



By Patrick Durkin, ATA Contributing Editor

ATA Continues School Archery Grant Program

The Archery Trade Association will provide grants up to \$15,000 each during the 2005-06 school year for states that launch archery curriculums for students, primarily through the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) that began three years ago in Kentucky.

The amount of each grant depends on several factors, including whether a state has signed a long-term “memorandum of understanding,” or MOU, with the ATA. Under an MOU, governmental agencies work with the ATA on range planning, bowhunting education and opportunities, and school- and community-based archery programs. To date, the ATA has signed MOUs with nine states, including five in 2004 — Arizona, Michigan, Minnesota, Tennessee and Ohio; and four in 2005 — Georgia, Iowa, New Jersey and Utah.

Cities and counties launching archery programs are also eligible for ATA grants by signing an MOU. The first to do so was the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County near Chicago, which signed its agreement September 13. The ATA also signed an MOU with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in 2004.

While approving the funding for this year’s school archery programs, the board also committed to continue the grants until all states have initiated programs. Most of the grants are coordinated by NASP and used to help provide teacher training and equipment kits.

Roy Grimes, president of the NASP Foundation, said 36 states would be enrolled in NASP by Oct. 31. Further, six more states — Alaska, Connecticut, Kansas, Nevada, New Mexico and South Dakota — have committed to joining NASP, but haven’t yet been scheduled for certification and orientation. In addition, one school in New York and another in Hawaii have bought NASP equipment and received its curriculum manual.

The ATA Board has committed to pay the startup costs of every state that wants to start a school archery program, said Jay McAninch, the ATA’s CEO and president. “From our perspective, the key ingredient in this program is the involvement of state wildlife agencies, which ensures institutional support over the long term. We’re looking forward to when all 50 states have well-coordinated archery programs throughout their school systems.”

The ATA provided \$225,000 in grants during the 2004-05 school year to help launch school programs in Arizona, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin. The ATA’s total commitment will likely exceed \$500,000 by the time all 50 states have implemented school archery programs.

The number of states implementing school-based archery programs has grown rapidly the past

three years. Working primarily through NASP, 24 states had enrolled by the end of 2004, and Grimes expects all 50 states to be participating in NASP by the end of 2006. In addition, Mexico will send a representative to California’s NASP workshop in October, and then launch the program in Guadalajara’s schools.

“The grant money ATA provides states has accelerated the program’s expansion,” Grimes said. “As soon as we have NASP in all 50 states, we’ll begin work to move every state beyond 100 participating schools and to reach 3 million student-archers every year.”

ATA Board Chair Erik Watts, who is CEO of Easton-Hoyt LLC, said the board continues to be impressed by NASP, and hopes the grants serve as “seed money” to help youngsters take the steps necessary to make archery a lifelong interest.

“NASP is without doubt the most exciting youth program we’ve seen in 20 years, and ATA is committed to taking it to every state in the country,” Watts said. “Just as importantly, we’re committed to working with state and federal agencies, communities and the nation’s archery dealers to involve everyone. We need to take youngsters beyond their school’s two-week introduction to archery. The real excitement will start when dealers get more involved and help educators develop after-school clubs and programs that introduce kids to archery’s various disciplines, and even bowhunting.”

McAninch said the foundation for turning archery into a lifetime sport is the MOU process. "Like many recreational sports, archery needs the infrastructure and institutional support that state and local governmental agencies provide," he said. "This support, coupled with increased use of the archery excise-tax funds, provides the top-down oversight needed so programs don't fall apart when a key person retires or moves on. To make archery part of mainstream recreation in America, it must be an integral part of our educational, recreational and natural resources programs."

To enhance those efforts, ATA has also funded research to learn how students benefit from NASP, and to learn how archery instruction can be even more beneficial. Michelle Doerr, the ATA's education and research coordinator for its non-profit foundation ArrowSport, said teachers cited a couple of ways to deepen archery's roots in the nation's school systems.

"Our surveys found some great growth opportunities to explore," she said. "The students and teachers really want to learn more games they can play in archery, such as tic-tac-toe. They want games that are challenging but fun so they keep kids excited while they sharpen their skills. The teachers also said they'd rather have daily lesson plans for the course, instead of the manual. Teachers are busy before and after school, and might not have time to craft their own daily lessons. A daily lesson plan prepared in advance by expert archery instructors would make phy-ed teachers even more effective."

ATA has also published an "Insight" bulletin that analyzes archery's impressive safety record. The free pamphlet answers concerns sometimes raised by administrators or school-board members when they consider archery for their phy-ed curriculum. "We're exploring every possible way we can help NASP and other school archery programs," said Denise Parker, ATA's vice-president. "NASP has established itself as a tremendous asset to



Wisconsin launched the National Archery in the Schools Program in February 2005 when it held this workshop for instructors at the Bessie Allen Middle School in North Fond du Lac. NASP is expected to be active in 36 states by the end of October 2005.

archery, and we want to make sure we capitalize on every opportunity for growth."

Kevin Stay, president of Brennan Industries, said he continues to be amazed by NASP's success, and believes it will continue to grow. "As the program picks up speed and the word spreads, we'll see even more awareness by the schools on how to acquire funding to launch pro-

grams," he said. "Between improved knowledge of how to apply for government grants, and more organizations and businesses stepping forward to sponsor individual programs, I don't see the momentum slowing any time soon."

Editor's Note: Brennan Industries is the supplier of the "fits anyone" Genesis bows used by schools in the NASP program. ←

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