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THE INDUSTRY'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE — EST. 1955

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THAT SELL THEMSELVES

2023 AMMUNITION MARKET UPDATE

Where Are We Now?

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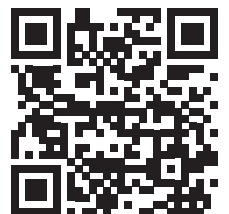
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The acquisition, ownership, possession and use of firearms is heavily regulated. Some models may not be legally available in your state or locale. Whatever your purpose for lawfully acquiring a firearm – know the law, get trained, and shoot safely.



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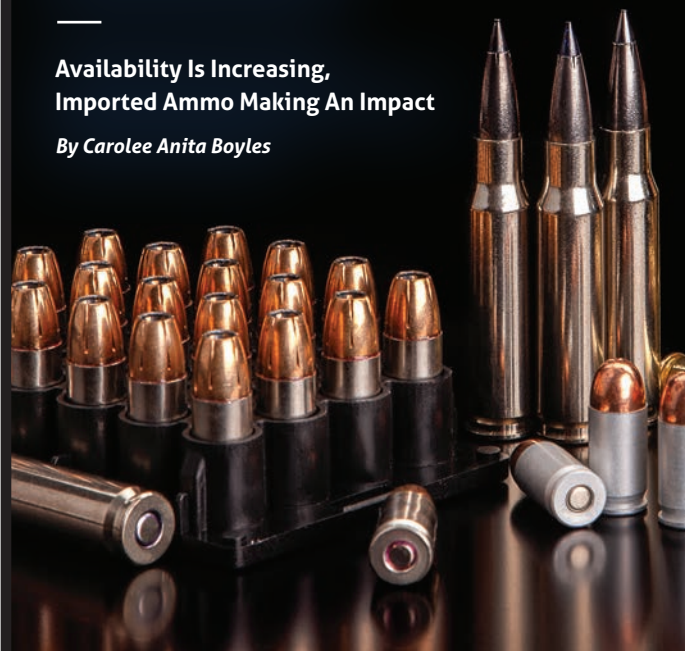
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Addressing Market Volatility

The volatile nature of the firearms industry has been on full display over the past three-plus years. In the midst of a “normalization”

ahead of an election year, the ammunition segment has made great strides in a return to more widespread availability. Some retailers continue to struggle getting ammunition on the shelves, but it’s far cry from where we were 24 months ago.

Inside this issue, dealers (pp. 26–28) provide updates on one of the most impacted markets in the industry.

“We’re seeing a little bit of softening in the market,” sums up Kevin Smith of Sprague’s Sports. “Prices have come down on certain ammo, but other ammo still remains a challenge to find and prices are still high on those.”

ANOTHER FORM OF “PPP”

When “PPP” appears, most of us might think of “Paycheck Protection Program.” Retail expert Hank Yacek argues we should instead be thinking of “Payroll, Profits and Performance” — especially while the industry comes down from the record sales period.

“In today’s environment, we need to get a handle on payroll expenses and how they impact our profit margins,” he said.

For more, see this month’s *Best Practices* installment, p. 24.

ON-GUN ACCESSORIES THAT SELL THEMSELVES

Some accessories are so popular they move without promotion or marketing — but knowing customer preferences is key to facilitating an upward trend. Red dots are red hot at Coat of Arms Custom Firearms, according to Owner Adam Johnson — with two brands standing out to his customers.

“Our shop is really selective about what we carry,” he said. “A lot of brands we don’t even offer. Everybody on our staff is a certified armorer and instructor. We pay attention to



MAY 2023

trends, and we keep track of what is durable and what is not. People can see firsthand they (Holosun and Trijicon) are virtually indestructible. They’re products that sell themselves.”

See pp. 30–33 for more accessories on the move.

SET YOUR SIGHTS ON VARMINT HUNTERS

One of the benefits of appealing to varmint/predator hunters is this category offers year-round potential — and often requires numerous accessories. Your store can play a part in managing local unwanted varmint/predator populations, while also making a profit.

Nathan Hopp, hunting department manager at Jay’s Sporting Goods, highlighted variety is key when appealing to these hunters.

He shared, “Calls, decoys and lights are our top-selling items for varmint hunting. You need a variety because each customer has different needs.”

For more insights, see pp. 38–39.

NEXT MONTH: THE SAFETY ISSUE!

June is National Safety Month — and we’ll be presenting *Shooting Industry’s* first-ever Safety Issue to go along with it. Inside June, there will be several features highlighting aspects of “safety” in everyday business — safety at the range, at the point-of-sale and the safety of employees/inventory.

Sales of safety-related products — both eye-and-ear protection and safes of all sizes/uses — will be another focal point of the June issue. **SI**

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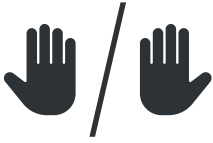


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Without hesitation, I have been instructing more women lately than men. Women want to be safe. In addition to the firearms training, I also have been teaching more women to draw from concealment.

Women are more vulnerable than men, and the criminal element knows this because they always take the path of least resistance, and also the elderly.

After teaching cops for many years, I'm very humbled now to train civilians — particularly women — on protecting themselves.

— **Diego Civello, Course Instructor**
Target World

What a great piece! I found myself agreeing with much of the sentiment expressed, especially with regard to how much room for growth exists within the industry. It's so important to continue talking about ever-increasing female firearm ownership, and hearing from women in the industry about how to embrace it.

— **Rachel McPherson, Digital Specialist**
Red Edge

I certainly agree, any training is vital and I fully support this. I worked with my wife for three years making sure her confidence level was where it needed to be — proud to say she now has her carry license.

— **Thomas Bei, Owner - Cargo Securement & Packaging Consultant**
Bei Ranch

My wife did this a couple of years ago, and now ladies I work with are getting training and firearms. I believe it is a huge market!

— **Mark Bartmas**

People are people. They want instruction from qualified people. Most aren't hyper focused on gender bits and virtue signaling. **[S]**

— **Paul Angell, Founder**
AmmoReady.com

REACTIONS TO THE WOMAN'S ISSUE!

Editor's Note: The fifth annual Woman's Issue (March 2023) clearly had an impact with readers, who shared some of their reactions and experiences with us. Here's a collection of comments we received via a LinkedIn post promoting the issue's "In Demand" feature, which included the perspectives of Paige Roux, Ava Flannel and Claudia Chisholm. Have a reaction to add? Drop us a line: editor@shootingindustry.com.

I have been training women for over eight years. As a prior Indiana State Trooper, I have used my experience as a woman carrying a gun in uniform and as an undercover cop to empower women of all ages to learn the fundamentals and safety aspects of carrying and using a gun. Women feel more vulnerable in today's world. They are looking for a way to level the playing field and protect their families. I am thankful for my role in empowering the ladies I have met.

— **Tamara Watson, Protocol Officer/Firearms Instructor/Prior Indiana State Trooper**

It's so important to continue talking about ever-increasing female firearm ownership, and hearing from women in the industry about how to embrace it.

I'm a course instructor at a pistol range/training center. I also have my own business teaching a variety of courses including firearm safety and the basic fundamentals of shooting.

HAVE A THOUGHT WHILE READING THE ISSUE?

Let us know at comments@shootingindustry.com or facebook.com/shootingindustry.



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HUNTING LICENSE SALES DROP TO PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS

Held March 19–24 in St. Louis, the 88th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference debuted the first look at the results of the Hunting License Sales 2021–2022 report — which documented a 3.1% decline in hunting license sales in 2022.

“We continued to track hunting license sales as one indicator of participation, and our results indicate that the impacts of COVID on getting people outdoors may be waning. Hunting license sales are settling back to pre-pandemic levels,” said Swanny Evans,

director of research and partnerships for the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports (CAHSS).

The study was a follow-up to the past two years’ CAHSS studies that documented a 4.9% increase in hunting license sales from 2019 to 2020 (otherwise known as the COVID-Bump) and a 1.9% decrease the following year from 2020 to 2021. To continue monitoring sales trends in the wake of the pandemic impact, the Council revisited this study in early 2023 to identify ongoing changes and emerging

trends in hunters’ rates of license purchases.

Working with Southwick Associates, the Council collected monthly resident and nonresident hunting license sales data from 46 state wildlife agencies to quantify and compare 2022 to 2021 sales. Among the 46 reporting states:

- Overall, hunting license sales decreased by approximately 3.1% in 2022 compared to 2021. Coincidentally, resident and nonresident license sales each were also down 3.1%.
- Just six of 46 states saw an overall increase in the number of licenses sold in 2022 compared to 2021.
- License sales were down overall in each of the four geographical regions (Northeast, Southeast, Midwest and West), with percentages ranging from -2.4 to -4.8%.
- The only months with overall increases in license sales (and slight ones at that) were February and September.

• The surge in nonresident license sales seen in 2021 receded in three of the four geographical regions, with the only increase seen in the Northeast.

The Hunting License Sales 2021–2022 report, which provides the most representative data on the current state of hunting license sales nationally and regionally, can be accessed on the Council’s website, cahss.org/our-research/hunting-license-sales-2021-2022.

[/cahss.org](https://cahss.org)

SUREFIRE, B&T USA ANNOUNCE COLLABORATION

SureFire LLC and B&T USA announced a new collaboration agreement that will give B&T exclusive rights to manufacture suppressors for SureFire’s patented SOCOM Fast-Attach line of suppressor-mounting muzzle devices.

The agreement is the culmination of a decades-old partnership between the

two companies.

While SureFire’s SOCOM Fast-Attach mounting design remains proprietary and patented, B&T customers will now have additional muzzle-device options while SureFire muzzle-device customers will have additional suppressor options.

Located in Fountain Valley, Calif., SureFire is a leading manufacturer of suppressors, high-performance flashlights, weapon-mounted lights and other tactical equipment.



B&T USA, located in Tampa, Fla., has manufactured suppressors since 1991, later expanding to include complete tactical weapon systems.

[/surefire.com](https://surefire.com)

[/bt-usa.com](https://bt-usa.com)

NSSF NAMES SEN. STEVE DAINES LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR

NSSF has honored U.S. Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.) as the 2022 NSSF Legislator of the Year.

Sen. Daines was recognized for his commitment to protecting the firearm industry against attacks that threaten the lawful commerce of firearms in America, as well as his commitment to preserving the Constitutional rights of law-abiding gun owners, hunting, public lands access and conservation.

"We're honored to present Senator Daines with the 2022 NSSF Legislator of the Year Award for his unwavering leadership in the U.S. Senate to protect the firearm and ammunition industry, lawful gun owners, hunters and sportsmen and women," said Lawrence G. Keane, NSSF SVP and general counsel. "Senator Daines'

leadership to ensure fairness in business, reasserting Congress' role in ensuring the federal government isn't picking marketplace winners and losers based on politics, protecting gun owners, hunters and sportsmen and women's rights and public lands access is commendatory. Senator Daines is an example to be emulated."

Sen. Daines introduced the Firearm Industry Nondiscrimination (FIND) Act in 2022 (S.4435) — legislation to ensure firearm-related businesses have fair access to financial services and corporate

entities wouldn't benefit from taxpayer-funded contracts while using those profits to discriminate against constitutionally-protected firearm businesses. He has since reintroduced the FIND Act in the 118th Congress as (S.428). The legislation would make corporations ineligible for federal contracts if they hold discriminatory policies against firearm businesses.

Apr. 18, Sen. Daines reintroduced the NSSF-supported Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act in the 118th Congress.

[/nssf.org](https://nssf.org)



NSSF's Joe Bartozzi and Larry Keane honor Sen. Steve Daines (center) during the 2023 NSSF Congressional Fly-In, Apr. 18.

 *The Golden Eagles*

www.NorthAmericanArms.com

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NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM ACQUIRES COOPER FIREARMS

Nighthawk Custom has acquired Cooper Firearms of Montana, known for its custom, bolt-action rifles.

The company will operate as Cooper Rifles of Arkansas LLC, and will be located at Nighthawk Custom's Berryville, Ark., campus. Nighthawk Custom will be the exclusive distributor of all Cooper rifles.

"Cooper has a reputation of building fine and accurate rifles for over 30

years. Each rifle will be built with 100% machined parts, stunning wood hand-checkering and beautiful finishes that are a perfect fit with the existing offerings we are known for. We, as a company, look forward to strengthening the brand and even improving upon the quality of the past," said Mark Stone, owner and CEO of Nighthawk Custom.

The transition is in progress, and a date for new operations to begin has not yet been announced.

"We ask for your patience during this time of transition as we move all



ONE GUN, ONE GUNSMITH

operations to Berryville. The process will take time, and our goal is to ensure the same great products and customer service from Cooper Rifles that you have come to know and expect from Nighthawk Custom," Stone said.

[/nighthawkcustom.com](http://nighthawkcustom.com)

[/cooperfirearms.com](http://cooperfirearms.com)

SK GUNS CONTINUES KIDS & CLAYS SUPPORT

SK Guns, series-driven manufacturer of custom firearms, announced its continued support of Kids & Clays through its SK Gives Back initiative.

Kids & Clays is dedicated to improving the lives of critically ill children and their families by partnering with Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) chapters to host sporting clays, skeet and trap fundraising events.

"Kids & Clays gives shooters the chance to come together, change lives and give a new generation of shooters the opportunity of a lifetime. We're dedicated to enhancing awareness of their mission

through support, donations and more," said Simon Khiabani, owner and founder of SK Guns.

Since 1999, Kids & Clays has generated more than \$20 million for RMHC through hosting and promoting sporting clays, trap and skeet events. The events have raised awareness for RMHC chapters throughout the hunting and shooting community, while assisting hundreds of thousands of families served by Ronald McDonald Houses each day.

The SK Gives Back initiative enhances personal growth and development opportunities for organizations that make an impact across the country. The initiative supports a wide array of causes. By regularly donating firearms to industry-connected organizations, the



program gives back to those in need on a local and national level.

[/skguns.com](http://skguns.com)

[/kidsandclays.com](http://kidsandclays.com)

POF-USA PARTNERS WITH EXPERTVOICE

Patriot Ordnance Factory Inc. (POF-USA), provider and manufacturer of AR-type rifles for the U.S. commercial market, has partnered with ExpertVoice, a brand advocacy platform.

ExpertVoice offers education programs and tools for training retailers and sales associates in more effective brand promotion and product-seeding. In addition to POF-USA and other hunting and tactical market brands, ExpertVoice

works to increase product awareness and drive retail sales for over 900 leading brands.

At the conclusion of their training, POF-USA dealers and their sales associates take a brand/product quiz in order to qualify as POF-USA "experts." They can then influence buying decisions by recommending products more frequently to consumers, including those in the ExpertVoice member network.

"The partnership with ExpertVoice will help to ensure our trusted dealer network has the tools they need in order to win at retail," said Jeremy Selting, VP of sales and



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marketing for POF-USA.

For 20 years, POF-USA has sought to be a market leader with its portfolio of regulated, short-stroke, gas-piston-operating rifles, as well as its newer offerings of direct impingement systems.

[/pof-usa.com](http://pof-usa.com)

[/expertvoice.com](http://expertvoice.com)

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DRG MANUFACTURING BECOMES OUTERWILD MFG

OUTERWILD MFG, formerly DRG Manufacturing, launched its new line of firearms and components at the start of 2023.

OUTERWILD is committed to delivering precision-driven, American-made products with corrosion-resistant finishes. As a total-solution manufacturing facility, OUTERWILD will continue to produce an extensive lineup of high-demand products, including bolt carrier groups, lower and upper receivers, barrels, handguards, muzzle brakes and bolts.

Dealers and builders may now also purchase OEM parts for AR-15, AR-10 and AR-9 platforms via the company website outerwildoutpost.com, formerly whitelabelarmory.com.

"For years, we've quietly built our state-of-the-art manufacturing facility with one mission: to make only the finest precision-crafted components," said Stacy Paras, owner of OUTERWILD. "Using 100% American-made materials, and with a focus on quality and craftsmanship, we've honed our craft, providing components to some of the most respected companies in the firearm industry, which we still supply today. Behind these success stories, we now emerge to introduce our own OUTERWILD brand to equip outdoor adventure seekers with high-quality, corrosion-resistant firearms and components made to withstand the harshest of environments."

OUTERWILD designs, engineers, manufactures and assembles purpose-driven products in Lake Zurich, Ill. Its cutting-edge manufacturing facility is driven by a workforce of robots and automated cells, working in concert with technical experts in the QC lab for each component produced.

[/outerwild.com](http://outerwild.com)

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6.5mm Creedmoor	140 gr.	SST	2714
.270 Winchester	150 gr.	SST	2813
7mm-08 Remington	162 gr.	SST	2512
.308 Winchester	165 gr.	SST	2645
.30-06 Springfield	165 gr.	SST	2749

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EASYEXPORT POSTS 2022 FIREARM INDUSTRY EXPORT REPORT

EasyExport has posted the 2022 EasyExport Insights firearm industry export report, based on official U.S. government export data. The current issue covers the three-year period beginning Jan. 1, 2020 and ending Dec. 31, 2022.

The Insights report shows worldwide exports for 23 categories of firearms,

optics, ammunition and related products.

In addition to worldwide exports, EasyExport Insights includes detailed reports on American exports to 14 countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, New Zealand, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and the UK.

The 2022 year-end report reveals global exports jumped more than 25% in 2022 relative to the preceding two years. Exports to Ukraine grew by multiples in many categories. In addition, the huge



impact of Canada's freeze on handgun sales is clear in the December exports to that country.

The EasyExport Insights 2022 Year-End Report is available for free download at the EasyExport website.

[/ easyexport.net](https://easyexport.net)

MEC-GAR USA SUPPORTS FPC ACTION FOUNDATION

Mec-Gar USA announced its donation of \$3,500 to the Firearms Policy Coalition Action Foundation (FPCAF), an organization dedicated to fighting for Second Amendment rights throughout the nation.

Mec-Gar's donation was raised through sales of its 1911 .45 ACP magazine, engraved with the text of the Second Amendment.

"We created this magazine a few years ago so we would have an additional vehicle to support Second Amendment causes. Ten percent of all sales from

this magazine is donated to pro-Second Amendment organizations. We're glad to help out the Firearms Policy Coalition," said David Larson, national sales manager for Mec-Gar USA.

Mec-Gar Srl is a privately held, family-run business located in Brescia, Italy. Since opening in 1965, the company has maintained an in-house engineering, design and manufacturing process. Mec-Gar USA is owned and operated by the same family, and is the sole U.S. importer and distributor for Mec-Gar Srl products in North America.

The FPCAF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose efforts are focused on protection of "natural rights," such as the right to keep and bear arms and



adjacent issues. These include freedom of speech, due process, unlawful searches and seizures, separation of powers, asset forfeitures, privacy, encryption and others.

FPCAF supports the work of FPC Law, a public interest legal team focused on the right to keep and bear arms and a leader in Second Amendment litigation and research.

[/ mec-gar.com](https://mec-gar.com)

[/ fpcactionfoundation.org](https://fpcactionfoundation.org)

SIG SAUER ACQUIRES GENERAL ROBOTICS

SIG SAUER Inc. announced its acquisition of General Robotics Ltd., manufacturer of lightweight, remote weapon stations and tactical robotics for manned and unmanned platforms and anti-drone applications.

"This acquisition will greatly enhance SIG SAUER's growing portfolio of advanced weapon systems. The team at General Robotics is leading the way in the development of intuitive, lightweight, remote weapon stations with their

battle-proven solution," said Ron Cohen, president and CEO of SIG SAUER.

Recently, the U.S. Army selected the SIG SAUER lightweight machine gun (XM250), automatic rifle (XM7) and high-pressure hybrid ammunition for the Next Generation Squad Weapons (NGSW) program. The NGSW program is currently in the early stages of adoption, and the U.S. Army will field the weapons at the squad level this year.

"The combination of the General Robotics remote weapons station with SIG SAUER's lightweight squad weapons and high-pressure hybrid ammunition will revolutionize small arms for military



forces worldwide," said Cohen.

"General Robotics and all our employees are honored to join forces with global defense leader SIG SAUER to integrate our platforms into a single solution to support military units around the world," said Shahar Gal, CEO of General Robotics.

[/ sigsauer.com](https://sigsauer.com)

[/ glrobotics.com](https://glrobotics.com)



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FRONTIER JUSTICE EXPANDS TO OKLAHOMA

Experiential retailer Frontier Justice announced it is expanding to Jenks, Okla. The company is breaking ground on the construction of a 25,000-sq. ft. facility.

The new location will be dedicated to providing Tulsa-area residents with access to Frontier Justice's unique fashion, firearms and shooting sports experience. It will boast a world-class indoor shooting range, an upscale Western-chic clothing boutique and an expertly curated selection of firearms and accessories.

"The Tulsa area, and Jenks in particular, is a unique place. Tulsa is not only a national leader in industries ranging from energy to aerospace, it benefits from a rich cultural history and



thriving communities full of caring people. It's a perfect fit for the Frontier Justice ethos of faith, family and freedom," said Jeremy Gayed, CEO of Frontier Justice.

The new Jenks facility at 202 South Gateway Place will be Frontier Justice's fourth location. The others are in Lee's

Summit, Mo.; Kansas City, Kan.; and Omaha, Neb.

In Nov. 2022, Frontier Justice was acquired by Rooted Pursuits, a platform of Ambassador Enterprises.

[/ frontier-justice.com](https://frontier-justice.com)

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DOUBLE D FOUNDATION SUPPORTS SOUTH CAROLINA YOUTH SHOOTING SPORTS

The Double D Foundation announced a \$160,000 gift to support competitive youth shooting sports in South Carolina. The foundation raised the funds at a banquet in March held in Columbia, S.C., through table sponsorships, raffle ticket sales, a live auction and an online silent auction.

Launched by Daniel Defense Executive VP Cindy Daniel in 2021, the Double D Foundation has raised more than \$1.46 million in the past two years, supporting more than 200 shooting teams and organizations in the South.

"Thanks to our sponsors and supporters, this banquet was an unmatched success and a great kickoff to our efforts in South Carolina. The resources raised will be used to protect our Second Amendment rights by growing participation in competitive shooting



sports here in South Carolina," said Daniel.

The Double D Foundation's donation will provide ammunition and supplies to competitive shooting organizations in South Carolina through an online grant application process.

[/thedoubledfoundation.org](http://thedoubledfoundation.org)

IHEA-WORLD, NAFWS ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP

The International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) and Native American Fish and Wildlife Society (NAFWS) announced a partnership allowing NAFWS-affiliated Native American tribes to become certified to teach hunter education.

The new partnership opens up hunter education to 4.5 million-plus Native Americans, allowing them to hunt worldwide. The NAFWS supports 227 tribes in seven regions in their right to manage over 56 million acres of tribal lands for fishing and hunting.

Delivering messages of safe hunting practices through state wildlife agency programs has been extremely difficult, if not impossible, in many of the tribal territories. This partnership allows NAFWS-associated tribes to teach hunter

education and issue official hunter education cards that certify new hunters may buy licenses anywhere in the U.S, Mexico, Canada, Australia, South Africa and other IHEA partner countries.

"I would like to welcome NAFWS to IHEA-World. We are proud to have you join our world association, and we look forward to working together with you and all our world partners to achieve the highest standards of safe, responsible and ethical hunters. This is the goal we strive for every day," said Shawna Belavance, president of IHEA-World.

"*Kwak kway* [Thank you] to the IHEA-World and the NAFWS for collaborating together to accomplish the Hunt Safe Program under the NAFWS," said Darren Talayumptewa, NAFWS board member. "This program will allow tribes to use their sovereignty to implement the same hunter education curriculum taught within each state game and fish agency. However, it will allow tribes to incorporate their own



respective traditional and cultural hunting ethics and practices for our people and the general public."

Continuing education training for hunter educators in the tribes is already available through the IHEA-USA's Learnhunting.org portal. Hunter education classes are expected to launch in tribal territories this summer.

The NAFWS was incorporated in 1983 to develop a national communications network for the exchange of information and management techniques for self-determined tribal fish and wildlife management.

[/ihea-usa.org](http://ihea-usa.org)
[/nafws.org](http://nafws.org)

DEAD AIR SILENCERS OPENS NEW WORLD HEADQUARTERS

Dead Air Silencers, an innovator of suppressors and accessories, announced the opening of its new world headquarters in Heber City, Utah.

The 9,000 sq. ft. facility houses multiple offices and conference spaces, and also includes warehousing and distribution space. The increased space allows the

company to conduct in-house quality control and research and development.

"We are incredibly excited to move into a facility that meets the needs of our ever-growing business. This is our fort, our base from which we will launch the next generation of Dead Air Silencers," said CEO Ernie Beckwith.

A grand-opening event allowing friends, family, partners and the media to see the new facility firsthand is slated for this spring.



Since 2014, Dead Air Silencers has focused on bringing top-quality materials, designs and manufacturing techniques to the suppressor market.

[/deadairsilencers.com](http://deadairsilencers.com)

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Is your free entry up to date? Visit shootingindustry.com/buyers-guide.

GALLERY OF GUNS SPONSORS SECOND AMENDMENT FOUNDATION

Gallery of Guns announced its sponsorship of the Second Amendment Foundation (SAF).

A division of Davidson's Inc., Gallery of Guns is a highly innovative and comprehensive firearms website that serves consumers and nationwide firearms dealers. Gallery of Guns allows consumers to select from extensive firearms inventories and have firearms shipped to their local firearms dealer for purchase, in accordance with local, state and federal firearms laws. All firearms purchased are backed by its "Lifetime GuaranteeD" replacement policy.

For nearly 50 years, SAF has been fighting to defend, secure and expand Second Amendment rights at the highest levels of the American judicial system.

Since its inception, SAF has been involved in over 250 cases, and is actively litigating nearly 50 cases, with the bulk of its work in the federal court system. Its goal is to end government overreach, unconstitutional bans and restrictive permitting laws that limit the right to self-protection.

"The Second Amendment Foundation has earned its long-standing reputation of excellence through thoughtful and highly effective legal action and its educational programs. Gallery of Guns is proud to back the foundation and support its critical mission of safeguarding our constitutional rights," said Wayne Tumlin, president of Davidson's Inc.



"The support of Gallery of Guns allows the Second Amendment Foundation to continue to challenge and erase unconstitutional gun control laws, with the goal of restoring firearms freedom, one lawsuit at a time," said Lauren Hill, VP of development for SAF. **BI**

[/ galleryofguns.com](http://galleryofguns.com)

[/ saf.org](http://saf.org)

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R. COLE

Team One Network Promotes Director

Team One Network announced Robert Cole was promoted to director of training.

"Robert has been a dedicated and valuable member of the team working as both instructor and training coordinator providing cutting-edge training programs," said John T. Meyer Jr., president of Team One Network.

Cole joined Team One Network in 2015, and served as the training coordinator for nearly five years prior to his promotion. He also served in the U.S. Marine Corps for 10 years.



M. WEISENSEL

Rinehart Targets Appoints Account Manager

Rinehart Targets appointed Matt Weisensel to the position of key account manager. In this role, he will be responsible for driving sales objectives and support for the company's key dealers.

James McGovern, Rinehart Targets president, said, "His comprehensive understanding of Rinehart's business and the archery industry will serve the company and its retailers well."

Weisensel brings more than eight years of sales and customer service experience from a previous stint at Rinehart. Prior to taking on this new role, he was the sole sales specialist for Viking Cues.



B. GENTRY

Bushmaster Names Sales Director

Bushmaster recently welcomed Bill Gentry as its new director of sales.

A company press release stated, "The Bushmaster brand is proud to be back in the firearms business, and it is our goal by bringing Bill Gentry on

board that we will grow to the industry's top ranks, once again."

Gentry brings 17 years of industry knowledge and experience to his new role.



M. FEDRICK

IHEA-USA Taps Partnerships/ Development Director

Megan Fedrick has joined IHEA-USA as the director of partnerships and development to connect the organization with national partners, regularly communicate with state administrators and provide training for L.E. and instructors. She will also lead several of the state agency partner projects.

Alex Baer, IHEA-USA executive director, stated, "Her deep experience in Hunter Education and law enforcement at a state level bring perspective and practical knowledge to our team, allowing us to expand our programs to meet individual state fish and wildlife agency needs more effectively."

Fedrick recently retired as the hunter education administrator and the boating law administrator for the state of Mississippi. In previous positions, she worked as a fisheries biologist, outreach educator and education coordinator for the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science.

Fedrick earned a master of science in natural science from Delta State University. She also graduated from the state law enforcement academy and retired as a major in the Law Enforcement Bureau.



C. ADY

Liberty Ammunition Selects Controller

Cheri Ady is now serving as controller of Liberty Ammunition where she oversees the company's financial structure as it

continues to grow.

"Cheri's financial acumen, strategic leadership capabilities, experience with a large P&L and a solid track record in advising companies have prepared her for this role," said Liberty Ammunition CEO Gary Ramey.

Ady joins the company with over 20 years of accounting and consulting experience that spans advising corporations, HNW individuals and serving as controller for a large conservative grassroots organization (NFRW) in Washington, D.C.



T. SCHMIDT

Walk The Talk America Adds Board Members

Walk The Talk America (WTTA) announced the addition of two new members to its board of directors, Tonnie Schmidt and Ron Staffieri. Both bring extensive experience and expertise to WTTA's board and



R. STAFFIERI

will help guide the organization as it continues to make a positive impact in the firearms community.

Michael Sodini, founder and executive director of WTTA, shared, "They both have ties to the firearms community and care very deeply about mental health and suicide prevention. Our values and goals for the WTTA mission align perfectly and I'm excited to see what they bring to it."

Schmidt is a co-founder and co-owner of Delta Defense LLC, the service provider to the U.S. Concealed Carry Association. She also serves as a member of the West Bend Community Foundation and is an advisor for The Volunteer Center of Washington County, Wisc.

Staffieri is a senior executive with over 40 years of professional experience. He has also served on multiple boards, including CSSI, Harold's Stores, Craft & Hobby

Association, Natural Wonders, First Agricultural Bank/Bank of Boston, Norman Rockwell Museum, Adelphi University and the Parent's Advisory Board at the University of Texas.



Fiocchi USA Names CEO

David Blenker is now serving as the president and CEO of North American operations for Fiocchi

USA. Blenker replaces Anthony Acitelli, who retired from the position. Blenker will guide several major company initiatives — most notably, the expansion of Fiocchi of America and the new primer manufacturing facility in Arkansas, and furthering the company's commitment to sustainable technology implementation throughout the product lines.

Acitelli commented, "I am looking forward to retirement and am pleased to leave the company in good hands as David brings to bear the kind of experience, integrity and long view that will serve Fiocchi well into the future."

Blenker recently guided the new Taurus USA and the A-1 Industries manufacturing facilities in Bainbridge, Ga. He is a former NSSF board of governors member, along with being a past board member of SAAMI, past board member of the South Florida Council of Boy Scouts of America and currently holds a board seat on the Youth Shooting Sports Alliance.



Second Amendment Foundation Welcomes Director

J. Pierce Shields has joined the Second Amendment Foundation (SAF)

as the national director of advancement.

SAF Founder and EVP Alan M. Gottlieb shared, "We are fortunate to have Pierce coming aboard, especially at this moment when SAF

is greatly expanding its legal activities."

Shields' background includes more than 20 years' experience in planned giving as well as overseeing a major bank's trust and private wealth department.

He holds a J.D. from Widener University Law School, a Master of Laws in taxation from Villanova University and a bachelor's degree in law from Rowan University.



J. MOSSBERG

PTR Industries Taps CEO

PTR welcomed Jonathan Mossberg to the position of CEO to lead the company into a new era of innovation and growth.

Mossberg's expansive resume includes experience in factory-level manufacturing, operations, R&D, financial, sales, marketing, business development, acquisitions and engineering. He has also served as president of several corporations.

Mossberg has sat on numerous industry boards including NSSF, SAAMI and the Wildlife Management Institute, and holds several U.S. and international patents.



J. VANDERBRINK

Vista Outdoor Names Sporting Products CEO

Vista Outdoor announced the promotion of Jason Vanderbrink to CEO of sporting products.

"I'm excited for Jason

to take a larger role in the near term and ultimately lead an independent company later this year," stated Vista Outdoor Interim CEO Gary McArthur.

Vanderbrink joined the company in 2005, and has held many senior positions including SVP of sales and president of sporting products. He earned a bachelor's from Saginaw Valley State University, a master's from Missouri State University and completed the advanced management and leadership program at Oxford University.



D. PASIENSKI

Steiner Optics Recruits National Sales Manager

Steiner Optics welcomed Dave Pasienski as the national sales manager. He will manage independent rep groups in the shooting sports and marine segments, as well as administer the distributor channel and buying group business.

Todd Fulton, Burris/Steiner VP of sales, said, "[Pasienski's] previous role as director of commercial sales has earned him deep knowledge of the optics market and its customer base. This experience will greatly assist in the advancement of the Steiner brand."

His nearly 20 years' firearm industry experience comes from roles at SureFire and Aimpoint. Pasienski earned a bachelor's in marketing from California State University, Long Beach. **SI**



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BY MASSAD AYOUB

BIG DADDY UNLIMITED: A RETAIL SUCCESS STORY

A recent theme in articles and the *Letters to the Editor* columns here at *Shooting Industry* is the “kitchen table” dealer versus the “brick-and-mortar” — replete with stories of good people who started in the first category and moved to the second. Let’s look at a success story that began in this same way, and grew with a different, innovative approach that combined the personal-defense market with Second Amendment advocacy and a “co-op” concept.

Tony and Sherrie McKnight weren’t “gun people” until a decade ago. They were into online marketing of weight-loss and skin-care products. Sherrie had a conservative radio talk show. She believed in the Second Amendment along with the rest of the Constitution and Bill of Rights, but didn’t own a firearm. When shortly after his re-election, then-President Obama came out of the closet and called for an “assault weapons ban,” she told Tony it was time for them to get active on Second Amendment issues.

The McKnights jumped in with both feet, cruising the gun shows and buying 19 firearms for themselves.

Being into sales, it seemed logical to Tony he should get an FFL if only to save money on their own purchases. And things snowballed from there.

They told *Shooting Industry* laughingly, “Like so many other gun dealers, we began in our garage.”

ADDING BRICK-AND-MORTAR

The McKnights immersed themselves in learning about guns and in learning about the gun business. Tony reminisced, “Distributors gave us blowback about not having a storefront. So ...”

The first Big Daddy gun shop was in leased space in a strip mall. Why the name?

“It sounded cool,” Tony explained with a smile. “Cool” became a business theme.

From the beginning, the shop focused on personal-defense firearms and related accessories. Tony happily recalled, “I told the distributors’ reps, ‘Keep your bolt guns, keep your double barrels. I want to sell cool guns!’”

Sherrie chimed in with a big grin, “At first, he only wanted to sell guns you’d find on ‘Call of Duty.’”

◀ Big Daddy Guns has 75 employees on its team — each is trained to be attentive and polite to customers of all backgrounds.

The theme worked. Soon there were Big Daddy shops in Gainesville and Ocala, Fla.; Columbus and Valdosta, Ga.; and Columbia, S.C. They presently have some 75 employees on their payroll.

A hallmark of the operation was, from the beginning, customer interaction. The McKnights feel listening to their customers is of overriding importance to retail success. As Sherrie put it, “We were literally two turnips who just fell off the truck.”

“

I told the distributors’ reps, ‘Keep your bolt guns, keep your double barrels. I want to sell cool guns.’

Tony McKnight • Co-Owner
Big Daddy Unlimited • Gainesville, Fla.

“Remember, we were new to guns,” Tony reiterated. “We started out with just guns, no scopes or anything. When a customer would ask about an accessory, my answer was, ‘You teach me what this is for and how to use it, and I’ll order it for you.’ We learned from our customers, and still do.”

Accessories are a crucial component of Big Daddy’s business model.

Tony revealed, “Firearms are actually only about 20% of our business. Ammunition is another 30%. The rest is accessories.”

When the company recently morphed into Big Daddy’s Unlimited, it was (and remains) largely an online business.

Tony informed, “We offer about 57,000 unique items. A great deal of our business is in gun parts: barrels, carriers, etc.”

A unique component of the business is its co-op approach. Customers purchase a membership and — online or in person — receive deep discounts.

“I wanted the \$9.95 membership fees to be our profit center and to pass on the savings to the customer,” Tony said. “Our motto is ‘Second Amendment Rights At Prices You Can Live With.’”

COMMITMENT TO SECOND AMENDMENT

Big Daddy’s has established tremendous customer loyalty. One reason for this is a strong, unwavering and high-profile commitment to gun owners’ civil rights.

When they moved into their new Big Daddy international headquarters in Gainesville in 2013, the 30,000 sq. ft. complex included Freedom Hall, which can accommodate 250 people. Freedom Auditorium can seat 90, and a terrace can hold 150 attendees for parties and “meet and greets.”

The McKnights formed the American Gun Coalition to “educate, motivate and activate people into the Second Amendment Movement.” The organization distributes decals to businesses welcoming concealed carry, and sponsors political events at Freedom Hall and elsewhere, introducing legislators to firearms hands-on at a local gun club range.

In March 2023, they hosted an open house that included a visit from pro-gun Congresswoman Kat Cammack (R-FL 3rd District).

In one busy decade, the McKnights went zero-to-60 — from their garage to a sprawling retail firearms empire. The co-op concept, responsiveness to customer input and an aggressive commitment to gun owners’ civil rights appear to have been a most-successful formula.

You can learn more about this unique operation at bigdaddyunlimited.com. **SI**



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Top: Boasting 30,000 sq. ft., Big Daddy Unlimited’s expansive headquarters is a far cry from its humble garage beginnings.

Bottom: Tony and Sherrie McKnight started their business with the mantra of learning from customers and offering “cool guns.” They haven’t stopped, selling 57,000 unique products.



BY ASHLEY MCGEE

DESPITE STIGMA, INTEREST GROWS FOR OFF-BODY CARRY EDUCATION

If you walk into almost any gun store or indoor range, you'll see a selection of purses designed for concealed carry — often tucked away in a corner. Yet the vast majority don't offer training aimed at educating firearm owners on how to properly carry off-body. Why is that?

"Off-body carry has long been condemned and ignored by instructors and the majority of the firearms community, but it doesn't change the fact concealed carry bags and purses are often preferred over on-body holsters, especially with new shooters," said Vicki Farnam of Defense Training International and DTI for Women.

"Nearly every tactical gear brand produces off-body carry bags including backpacks, fanny packs and briefcases. Yet because they are 'tactical' they are primarily marketed toward men; they're not viewed as taboo in the way purses are," she added.

Inspired by ongoing conversations with Claudia Chisholm, president of GTM Original, Farnam began offering a Fundamentals in Off-Body Carry & Protection course for NRA- or USCCA-certified instructors in the fall of 2019. Since then, around 40 instructors have completed the course at either Farnam's

home base in Colorado or at various locations throughout the U.S.

"GTM was already including an in-depth owner's manual with the purchase of their handbags, which in essence became the structure of our curriculum," said Farnam. "So many things are vilified about off-body carry, and both the manual and the course address them."

Chisholm said the course serves two purposes: one is to demonstrate off-body carry can offer protection with proper training and quality products.

"Second; what an incredible opportunity for any retailer or range to reach out to this neglected demographic," she added. "By filling this void with talented educators and trainers, it is a win-win where it's desperately needed."

Regardless of one's personal feelings or preference about off-body carry, it's a popular option for those times and places where it is difficult (if not impossible) to carry a defensive pistol on your body.

"Physical capabilities, the environment where one carries and why and manner of dress don't always lend themselves to on-body concealed carry holsters as many instructors

◀ Vicki Farnam (far left) discusses fundamentals during a off-body carry and protection course for instructors.

would like their students to believe," Farnam reasoned. "It's no one's place to dictate how another person should carry a gun as long as they're doing so responsibly."

Off-body carry bags also give users, particularly those with smaller body types, more options to confidently carry a mid-size or full-size firearm when they might otherwise be stuck with a micro-style carry gun.

FUNDAMENTALS & SKILLS

Depending on the bag, you can have a two-, three- or even a five-step draw, so DTI's Fundamentals in Off-Body Carry & Protection course spends time on how to safely draw a firearm without muzzling yourself or others.

“

I've found even those who have already had some other basic level of firearm education, either with me or someone else, are signing up because it's a specialized experience."

Christa Forrester • Owner & Lead Instructor
Confident Carry Firearms Instruction

Other fundamentals covered include re-holstering (which can be just as dangerous as drawing), managing the off-body carry bag while simultaneously shooting, movement, situational awareness and other skills commonly taught in a defensive-handgun class.

Farnam also brings a large selection of bags in varying sizes, materials, shapes, weights and carry-pocket configurations. Due to their range of options, high quality and popularity among firearm owners, the majority of bags are from GTM Original, but some other brands students have the opportunity to handle include Coronado

Leather, Ukoala and Travelon.

Throughout the three-day course, students change bags every two hours. This way, they are not only better equipped to train students on how to use them, but also to offer guidance on what features to consider when shopping for one.

"Each bag is different and has its own characteristics. Some have zippers, magnets, flaps, etc., so it's important for users to know how to navigate the unique features of their particular bag," she explained. "We've developed techniques for doing so and go through them step by step."

Although one might assume the course is strictly for women, every single session offered to date has had men in attendance.

"They're always astounded at the fact you can draw effectively from a bag," said Farnam. "And at the sheer variety of options available on the market."

STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

One of Farnam's most recent graduates of the off-body course is Christa Forrester, owner and lead instructor of Confident Carry Firearms Instruction in Georgia. Forrester also serves as vice president of Shoot Like A Girl, an event marketing company that empowers women to participate in shooting sports.

"I'm very invested in taking training that allows me to connect with the individual," shared Forrester. "Vicki's course was so much more than I expected. It equipped me with vital information needed to help my students, such as how to educate others on the importance of prioritizing safety over fashion when choosing a bag."

Forrester has since added an off-body carry course to her offerings.

"I have former students signing up as well as new students who have never taken a course with me," she said. "I've found even those who have already had some other basic level of firearm education, either with me or someone else, are signing up because it's a specialized experience. I've even been getting out-of-state interest from people who don't have access to off-body carry training in their area."

To address the growing need and demand for off-body carry education, Donna Anthony launched an online course last year. Anthony is the first certified graduate of Farnam's course and owner of Point Blank Firearms & Self Defense Training in Palmer, Ark. Titled Purse/Bag Off-Body Carry Course, it's the first of its kind in an online format using the Farnam method.

“

It's no one's place to dictate how another person should carry a gun as long as they're doing so responsibly."

Vicki Farnam
Defense Training International and DTI for Women

Anthony's course is available to those people who wish to gain off-body carry confidence from the convenience of their homes, which can be especially useful to retailers and dealers wanting to offer a class that brings more women to the store/range.

GET CERTIFIED

Registration for DTI's three-day Fundamentals in Off-Body Carry & Protection course is \$785 per person and is limited to six students per class. Instructors who go on to share what they've learned with others can order up to three concealed carry bags or purses to aid in teaching how to carry firearms off-body through GTM's "Instructor PreLoved Bag Program" for \$20 plus the cost of shipping.

Those who aren't certified instructors and eligible to take the course are encouraged to ask their local range to have their instructors certified.

For more information, visit defense-training.com or email vk.farnam@gmail.com. **\$1**



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BY HANK YACEK

BOOST PROFITS: PPP ISN'T JUST A COVID LOAN

Looking back to that fateful period of the “not to be named virus of unexplained origin,” we saw the government step in with PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) loans to help businesses keep up with payroll expenses. It was a great help to many during those harsh times, but today we’re seeing a far different “PPP” strike many businesses — and in this case it might just be a painful reality for an unsuspecting business if ignored.

What am I referring to? In this case PPP stands for Payroll, Profits and Performance. In the past 18 months, we’ve seen retail sales suffer and constrict under the current economic pressures. Higher energy expenses, inflation and cost of living spikes, among others, have seen the consumer public spending less money and spending it less often.

Today, many retail establishments are competing on price once again. Specific to the firearm industry, it’s apparent pricing of goods in our industry is heading back to pre-2020 margins. Business expenses, and not just payroll, have increased substantially since then.

In my last article (“When Storms Bring Opportunity,” Feb. 2023) we

broached this topic at length, but here we’re going to dig deep and explore this evolution in the industry and how to come through this “perfect storm” the better for it. So get a pen and paper, fire up your point-of-sale (POS) system and let’s get down to business!

FIRST UP: PAYROLL

In today’s environment, we need to get a handle on payroll expenses and how they impact our profit margins. All too often, I’ll get an unsolicited call from a desperate retailer asking me to help pull their business out of a nosedive. When asked some general questions about their business, the conversation often goes something like this:

Me: “I hear your business is struggling right now to post profits, but tell me a bit more about how much in sales did you did last year and how much profit you produced.”

Retailer: “Over our last 12 months we posted about \$3 million in sales, but we’re still having to inject thousands of dollars a month out of our own pocket into the business just to make payroll. Our ability to keep cash on hand to buy new inventory is suffering for it. At this pace I won’t have enough money to keep the business going in six months.

What are we doing wrong?”

The details may be different but the same core message always comes through: “*We’re working hard, but at the end of the day there’s no money in the checking account.*”

So, what is the situation at hand here? Where are they going wrong? They seem to be doing a fair amount of business, so why are they suffering so much? In my experience, more times than not the largest factor comes down to payroll expenses. When you’re living in a retail ecosystem that, depending on the products and services you supply squarely, produces anywhere from 25%–40% profit margins and you’re eating up most of it with payroll, there’s nothing left on the table to keep the business viable.

“

When you’re living in a retail ecosystem that — depending on the products and services you supply squarely — produces anywhere from 25%–40% profit margins and you’re eating up most of it with payroll, there’s nothing left on the table to keep the business viable.

A high level of customer service is more important now than ever but there comes a point where too much is a bad thing. A phrase clients will often hear: “The first rule of good customer service is ‘being open for business’ because if you aren’t open, you can’t give any customer service at all!”

PAYROLL'S IMPACT ON PROFITS

In one real-world example, a client's payroll expenses accounted for 38% of their gross revenues. You read that right. For every \$100 of revenue the store generated, \$38 was leaving as payroll. An organization producing healthy profits with reasonable levels of customer service will have payroll expenses sit somewhere between 12% and 20%, depending on the facility and the services they offer.

For those wondering: To calculate payroll expenses, simply add up your entire payroll expenses for the last 12 months and divide it by the total revenue in the same period and the number will be your payroll percentage. This is a key number every facility should track on a regular basis. If that percentage gets too high, you can kiss profits goodbye.

You already know payroll can be too high, but it also can be too low! There's no true path to profitability through a workforce reduction. In other words, you cannot "fire" your way to profitability. Eventually you'll hit the wall at some minimal level of staffing to be able to function as a business. Referencing back to our 12%-20% model, if you find yourself significantly below this range, I'll wager a bet a quick search online for reviews of your business will see one- and two-star reviews complaining about how long it took for a customer to get service or that your staff was so preoccupied with other tasks they felt like they got a subpar experience.

STRIKE A BALANCE WITH PRODUCTIVITY

So how do we strike the perfect balance of a great customer experience without onboarding too much payroll? It's where the last of our three Ps come into play — Productivity. This is when your POS system is priceless. Any POS should have the ability to report to you an employee-by-employee breakdown of just how much revenue, profits, products sold and maybe even sales per hour they're generating. With this data in hand, we can quickly determine who our rock stars and charity cases are.

All too often during an exploration of a struggling business, the bulk of the sales team will not be generating enough profits to even cover their income. It sounds insane this could be the case, but in nearly every store I have worked with there is almost always at least one or two cases of employees in this status. We're here to be a "for profit business" and not a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charity.

The path to striking that perfect balance is to focus on productivity. The more each employee can produce, the less their effective payroll expense percentage becomes. Seeing as their income is a fixed expense, if we can increase the volume of profitable sales they generate, our payroll expense percentage, by default, will go down.

If your store is generating \$1 million in gross revenue per year and your payroll is \$250,000, you're sitting on a 25% payroll percentage — a full five percentage points higher than the desirable range. Without firing anyone, an additional \$250,000 in sales volume over the course of a year will reduce the business's payroll percentage to 20%. Depending on how many employees this represents, it could be as little as \$100 per day increase in an individual's sales performance to hit that mark.

To realize this increase in productivity, it usually takes management to "open up the tool box" and develop their team to have the skills and information they need to boost their productivity. Regular product knowledge training, sales skills training, having quality inventory and making the sales process as efficient as possible are all straightforward ways to develop your team beyond where they are today and on a solid path to producing beyond their expense.

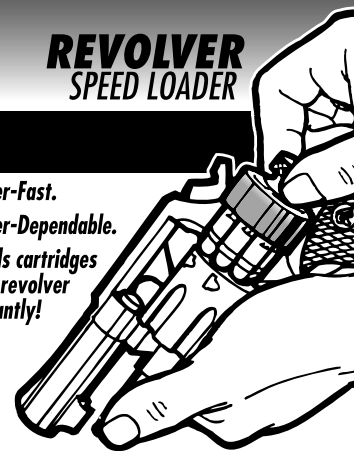
If you can consistently measure your business on Profits (28%-40% range), Payroll (12%-20% range), Productivity (generating profits beyond payroll) and give your team members the skills and tools to succeed, you'll see a greater profit potential through 2023 and beyond. **SI**

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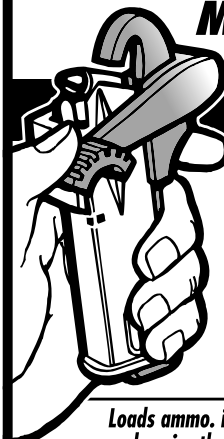
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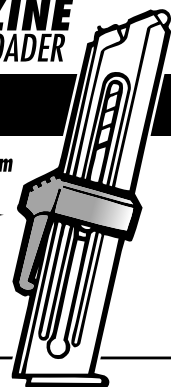
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THE AMMUNITION MARKET IN 2023



Availability Is Increasing, Imported Ammo Making An Impact

BY CAROLEE ANITA BOYLES

AS we get farther from the pandemic and closer to a new election cycle, ammunition availability and price continue to evolve. Some things are more available, but others are not. Consumers complain the price of ammo is through the roof, but they're still buying.

"We're seeing a little bit of softening in the market," observed Kevin Smith, general manager of Sprague's Sports in

Yuma, Ariz. "Prices have come down on certain ammo, but other ammo still remains a challenge to find and prices are still high on those."

Smith said .30-30 is difficult to find, and some hunting calibers are basically nonexistent.

"We do have plenty of 6.5 Creedmoor, 6.5 PRC, 300 PRC, .308 and 5.56," he added.

According to Smith, overall, the supply of ammo has improved.

"The supply has definitely gone up, but hunting ammo is still very hard to get, and we're still very tight on some of the lesser calibers," he shared. "This includes .270 WSM and .300 WSM. Shotgun shells are still hard to get, as well."

Smith's suppliers have let him know shotgun shells will continue to be difficult at least through the end of this year. Inventory levels of ball ammo, on the other hand, are good.

"If you want to come in and buy

“

If you want to come in and buy 1,000 rounds of 9mm or .45 ammo, we've got it. But if you need a box of .300 WSM to go elk hunting, we don't."

KEVIN SMITH, General Manager
Sprague's Sports
Yuma, Ariz.

1,000 rounds of 9mm or .45 ammo, we've got it," he stated. "But if you need a box of .300 WSM to go elk hunting, we don't — and we haven't had it for quite some time."

A SHIFTING MARKET

Paul Bastean, managing director at Ultimate Defense in St. Peters, Mo., said the ammunition market is shifting for dealers. Larger retailers are getting the ammunition they need, he said, but smaller retailers still are having a difficult time.

"If you have the capacity to buy a pallet, you can get ammo," he noted. "If you only have the capacity to buy three cases, you don't get it. If a wholesaler or manufacturer can put a label on 360 cases of ammo and send it to one place, or send 360 cases of ammo to potentially 100 different places with 100 different mailing labels, both for the same amount of markup, they're going to send it to the one place."

Because Ultimate Defense has been buying ammo by the pallet, Bastean said they have developed a new and different relationship

with other retailers around them.

"We get along with a lot of the local gun shops in our area," he shared. "We are now their ammunition distributor."

According to Bastean, ammunition prices are finally starting to come down from what they were during COVID.

"U.S. manufacturers are fighting with importers now, and they're losing," he observed. "Importers are driving the price down."

“

If you have the capacity to buy a pallet, you can get ammo. If you only have the capacity to buy three cases, you don't get it.”

PAUL BASTEAN, Managing Director
Ultimate Defense
St. Peters, Mo.



Maxon Shooting Supplies' Sarah Natalie confirmed prices have dropped from the heights of the pandemic — but are still elevated. "We're pretty much back to what we would consider to be 'normal,'" she said.

Bastean thinks this will continue to drive prices down, and if imported ammunition remains as available as it is now, smaller retailers will start to be able to buy lesser quantities of ammo again.

"But it may not happen," he cautioned. "We're not in an election cycle yet, but we can kind of see it from where we are, and this election cycle is going to be a doozy."

Bastean said the imported ammo he's seen is primarily from Magtech and Sellier & Bellot.

"That's a lot of what we're getting offered," he said. "We're seeing a lot of it not only from our wholesaler reps but also on emails. It's also a lot of what my competition is advertising."

Domestic manufacturers are struggling with price, Bastean observed.

"Winchester just came to us and they're not even in the realm of being price competitive in 9mm," he said. "We haven't had a box of 9mm Winchester in here for two years or so."

One thing affecting ammunition sales, he contends, is the effect the economy is having on disposable income.

"The guy who's been a gun guy for more than five years has a cache of ammo he's sitting on," he said. "It's never enough, but it's at least enough that he feels comfortable he has some. The new shooters we've seen in the past two or three years still buy a box here and there, but inflation and disposable income are going to squeeze everything a little bit tighter. We've seen a slight reduction in training and memberships and from year to year, we've seen a pretty substantial reduction in ammunition sales."

At one point, Bastean recalled, Ultimate Defense was the only retailer in the county with any ammunition. During that period of time, they saw a massive increase



in the amount of ammunition they were selling because they were the only game in town. Then in the middle of 2022, some of the big-box stores started getting ammunition, and the store's ammo sales decreased.

STILL HAVEN'T REACHED THE PEAK?

At Jay's Sporting Goods in Gaylord, Mich., Manager Matt Goad said ammunition supplies have improved over the past several months.

"It's still hit or miss," he noted. "On a day-to-day basis, we see a lot of fluctuation, and there are certain calibers we just are not seeing and the consumer really would like to see. But there are other things we have not seen in a while that are loosening up and we're seeing at least some availability."

One thing on the shelf now is several brands of .410 shotgun shells, Goad shared.

"For a long time, we didn't have any of those," he said. "We also have five different kinds of 7mm Magnum on the shelf now (in spring) and during our firearms deer season last year we had none."

Goad also has some calibers of handgun ammunition becoming more available than they have been in the past couple of years. He agreed the price of imported ammunition is putting pressure on U.S. manufacturers.

"From an availability standpoint, imported ammo is just as available as any domestic ammo," he said.

All of this may help drive prices of U.S.-produced ammunition down.

At this point, Goad shared there still are some calibers that just are not available. These include .32

“
On a day-to-day basis, we see a lot of fluctuation, and there are certain calibers we just are not seeing and the consumer really would like to see.”

MATT GOAD, Manager
Jay's Sporting Goods
Gaylord, Mich.

Winchester Special, .300 Savage, .35 Remington and .45-70 Government, as well as others.

He doesn't think the ammunition marketplace is going to level out anytime soon.

"I think demand is going to get even higher," he predicted. "We're selling guns like crazy. The governmental influence right now and everything potentially going on in Congress is still driving gun sales. People are still extremely concerned about what's going to happen in the future and being able to protect themselves."

Goad said gun buyers will take whatever they can get their hands on if it fits them at this point. He doesn't think we're going to see any normalization in the market this year.

"I don't think it's possible," he stated. "There's just too much demand right now. The reasons manufacturers are giving us for why shells aren't being made in larger quantities include munitions going to war efforts and plants still being

shut down and not re-staffed from COVID. I just don't think they're going to be able to catch up for quite a while."

STILL UP FROM PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS

Sarah Natalie is general manager of Maxon Shooter's Supply & Indoor Range in Des Plaines, Ill. She said ammunition supplies have improved over the past year.

"Prices during COVID were insane," she recalled. "We've seen prices come back down, but they're still not at pre-COVID levels."

Natalie doesn't have a lot of any kind of ammunition at this point, but some things have become more available than they were.

"Both .38 and .357 were a struggle during COVID," she said. "They are more readily available now, but not to the degree we would like. In shotgun shells, .410 has been very difficult."

Going forward, Natalie anticipates things won't change much in the near term.

"I think demand will stay higher than pre-COVID demand," she forecasted. "I don't think it will be anything near what it was during the civil unrest period of COVID. We're pretty much back to what we would consider to be 'normal.' I don't anticipate demand going down from there." **SI**

Dealers, what are you seeing? Are prices coming down? Is imported ammunition putting pressure on U.S. producers? Are you able to get ammo? Join the conversation:

comments@shootingindustry.com



MENTAL HEALTH: IT'S OK TO TALK ABOUT IT.

Everyone struggles sometimes.
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FIREARMS ACCESSORIES THAT PRACTICALLY SELL THEMSELVES

By Bryan Hendricks



Retailers Ride Waves To Steady Sales

Some firearms accessories are so popular they move without promotion or marketing, but

customer preferences vary by state and region.

POLITICS IMPACT SALES TRENDS

In Oregon, for example, voters passed Ballot Measure

114 by a narrow margin in 2022. It bans the sale of magazines capable of holding more than 10 cartridges.

An Oregon judge issued a preliminary injunction halting the law's implementation until a higher court rules on compliance with the Oregon constitution.

As a result, outlets like Coat of Arms Custom Firearms in Keizer, Ore., are selling more-than-10 capacity magazines as fast as they can get them.

Adam Johnson, owner of Coat of Arms, said individual customers are buying magazines by the hundred. Magpul's PMAG is the most popular flavor, Johnson said. If you have them, you'll sell

them — and if you have them, word gets around fast.

"The PMAG is the most common defensive magazine on the market," he confirmed. "PMAGs are so affordable and so reliable. People are buying AR mags in any flavor, GLOCK mags, Smith & Wesson M&P mags. They're buying them as fast as we can get them, and I expect it will continue until the ballot initiative gets sorted out."

RED DOTS RULE

Red dot sights are hot sellers around the country. The Trijicon RMR and the Holosun 507C are the most popular in the category, Johnson noted, adding their stellar reputations eliminate



the need for external promotion.

"Our shop is really selective about what we carry," he said. "A lot of brands we don't even offer. Everybody on our staff is a certified armorer and instructor. We pay attention to trends, and we keep track of what is durable and what is not. People can see firsthand they (Holosun and Trijicon) are virtually indestructible. They're products that sell themselves."

Johnson noticed the demand for red dots started increasing noticeably about five years ago, and it increased dramatically over the past 18 months. He said the demand coincides with an increased awareness among shooters a red dot is easier to use. It provides quicker and surer target acquisition in high-stress environments than static iron sights.

Demand continues to accelerate, Johnson contends, as instructors offer classes to educate shooters in the proper use of red dots. Consumers also notice law enforcement agencies are evolving to red dots for their firearms, and consumers often follow professional trends. Law enforcement and military trends greatly influence the consumer market.

"As more and more people learn about the science behind red dots and the enhanced experience of using them, the product sells itself," Johnson explained.

Additionally, he believes the demand for body armor and night vision optics is increasing.

"People are preparing themselves — for lack of a better term — for a worst-case scenario," Johnson proposed. "We're seeing an uptick in demand for plate carriers, and sales have really ramped up with night vision."

MORE OF THE SAME

In central Arkansas, which includes Little Rock, red dots are the rage, according to John

Brown, an employee at Bullseye Guns & Ammo. The store has a strong niche in the defensive



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ADAM JOHNSON, Owner
Coat of Arms
Keizer, Ore.

handgun market and has a strong presence in the "tactical-lite" segment. Brown said buyers are eager to upgrade their sights, and the Holosun 407C and 507C are far and away the most popular choices.

"We can't keep them in stock," Brown stated. "They walk out the door faster than anything."

Affordability is the key to Holosun's popularity. Its quality is comparable to the Trijicon RMR for half the price, and Brown reports even advanced shooters will never notice a difference. More to the point, Holosun is attractive to buyers who don't feel the need to spend as much on an optic as they spent for the platform.

"They're pretty cut and dried," he reasoned. "You turn it on and have a dot. You turn it off and you don't have a dot. The difference is Trijicon has a military contract, and Holosun does not. People in our area are looking for affordability over a name."

Brown has noticed there is no distinction between user groups;



John Brown (left) matches a dot sight and handgun for a customer at Bullseye Guns & Ammo. According to Brown, red dots are "all the rage" these days.



Modern sporting rifles continue to be top sellers in Maine, according to Gage Jordan of G3 Firearms. Magpul furniture and Echo Triggers consistently sell well for the store. "People in Maine are real big into "What's next?" he said.

advanced shooters like Holosun as much as entry-level users.

"We have everyone from first-time users to lifelong users put them on their guns," he shared. "A lot of people want light to illuminate their space when it comes to bumps in the night. It's the same with red dots. Everyone from beginning shooters to seasoned veterans ask for them."

LIGHTS & MORE

To light up the night, Bullseye's clientele loves to attach tactical lights to their firearms, Brown said. In fact, lights and red dots are often

companion purchases.

"We sell a lot of Streamlight TLR-1 or TLR-7," Brown confirmed. "We sell a lot of 7s because they can go on the small micro-guns. The TLR-1 goes on everything. A lot of people buy a Holosun and throw a TLR-7 on it, and they never come back dissatisfied."

Modern sporting rifle accessories continue to be hot, with Magpul furniture being the most popular self-selling items in the inventory, Brown affirmed. Customers love Magpul's vertical foregrips, and all of Magpul's replacement stocks are

“

A lot of people want light to illuminate their space when it comes to bumps in the night. It's the same with red dots. Everyone from beginning shooters to seasoned veterans ask for them.”

JOHN BROWN
Bullseye Guns & Ammo
Little Rock, Ark.

hot sellers.

"They're better than the mil-spec stocks you get on factory guns, and we sell a lot of the flip-up iron sights for rifles," he said. "Anything 'Magpul' is a hot seller when comes to rifles."

Many shooters replace their factory triggers, but Brown suggests aftermarket triggers are a losing proposition for small, independently owned outlets like Bullseye Guns & Ammo.

"Most people who buy triggers buy them online," he said. "A lot of parts in general are cheaper online than we can get them. We can't compete with online retailers for the aftermarket GLOCK barrel industry because we have to make money, too."

SPEED RINGS THE REGISTER

Gage Jordan, owner of G3 Firearms in Turner, Maine, said his hottest-selling items are binary triggers for AR-15-style platforms. Modern sporting rifles are very

popular in Maine, Jordan informed, and his customers want their guns to shoot faster.

“The most popular items we sell are Echo triggers,” he said. “Any binary triggers, really. It’s not full-auto, but it makes an AR into full-auto style. You pull the trigger once and it fires. Release it and it fires again. It’s been around for probably 10 years. At the end of the day, it kind of gives you a full-auto feeling without having pay the full-auto price.”

A fully automatic rifle can cost tens of thousands of dollars. A binary trigger dramatically increases your rate of fire for less than \$500, and Jordan believes enough of his customers make the investment to keep product flowing.

He shared, “People who have semi-autos want to move to the next step, and they ask, ‘What’s the next step I can have fun with and get a new interest in?’ People in Maine are real big into ‘what’s next?’”

As with the rest of the country, Holosun red dots are wildly popular with G3 Firearms’s customers.

“I think what makes them so popular is their solar recharging capability,” Jordan proposed. “The



Holosun red dots are brisk sellers at Bullseye Guns & Ammo.



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507C and 507K have solar power recharge, and their price point is pretty good. Trijicon makes excellent stuff, but you have to pay double or even triple for the same kind of sight. Holosun is just as good, if not better. A lot of people up here don’t mind spending \$600 or \$700 on a GLOCK, but they don’t want to spend as much or more on the sight.”

Magpul furniture accessories are also very popular among G3 Firearms customers. They like them because they offer affordable high quality.

“My customers love Magpul vertical foregrips and Magpul folding sights,” Jordan said. “Magpul has really made a name for itself. A lot of companies experimented with polymer, but Magpul really went into it and came out with all kinds of plastic. Metal vertical foregrips and sights are good, but they’re expensive. Magpul is just as good. They’ll take just as much of a beating, but they’ll only cost you 30 or 40 bucks.”

Suppressors are an emerging hot market in Maine, Jordan noted. Like everywhere else, Maine is getting more densely populated, and people

are adapting to the reality they can’t shoot in the backyard anymore without disturbing or even provoking a neighbor. Suppressing a firearm allows them to enjoy shooting while reducing the possibility of conflict.

“If someone has a neighbor who doesn’t like shooting and they want to shoot quietly, subsonic ammo doesn’t fix the problem,” Jordan remarked. “A silencer, even if you have to wait eight months to a year to get one, has become pretty popular. If you want to pop off a few rounds in your backyard, you can do it.”

FINGER ON THE PULSE

From coast to coast and points in between, Holosun red dots for handguns and Magpul accessories for long guns are the items that most consistently sell themselves. However, state and local politics and random regional preferences drive secondary markets.

Savvy retailers keep their fingers on their community’s pulse and stock trending items shooters desire. This keeps them coming for other items, which translates into repeat business and long-term customer loyalty — a win-win every time. **SI**

By Nancy Keaton

Ramp Up Summer Sales Events

Summer can often be a slow time in the firearms business, which can be a little stressful. But it's also a season to do some fun and creative things you don't have time to do during the rest of the busy year. So how can you get more people into your store or range during the summer besides just having sales?

Ask yourself, what do people like to do in the summer? BBQs, parties,

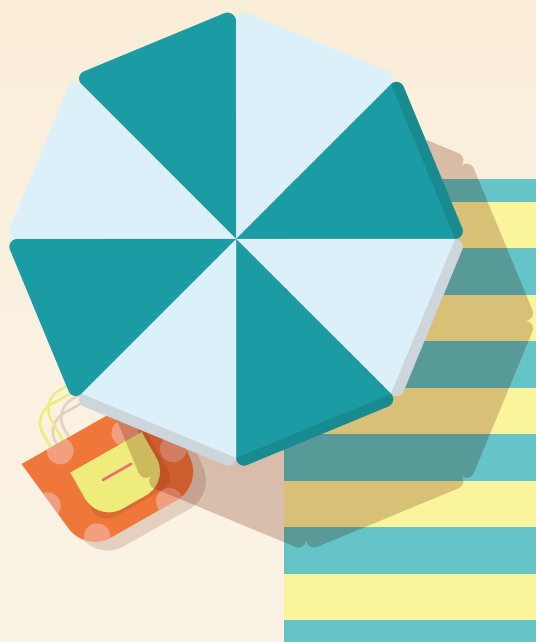
games. You could go with a specific theme, such as a Hawaiian luau. Give out prizes for the best Hawaiian look. Or perhaps you've noticed the people in your town will go to any event that gives out hot dogs. Then offer hot dogs during a sales promotion!

You could hold a tournament, such as cornhole, and award prizes. Hold a "celebrity" shoot fundraiser with local politicians, law enforcement or other popular citizens in your area. Or how about

providing free, short, one-hour workshops or speakers on various topics. How about live demonstrations of various products?

SEEK OUT INPUT

Do you know for sure what your customers want? Instead of guessing, get their input.



When you are in the planning process, ask your customers what they would like. You can hand out a paper survey at the store and also email a survey to everyone on your customer mailing list. People love being asked their opinion. Make sure to include the opportunity to win a gift card as an incentive for completing the survey. Then follow up with a survey after the event.

People also love to give constructive feedback if it's made clear their opinion is truly valuable and used to improve your service. Again, offer a chance to win a gift card as an incentive to complete the survey.

WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH BOTH RANGE/RETAIL SPACE

Tim Shoopman, director of brand communications at H&H Shooting Sports in Oklahoma City, talks about a very successful event they hold annually.

"Every July, we hold what we call our 'Annual Summer Expo.' We've held it for over 20 years. It's typically a two- or three-day event where we invite all of our manufacturing and factory reps. The reps bring samples and products to demo.

“
When trying to come up with ideas to pull in those harder-to-reach customers, think about what draws you to other businesses.

Customers get to test shoot as many guns as they want. It's kind of a 'try it before you buy it' event," he explained.

H&H Shooting Sports also offers discounts during the event, according to Shoopman.

"Our discounts are essentially the same as our Black Friday discounts. Everybody really likes having the discounts available twice a year," he informed.

Shoopman shared the event was suspended for two years due to the pandemic, then in 2021 they simply didn't have enough stock. Finally, they were able to bring it back in 2022.

"Everyone was really happy to bring it back. We had a great turnout and it was just a really nice return back to some normalcy," he recalled.

WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH STANDALONE RETAIL SPACE

Several years ago, on the way back home to Washington from a trip to Yellowstone, my family and I were passing through Ennis, Mont., when we came upon a crowded section of town with a lot of cars parked everywhere and people roaming around. It looked like a major traffic jam in a town of only a few blocks. It piqued our curiosity, so we stopped to check it out.

We discovered a sporting goods store, Shedhorn Sports, was having a major event called the "Hunter's Rendezvous & Sale." There were sales vendors and all kinds of activities.

One very memorable demonstration was a fake bear on a track. Attendees stood in front of the bear and pushed a lever. The bear suddenly moved like a bolt of lightning toward them on the track, simulating the speed at which bears move.

People tend to think bears are big and slow and they'd just be able to outrun them, but this showed it wouldn't be the case at all. It was very eye-opening. All these years later we still remember the unique event and how much fun it was.

Melissa Glaser, the owner of Shedhorn Sports since 2021, explains the event started in the 1990s when the store was a hardware store with a gun section. The founder of Shedhorn Sports, Rob Gallentine, worked behind the gun counter and decided to hold a fun sales event to give back to the community, so he moved all the firearms to the local high school.

"It eventually became a street sale, so we basically take up the street in front of our store," Glaser explained. "We started with one tent and now we're up to three tents, so it expands our entire shopping area. We have about 6,000 sq. ft. of shopping space inside and it almost doubles it outside."

The store advertises extensively to make it an impactful event — not only for Ennis, but the surrounding region, too.

"We advertise from Bozeman to Butte, and Helena to Idaho Falls, so



The Shedhorn Sports team hosts an annual summer "Hunter's Rendezvous & Sale" that impacts its entire community, thanks to a multi-state advertising push.

we normally have a good draw during the year anyway just for our gun inventory and everything else the store has to offer, but this event really draws people in," she continued.

Glaser estimates around 4,000 customers visit the store during the "rendezvous." As with other retailers, business suffered with

the pandemic and supply chain issues so this year will be the first time holding the event since 2019.

"The event can be a little hard on staff at times just because of how much goes into it. But when we talked about not having it, the pushback from customers and even our vendors was so big that we



Tim Shoopman (**top**), H&H Shooting Sports director of brand communications, shared his store's annual summer sales event offers deep Black Friday-inspired discounts — attracting extensive interest from customers (**bottom**). "Everybody really likes having the discounts available twice a year," Shoopman said.

“
We have the vendors from basically every firearm we have in the store and they're here helping to sell those firearms — so it expands our workforce by double or triple.”

MELISSA GLASER, Owner
Shedhorn Sports
Ennis, Mont.

just had to continue it. It's just something people love. Even before I owned this store, I loved it," smiled Glaser.

"One of the big bonuses is having our vendors there, which I think is what makes it successful," she added. "It expands our workforce. We have the vendors from basically every firearm we have in the store and they're here helping to sell those firearms — so it expands our workforce by double or triple. Plus, our vendors love the event as well; they feel like they're around friends."

To show appreciation, Glaser also provides a barbecue on Friday

night for all the staff and vendors working the event.

This year the event will have over 30 vendors representing over 45 lines of participating product. For the first time, they will also be adding a speaker's tent, with presentations on how to have a safe and successful hunt. They even hint at having some pack llamas to see.

Another way they are guaranteeing a good turnout is by offering a special giveaway for the first 50 customers in line.

"We're going to have a big comeback this year, it's very exciting," Glaser beamed.

OTHER IDEA GENERATORS

Finally, when trying to come up with ideas to pull in those harder-to-reach customers, think about what draws you to other businesses. Is it food? Is it discounts? Is it prizes? Is it fun activities? Is it family-friendly activities? Is it getting to try new things?

Chances are, the things that will drive you to go shopping at your favorite furniture store, home decorating emporium or outdoor retailer are exactly what will draw others to your establishment.

Wherever you go, pay attention and take notes. Before long you'll start seeing a pattern that fits your needs, and one you'll want to replicate.

There's no need to reinvent the wheel — just glean some good ideas. Remember you don't have to do it all: Start small and build it until it's what you want. **SI**

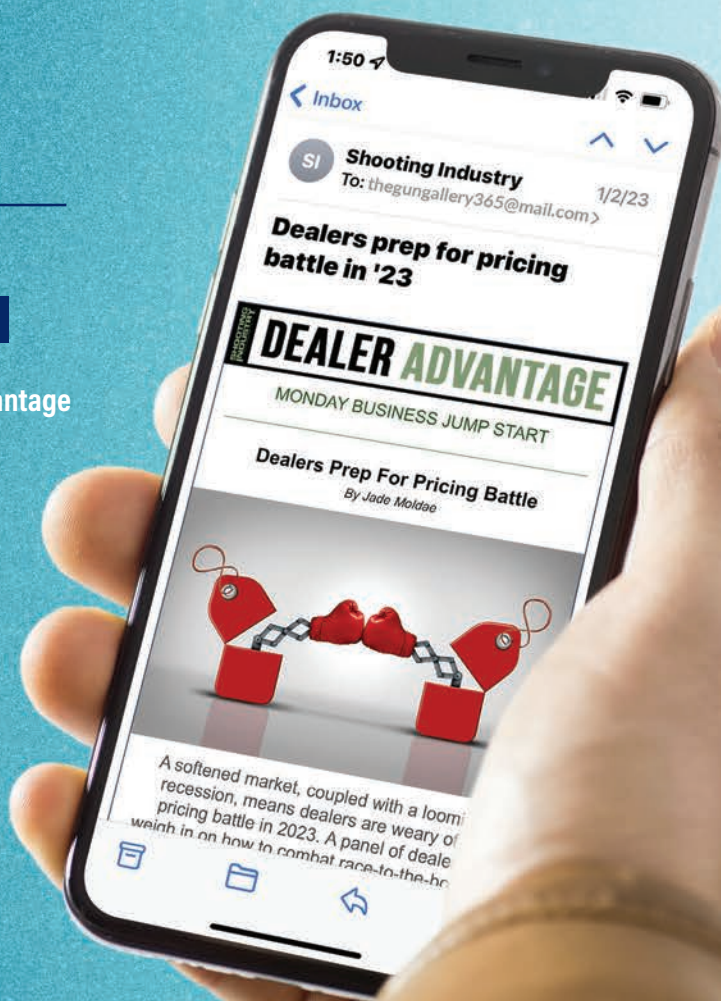
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**SHOOTING
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BY MIA ANSTINE

SET YOUR SIGHTS

ON VARMINT HUNTERS

Image: Howard Communications

When considering expanded sales, the hunting market is

always a good one to set your sights on. While a broad scope of hunting products is good, you can develop into a niche market and entice additional buyers into your store. Let's talk varmint hunting.

Varmints are small wild animals considered pests, nuisances or threats to humans and domestic animals. The term can be applied to various animals, including coyotes, raccoons, feral hogs, bobcats, rodents, birds and even iguanas.

ABOUT VARMINTS

These animals are often managed via hunting because they can threaten our pets, destroy farmland, parks and gardens, carry diseases and more. For example, rodents can gnaw through wires and insulation, while raccoons may tear up shingles or siding in search of food or shelter.

Invasive species like feral hogs and iguanas are notably more destructive than other varmints. According to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, "Iguanas cause damage

to infrastructure by digging burrows that erode and collapse sidewalks, foundations, seawalls, berms and canal banks." These lizards also eat tree snails and host plants of endangered butterflies.

Coyotes and foxes pose a threat to domesticated animals like pets and livestock. Ranchers sometimes welcome coyote hunters to protect their herds. First-time mother cows, known as heifers, sometimes have trouble giving birth. Coyotes look to the struggling cow as an easy target and, at times, will attack the not-yet-fully birthed calf and the back end of the momma, leaving the rancher with a double loss.

Another issue conservationists tout as a reason to pursue varmints is to protect other wildlife species. Bobcats, raccoons and foxes will raid eggs from nests, thus depleting populations of sage grouse, quail and other birds.

Therefore, it's crucial to take steps to control varmint populations when necessary while also respecting their place in the natural ecosystem. Your store plays a part in this management process — and can generate profits from it.

HUNTING VARMINTS

Your establishment likely already has firearms for varmint hunting.

Hunters often use rifles with high-velocity rounds to take down small animals like groundhogs, prairie dogs and coyotes. They also look for tools that are easy to carry. If you haven't already taken stock, you may want to consider the new tactical-style lever-action rifles, such as those offered by Bond Arms and POF-USA.

Stephanie Braman, who guides for big game, hogs, bobcats and coyotes at Mellon Creek Outfitters in Texas, suggests, "A hunter, without a doubt, needs a gun they're familiar with, and they need to shoot it often."

For hogs and other larger nuisance species, modular rifles are the rage. The old reliable may fill your stands, but have you already added some modular rifles to your inventory? Check out rifles such as the new Franchi Momentum All-Terrain Elite, available in .223 to .308 calibers. Not only is it a slick-looking shooter, but its short, stout build makes the rifle easy to transport from stand to stand or for spot-and-stalk scenarios. In addition, the modular systems allow customers to modify it to suit their needs for check welds and proper eye relief.

Braman also mentioned, "Thermal hunting is the best product that has helped in predator control. It makes it so much easier."

In addition, a hunter can acquire and identify their target at longer distances with optics such as ATN's THOR Gen5 or Pulsar's Thermion Duo DXP55. These have long-distance sensing and mind-blowing high-definition technology.

Optics are a must, and this year we saw upgrades from the thermal vision space and add-ons, such as Swarovski's tM35, a device that clips onto your customer's favorite scope.

DAYTIME EXPLOITS

Stepping back into the daylight, Braman told us she enjoys a challenge and "there is nothing better than watching coyotes come into your stand during daylight hours." She enjoys outsmarting them on their turf.

As a guide, part of the job is to locate the animals. To help customers identify their targets in the daytime, check out the new compact ATC and STC spotters from Swarovski. They have amazing clarity, weigh around 34 oz., and at about 11" long, will take up little room in your display case.

While the old saying goes, "Your gun is only as good as your optics," Braman



FRANCHI MOMENTUM ELITE VARMIN

“ WHEN CONSIDERING WHAT PRODUCTS TO CARRY FOR THIS NICHE MARKET, REMEMBER MANY ITEMS CROSSOVER.”

shared another factor that might be even more significant.

"The most important part is a good tripod," she asserted. "I see so many people not using a stable platform to shoot from. A good tripod with a steady head is the best way to go. What's the point of calling one in if you can't shoot it?"

Varmint hunting can end up being a "run and gun" style, so a steady rest comes in handy when you're not in a shoot-house or carrying around a bench. Consider inventorying shooting sticks such as the Primos Trigger Stick Apex Spartan. These are ultra-light and have a magnetic feature allowing the user to swap out optics and firearm rests.

ALL ABOUT THE CALL

Nathan Hopp, the hunting department manager at Jay's Sporting Goods of Clair and Gaylord, Mich., reaffirms Braman's need for quality calls.

He shared, "Calls, decoys and lights are our top-selling items for varmint hunting."

He noted the FoxPro electronic calls are popular, and many good calls are out there, but "you need a variety because each customer has different needs."

When choosing a variety of electronic calls, look at technology, such as ICOTec's all-new Night Stalker+ and the Rascal. These calls are portable, with Bluetooth options allowing for a wireless range of up to 100 yards using a cell phone.

Decoys and attractors are handy distractions when your customers are calling varmints. Flambeau is notable for its lineup of calls, decoys and accessories.

Flambeau Director of Sales and Marketing Charlie Puckett said, "Our consistent top-performing products for varmint hunting are our 5985MS-1 Lone Howler Coyote Decoy and MVP-4 Circe 3-in-1 Predator call."

(As a Lone Howler owner, I can attest it fools the best. Mine has seen many a coyote and has even been attacked and battered by my mules and our crafty emu!)

DEMOS PROVE THEIR WORTH

Consider working with product suppliers to offer options for demoing the sounds from their calls.

"Having a good-quality sound for your caller is an asset you can't do without," confirmed Braman. "I search through the calls out there for the best sounds. There's a skill to calling them in, and different sounds are preferred during different times of the year."

Jay's Sporting Goods has been using in-store seminars for quite some time. This forum is a great way to demo the product and let customers hear the sounds of electronic or manual calls. Work with your suppliers or an influencer and start hosting varmint-hunting seminars.

Through demonstration training, you'll have more involved customers who will see the tools in action. They'll be able to hear and see the features and benefits, plus ask questions. Additionally, they will likely see other items in your store they can't resist.

DON'T FORGET EXTRAS!

When considering what products to carry for this niche market, remember many items crossover from hiking, camping and other hunting avenues. Some of the other must-haves are base layers, boots, camouflage clothing, gloves, hats, hunting vests, suppressors and more! **SI**



Stephanie Barman (left) with two lady veterans during a successful honor hunt. Barman recommends dealers ensure customers are familiar with the platform they want to use, and shoot it often, to have an enjoyable varmint/predator hunt.

FN Relfex

BY MASSAD AYOOB

PROMISING SELF-DEFENSE PICKS

WHEN IT COMES to new product introductions, the NRA Annual Meeting (NRAAM) is second only to SHOT Show in density. Some were announced at the SHOT Show in January, but weren't coming off the production line until second quarter, and some just weren't ready for "prime time" until April.

There are never as many new introductions as at SHOT, but none of this means the products debuting at NRAAM are in any way second rate compared to those that came out in January.

Here are some promising picks from the self-defense market side of the house.

RESURGENT INTEREST IN REVOLVERS

At a time when autoloading pistols almost totally dominate the defensive handgun market, we're still seeing some resurgent interest in double-action revolvers. Kimber's K6 series now includes a lightweight (sub-1 lb., unloaded) .38 Special snub-nose revolver with enclosed hammer.

The K6 has won rave reviews for its accuracy, smooth and easy trigger

and overall functionality. The one complaint I heard about the all-steel ones was the weight, and this new K6xs model should stifle that complaint nicely.

The new revolver that drew, by far, the most interest comes from Henry, whose rifles sell so well for you. It's a double-action with swing-out cylinder, in medium-frame size and chambered for .38 Special/.357 Magnum. Now, this one isn't going to sell to the nostalgia crowd. Looks are the reason.

Pundits have variously described it as resembling anything from an old Harrington & Richardson to an RG, and its brass trigger guard and grip-frame strike many as belonging on a cap-and-ball revolver clone, not a modern double-action six-shooter. However,

those who got to try the action say it's very smooth and manageable, and workmanship appears to be commensurate with its price, which is in the Ruger/Smith & Wesson range at \$928 MSRP. Its 4" barrel has an unshrouded ejector rod, sights are fixed and the walnut stocks can be had in square-butt or bird's-head configuration.



Henry Big Boy Revolver

It will be an interesting companion gun to the Homesteader, the semi-auto 9mm carbine Henry introduced at the SHOT Show this year, with a silhouette resembling the

old Winchester Model 1907 autoloader.

PROMINENT SEMI-AUTO PISTOLS

Among the autos, SIG was showing the female-oriented Rose iteration of the super-popular P365 that has been getting attention since the SHOT Show. The P320-AXG Legion was new for NRAAM, though. It has a high-tech “John Wickish” treatment that will particularly appeal to anyone into high speed/low drag pistol shooting.



EAA Girsan MC 14T

This 9mm comes optic ready (a given, it seems, in 2023) and boasts slide lightening cuts, a flared mag well, a skeletonized flat trigger and extended (21-round) magazines. MSRP is in the \$1,200 range.

SIG also introduced a P320 M17 with a new ROMEO optical sight which appears as if it grew out of the slide (The ROMEO-M17).

At SHOT, Beretta introduced an updated version of the Model 84 .380; for NRAAM, they have a single-action-only variation, the 92X1. It boasts an ergonomic frame-mounted thumb safety.

Staccato has set a trend with high-end double-stack 1911 9mm pistols. Springfield Armory followed a while back with their less expensive Prodigy version. Nighthawk is offering a Bob Marvel double-stack 1911 with a two-tone finish, an upscale entry in the same race and Kimber has followed the Prodigy with a more economical double-stack 9mm 1911, named the KDS9c.

The SAR line from Turkey expands into an

Hi-Point Model 3095



affordably priced SOCOM 9mm full-size combat 9mm, and a micro-size version, both optic ready. I've had good luck with the SARs I've tested and the one I own.

From EAA, the Girsan MC14T is a reincarnation of the tip-up Beretta .380. It's another approach to selling functional self-defense pistols to those of us whom age or decrepitude have made it hard to rack conventional pistol slides. The Girsan guns are earning a great reputation among those who appreciate both thrift and good workmanship.



SIG P320-AXG Legion

GLOCK is just about all in with MOS variations designed to take carry optics.

The market continues to be filling up with subcompact double-stack “micro” pistols. FN introduced one, the Reflex, complete with optic cut and an 11-round and extended 15-round magazines. More interesting with the Reflex is, despite its external resemblance to striker-fired FN pistols, this one is internal hammer-fired in design — in hopes of getting a better trigger pull. We saw the same with S&W's Equalizer introduced at

SHOT Show. And, speaking of FN ...

LONG GUNS

There didn't seem to be anything startlingly new in the defensive shotgun arena, but in home-defense carbines FN introduced a new AR-15 variation. This FN-15 is designed to retail for \$999 but still has desirable features. It's hard to go wrong when you can sell an iconic brand name synonymous with champagne quality at beer (well, maybe premium beer) prices.

Shield Arms now offers the SA-9, a side-folding AR-platform 9mm carbine ideally configured for ready-access storage in small prices.

We've mentioned the Henry Homesteader 9mm carbine already. Hi-Point introduced an economy-priced carbine in the .30 Super Carry chambering, named the Model 3095. **SI**

The market continues to be filling up with subcompact double-stack 'micro' pistols.

REMEMBERING TIGER MCKEE

We in the industry were saddened to learn our friend and fellow writer Tiger McKee had died over the NRAAM weekend — suddenly and unexpectedly.

A true Southern gentleman, he was a master instructor of self-defense shooting whose skills with his favorite guns — AR-15s, 1911s, Browning Hi-Powers and K-Frame S&Ws — were awesome.

Tiger's wisdom and his kindness will be greatly missed.

NEW PRODUCTS

TO VIEW HUNDREDS OF PRODUCTS
FEATURED IN PAST ISSUES, VISIT:

SHOOTINGINDUSTRY.COM/CATEGORY/FIRST-LOOK

By Jenna Buckley



SCENTLOK

(231) 777-7565
scentlok.com

The **BE:1 RIDGE HALF-ZIP HOODIE** from ScentLok provides an elevated option for early- to late-season hunting. "Triple threat technology" provides maximum odor absorption: silver alloy inhibits the growth of bacteria and Fusix technology helps destroy bacteria and control odors while maintaining supreme stretch. Features of the hoodie include: smooth polyester outer fabric, ultra-warm Berber fleece lining, DWR treatment helps repel moisture, three-piece hood with a built-in neck gaiter for concealment and odor control, kangaroo pouch pocket with zip closures, half-zip design and Lycra binding. The hoodie is offered in Mossy Oak Terra Gila, Realtree Escape and Mossy Oak Terra Outland in sizes MD-XL, 2X-3X.



MTM CASE-GARD

(937) 890-7461
mtmcase-gard.com

THE BULL RIFLE REST from MTM Case-Gard is sized to accommodate full-length rifles and shotguns. The adjustable frame can be shortened or lengthened between 18.3" and 26" to achieve proper forearm and buttstock support on any shooting bench. The wide stance delivers optimal stability for all long-arm platforms while rubber feet at the four corners prevent slipping. To quickly adjust elevation, The Bull features a screw-style yokes tower that raises or lowers via an easy-to-operate hand wheel. These yokes can be locked into place via the screw tightening mechanism.

PRYME

(800) 666-2654
pryme.com

PrymeMAX series professional-grade wireless dual-muff headsets now are compatible with cell phones and tablets (iOS and Android), all PrymeBLU Radio adapters (including the V2 series) and ICOM/Kenwood/EFJ and BK radios with built-in Bluetooth. Ear muff headsets are available in three different mounting configurations. The **BTH-800** over-the-head-style has a wide, padded headband. The **BTH-900** racing style has both an over-the-head adjustable strap and a strong behind-the-head spring steel band for tight, secure fit. The **BTH-700** kit is designed to fit in the slots found on most safety helmets used in safety/construction applications. All versions of the BTH-600/700/900 can be dual-linked with cell phones or tablets and two-way radios at the same time.



XS SIGHTS

(888) 744-4880
xsights.com

XS Sights now offers Ghost Ring sight sets for **HENRY BIG BOY CARBINE LEVER-ACTION RIFLES IN .357 MAG. AND .44 MAG.** The sight sets are made of precision-machined steel and fully adjustable for windage and elevation. Featuring a large ghost ring aperture and white stripe front sight, they are designed for easy installation on Henry Big Boy Carbines equipped with a compatible XS Lever Rail. The sets deliver an enhanced field of view and white stripe front sight that is highly visible on targets in a wide array of lighting conditions, allowing for the fastest target acquisition possible with iron sights. The XS Ghost Ring sets are CNC machined and come with both a 0.230" ID and a 0.191" ID aperture.



RCBS

(800) 285-0689
rcbs.com

RCBS adds **THREE NEW CARTRIDGES** to its collection of full-length die sets: 7mm PRC, .360 Buckhammer and .338 Weatherby RPM. All three of the two-die sets come with a full-length sizer die with an expander-decapping unit and a seater die with bullet-seater plug. Each die comes with standard 7/8"-14 thread and the sets come in a green die set box.



TANGODOWN

tangodown.com

The **ACRO MOUNT** from TangoDown enables users to mount an Aimpoint ACRO reflex sight on a Smith & Wesson M&P9 M2.0 pistol slide. It is made of ordnance-grade steel with a QPQ rust-resistant finish. The included Torx fasteners with Vibra-Tite VC-3 thread-locking compound packet provide security and convenience.



BURRIS

(888) 440-0244
burrisoptics.com

Built into the Burris **SIGNATURE LRF 2000's** rugged armored rubber exterior is a sophisticated program and laser rangefinding system that allows the user to customize the operation and data feedback for spot-on ranging accuracy in any environmental setting. Three operation modes include Auto, Sport and Hunt to meet various environments and targeting needs. Five display options cover line-of-sight (LOS) only, horizontal distance (HOR) only, LOS and HOR, LOS and angle (ANG) above and below horizontal, and HOR and ANG. The Signature LRF 2000 boasts a sealed nitrogen-filled chassis for waterproof and fog-proof performance. The adjustable eyepiece ensures crisp focus of the display with its +/-6 diopter adjustment range.

WINCHESTER AMMUNITION

(618) 258-2000
winchester.com

Winchester Ammunition's environmentally friendly **E-TECH** shotshells utilize wads made from biopolymers certified as home compostable. E-Tech, loaded with BioAmmo's one-piece, four-petal shot wad, is ideal for those who want to limit their use of plastics. Over time, the plant-based wads degrade into natural elements. The biopolymer wads have been extensively engineered to match the performance of traditional plastic components for reliable and effective performance. E-tech is offered in 12 GA No. 7.5 lead shot and No. 6 steel shot.



ROCK RIVER ARMS

(866) 980-7625
rockriverarms.com

From Rock River Arms, the **OPERATOR DMR** (Designated Marksman Rifle) series includes four models chambered for .308/7.62x51 and two models chambered in .223/5.56 NATO. Both chamber variants offer configurations suited for personal-defense use and L.E. applications. Two of the .308/7.62x51 models feature 20" chrome-lined barrels, a low-profile gas block, mid-length gas system, RRA two-stage Ultra Match trigger, 17" lightweight free-float M-LOK rail handguard, BCM SOPMOD buttstock, Magpul Pro Series MBUS flip-up sights, LAR-BT3 billet upper and lower receivers, QD mount, five-slot rail assemblies and a Hogue beavertail grip. Additional features and specifications in the Operator DMR series vary by model/variant.



SAVAGE ARMS

(800) 370-0708
savagearms.com

Adding to its lineup of straight-pull rifles, the **IMPULSE DRIVEN HUNTER** from Savage Arms features a user-adjustable AccuTrigger (1.5-4lbs); ambidextrous, multi-positional bolt handle; aluminum receiver with integral one-piece 20 MOA rail; AccuStock technology with three-dimensional aluminum bedding; adjustable LOP and comb height with AccuFit technology. Models sport an 18" (.308 Win. and .30-06 Sprg.) or 20" (6.5 Creedmoor and .300 Win. Mag.) Savage carbon steel sporter barrel, two-sling swivel studs, two-position tang safety, rugged, gray synthetic stock and threaded barrel.

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NEW PRODUCTS

CASCADE MOUNTAIN TECH

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cascademountaintech.com

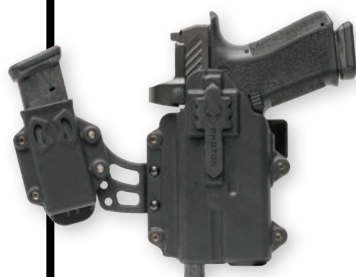
With a look and feel reminiscent of mantle-style gas lanterns, the **MONAHAN RETRO LANTERN** from Cascade Mountain Tech blends old-school style with modern convenience and performance. The lantern runs on a rechargeable lithium-ion battery to deliver 400 lumens of dimmable power in SMD bright white light and tungsten wire LED for a softer warm light. And when other devices run low, its powerbank can quickly recharge them. A wide base makes it stable on a variety of surfaces while a folding handle is easy to carry and hang above a table or work surface.



ALIEN GEAR HOLSTERS

(208) 215-2046
aliengearholsters.com

The **PHOTON** holster from Alien Gear boasts a 4-in-1 design and an ambidextrous draw. It can be configured for IWB or OWB carry, and accommodates lights, optics and high sights. With the included 1.5", 1.75" IWB clips and the OWB paddle, the Photon can be worn anywhere on the belt line. The IWB clips also facilitate adjustments to height position and cant, and the front of the holster is optimized to accommodate threaded barrels. The Photon is available in a weapon-mounted light or non-weapon-mounted light options.



AMERICAN BUFFALO KNIFE & TOOL CO.

(423) 337-7423
abkt.com

American Buffalo Knife and Tool Co. expands its line of Roper Knives with the **SUNSET SERIES TRAPPER**. The vintage trapper-style knife sports a pair of 1065 carbon steel blades with brass liners. Measuring 4.125" closed, the Sunset Series Trapper is finished with a colorful, unique Western-stylized handle.

TRIJICON KICKS OFF 2023 ROADSHOW

Trijicon Inc. has announced the start of its second full year of its highly popular, The Science of Brilliant Roadshow. Once again, Trijicon is embarking on a mission to visit prominent dealers across the U.S. and provide consumers hands-on experience with Trijicon's full line of Brilliant Aiming Solutions.

"Our grassroots approach to the

roadshow has been received very well by both consumers and our dealers," said John Trull, Trijicon VP, sales and marketing. "The spring edition of the 2023 roadshow will focus primarily on the western half of the U.S. as we strive to support our valued dealers and customers all across the country."

Attendees can see over 100 Trijicon products including riflescopes, reflex sights, night sights and thermal night vision optics. Trijicon's legendary durability and The Science of Brilliant testing protocol are on full display



The Science of Brilliant[®] ROADSHOW

through interactive product testing including heat, drop and immersion testing, along with other product demonstrations.

The spring 2023 edition of The Science of Brilliant Roadshow runs through June 17.

[/ trijicon.com/roadshow](https://trijicon.com/roadshow)

SIG SAUER EXPANDS SIG PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM

SIG SAUER has expanded the SIG Professional Program (SPP) — offering discounted pricing on select SIG SAUER firearms to those who protect and serve their communities — to commercial Master and Elite dealers.

"Until now the SIG Professional Program has been limited to specific dealers, now with the expansion of availability in the commercial market at

SIG Master and Elite dealers, more law enforcement, military, first responders and security personnel will have the opportunity to take advantage of this generous program and the benefits it offers," said Tom Taylor, chief marketing officer and executive vice president, commercial sales.

With proof of proper credentials, any qualifying military, law enforcement or security professional can receive discounting on select popular SIG SAUER firearms. The program can be accessed through commercial Master and Elite



Dealers in addition to the current law enforcement dealers.

The SIG Professionals Program is open to: active-duty military, corrections officers, sworn L.E. officers, retired military and L.E. officers, court officers, EMTs, firefighters and several other categories of first responders.

[/ sigsauer.com](https://sigsauer.com)

SILENCER CENTRAL TOPS \$1 MILLION IN DONATIONS

Silencer Central announced a milestone of \$1.3 million in support of a wide range of organizations and programs dedicated to hunter and gun rights advocacy, education and conservation.

"This is a remarkable milestone for Silencer Central and a testament to the amazing partners that play a vital role in conservation efforts in our industry," said Brandon Maddox, CEO of Silencer Central. "We're blown away by the impact we've seen, and it doesn't stop here. We're a company passionate about this mission and continue to work to reinforce hunting, firearm and conservation efforts through new and old partnerships."

Silencer Central donates suppressors to conservation organizations to utilize at fundraising events. The suppressors



Pictured (from left): Karter Keefer (Silencer Central), Tom Glines (NWTF) and Brandon Maddox (Silencer Central). NWTF is one of several organizations benefiting from Silencer Central's charitable efforts. Other organizations receiving donations include Delta Waterfowl, Ducks Unlimited, Friends of NRA, Mule Deer Foundation, Pheasants Forever/Quail Unlimited, Safari Club International, Wild Sheep Foundation and Whitetails Unlimited.

serve as auction, raffle or door prize items. 100% of funds generated go directly to the organizations, with event

hosts helping educate their members about the benefits of suppressors. **\$1**

[/ silencercentral.com](https://silencercentral.com)

BY JADE MOLDAE

CHALLENGE: CAPITALIZE ON MOMENTUM, WHILE NAVIGATING SPEED BUMPS

Momentum is a funny thing. It can develop over time into something nearly indomitable, but one event can inhibit or change its trajectory completely.

There's no question: the firearms industry has been generating a lot of momentum over the past three-plus years — welcoming millions of (often diverse) first-time gun owners and producing more firearms than ever before (as revealed in ATF's 2021 Annual Firearms Manufacturing Report, which will be dissected in the July issue). The past few years have been an unprecedented period for all of us.

That said, it's not all roses. Dealers are still having challenges getting their desired levels of inventory — we still hear, in some cases, orders from early 2020 have yet to be fulfilled — and margins haven't climbed in the same way prices have. Infighting certainly hasn't helped, whether it's the storefront vs. home-based model debate or disagreements on how product is allocated.

In the political arena, it's been a mixed bag: Over the past year, important legislative victories have been achieved in both the Supreme Court and lower federal courts. Today, more than half of U.S. states allow constitutional carry. But as this issue was being published, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee signed HB 1240, which outlaws the sale, transfer and import of at least 60 named firearms

in Washington, including the "AK-47 in all forms" and "AR-15, M16 or M4 in all forms." (It has since been challenged.)

There are speed bumps hampering progress, but it's clear: the firearms industry continues to grow in its size and scope. Here are two news items, out of dozens of potential stories, we wanted to share with you.

A BURGEONING INDUSTRY

Speaking of momentum, the U.S. firearms industry has been on an upward trajectory for years — as revealed in NSSF's 2023 Firearm and Ammunition Economic Impact Report.

From 2008 to 2022, the firearm industry's economic impact has ballooned 322% — rising from \$19.1 billion to \$80.73 billion. The total number of full-time equivalent jobs has likewise jumped, rising from 136% in the same span (from 166,000 to 393,696).

On a year-over-year basis, the industry's economic impact rose to \$80.73 billion in 2022, up 14.5% from 2021 (\$70.52 billion). While there have been major fluctuations in demand over the years, the firearms industry's economic impact has grown every year since 2008, according to NSSF.

"Our industry's economic input is undeniably contributing to every state and every community. This milestone achievement of over \$80 billion in economic impact proves the American firearm and ammunition

industry is strong," said Joe Bartozzi, NSSF president and CEO. "Ours is an industry that is consistently growing and innovating to meet the American demand for the highest quality firearms and ammunition for lawful firearm ownership."

95% RETENTION RATE? BRAVO!

Shooting Industry has regularly highlighted the growth of the shooting sports at the high school and university level. The USA Clay Target League (USACTL) announced a record-breaking 34,629 student athletes were participating in its spring season. These athletes are competing on 1,625 high school, college and homeschool teams nationwide, supported by over 9,600 coaches, team staff and other volunteers.

According to USACTL President John Nelson, this league offers something every parent and athlete would want in a sport: opportunity for *all* participants.

"Parents want safe, school-based, non-traditional outdoor activities for their students. They want their youth to have the sense of belonging and camaraderie that team activities provide without the high costs and limited playing opportunities of traditional high school sports," Nelson said.

If record-breaking attendance isn't indicative of its strength, USACTL boasts enviable retention.

"Every year, 95% of non-graduating students return to participate in the League's programs," Nelson said. "Nearly 9,800 new athletes joined the League this spring through their school's teams. In the League there are no benchwarmers — everyone participates thanks to the efforts of the shooting ranges, coaches and parents that make teams flourish."

For high school athletes, their nine-week spring season is already underway, and will conclude May 20. The season is followed by state tournaments in June, leading up to the High School National Championship in July. College athletes compete in a shorter season in the spring, and then return to compete in the fall leading up to the USA College Clay Target League (USACCTL) National Championship in late October.

Keep it up, USACTL staff, coaches and athletes!

Continued on p. 45

THERE ARE 6 MILLION FERAL HOGS IN AMERICA.

WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO.



Trijicon IR-HUNTER® Thermal Riflescope

Let's put wild hogs where they belong. Underground. With the superior thermal imaging technology of the Trijicon IR-HUNTER®, you can shoot with lights-out precision and take back your land.

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See the technology at [Trijicon.com/HUNTER](https://www.trijicon.com/HUNTER).

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The EFLX Mini Reflex Sight was designed with EOTECH's holographic sights in mind. Its ruggedized aluminum housing, ultra-clear glass and wide field of view make it simple and easy to get onto target fast. Powered by a top-loading 2032 battery, the EFLX offers over 20,000 hours of use and is programmable for auto-off or always-on. Designed to mount to any DeltaPoint Pro™ footprint, the EFLX is ideal for professional use, hunting, home defense and more.



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