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### **VDGIF DIRECTOR'S VOLUNTEER AWARD** Volunteers Recognized for their Tremendous Dedication

Richmond, VA - The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) relies heavily on a volunteer force to deliver its free Hunter Education course to more than 14,000 people each year across the Commonwealth. These dedicated individuals give selflessly to a program that helps teach hunting safety, hunting ethics, and hunting skills.

In 2008, three volunteer Hunter Education instructors received the Director's Volunteer Award for contributing more than 5,000 hours each to the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Those individuals are Lewis A. Austin, of Norfolk; Jack L. Broughman, of Waynesboro; and John W. Dodson, of Culpeper. The men were honored for their work at events in Richmond and Appomattox during August and September.

Captain Bobby Mawyer, whose responsibilities include overseeing the Hunter Education program, commented on the award, "5,000 hours is roughly the equivalent of two and one-half years of full-time work. These Hunter Education instructors have altogether trained more than 27,000 students to be safe, responsible, and knowledgeable hunters. Each has given of their time and talent to assist the Department in its mandate to provide Hunter Education to the public."

**Lewis A. (Lew) Austin** became a Hunter Education instructor in 1985. Since that time, Lew has given 5,469 hours to the Hunter Education Program. In 1997, he received the William Dixon Morgan Memorial Award, for the instructor considered to have contributed the most to Hunter Education that year. In addition to teaching the basic Hunter Education course, Lew has trained countless numbers of young people in firearms and hunter safety from Boy Scout and 4-H groups. He has also used his knowledge and experience to teach advanced rifle and shotgun courses to other instructors.

**Jack L. Broughman** has been an instructor since 1988. He has contributed 5,566 hours, more than any other active instructor in Virginia. Jack served as volunteer county coordinator in Augusta County for many years. He has worked extensively with Augusta County schools to provide Hunter Education in the county's middle schools. For many years, Jack worked with the Youth Hunter Education Challenge team, as well as helping the Department conduct the Hunter Education Challenge. Jack received the William Dixon Morgan Memorial Award in 1996.

**John W. Dodson** became an instructor in 1987. He has contributed 5,161 hours to the Hunter Education Program. John became a founder of Cedar Mountain Youths, Inc. in 1990 with the goal of teaching firearms safety to young people. Since that time, most of the Hunter Education instructors in the Culpeper area have come from Cedar Mountain Youths. John has taught firearms safety to numerous young people from 4-H, Boy Scouts, schools, and churches. He has trained many other instructors in the use of hunter safety trails as a teaching aid. He has taught the skills needed for safe turkey hunting to other instructors and to the public. John was deemed Hunter Education Instructor of the Year by the Virginia Wildlife Federation in 1994. He was the William Dixon Morgan Memorial Award recipient in 1995. John received the International Hunter Education Association's Hall of Fame Award in 2002.

The Virginia Hunter Education Association (VHEA) was formed last year as a non-profit group, composed of volunteer instructors who wished to provide a greater level of assistance to the Department with its Hunter Education efforts. On behalf of the Association, VHEA President Vernie Kennedy presented each

of the recipients with a Henry Golden Boy .22 rifle to commemorate the award. "These instructors have been mentors to the rest of us," said Kennedy of the recipients of the award.

To learn more about Virginia's Hunter Education program visit the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries website at [www.dgif.virginia.gov](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov).

It is the mission of the VDGIF to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth; to provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fish, boating and related outdoor recreation and to work diligently to safeguard the rights of the people to hunt, fish and harvest game as provided for in the Constitution of Virginia; to promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting and fishing; to provide educational outreach programs and materials that foster an awareness of and appreciation for Virginia's fish and wildlife resources, their habitats, and hunting, fishing, and boating opportunities.