

PRESIDENT'S *Corner*

Between the economy and continuing bad weather across the country, spring has been a long time coming this year. But here in Washington, DC, we're getting enough days of warm temperatures to remind us that in many parts of the country, fishing season has begun.

Of course for the sportfishing industry to thrive, there have to be anglers. Along with access, participation is one of the most critical issues facing the industry today and it is one of our top priorities. From one of our earliest major undertakings in the 1930s promoting a casting game for kids to taking the lead in establishing the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation in 1999, with our members' business in mind, the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) has introduced people to fishing.

As you may know, last month the Future Fisherman Foundation's board of directors voted to continue the foundation's operations. Despite the economic challenges, the foundation will continue to seek funding to provide youth angling-education programs for children and their families. The Future Fisherman Foundation,



established in 1986 by Berkley & Company, became associated with ASA in 1996. With the economic challenges facing our industry and the elimination of one of the foundation's two grant funding sources, in October 2008 ASA's board of directors decided that effective March 31, 2009, ASA could no longer provide the foundation's core support. We wish the foundation's board of directors and

its staff all the best as they find new ways to introduce young people to fishing.

Through the federal manufacturers excise tax on tackle, the industry's investment in the Recreational Fishing & Boating Foundation (RBFF) is showing dividends. Its Take Me Fishing campaign is a loud and clear call to action that leaves no doubt about what we are asking the American public to do. With "take me fishing" as the message and the brand, RBFF has developed a myriad of programs to get more people fishing. RBFF is now kicking off year two of a nationwide effort to entice lapsed anglers to get back on the water. With RBFF's support, 32 state agencies will launch campaigns during the coming weeks with targeted mailings enhanced

by radio advertising. In year one, more than 223,000 additional licenses were sold. That's the kind of results we like to see.

Another RBFF program, Anglers' Legacy, is approaching its three-year anniversary. Last month RBFF announced that 100,000 people, the Anglers' Legacy Ambassadors, have pledged to introduce someone new to fishing. An RBFF survey conducted last fall revealed that on average Ambassadors purchase approximately \$140 in fishing tackle and equipment sales and \$153 in boating supplies and accessories, generating \$25.6 million for the sportfishing and boating industries.

In the end, ASA is a steward of our industry and it's all about making the most judicious use of our resources, whether its members' dues or investments using the federal manufacturers excise tax on fishing tackle. We are here to look out for you and your businesses.

Mike Nussman
President & CEO