

Growing the sport of tennis is our top priority here at USTA Kentucky. Last year, we received a challenge to have 35 million players by 2035. To achieve that goal, it means a 3% increase annually. I am happy to announce that participation grew by 8% nationally, but our region of USTA Southern grew by 12%. Within the Southern region, Kentucky was 2nd place for growth out of our 9 member states! Hearing about our sport's growth was quite the accolade at the USTA Southern Annual meeting in January. We also had 5 USTA Southern award winners represented at the Annual Meeting—congratulations to our award recipients! During our meetings, one of the main takeaways was that funding for growing the game is not an issue. More on that in a moment.

Our USTA Kentucky weekend also just wrapped up in late January. We held meetings with the statewide committees during the weekend, with each meeting's focus being centered on creating one big goal for each committee. We also were able to honor our state's award winners and induct new members into the Kentucky Tennis Hall of Fame. Raise a Racquet also announced a new record of \$92,000 in raised funds! As I reflect on the weekend, it is such a joy to see the sport growing and continuing to flourish. Tennis is the sport of a lifetime and is the healthiest sport. I am regularly impressed by the great leadership we have in our governing bodies. They are budgeting funds to help us in promoting growth, setting us up for success at the grassroots level.

As we look at the year ahead, it is up to us here in Kentucky to creatively tap into this flow of funds. Here are the key areas of funding:

- Innovation
- Growth Catalyst
- Facility Grants

Now is the time to be creative and share your ideas for new opportunities to growing tennis in your community. Let's make strides to apply for and receive these funds so that we can apply them throughout Kentucky.

Get out and play and live another day.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray L. Schenck".