the perfect fishing kayak," noted Morgan Promnitz, Hobie's fishing product manager.

- **MIRAGEDRIVE:** The iconic feature on the Pro Angler 12 is Hobie's patented MirageDrive pedal propulsion system. The self-centering padded pedals are connected to two underwater flippers, functioning much like penguin wings. Pedaling is done alternatively left and right, like walking, to drive the flippers. It is a quiet and efficient mode of propulsion that maximizes fishability.
- **VANTAGE SEATING:** The standard definition of Vantage is "an advantage in a competition; superiority; and a position, condition or opportunity that is likely to provide superiority." The new Hobie Vantage seat fits all these descriptions. This deluxe chair is designed with Hobie's new comfort-mesh for breathability and with fore/aft and five-inch up/down adjustment without getting out of the seat. Got lumbar support? The integrated Boa® System allows for ultimate lumbar support. Ready to stand up and fish? The seat will fold up out of the way. Ready for some beach time? The seat is easily removable for use on-shore.
- **BOA ADJUSTMENT:** A Boa system on the back of the seat provides one-handed dial, full range of adjustment, for lumbar support. It is quick and easy and once locked into place, stays that way.
- **FISHFINDER INSTALLATION SYSTEM:** A Lowrance-Ready built-in transducer mount features pre-installed through-hull cable plugs. Fishfinders can be installed in minutes without gluing transducers or drilling holes in the kayak and they provide accurate readings from sonar or DSI (DownScan Imaging) – the latest technology in 3D imaging for fishfinders.
- **PIVOTING TACKLE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:** The newly-designed large rectangular center hatch features a pivoting compartment that houses and includes two medium sized Plano® tackle boxes.
- **PORT/STARBOARD DUAL-STEERING:** Steering is controlled via an oversized fingertip steering handle on the left side, making it easy to cast, hook and land fish while maneuvering to that secret spot. What if the preference is for right handed steering? No problem. Steering from both sides comes standard and the main handle can easily be moved from one side to the other, whatever the preference.
- **Rod Storage:** Two vertical molded-in rod holders angled for trolling and



Anticipated availability of the Hobie Mirage Pro Angler 12 is June 2012.

four horizontal built-in rod holders with rod tip protection ensure the right equipment is always on-board for any species or waters.

As with all Hobie products, the features do not just end with the bigger and obvious ones. Keep checking. Front, rear and side handles make the boat easy to move or transport. Brass inserts are strategically placed for the optional anchor trolley kit. The removable front hatch liner is sized for the daily catch, drinks on ice or gear. Two replaceable mounting boards can handle a variety of electronics and rod holders. Anti-skid floor mats make it easy to stand up and fish. The boat even has a receptacle for an after-market accessories mount or sail and mast.

And the list goes on.

Like all Hobie boats, the Pro Angler 12 meets the National Marine Manufacturers Association certification requirements for flotation.

Since 1950, Hobie has been in the business of shaping a unique lifestyle based around fun, water and quality products. From their headquarters in Oceanside, California, Hobie Cat Company manufactures, distributes and markets an impressive collection of watercraft worldwide. These include an ever-expanding line of recreation and racing sailboats, pedal-driven and paddle sit-on-top recreation and fishing kayaks, inflatable kayaks and fishing boats, plus a complementary array of parts and accessories.

Visit Hobie's website at [hobiecat.com](http://hobiecat.com); for more information, contact Ingrid Niehaus at (949) 499-2225 or [iniehaus@hobiecat.com](mailto:iniehaus@hobiecat.com).

# Hi Mountain Rubs, Smokehouse Cans Add Seasoning to Grilling Season



RIVERTON, Wyo., April 24, 2012 — It's time to clean out the grill and fire up the burners because grilling season has officially opened. With the warmer weather and longer days, there's nothing better than cooking outdoors. And that doesn't just mean boring barbecue chicken or hot dogs and burgers. It is Hi Mountain grilling time with steaks, fish, waterfowl, pork or any other bounty of last season's quarry on the menu.

With Hi Mountain Seasonings' delicious Western Style Rubs and flavor-filled Smokehouse Cans, it's exceptionally easy to grill your way to delicious dishes that even a 5-star chef would envy. Whether it's wild or store-bought, your poultry, pork, fish or beef are on tonight's menu, and Hi Mountain Seasonings has a Western Style Rub that will seal in the juices and enhance the natural flavor of your hard-earned meat. Hi Mountain Seasoning's five mouth-watering blends—Steak Rub, Garlic Pepper Rub, Venison Rub, Salmon Rub and Poultry Rub—provide you with a delicious way to grill something amazing and new every night of the week.

Hi Mountain's Western Style Rubs adhere to meat using its natural moisture, so no oil is required. That makes them virtually fat-free while being a healthier alternative to many oil-laden

marinades on the market. With these Hi Mountain Seasonings Dry Rubs, it is easy to turn any ordinary meal into a tantalizing culinary experience that will please even the most finicky eaters.

To turn up the flavor another notch, try using one of Hi Mountain Seasonings Smokehouse Cans inside your grill. Available in three great flavors—Alder Orange Peel, Mesquite Coffee Bean and Hickory Lemon Basil—you simply place the smoke can on the grill grate for a few minutes until the smoke starts, place your food on the grill, and then let the Smokehouse flavor infuse into whatever you are cooking. Hi Mountain Seasonings Smokehouse Cans are a simple and easy way to bring a rich smoky flavor to any meal.

Available at retailers nationwide or conveniently online at [www.himtnjerky.com](http://www.himtnjerky.com), the Smokehouse cans retail for \$3.79 and the Rubs retail for \$8.99.

Hi Mountain's entire line of products, cooking tips, instructional videos, and recipes are also available at [www.himtnjerky.com](http://www.himtnjerky.com), and the products can be found at high-quality sporting goods stores, farm and ranch stores and your local grocery stores.

Located in the heart of Wyoming, Hi Mountain Seasonings was founded in 1991. It is the premier manufacturer of kits for homemade jerky and sausage. Hi Mountain Seasonings has successfully captured distinct, traditional Western flavors in its Jerky Cure & Seasonings, Western Style Seasonings, Bacon cures and other products that make up the unique line of gourmet Western seasonings. For additional information, call (800) 829-2285; or visit the company website at [himtnjerky.com](http://himtnjerky.com).

## New TOWA Supporting Member Navionics Introduces Navionics Marine & Lakes USA

**THE FIRST OF ITS KIND, NAVIONICS COMBINES THE BEST OF BOTH** charting worlds into one user selectable, downloadable chip. Navionics Marine & Lakes gives you access to Navionics best detail in a convenient coverage package for only \$99 per state. Unlimited access to the community layer and freshest data means access to Navionics' most current database is only a quick download away.

Here's how it works: Buy a Navionics Marine & Lakes chip from your nearest dealer, then plug your chip into [navionics.com](http://store.navionics.com/faqs/download_webstore) web store [http://store.navionics.com/faqs/download\\_webstore](http://store.navionics.com/faqs/download_webstore). Select and download your preferred U.S. state (Texas, California and Florida are split into two selectable regions). Download your free PC or Mac application, then check back often to get the freshest data.

Coverage includes HotMaps Inland Lakes and Rivers with more than 17,000 lakes throughout the U.S. (One thousand lakes are in high definition with one-foot contours); Great Lakes coverage within the state borders; All submerged structure details available in HotMaps Premium and Platinum (roadbeds, foundations, creekbeds, brushpiles, fish attractors, etc.) and Pro Staff additions. Gold Coastal Marine Data includes coastal coverage for each state out to three nautical miles; tides and currents; and port services.

For more information, visit [navionics.com](http://navionics.com) or contact Art Wright at (508) 273-6217 or [awright@navionics.com](mailto:awright@navionics.com).





## NEW FOR 2012: RANGER 175T ANGLER

Ranger pairs its fishing-first heritage with exceptional features, styling and performance in a widely-acclaimed, multispecies tiller design

### TECH SPECS: 2013 RANGER 175T ANGLER

Overall Hull Length: 17 feet, 7 inches

Beam: 87 inches

Maximum HP: 75

Engine Shaft Length: 20 inches

Inside Depth: 19 inches

Fuel Capacity: 23 gallons

Total Persons/Motor/Gear: 1,200 lbs.

Approx. Boat Weight: 1,200 lbs.

Trailer Capacities/Specifications

Trailer GVWR: SM2995

Length on Trailer with Motor Down: 22 feet, 2 inches

Length on Trailer with Motor Down & Swing-Away Tongue Open: 20 feet, 2 inches

Width on Trailer: 95 inches

FLIPPIN, ARK. (March 27, 2012) Highlighting their legendary dedication to anglers chasing a wide range of game fish, Ranger Boats has introduced the 175T Angler, a 21st century design taking cues from several of these classic Ranger multi-species platforms. The newest member of the company's multi-species lineup touts an elevated level of fishability and comfort while delivering remarkable performance and style to today's tiller-boat angler.

Measuring 17 feet, 7 inches with an 87-inch beam, the Ranger 175T Angler holds 23 gallons of fuel in its tank, which is mounted under the front deck for enhanced load distribution, easier planing and better rough water performance. Rated for a maximum 75 horsepower, the new 175T also features a front casting deck and cockpit covered in a slip-resistant coating and topped with snap-in marine carpet, which can be removed for easier cleaning, while the transom of the boat allows room for an electric kicker motor and splash guards for anglers who back troll.

"Our history in producing versatile tiller powered fishing platforms dates back over 30 years. That experience, coupled with decades of refinements, has led us to the 175T, a boat that's wide open, has ample storage, is extremely affordable, and is made to handle whatever the day calls for," said Ranger Boats Vice President, Keith Daffron. "You might fish for walleye one day, muskie the next and bass the day after that. We think this boat will be a perfect fit to an already stellar Angler Series lineup."

Available with a wide range of precision-matched outboards, the Ranger 175T Angler features an instrument panel with a full complement of gauges and rocker switch controls and comes standard with Lowrance Mark 5X Pro electronics. Additional standard features include a 6x2 on-board battery charger, premium marine upholstery, recessed tie cleats and a 50-inch livewell designed to help keep big fish comfortable and stress free.

In addition to room for today's large-screened electronics at the console and the bow, there are also generous storage areas throughout the boat, including an insulated cooler with drain and space for rods up to 9 feet, 6 inches in the starboard-side rod storage and room for rods up to 7 feet in the portside rod storage.

Other highlights of the Ranger 175T Angler include a sliding captain's seat to allow for easier and more comfortable driving for a variety of anglers, integrated access panel at the stern for the quick access to the bilge pumps; recirculating livewell plus cup holders at all four corners of the cockpit as well as at the bow.

Ranger Boats is the nation's largest manufacturer of premium fiberglass fishing boats, which include series of bass, multi-species, fish 'n play and saltwater boats. Founded in 1968 by Forrest L. Wood, Ranger Boats continues its commitment to building the highest-quality, strongest-performing boats on the water. For more information, visit [rangerboats.com](http://rangerboats.com).

## CCA Lauds Governor Perry's Support of Artificial Reefs

AUSTIN, Texas — In a letter to U.S. Department of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, Texas Governor Rick Perry is calling for a review of the federal government's "Idle Iron" policy that threatens to dismantle what is regarded as the largest artificial reef system in the world. In the letter, Perry says that the policy, which orders non-producing oil and gas rigs and other structures in offshore waters to be removed within five years of the issuance of the directive, will have profound negative implications for marine fisheries and the local coastal communities and businesses that rely on the fishing opportunities that these structures provide in the Gulf.

"I understand the factors that may have influenced the decision to order the blanket removal of these structures in the aftermath of the tragic oil spill of 2010," Perry states in the letter. "However, a more balanced, reasoned response is required in light of irrefutable evidence that these structures are the basis for thriving ecosystems that harbor and sustain an immense diversity of life above and below the waterline, including seabirds, fish, turtles, marine mammals and corals."

"We are grateful to Gov. Perry for weighing in on this issue on behalf of recreational anglers, divers and everyone who cares for a vibrant marine environment," said Pat Murray, president of CCA. "A more reasoned process is exactly what is needed to preserve these structures that form the basis of thriving marine ecosystems off Texas and all over the Gulf of Mexico."

Perry's letter is the latest effort to counter the federal government's misguided removal policy. At its April meeting, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council moved to begin the process of classifying rigs and other vital artificial reefs as Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). If artificial reefs are eventually designated as EFH, all federal agencies would then have to consult with NOAA Fisheries on federal actions that may adversely affect them. Sen. David Vitter (R-La) and Rep. Steve Palazzo (R-Ms) have filed legislation to prevent rigs and other structures from being summarily removed from the Gulf of Mexico, and the issue continues to generate a high interest among other lawmakers.

For information on the Coastal Conservation Association, contact Ted Venker at [tvenker@joincca.org](mailto:tvenker@joincca.org) or visit [joincca.org](http://joincca.org).

MAY 2012 TOWA NEWSLETTER

# Firearms Industry Helps Lead Economic Recovery

## New Study Shows Growth in Jobs, Taxes Paid and Sales

The National Shooting Sports Foundation has released a newly commissioned report detailing double-digit gains in jobs and other data showing the industry has been a leader in the nation's economic recovery. The report can be viewed at <http://nssf.org/impact>.

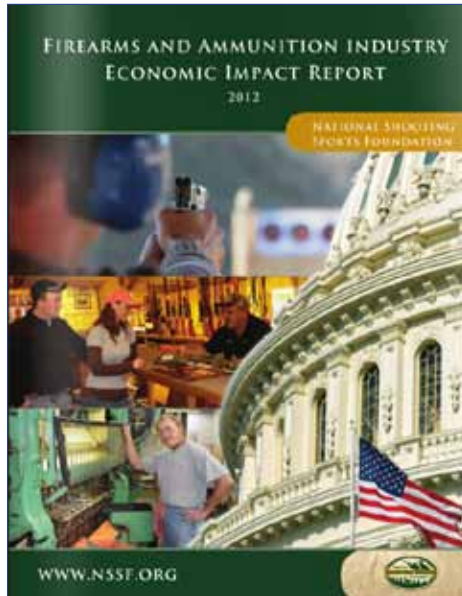
Firearms industry members on Capitol Hill were briefed on such remarkable statistics as the 30.6 percent increase in jobs between 2008 and 2011, a 66.5 percent increase in economic impact and a 66.5 percent increase in federal taxes paid by industry companies.

Armed with the good news of the report and recognizing that jobs and the economy are of major importance in the November elections, industry executives are meeting today with elected officials during the NSSF-sponsored Congressional Fly-In.

"During difficult economic times and high unemployment rates nationally, our industry actually grew and created more than ten thousand new, well-paying jobs," said NSSF President Steve Sanetti. "Our industry is proud to be one of the bright spots in this economy."

The firearms industry has stood apart from other industries by thriving in a down economy. Indicators such as background-check statistics, firearms production and importation, firearm-retailer surveys and on-the-ground reports from retailers nationwide reveal that Americans are purchasing firearms in record numbers. For example, federal background checks for March totaled nearly 1.2 million in adjusted figures, representing an increase of 20 percent over a year ago and the 22nd straight month-over-month increase. (NSSF adjusts figures from the National Instant Criminal Background Check System to remove purpose-code checks associated concealed carry applications and permits. Though not a direct correlation to firearm sales, adjusted NICS figures provide a more accurate picture of market conditions.)

This year's robust sales are a continuation of the economic growth the firearms and ammunition industry experienced last year that



was driven by an unprecedented number of Americans choosing to exercise their fundamental right to keep and bear arms and purchase a firearm and ammunition. This increase in firearms ownership coincided with the continued decline in accidental firearm-related fatalities—a more than a 60 percent decrease in the last 20 years—and a continued drop in crime rates nationally.

Also cited in the economic impact report were the significant taxes paid by industry member companies to federal and state governments and the Pittman-Robertson excise tax the industry pays on the products it sells. The latter tax is the major source of wildlife conservation funding in America.

"Last year our industry increased its contribution to wildlife conservation by over seven percent, which translates into sportsmen contributing more than 1.3 million dollars daily to conservation efforts," said NSSF Senior Vice President and General Counsel Lawrence G. Keane.

"Ours is an industry with a rich history and heritage that remains vital and important to the American economy today," continued Keane. "To millions of Americans our industry's products represent liberty, security and recreation. We look forward to speaking with members of Congress today about important legislative and regulatory issues that will allow our industry members to continue to grow their businesses and create even more new jobs in their communities."

For more information about the National Shooting Sports Foundation or to download the complete report, visit [nssf.org](http://nssf.org).

## CALENDAR

**May 5** – Annual Cinco de Mayo celebration at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For more information on the event contact James Booker at (903) 670-2266, [james.booker@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:james.booker@tpwd.state.tx.us).

**May 18** – Operation Game Thief Clay Stoppers Shootout, with a TOWA Board team participating. 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Capitol City Trap & Skeet Club, Austin. Prizes, shooting games, and silent and live auctions. For further information, contact Scott Grant at (512) 694-6585 or [sgrant@austin.rr.com](mailto:sgrant@austin.rr.com).

**June 2-10** – National Fishing and Boating Week. Further information is available at [takemefishing.org](http://takemefishing.org) and at [rbff.mediaroom.com](http://rbff.mediaroom.com).

**June 28-July 1** – Texas Wildlife Association's Annual Convention – WildLife 2012, San Antonio, Texas. For information about WildLife 2012, contact David Brimager at (210) 826-2904 or [dbrimager@texas-wildlife.org](mailto:dbrimager@texas-wildlife.org).

**July 11-13** – ICAST 2012 in Orlando, Fla. Obtain media credentials by registering at [icastfishing.org/icast-press-room](http://icastfishing.org/icast-press-room). Contact Mary Jane Williamson, Communications Director, at (703) 519-9691, x227 for more information.

### KEY POINTS: FIREARM AND AMMUNITION JOBS

	2008	2011	PERCENT CHANGE
Direct Jobs	75,600	98,750	30.6%
Total Jobs	166,200	209,750	26.2%
Econ Impact	\$19,128,934,700	\$31,838,799,400	66.5%

### KEY POINTS: TAXES

	2008	2011	PERCENT CHANGE
Federal Taxes	\$1,503,740,470	\$2,503,904,400	66.5%
State Taxes	\$1,299,088,680	\$2,071,203,430	59.4%
Excise Taxes	\$351,540,010	\$487,998,106	38.8%

# Falcon International Reservoir Tops List of Best Bass Lakes in the U.S.

**F**ABLED FALCON HAS BEEN RANKED THE NUMBER ONE BASS LAKE in the country by the editors of Bassmaster magazine, but the good news doesn't stop there.

Another Texas-Mexico border reservoir, Amistad, is number six on the list, and six other Texas reservoirs made the top 100.

The Texas lakes on the list with their rankings are:

- No. 1—Falcon
- No. 6—Amistad
- No. 15—Toledo Bend (shared with Louisiana)
- No. 19—Sam Rayburn
- No. 26—Fork
- No. 39—Choke Canyon
- No. 64—Conroe
- No. 88—O.H. Ivie

"The list was compiled in a months-long process that included research from state fisheries agencies, nominations from B.A.S.S. Federation Nation tournament organizers and a panel of widely traveled professional anglers, fishing writers and others," stated a press release issued by B.A.S.S.

Falcon is legendary among professional bass anglers for its winning four-day bag of 132.5 pounds during the 2008 Bassmaster Elite Series tournament. Tournament-winning catches regularly average eight pounds per fish.

The eight reservoirs in Texas making the top 100 list are the most for any state. Florida has seven.

Of the states bordering Texas, three Arkansas lakes made the list, along with three each from Louisiana and Oklahoma and two from New Mexico.

"This supports the opinion we've long had that Texas has the best largemouth bass fishing in the nation," said Dave Terre, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Inland Fisheries Division chief of research and management. "The aggressive Florida largemouth bass stocking program in Texas coupled with the outstanding efforts of our fisheries biologists who direct our management efforts are responsible for making fishing great in Texas."

Bassmaster editor James Hall said the rankings are based on a variety of factors, not just opinions. "The method was as scientific as we could make it," he said. The 100 Best Bass Lakes list used state fisheries



Jason Brudnicki, son of TOWA member Randy Brudnicki, with Toyota ShareLunker 525 from Falcon.

agencies electrofishing and creel survey data, tournament catch data and accessibility and fish stocking practices. The final list was developed by a panel that considered the current fishability of each lake, its history, big fish catches, overall quantity potential and the aesthetics of the surrounding area.

Bassmaster plans to make the list an annual undertaking. Details on each lake on the list can be found at [bassmaster.com/news/100-best-bass-lakes](http://bassmaster.com/news/100-best-bass-lakes). For more information, contact: Steve Wagner, Blue Heron Communications, (800) 654-3766 or [steve@blueheroncomm.com](mailto:steve@blueheroncomm.com).

## TOWA MEMBER NEWS

**TOWA CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD JOHN GOODSPEED** retrieves his camera to photograph paddlers on the Rio Grande at a stop along FM 170 near Big Bend — one of the most scenic drives in Texas, and also known as Camino Del Rio or the River Road — while touring in a 2012 Corvette.

GM's Craig Epling sweetened the EIC prize pot at this year's awards ceremony by announcing that first-place winners, in addition to the cash prizes, could drive GM products of their choice for a week. "I was sore after wearing a smile on my face for seven days. It really puts the fun in driving when you get behind the wheel of the quintessential American sports car," said Goodspeed, who scored wins for magazine and newspaper features.

We'd love to hear about some of our other EIC winners' "Week in a Chevy" experiences; send 'em along to [susanebertink@gmail.com](mailto:susanebertink@gmail.com) for consideration for inclusion in an upcoming newsletter.

