



photo-Adam Spangler

While at the Great American Outdoor Show in Harrisburg on Saturday, February 1, Governor Tom Corbett picked up his 2014 fishing license at the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) booth while PFBC Executive Director John A. Arway looks on.

# Straight TALK

by **John A. Arway**

Executive Director  
Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

## PFBC's Angler Thank You Campaign

When was the last time you were thanked for purchasing a product at your local supermarket or retail store? Most likely, just like me, it was the last time you visited the store, because most clerks thank you for your business every time you make a purchase. Businesses have learned that a simple thank you for visiting their store and making a purchase is a way to keep customers coming back. The model that businesses use has been around for a long time and continues to work well even in today's busy society. Unfortunately, government doesn't typically do a good job of thanking those who provide the funds that government uses to deliver the goods and services that people receive. I'm not quite sure why that is, but my staff and I intend to change the way government works in Pennsylvania by greeting you on a stream or lake one day and personally thanking you for buying your fishing license.

I recently saw a presentation by Howard Hyden from the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation called "Standing in Your Customers' Waders." It really brought home the message to me about the importance of thanking our customers for their support for buying fishing licenses or registering boats. I believe that government in the past has always taken license buyers for granted. We can require



For more information on PFBC's Angler Thank You campaign, visit [www.AnglerBoaterThankYou.com](http://www.AnglerBoaterThankYou.com) or see page 3 of the wrapper.

anglers to buy a license or boaters to pay a fee to register their boat, so it really doesn't matter if less people fish or boat, because all we have to do is raise the fees and that will insure that our agency's place in government continues to exist. If you want to learn more about my view of this approach, you can find it in a previous "Straight Talk" titled "A Fishing License Decrease" at [www.fishandboat.com/images/people/exec\\_dir/straight\\_talk/2010\\_07\\_08\\_decrease.pdf](http://www.fishandboat.com/images/people/exec_dir/straight_talk/2010_07_08_decrease.pdf).

My continued view is that we need to begin running government more like a business and not take our customers for granted. We continue to lose market share in the field of recreation, because we now have to compete with other sports for a share of your time. That's why I sent a team of our staff to a Sports Marketing Conference last year to learn more about the techniques that other professional sports teams use to retain their current customers and recruit new ones. One of the things they learned was that we have to continue to add value to the products we deliver to you. If we don't, you will decide to spend your leisure time and money doing other things. Hyden says innovate or evaporate, aka change or die. You become what you think. So, we put on our thinking caps and began evaluating our programs with the goal of improving services and goods to get more people fishing and boating in Pennsylvania.

We are a public service agency, and we have always prided ourselves in providing the best services that we can with the funding we have been allotted. Our views have been mostly product focused through our resource conservation and recreational service programs. We need to do a better job focusing on our customers' expectations in order to recover the market share we have lost to other sports and activities. Our best form of advertising is our customer. PWOM (Positive Word of Mouth) starts and ends with you, the angler—all 1.1 million of you (2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation). When you sit around a campfire, on a stream bank or even at a cocktail party and the conversation turns to fishing or boating, it is our job to make sure that you had a positive experience. Then, you can be an angler and boater recruiter to others, so they



*The mission of the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission is to protect, conserve and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities.*

can enjoy what we have come to enjoy as Pennsylvania sportsmen and women.

I have asked Steve Kralik, a current Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission employee, to be our marketing coordinator, and I am confident that he and our staff will lead us into new areas that will show you that we are serious about delivering the best services and goods to meet your expectations. Steve has already lined up some surprises that we will be announcing on our website dedicated to this effort at [www.AnglerBoaterThankYou.com](http://www.AnglerBoaterThankYou.com). I can't promise you a fish on every cast, but I promise you that our staff and I will be out there on March 29th on the early opening day of trout season in the southeast and on April 12th for the statewide opener to show our thanks and appreciation for your business. We will be partnering with others since we share you, our customer, with many other businesses throughout the Commonwealth. We want to learn what's important to you. Remember, we are all in this together.

See you on the water.

Your Director,

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Photo-Andrew L. Shields

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Share your ideas.*



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