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IKES ON TARGET



PHOTO: JAY CLARK

Set Your Sights On New Gun Owners During August – National Shooting Sports Month

Sustaining and growing participation in shooting sports is a high priority for the Izaak Walton League.

The number of first-time gun owners has grown dramatically during the previous two years. According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), over 14 million Americans purchased their first firearm since 2020. These new gun owners represent an incredible audience for chapter-sponsored training, potential chapter members and future volunteers.

So, when your chapter hosts a **National Shooting Sports Month** event in August (www.shootingsportsmoonth.org), set your sights on these new gun owners. An important objective of this nationwide effort is to encourage participation by people who are *not* already recreational shooting sports enthusiasts.

This issue of *Ikes On Target* highlights many resources available to support public events, including:

- **IWLA Mini-grants** of up to \$250 from the League. Deadline to apply is June 1.
- A **How-to Webinar** hosted by League member Ginny Thrasher, who won an Olympic gold medal in shooting sports in 2016 (May 23 at 7:00 p.m. EST).
- **NSSF First Shots** program is an ideal resource for chapter that have never hosted a shooting sports event open to the public. (Refer to a “Quick Guide to First Shots” found on page 2 or online www.nssf.org/ranges/first-shots).

We want all chapters with shooting facilities to reap the benefits of hosting a National Shooting Sports Month event. Use these strategies and they will help your chapter stay “on target!”



QUICK GUIDE TO FIRST SHOTS®

AN INTRODUCTION TO SHOOTING



More Americans than ever before are interested in gun ownership and learning how to shoot. First Shots®, developed by NSSF®, is an easy — *and proven* — way to get them started or restarted. First Shots is a program designed to introduce new shooters to shooting fundamentals, firearm safety, deliver a hands-on experience, and provide incentives to continue their shooting journey.

Adding First Shots events to your range's or organizations offerings is simple, and NSSF is here to help ensure success. Here's how easy it is:

1.

Identify what dates you'd like to hold your First Shots events, line up your instructors, and then schedule your events at nssf.org/firstshots.

2.

NSSF will connect with you to make sure you get all your First Shots materials (see the list of what you'll receive below). You'll also be able to download digital assets from our online First Shots portal, which includes presentation decks, templates and other resources to help with your marketing and advertising efforts.

3.

After you've received your First Shots materials and have everything you need, host your events and welcome new shooters from your community to their new favorite place—your range!

NSSF provides all support materials for First Shots at no cost to NSSF member ranges. You'll receive:

- Eye/ear protection
- Birchwood Casey Shoot-N-C targets
- Rimfire ammunition
- Up to \$500 annually in monetary support for clay target and shotgun ammunition expenses
- First Shots handbooks and other safety literatures for each student
- \$25 rewards coupon component for each student for them to use at their First Shots host range

First Shots is ideal for you if you're looking to accomplish these things:

- Attract new customers or members
- Expand your current efforts geared toward new shooters
- Welcome new gun owners
- Re-engage non-shooting gun owners
- Expand on overall outreach efforts and grow our sports
- Turn first-timers into repeat customers at your business
- Create new shooting sports advocates, not only for your business, but for the future our sports



Want more information or have questions?

Visit nssf.org/firstshots or contact Ann Gamauf, NSSF Retail & Range Business Development Coordinator, at 203-299-2079 or agamauf@nssf.org.



A PROGRAM OF
NSSF
The Firearm Industry
Trade Association

Mini-Grants for National Shooting Sports Month Events

To support chapters during **National Shooting Sports Month (NSSM)**, in 2022 the Izaak Walton League national office will provide mini-grants of up to \$250 to chapters that host public events designed to introduce new audiences, including first-time gun owners and families with children, to shooting sports. The goal of these events and financial support is to proactively engage new participants through a special public event.

Applications will be evaluated based on how well the chapter's application meets the following criteria:

- Chapter must organize and host a NSSM event during August 2022.
- Events must be geared toward introducing new audiences, including first-time gun owners, to safe, responsible firearms ownership and use.

Grant funds can be used for ammunition, eye and ear protection, targets, printed educational handouts, refreshments/beverages, and advertising/marketing.

Mini-grants are not available to support existing and long-running chapter programs that, for example, open ranges to the public for a fee on a given day of the month (i.e., trap shoot, handgun competition). Nor will funding be made available for engagement focused primarily on people already enrolled in hunter education courses or firearms training classes conducted at the chapter. Grant funds cannot be used to pay instructor fees or purchase firearms.

Additional suggestions and considerations for a chapter include:

- Take advantage of the national marketing effort: promote the chapter's event as part of a celebration of "National Shooting Sports Month."
- It is recommended that a chapter use the NSSF's prepared First Shots™ curriculum, as many new, first-time gun owners are seeking formal training.

Every chapter that receives a mini-grant will need to submit a short report to the national office after its event. Each report should describe the event and number of attendees, specifically address whether attendees had prior experience with firearms use and share comments from attendees about their experience at the event. If you like, include a few photos for promotional use by the League in *Outdoor America* magazine, "Ikes On Target" newsletter, and on the League website and social media.

Application deadline is June 1 (postmarked). Chapters receiving grants will be notified no later than July 1. Grant payments will be distributed to chapters by July 15. The deadline to submit an event report is October 1 (postmarked).

See the enclosed grant application form or request a copy by emailing shootingsports@iwla.org, or call (toll-free) at (800)-IKE-LINE (453-5463), extension 216.



More On National Shooting Sports Month



Webinar With Ginny Thrasher —

First introduced to the shooting sports as a teenager at an Izaak Walton League chapter, she has since developed into a world-class competitor and an Olympic gold medalist.

As the Izaak Walton League's national spokesperson for National Shooting Sports Month (NSSM), she will host an exclusive, one-time webinar to help you recruit participants and promote your chapter's NSSM event.

"How Best To Approach and Attract New Audiences and Market National Shooting Sports Month Events" Webinar will be held on Monday, May 23, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. EST.

Sign up here at this webinar registration page: www.iwla.org/ginnythrasher. Also, feel free to forward this webinar registration link to any others at your chapter. Register today to attend!

For more information, consider emailing shootingsports@iwla.org.

Tips For A Successful NSSM Event —

- In addition to posting your event on the chapter's website and social media page, list your event on the League's shooting sports webpage (www.iwla.org/shooting-sports). Email details to shootingsports@iwla.org. This is a great way to promote your event to a wider audience — as thousands of people visit the national's website monthly to search for chapters near them.
- To further help spread the word about the event you're planning, utilize the resources found within the **NSSM Promotional Toolkit** from the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF).
- Encourage your members to help find and invite potential participants.
- To improve event name recognition, display the NSSM logo whenever possible on all print and electronic promotions (Logo available online at www.shootingsportsmoonth.org).



~ Continued on page 8

IWLA Shooting Sports Awards

Each year the Izaak Walton League offers nearly 50 national awards for conservation, outdoor ethics, water quality, shooting sports, communications, youth-focused achievements and much more!

The **Shooting Sports Award** is presented to individuals (member or non-member), groups or organizations judged to have done outstanding work to promote shooting sports.

Honor a deserving member, non-member, chapter, or corporation for their dedication and contributions to the shooting sports by nominating them for the IWLA Shooting Sports Award.

Please refer to the enclosed award nomination form or search online at www.iwla.org/awards, or email awards@iwla.org.

Last year, the League recognized two members and a chapter for their efforts to promote shooting sports.



Richard C. Deibert (Pennsylvania)

As a longtime member of the Lancaster Red Rose Chapter, he served in various leadership

capacities. However, his most significant contribution has been the development and operation of the chapter's annual youth pheasant hunt.

Richard incorporates his teaching experience as a high school teacher and hunter education instructor and his knowledge as an avid shotgunner and bird dog hunter to make each event a success.

Kenneth C. Mincks (Iowa)

As a member of the B.F. Carroll Chapter, Ken has spent countless hours promoting shooting sports to new shooters –both young and old – in his community.



He established and coached the Davis County High School Trap Team and helps manage regional high school trapshooting tournaments held at the chapter. Ken has also been the driving force to maintain and upgrade the chapter's shooting ranges, and he successfully sought and received grant funding to improve the chapter's ranges.

Shooting Sports Program of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter (Maryland)



This chapter's complete shooting sports program includes the addition of five-stand and sporting clays to the trap and skeet ranges. This members' facility is used for outreach to non-member groups including a public winter trap league, the local Ruffed Grouse Society chapter and Boy Scouts seeking to earn their shooting merit badges.

In addition to improving personal marksmanship and hunter proficiency, their rifle and pistol range is used to host sanctioned Mid-Atlantic Summer Biathlon Competitions attracting biathletes from throughout the region.

Their enhanced archery area, with a pavilion used for training and expanded target and 3D courses, continues to attract new families and youth into the League.

The chapter's shooting sports program is led by a group of dedicated committee chairs: Warner Parks, T. Steve Eschholz, Jr. and Jack Mandel.

On Target: Featured Chapters

In each issue of “Ikes On Target” we highlight chapters that promote shooting sports.

Under 500 Members — St. Joseph County Chapter (Indiana)



There is more to South Bend than Notre Dame football! Ask the 350 members of the local “St. Joe’s” Chapter who are privileged to have access to an amazing archery field course and indoor complex.



Aerial View of Field Archery Course

The chapter hosts summer archery leagues on a world-class outdoor field range, as well as on its five-star National Field Archery Association 28-target field and hunter archery course.



For years, the chapter has hosted many regional archery tournaments and attracts some of the nation’s best archers.



During the winter months, their spacious chapterhouse dining hall (above photo) is easily converted for archery league 20-yard shoots.



Whether traditional archery shoots or just tuning up for the upcoming hunting season, the St. Joseph County Chapter offers true-to-life shooting challenges for archers of all skill levels.

www.izaaksb.com/

Over 500 Members – Rockville Chapter (Maryland)



northern Virginia.

The chapter maintains an outdoor nine-position pistol range (including one wheelchair accessible), a three-position rifle range (up to 140 yards), and a static archery range.

In order to use any of the Rockville Chapter's firearms and archery ranges, the member must complete a chapter hosted range safety training class and at all times follow the posted range rules.



In addition, the chapter offers range officer training to certify for those members who wish to volunteer their time to help manage and maintain safe shooting ranges.

In recent years, the chapter's National Rifle Association basic firearms training courses and their Maryland Department of Natural Resources hunter education classes have benefited hundreds.



More recently their summer archery program has grown, in part due to Archery Trade Association's trained instructors from a previous IWLA Archery Academy.



Their junior shooting sports training is limited to BB gun and both air rifle and pistol. These training sessions are conducted throughout the year on the upper level of the chapter-house. During winter months, the indoor air pistol league also uses the same facility.

The Rockville Chapter hosts a number of outdoor competitions from April through September for members to test their shooting skills, including monthly rifle and muzzleloaders and weekly pistol events.

www.iwlar.org/

NSSM Tips (Continued from Page 4)

- Consider the NSSF, the organization that markets and manages NSSM promotions, as another source of other potential funding and in-kind support such as promotional tee-shirts, caps, equipment, and other gear.
- If the NSSM event is conducted using NSSF's First Shots curriculum, the chapter may be eligible for instructional hand-outs, and, if available, eye and ear protection, .22 caliber ammunition, paper targets, and limited clay target funding.

Any Izaak Walton League chapter with shooting ranges serves a critical role in the continued growth of gun ownership and shooting sports participation and NSSM is the perfect time to host such an event.

Quick Shots

Chapter Shooting Sports Coordinators

Attention Chapter President: Does your chapter have an assigned **Shooting Sports Coordinator**? Why is this so important?

Having a member volunteer in this position will help us provide your chapter with timely information about best practices for range management and other issues that affect hunters and recreational shooters at the local, state, and national levels. This member will also receive future shooting sports-related updates (and issues of "Ikes On Target" newsletters) from IWLA and NSSF and corporate discount product offers.

If your chapter does **not** currently have such a position filled, please identify a member to this position, then complete and return the enclosed form in the postage-paid envelope. Thank you!

IWLA Chapter Promotional Posters

The Izaak Walton League has made available a set of five **Chapter Promotional Posters** along with editing templates and "blank" poster stock free for your chapter's use.



Chapters are encouraged to produce and distribute their own posters and use them to promote specific information about their League chapter in their community.

One such poster, "Join Us – At A Chapter Near You" (enclosed sample) may be the one to use when marketing the shooting sports events.

So, consider using these when advertising your chapter-hosted shooting sports event, firearms training class, and hunter education courses to the public.

See the enclosed request form for more details (or available online at www.iwla.org/chapter-resources/chapter-communications). Using the poster stock and available templates, your chapter can easily create attractive posters for your promotional use!

