At the USTA’s recent Annual Meeting in Orlando, one topic that received a lot of attention was the renewed effort to promote this sport through National Tennis Month in May. NTM not only had its own elective session at the meeting, but came up in many committee meetings, was a part of USTA President Mike McNulty’s address to the more than 850 attendees, and was included in signage around the meeting venue.

“National Tennis Month provides us all with the perfect opportunity to raise awareness around our great sport and promote it as healthy, fun, safe and accessible to people of all ages and abilities,” says McNulty, adding that he’d like to see this kind of promotion of tennis “12 months of the year.”

Nearly every USTA section has something planned for the month of May that ties into National Tennis Month. For instance, in USTA Southern, tennis providers such as CTAs and NJTLs can promote tennis in their communities and also earn money for their programs by picking from a “menu” of eight promotional ideas. Successful completion during NTM earns the provider organization $250 per item, up to $1,000.

USTA New England has plans for an NTM kick-off event on May 7 on Boston Common, with vendors, games and a carnival-like feel. The section is working with the Boston mayor’s office to advocate for May 7 to be the “official day of tennis” in the city, and the section has similar events planned for other Boston locations on other days.

The overall idea is for NTM to give every tennis provider—including teaching pros/coaches, facilities, park & recs, CTAs, NJTLs, retailers and others—an annual platform to bring new players into local programs, inspire lapsed players to re-engage with the sport, and energize existing players to play more and buy more. An important focus is on the “local” aspect of these promotions. Programming and events are left up to whatever local tennis providers decide would be best for their own communities.

NTM also is an industry-wide effort, as members of Tennis Industry United, including the USPTA, PTR, Tennis Channel, ATA and ITA, have all expressed support and plan to reach out to their constituents with ideas to tie into NTM.

The USTA, through both volunteers and staff, has been able to assemble a wealth of marketing materials for tennis providers to use to promote tennis—all free and available at USTA.com/NationalTennisMonth.

Among the material are downloadable and customizable artwork, press releases, postcards and sample proclamations for city councils and mayors. One phenomenal resource—designed for NTM but suitable for use any time—is a “Programming, Marketing and Promotional Ideas” brochure with hundreds of ideas to help grow the game and your business, most of which are free or very low cost. The ideas were generated from many of the USTA’s volunteer committees, so they come right from the people who have been delivering tennis at the grassroots.

Help grow the game and your business. Promote May as National Tennis Month in your community.