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**Media Contact: Chris Chaffin**  
[Chris@ChaffinCommunications.com](mailto:Chris@ChaffinCommunications.com)  
(321) 729-0280 Office; (321) 506-5500 Cell

## 2014 IHEA-USA Photo Contest Winners Announced

**Denver, Colo**—Winners of the 2014 International Hunter Education Association-USA (IHEA-USA) photo contest were recently announced. Through the contest, IHEA-USA sought quality images that represented hunter education training, hunting and shooting safety, as well as other quality aspects of safe, responsible hunting and firearms use. The images will be used in IHEA-USA’s communication and education outreach programs and materials.

The winners were chosen from among the 28 photographers who submitted 333 images. Bass Pro Shops generously donated gifts cards to recognize and reward the top three winners, continuing their long-standing support of hunter education.



**First place** went to **Ron Spomer** of Boise, Idaho for his dramatic photo depicting two generations of hunters in the field and on target, focusing on “doing it right” and clearly depicting the valuable mentoring partnership of the hunters. Spomer is a well-known outdoor journalist, photographer and outdoor TV host.



**Second place** was awarded to **Judd Cooney** of Pagosa Springs, Colorado for his sparkling image of two young, successful coyote hunters in a dynamic, snowy mountain landscape. Following a long career with the Colorado Department of Wildlife, Cooney has spent years as an outdoor journalist and photographer, as well as a being a guide for deer and turkey in Iowa.



**Third place** was won by **Joe Byers** for his colorful, close-up shot of an archery hunter at full draw, depicting the technique and focus required for successful bow hunters and capturing the flavor of a solitary hunter, concealed in brilliant fall colors. Byers is a respected outdoor communicator of many years, from Hagerstown, MD.

In addition to the top three places, the judges awarded two honorable mentions to Cooney and one each to Bob Humphrey of Pownal, ME and Mark Kayser of Sheridan, WY. As with the award winners, Humphrey and Kayser are widely recognized as top-quality, professional outdoor communicators with long track records of telling and sharing the outdoor lifestyle story through their photographs, writing and more.

First place winner, Ron Spomer, said, "Sharing with the next generation the joys we've discovered in the hunter/gatherer lifestyle isn't just a good idea, it's essential. New recruits are needed to protect hunting, wildlife and the natural environments that make both possible. Teaching firearms safety and respect goes hand in hand."

Judd Cooney commented on entering the contest, "I've been blessed with having had the opportunity of introducing a son and daughter, followed by two grandsons and a granddaughter, into the hunting and shooting field and watching them enjoy the bounties of the outdoors and experience the highs and lows of hunting and shooting. In addition I've been equally fortunate to have trained many school students in firearms safety and proper use of firearms, and taken many youngsters into the field to enjoy the hunting challenge. However, the greatest reward of these lifetime associations with youngsters in their hunting and shooting endeavors has come from photographing them over the years to record their activities so that others can share vicariously in their experience through the photos."

Joe Byers said, "Jim Durr [photo subject] loves this stand in a sugar maple and the leaves turn about the same time as deer begin foraging for acorns. The image shows two important safety features: A ScentBlocker safety harness that fits through the hunter's jacket and the ladder steps that rise above the stand platform allowing a hunter to step onto the stand safely. Jim's a great shot and I doubt he'll miss."

"Hunter education is a crucial first step for any young hunter," said Bob Humphrey "because it teaches not only safety, but ethics and responsibility, which ultimately makes the hunting experience more enjoyable for the individual and those that he or she shares it with."

Mark Kayser shared his thoughts on the contest and hunter education. "As a full-time outdoor communicator hunting to me is more than a pastime, it's my livelihood. It envelops me and my family so when I learned of the photo contest I immediately thought of how important it is for everyone to consider hunter education. It's not only a stepping stone to acquiring hunting permits and great outdoor memories, but it provides insight and education on firearms, and firearm safety. With firearms found everywhere in this great country it is more important than ever for every individual to understand the respect firearms require and the enjoyment that firearms provide. Hunter education does both and continues to be an important teaching lesson everyone should consider."

"IHEA-USA extends its gratitude to all the photographers who were willing to support hunter education and share their skills to help us communicate more visually and effectively. Likewise, we are grateful for the on-going support from Bass Pro Shops," said Steve Hall, IHEA-USA Executive Director.

Hall concluded by saying the success of this year's photo contest would, in all likelihood, lead to a second annual contest in 2015 as IHEA-USA continues to embrace their position and responsibility as "World Leader in Developing Safe, Responsible Hunters Since 1949."

## —IHEA-USA—

**About IHEA-USA:** IHEA-USA is a 501 (c) (3) professional organization that operates in support of the 50 state fish and wildlife agencies and their hunter education programs, including mandated training for hunters and shooting enthusiasts. Through these agency efforts, more than 57,000 instructors, many who are volunteers, train more than 670,000 students through hunter education programs each year.

### **About Bass Pro Shops®**

Bass Pro Shops®, which specializes in outdoor fun, operates 88 retail stores and Tracker Marine Centers across America and Canada that are visited by more than 116 million people every year. Bass Pro Shops stores, many of which feature restaurants, offer hunting, fishing, camping and other outdoor gear while their catalogs and website serve shoppers throughout the world. The company's Tracker Marine Group® (<http://www.trackermarine.com/>), which has produced the number one selling brand of fishing boats for more than 35 years, manufactures and sells a variety of boats for fishing and cruising. Family fun is on tap at Bass Pro Shops resort Big Cedar Lodge® (<http://www.bigcedar.com/>) voted number six by *Travel + Leisure Magazine* as World's Best Hotels for Families. For more information, visit <http://www.basspro.com/>. To request a free catalog, call 1-800-BASS PRO. Follow us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/bassproshops>.

**IHEA-USA 800 E. 73<sup>rd</sup> Ave., Unit 2, Denver CO; (303) 430-7233 • [www.ihea-usa.org](http://www.ihea-usa.org)**

*Continuing the Heritage of Hunting Worldwide by Developing Safe, Responsible and Knowledgeable Hunters.*