

Governor Rauner celebrates Illinois' hunting heritage on National Hunting and Fishing Day

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Directs IDNR to Develop New Hunter Safety Education Options

SPRINGFIELD – In observance of National Hunting and Fishing Day on September 24, Governor Bruce Rauner has directed the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to take steps to make participation in hunting and fishing more accessible for current and future generations.

The Governor's vision is to make IDNR's Hunter Safety Education program a leader in the nation by employing the latest techniques and technology. As part of that effort, Governor Rauner has asked IDNR to implement a new hunter safety course that can be completed entirely online – providing a convenient additional option for hunters that embrace the goals of hunter education and safety while assisting efforts to recruit and retain young hunters.

“I know firsthand how important hunting and fishing are to our state and our economy,” said Governor Rauner. “One of my favorite pastimes is fishing in Lake Sangchris and hunting doves in the fields of Central and Southern Illinois. I want all young people in Illinois to have the same opportunities.”

Currently, hunters seeking to take Illinois' Hunter Safety Course to become certified must complete 10 hours of classroom work and attend a field day for hands-on safety training. Hunters have the option to complete a portion of the classroom work online, but still must attend the field day portion in person. The new course, when implemented, will be a state-of-the-art course that can be completed entirely online, providing ease of access and consistency of delivery. The field and classroom courses will remain available for those who prefer the traditional training.

“Hunters and anglers spend more than \$2 billion per year, providing a boost to our state's economy. They also help fund conservation of deer, turkeys, waterfowl and other wildlife by their purchases of hunting and fishing licenses,” IDNR Director Wayne Rosenthal added. “It is crucial that we continue to provide opportunities for a new generation of hunters and anglers that also are our next generation of conservationists in Illinois.”

In addition to this new facet in Hunter Safety Education, the IDNR is also preparing wildlife specific workshops, in-person mentoring programs and additional instruction for new and current hunters. The workshops will cover a variety of topics, including hunting basics, advanced hunting techniques including species-specific training, how to clean game and care for equipment, wildlife laws, and the role of hunting in wildlife management.

These workshops will be among the nation's first to provide in-the-field training opportunities to improve the skills of hunters. The IDNR will make further announcements when these new programs are available.