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FOR A SAFETY CAMPAIGN

# SHOOTING INDUSTRY®

THE INDUSTRY'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE — EST. 1955

\$5 | JUNE 2023

## FIRST-EVER SAFETY ISSUE!

The Gun Safe Market

First Off The Shelves:  
Eye & Ear Pro

Loss Prevention Strategies

Developing Safety,  
Health Programs

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Why An Onion Is Your  
Best Security Feature! p. 38

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 [shootingindustry.com/5-takeaways-nssf-summit](https://shootingindustry.com/5-takeaways-nssf-summit)



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## Prepping For National Safety Month

**I**n case you haven't heard: June is National Safety Month — and as a result, the *Shooting Industry* team is proud to present our first-ever Safety Issue. Inside this issue, there are multiple articles focused on expanding safety sales, developing a safety campaign and tips for keeping both inventory and personnel safe.

As the saying goes, "Safety is no accident" — and it takes an entire team to make sure all who enter our storefronts and ranges stay safe.

Have a comment after reading this issue? Contact the *SI* team at [comments@shootingindustry.com](mailto:comments@shootingindustry.com).

### FIRST OFF THE SHELVES: EYE/EAR PRO

When it comes to sales of eye-and-ear protection, Tim Van Leiden, owner of The Gun Guys in Ottawa, Kan., says: "Out of all the stuff in the shop, they're probably the easiest things to sell, maybe other than ammo."

John Stephenson, general manager at Metro Shooting Supplies in Bridgeton, Mo., shared a push for safety-related gear represents a natural progression in the sales process.

"You just bought this new gun? So now you need a range bag. And how about a rag to wipe down your gun after shooting? And let's get your own eye and ear protection.' That's what

we try and get them to do — and we're very successful at it," he stated.

For sales tips, and what the top sellers are for the three stores interviewed for this story, see "First Off The Shelves: Eye & Ear Protection."

### SAFETY: IN-STORE & ON THE RANGE

In this month's *Personal Defense Market* column, Massad Ayoob contends, "The great majority of firearms accidents that take place in gun shops are the direct fault of careless customers, but occasionally there is negligence on the part of the staff."

Ayoob shares some safety protocols your store should focus on implementing to ensure the safety of staff members *and* customers.

### AN "ONION" FOR SECURITY?

Taking the "survivability onion" concept to a retail environment, Hank Yacek identifies six steps your store can take to harden your business and minimize the potential for theft and break-ins.

"Looking at store security through this paradigm can help you build enough layers of deterrence to make the thief keep your store off their radar and help you survive should the worst happen," Yacek advises.

See "An Onion Is Your Store's Best Security Feature" for more insights.

### COMING NEXT MONTH: 2021 FIREARMS PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

Earlier this year, the ATF released its Annual Firearms Manufacturing & Export Report — focusing on 2021



JUNE 2023

firearms production. Next month's issue will include an in-depth analysis on the state of the U.S. firearms industry today.

Several records fell in 2021, including:

- U.S. firearms manufacturers produced 12,511,637 firearms — smashing the record set in 2016 (10,664,318).
- Nearly 8 million pistols were produced in 2021, with 4,301,814 chambered in 9mm.
- Revolver production surpassed the 1 million mark for the first time.
- For the first time, two firearm manufacturers crossed the 2-million threshold — we bet you can guess who.

Other highlights of the July issue include sales of gun-care products (and how it remains an untapped market for some dealers), bowhunting stocking tips (crossbows and compounds) and what you need to know about Google Analytics 4. **SI**

FEATURE

HIGHLIGHT



### "An Onion Is Your Store's Best Security Feature"

By Hank Yacek

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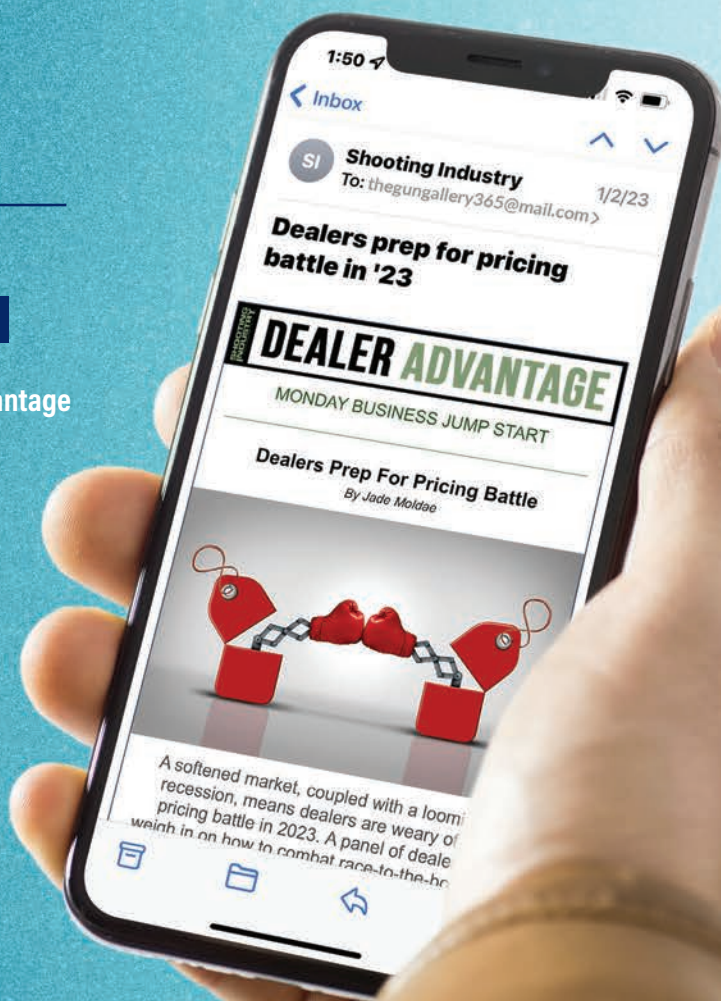
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## WOMAN'S ISSUE "THANK YOU!"

Howdy *Shooting Industry*, thanks for the article on women in the shooting industry — "In Demand" (March 2023). I've been carrying for about 30 years, ever since a fake security guard almost attacked me in a parking lot in San Diego at about 2 a.m. Fortunately, I got away. My dad then gave me his .22 for protection. Shortly thereafter I moved back to my native Texas, and met my husband of now 28 years.

About 10 years ago, life threw me a curveball and family trauma struck. I was unable to get over it for about two to three years. Finally, my husband dragged me to a local 3-Gun competition here in North Carolina and made me compete. Initially, I wasn't interested at all and was really intimidated — I was one girl out of about 50 guys competing. (Unbeknownst to me at the time, some of them were top-tier U.S. Army Special Forces.)

But compete I did, and when my AR jammed as I was shooting at the top of a Conex at one stage, I transitioned to my pistol and started hitting the targets at 40 meters. I was just embarrassed and mortified it jammed, so I was going to make my pistol shots count! My husband told me the guys watching were going, "I can't believe it, she's actually hitting the

targets with the pistol!"

From there, I've been really warmed to see all the support I received from 3-Gun has made me a stronger person with higher standards. It didn't take many

**The more people — and women — educated in gun safety as a priority equals a stronger preservation of our precious Second Amendment.**

competitions for me to get all of it, and it will stay with me forever. I had to be strong, safe, accurate and good, and I have to keep being that way. It saved me.

Since then, I've started my own laser-engraving business and half is engraving firearms for L.E. and the military, and also civilians. In seven years, I haven't seen one lady bring in her own firearm to be engraved; it's usually for someone else! I hope to see this increase as well as women's involvement in the entire shooting industry.

The best gun safety is education, and the more people — and women — educated in gun safety as a priority equals a stronger preservation of our precious Second Amendment.

More women involved means more protection over our Second Amendment and, indirectly, more freedom worldwide. I don't know how much more visceral you can get than this for women's rights!

— **Lauren Knapp-Resnik, Founder**

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## A FOOT IN TWO CAMPS

I'm following the back-and-forth between home-based FFLs and brick-and-mortar dealers closely with great interest. On the home-based side of this, us readers aren't getting complete disclosure.

First, I must state my business — TRL Firearms & Gunsmithing — is living in both worlds. Our initial application 11 years ago specified we had to have a storefront to get the FFL.

We're fortunate to have historic zoning that allows for a home-based business. Yet we still had to submit a local business license/photo of storefront to suppliers to qualify for dealer accounts. The shop is indeed on the side of a historic (read: large) house.

I can't help but think when other home-based FFLs complain the wholesalers "won't sell them guns," they actually mean the wholesalers won't give them credit like a net 30 or whatever. We also don't know from these letters what

**HAVE A THOUGHT WHILE READING THE ISSUE?**

Let us know at [comments@shootingindustry.com](mailto:comments@shootingindustry.com) or [facebook.com/shootingindustry](https://facebook.com/shootingindustry).



impression a photo of the home might present.

Hopefully future comments might have more clarity in these areas. Our own experience has been things take time to build up. Also, getting your product (any of it) on credit is a big mistake we've never made.

Good luck to all small dealers trying to survive in the "transfer world" where the internet dealers never really touch the guns!

— **Laura Rothermund, Co-Owner**

TRL Firearms & Gunsmithing • Salisbury, Md.

## A REPLY TO "FFL TRANSFER-ONLY" DEALERS

The only reason for FFL transfer-only home dealers is to make extra money

at home. They do nothing for the gun industry — they employ no one, they pay no sales tax (and no sales tax means no help to the government) and they pay no inventory tax.

A temporary storefront isn't good enough — you *have* to make a commitment to be a storefront business.

We offer a service to our customers with local inventory, gun repair and supplies when they need them. We have the latest inventory on hand for customers to see in person.


I've been in the sporting goods business for 36 years — started out as a small storefront, then built out to 4,000 sq. ft. Today, I employ four employees, plus my wife and I.

We lost everything during Hurricane Katrina and rebuilt with a commitment

to the industry by not staying at home and just doing transfers.

Why do the home-based businesses think they can come in and take away what we've worked so hard to build?

It starts with the wholesaler not selling to them. We support our wholesalers, and hope they'll stay loyal to us.

Thanks for listening. 

— **A. Macaluso, Owner**

Hook & Line • Violet, La.

**Editor's Note:** The home-based vs. storefront dealer debate continues to stir up a significant conversation among S/ readers. If you want to have your voice heard, contact me directly: [editor@shootingindustry.com](mailto:editor@shootingindustry.com).

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◀ FN Herstal CEO Julien Compère (left) and FN America President and CEO Mark Cherpes stand on the future site of FN America's second U.S. location coming in 2025.

## FN AMERICA EXPANDS U.S. FOOTPRINT

FN America, the U.S. subsidiary of FN Herstal, has announced multiple investments to grow its manufacturing capability in the U.S.

April 26, FN announced plans to open a second production facility located in Pickens County, S.C. — further expanding the company's presence in the Palmetto State. The company will invest \$33 million into the construction of the more than 100,000 sq. ft. facility, which will be constructed in two phases. In total, the expansion will add 176 new jobs to the company's workforce and add new manufacturing capacity that will position the company to meet the increasing demand for FN products.

"FN has experienced significant growth over the last several years and

demand for our products continues to increase in all market segments that we serve," said Mark Cherpes, FN America president and CEO. "Our new facility in Liberty, S.C., will allow us to expand our manufacturing capabilities and grow our highly skilled workforce to meet that new demand. We're proud to partner with Pickens County and the state of South Carolina on this expansion."

The company plans to break ground on its second facility in 2024 with anticipated completion in 2025.

May 3, FN announced further investment into its U.S. business through an \$18 million expansion project at its Columbia, S.C., production facility. The expansion will start later this year with completion expected mid-2024.

This plan will add more than 40,000 sq. ft. of manufacturing capacity and office space as well as create a Design Center of Excellence geared toward enhancing the company's research and development for new products. The expansion will add 102 new positions to the company's existing workforce.

"The record growth that our company has had these last several years has enabled us to invest in our South Carolina manufacturing footprint with our soon-to-be new facility in Liberty and now the expansion of our Columbia facility," said Cherpes. "We were established in Richland County more than 40 years ago to manufacture small arms for the U.S. Army, and we're proud to expand our capacity to support that sector of our business."

FN America was originally established in the U.S. in 1979 and opened its doors in 1981 to produce the M240 medium machine gun, a variant of the FN MAG-58, under contract to the U.S. Army.

Currently, FN America employs more than 600 individuals to produce firearms, accessories and other adjacent products for the U.S. military, law enforcement agencies as well as consumers.

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

## CELERANT LAUNCHES ONLINE SELF-SERVICE KNOWLEDGE BASE

Celerant Technology has launched an interactive knowledge base for the company's retail software. The new self-service knowledge base provides instant access to training materials to help dealers better utilize their point

of sale software — so they can help customers and complete tasks faster, while reducing friction when needing training assistance.

"We're excited to launch our new knowledge base," stated Robert Goldman, VP and CTO of Celerant Technology. "This year-long project was a process of converting every training manual and guide we have into an online, easily searchable resource by topic. Instead of having to search



through pages and pages of manuals, our clients can simply type a few keywords and find the training answers they need."

[/celerant.com/firearms](http://celerant.com/firearms)



## FIocchi USA NAMED OSCF PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation (OSCF) has bestowed Fiochi USA with its Conservation Partner of the Year Award.

Fiochi USA was an early adopter of OSCF's national conservation engagement program called "Fill A Bag While Filling Your Tag" that distributes reusable, biodegradable bags to hunters and target shooters across the country. Outdoorsmen and women take the bags along with them when they head to the woods, waters and field. The biodegradable bags make it easy to take a piece or two of trash out of nature, resulting in a cleaner environment.

"It is great to see companies like Fiochi USA understand the benefit of conservation efforts. We thank them for being a partner in conservation with our 'Fill A Bag' program," said Jim Curcuruto,



Fiochi USA's Christian Hogg (center) accepts Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation's Conservation Partner of the Year Award from Jim Curcuruto (left) and Peter Churchbourne (right).

OSCF executive director.

"We're proud to be partners in conservation with [OSCF's] 'Fill A Bag While Filling Your Tag' program and honored to have received this award," said Christian Hogg, Fiochi USA director of marketing.

Fiochi USA has demonstrated further commitment to conservation with its EnviroShield initiative, which has

developed products such as GreenCore biodegradable shotgun wads that allow for minimal to zero environmental impression. Fiochi USA also actively supports conservation-focused organizations such as: RMEF, SCI, Delta Waterfowl, Sportsmen's Alliance and OSCF.

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## SAFE LIVING AWARDS RUGER WITH EXCELLENCE IN SAFETY AWARD

SLG2 Inc., an event marketing company that includes brands Shoot Like A Girl, Safe Living, Hunt Like A Girl and SLG2 Consulting, announced Ruger as Safe Living's Excellence in Safety Award winner for Q2 2023. Safety and responsibility serve as a cornerstone of Ruger's philosophy and mission as the company strongly advocates for firearm safety.

"As a continuing symbol of responsibility and a trusted partner of SLG2 Inc., Ruger represents all that we stand for and more," said Karen Butler, founder and president of SLG2 Inc. "We're thrilled to present our Q2 Excellence in Safety Award to a company dedicated to responsible firearm ownership, enhancing safe living and promoting the 10 firearm safety rules."

"Shoot Like A Girl does a tremendous job reaching new audiences and educating them on safe and responsible firearm ownership," said Chris Killoy, Ruger president and CEO. "We are proud to support all of their initiatives, including



Safe Living, as these programs continue to reinforce our corporate motto as 'Arms Makers For Responsible Citizens.'"

[/ safeliving2.com](https://safeliving2.com)  
[/ ruger.com](https://ruger.com)

## TENPOINT PARTNERS WITH PROJECT SAVIOR OUTDOORS

TenPoint Crossbow Technologies announced its partnership with Project Savior Outdoors to fight PTSD and veteran suicide.

Founded by Marine Corps veteran Mike Dragich, Project Savior Outdoors' mission is to fight PTSD and veteran suicide by connecting with the great outdoors and sharing the true freedom that comes through Jesus Christ. The organization provides veterans first-

class outdoor experiences, from hunting to fishing to camping, and offers future support through specific counseling resources and the local church community.

"We are proud to support organizations like Project Savior Outdoors that provide expense-free outdoor experiences to the men and women who so selflessly gave to our country," said Brian Flaherty, TenPoint marketing manager. "At TenPoint, we believe a crossbow is a great tool for veterans who need or want to assimilate back into the civilian world — whether through target



practice or getting the chance to hunt and provide food for their family. The quiet nature of the crossbow is also helpful to those veterans who have issues with loud noises."

[/ tenpointcrossbows.com](https://tenpointcrossbows.com)  
[/ projectsavioroutdoors.org](https://projectsavioroutdoors.org)

## STREAMLIGHT HONORS TOP 2022 SALES PARTNERS

Streamlight Inc. has announced its top 2022 sales rep agencies across the sporting goods, law enforcement, fire/industrial and automotive markets.

Core Line Marketing received the company's 2022 Sales Rep Agency of the Year Award for the sporting goods market. Established in 2009, Core Line Marketing serves markets throughout the Southeastern U.S.

"Core Line Marketing brings a wealth of industry knowledge and experience to their sales efforts," said Michael F. Dineen, Streamlight chief revenue officer.

"As outdoor enthusiasts themselves, they are invaluable partners in this important market segment. We look forward to their continuing contributions to our sales efforts."

In the L.E. market, Streamlight named Odle Sales as its 2022 Sales Rep Agency of the Year. Odle Sales serves the L.E. markets throughout the Midwest.

"I want to congratulate Odle Sales for their outstanding sales performance last year in this very important market segment," said Dineen. "This agency did an outstanding job in the Midwest for our law enforcement division during 2022. I am extremely pleased to be partnering with them and I look forward to their continuing contributions in 2023."



Streamlight named Holt & McArdle Associates as its 2022 Sales Rep Agency of the Year for the fire/industrial markets. Holt & McArdle is based in Garnet Valley, Pa.

For the third year running, E.A. Langenfeld & Associates was named Streamlight's 2022 Sales Rep Agency of the year for the automotive market.

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## OUTTECH ACQUIRED BY LEGACY1846 OUTDOOR GROUP

Along with its subsidiaries QuickFire and Peak Strategic Insights, Outtech Inc. announced it has been acquired by Legacy1846 Outdoor Group, an investment holding company. These entities join Trophyline, LLC, Redline Bowhunting and The Sports Products Group LLC as additional owned investments of Legacy1846.

Headquartered in Fredericksburg, Texas, Legacy1846 was founded by Gordon and Ryan Sauer and their family, as well as two of the original founders of Outtech, Jay Scholes and Ron Rette.

The mission of this group is to invest in brands and services that bring value to both manufacturers and consumers of

outdoor products.

“For Ron and I to be able to invest, along with the Sauer family, and continue to bring value and resources to the outdoor space, is a great next step for Outtech,” explained Scholes.

“Adding Outtech, QuickFire and Peak to our investments in Trophyline and Redline, as well as the Sports Products Group, gives Legacy1846 a set of solid opportunities from an investment point of view, as well as a future platform for further growth,” said Ryan Sauer.

As part of the new structure, Outtech’s sales representation team will advance as a stand-alone sales services firm with its entire current management, field sales and support teams intact in addition to the support provided by Legacy1846 resources. This will allow Outtech to continue to focus on its



represented partners, as it has for the past 30 years. QuickFire and Peak will also run independently with focused growth strategies to serve and expand their client base.

Legacy1846 Outdoor Group also announced the appointment of Scott Blackwell, Outtech’s current CEO, as the CEO of Legacy1846. Blackwell will continue to oversee the Outtech investment as well as investments in Trophyline, Redline and the services companies under the Legacy1846 portfolio, along with the management of potential further acquisitions and new initiatives.

[/ legacy1846.com](http://legacy1846.com)

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## SAVAGE ARMS DEBUTS PROPRIETARY CAMO PATTERN

Savage Arms introduced its own versatile camouflage pattern, Woodland, which is now available on the IMPULSE Big Game and 110 Ultralite Camo rifles in the Backcountry Xtreme Series.

Savage Woodland camouflage helps hunters close the distance. The breakthrough design specifically for Savage utilizes natural colors and shapes digitally enhanced to provide the ultimate in concealment at all ranges. The versatile mix of tans, browns and



greens blends seamlessly into a variety of terrains. Savage Woodland hides hunters effectively in different cover — from hardwoods to grasslands, and even deep into the mountains.

"We've always had big plans for the Savage brand," said Beth Shimanski, director of marketing at Savage Arms. "We

worked hard on Woodland to get it right. The data that made us pull the trigger on this decision was that hunters wanted patterns that benefited them in the field — meaning concealment when it matters most. So developing our own camouflage was something we took very seriously."

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

## VISTA OUTDOOR PAC DONATES \$85,000 TO FIVE NONPROFITS

Vista Outdoor has announced it will donate \$85,000 in unused funds from the Vista Outdoor Political Action Committee (PAC) to five nonprofit organizations. The funds will be split evenly among the Congressional Sportsmen Foundation, National Interscholastic Cycling Association, Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation, American Junior Golf Association and Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports.

These organizations represent a cross-section of the causes Vista Outdoor and its

brands have traditionally supported.

"We're honored to support these five organizations, whose missions align with our company's purpose of bringing people together through the outdoors," said Fred C. Ferguson, Vista Outdoor VP, public affairs and communications, and chairman of the Vista Outdoor PAC. "We believe in the power of outdoor experiences — whether it's cycling, golfing, hunting, boating or fishing — and we hope our contributions will help these organizations continue making a difference in their respective activities and communities."

The donations mark the final contributions from Vista Outdoor's PAC,



which is closing in light of the previously announced separation of Vista Outdoor into two independent companies. Each company will develop a holistic advocacy model centered on direct engagement with policymakers, philanthropy and trade association involvement.

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

## SPEER AMMUNITION AWARDED NYPD CONTRACT

Speer Ammunition was recently awarded the New York Police Department (NYPD) 9mm duty and training handgun ammunition contract for Speer 124-grain Gold Dot. The duty handgun contract with the largest law enforcement agency in the U.S. will supply this agency for up to five

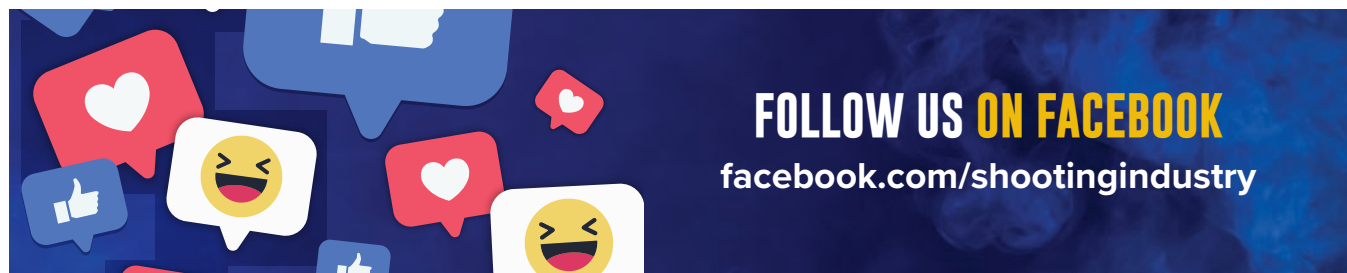
years with an expected quantity of several million rounds. The partnership with Speer and NYPD began in 2001.

"We are excited to report the NYPD once again chose Speer Gold Dot 9mm 124-grain +P as their ammunition of choice," said Speer's Senior Director of Law Enforcement Ammunition Sales, Hal Price. "The approximate 36,000 officers will use this ammunition exclusively for duty and training. We are proud of this

The Speer logo, featuring the word "SPEER" in a stylized, italicized font with a registered trademark symbol.

contract win and we are excited to have the opportunity to continue to work with the NYPD."

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



## TEXAS GUN EXPERIENCE EARNS NSSF FIVE-STAR RANGE RATING

NSSF awarded Texas Gun Experience its Five-Star rating for range excellence. Five stars is the highest rating in NSSF's star-rating system, which evaluates shooting facilities on appearance, management, shooting sports development and amenities.

Located in Grapevine, Texas, within the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area, Texas Gun Experience is owned by brothers Jared and Joseph Stanyer. As kids in the mid-1980s, the brothers worked in their father's gun shop.

In 2012, Jared and Joseph purchased their dad's business and rebranded it DFW Shooting Sports. The next iteration — Texas Gun Experience — came out of the desire to add a shooting range, and in 2019 Jared and Joseph opened their 35,000-sq.-ft. retail-range facility to serve a fast-growing customer base.



NSSF's Zach Snow (second from left) presents Jared Stanyer (center) with a plaque honoring Texas Gun Experience as a Five-Star range.

The range accommodates handgun, rifle and shotgun shooting on 25- and 50-yard lanes. An extensive firearm rental inventory allows customers to enjoy the range even if they don't own a firearm yet or for existing owners to try out different models. Texas Gun Experience also offers a full range of training and classes, memberships packages and accommodates parties and special events.

"We couldn't be more pleased to have earned the NSSF's Five-Star Rating. This

rating exemplifies our commitment to being the best resource for firearms, training and more within our community. It's an honor to receive it and also confirmation of all the planning that went into creating Texas Gun Experience to make it a quality, full-service facility for our customers and a fulfilling place to work for our staff and for us," said Owner Jared Stanyer. [SI](#)

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

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

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R. ALSEN

### Buck Knives Adds National Manager

Buck Knives recently welcomed Rick Alsen as its national accounts manager where he will develop, implement and manage the sales strategy with several of Buck's key national accounts.

Mark Reasoner, Buck Knives' VP of sales, said, "National accounts are a critical element to our long-term growth plan, and [Alsen's] expertise in this channel puts Buck Knives in a great position to achieve success."

Alsen has more than 25 years of experience with outdoor recreation companies, including X-Vision, Beavertail Products Gardner Sales Associates.



E. WILLIE

### Orchid LLC Names Sales/Marketing VP

Eric Willie has joined Orchid LLC as the firm's VP of sales and marketing.

"Eric brings extensive industry experience from across the firearm supply chain, having spent time with leading manufacturers and distributors, as well as our industry's trade associations, with the goal of adding value to the retail FFL community," shared Leland Nichols, Orchid chief strategy and business development officer.

Prior to joining Orchid, Willie held various leadership roles at Gearfire and AcuSport.



K. IKELS

### Revo Brands Hires Chief Revenue Officer

Revo Brands, the parent company of Real Avid and Outdoor Edge Cutlery, has hired Kenan Ikels as chief revenue officer. Ikels will lead sales for Revo Brands with responsibility for the company's top-line revenue growth.

Roy Wetterstrom, CEO of Revo Brands, stated, "[Ikels] brings a wealth of experience in our industry and has a track record of driving revenue growth and strong relationships within our channels. He is a dynamic, strategic leader and fits in well with our team."

Ikels has been in the outdoor sporting goods and recreation industry for the past 18 years, most recently as the EVP of sales for Aqua Leisure Recreation.



F. VIRGETS

### Lipseys Promotes Executives

Lipseys announced Flint Virgets was promoted to executive industry director from his position as president, and SVP Mark Emonet was appointed president and will remain CFO.



M. EMONET

Laurie Lipsey, chairwoman and CEO, shared, "We wanted to honor these two men at the pinnacle of their careers for their past and future contributions which have proven invaluable."

With the organization for 35 years, Virgets' newly created position focuses on the strategic enhancement of both dealer and manufacturer partnerships on every level of the industry.

Emonet has served in several operational roles during his 23 years with the company. As president and CFO, he will continue to mentor staff, nurture company culture and oversee day-to-day operations.



B. FLAHERTY

### TenPoint Crossbow Technologies Advances Marketing Director

TenPoint Crossbow Technologies recently promoted Brian Flaherty to director of marketing. He will manage all functions of marketing,

including creative direction, social media, website design and function, e-commerce and advertising.

"I'm excited to see Brian advance to the next chapter in his career," said Phil Bednar, president and CEO of TenPoint Crossbows. "Brian has been a crucial part of the company's success since he started 15 years ago."

Prior to working at TenPoint, Brian earned his MBA in management from the University of Akron and a BA in education.



C. CRAIGHEAD

### Staccato Enhances Training Division

Staccato has welcomed retired U.K. Special Mission Unit (SMU) operator Chris Craighead to the company's training division.

"We are honored to welcome another true hero to our team," Staccato CEO Nathan Horvath said. "Christian exemplifies our core values and his actions in Nairobi represent the epitome of acting with honor and doing what is right, especially when it is difficult."

Craighead is highly respected for his actions in Nairobi, Kenya, where he defeated terrorists in a hotel siege and saved over 700 lives.

Bringing his extensive experience and expertise to Staccato, Craighead will conduct elite programs including active shooter response training for SWAT teams across the U.S.



D. BIGGERS

### Ed Brown Products Retains Sales/Marketing Director

Dave Biggers is now serving as Ed Brown Products' sales and marketing director. He will be responsible for maintaining Ed Brown's existing sales channels, as well as developing sales and marketing strategies focused on customer service and growth.

Travis Brown, CEO of Ed Brown Products, shared, “[Biggers] brings a proven track record of sales and marketing experience, a passion for what we do and the outside perspective and contacts necessary to continue to grow and improve our company.”

Biggers has more than 20 years’ industry experience from working extensively in the parts accessory business and 1911 sales.



M. RITCHIE

### Hornady Appoints Marketing Operations Coordinator

Matt Ritchie was appointed marketing operations coordinator for

Hornady. He will play a key role in coordinating donation requests, shooting sports programs and sponsorships.

“We are thrilled to have Matt join the Hornady marketing team,” said Neil Davies, Hornady marketing director. “Matt is an avid outdoorsman; his product knowledge and work ethic will make an immediate impact.”

Ritchie joined Hornady in 2015 as a sales technician.

**CARACAL®**



**Caracal USA  
Taps Sales VP**

Caracal USA announced Bill Silver as the new VP of sales for the American market where he is tasked with driving the company's commercial programs and expanding the brand nationwide.

“Bill has built a solid reputation within the shooting sports market as a tireless sales executive with deep knowledge of our distribution chain and strong working relationship with distributors, box stores and dealers,” said Jeffrey Spalding, president and CEO of Caracal USA.

Silver has served as the VP of sales for various firearms brands including SIG SAUER. **SI**

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BY MASSAD AYOUB

## SAFETY ISSUES: IN-STORE & ON THE RANGE

**WE** can never lose sight of the fact we are selling deadly weapons. Therefore, workplace safety is a concern — no matter what our business or profession might be. When our business involves objects described in the law as “lethal weapons,” we have to be all the more careful.

### PREVENTABLE TRAGEDIES

Google “accidental shootings in gun shops” and you’ll get more than 6 million hits.

It appears the great majority of firearms accidents that take place in gun shops are the direct fault of careless customers, but occasionally there is negligence on the part of the staff.

Many years ago, I was consulted as an expert witness in the case of a shooting that took place at a gun show. A veteran gun dealer had, for many years, one or more tables at the show, and was approached there by a man with a bag of handguns he wanted to sell. A cursory examination showed them to be pretty much junk, and the dealer politely told the man he wasn’t interested.

The man replied, “Then how about *this*?” He reached under his coat and whipped out a French MAB 9mm. The dealer took it and, removing the magazine, realized “*This idiot just handed me a loaded pistol.*”

The mainspring is strong on an MAB, and it held the hammer down tight against the slide in addition to the

resistance of the recoil spring. As the dealer gave the slide a mighty tug to clear the chamber his hand slipped, and apparently hit the trigger, discharging the pistol.

The bullet struck and killed a 9-year-old boy nearby.

In 2021, a fatality occurred in a gun shop in Berkeley County, S.C. The news report from the local NBC affiliate, WCBT-TV News, began, “Charges have been filed against a Berkeley County gun shop owner who fatally shot a friend after mistaking a GLOCK 17 for a BB gun.”<sup>1</sup> The charge was involuntary manslaughter.

A 2017 incident in a Pinellas County, Fla. gun shop had serious, but fortunately non-fatal, results. The police report reads, in part, “Detectives assigned to the robbery/homicide unit are investigating an accidental shooting at a gun store that seriously injured a 19-year-old woman in unincorporated Seminole.

“According to detectives, at about 6:30 p.m. on Friday, February 10, 2017, deputies were called to Dara’s Nail Salon and Day Spa for a female victim suffering from a gunshot wound. Paramedics were already on scene rendering aid to the victim, 19-year-old Yaminah Gilbert. Gilbert suffered from a gunshot wound to her back and was transported to Bayfront Medical Center for non-life-threatening injuries.

“Detectives say 43-year-old Mark Smith, an employee at the neighboring business, R&R Firearms, was unloading

◀ Whenever guns change hands, staff should “check empty” not only by sight, but also by feel. Checking the magazine well — and chamber — needs to be an essential function.

a customer’s .45-caliber handgun inside the gun shop. Smith informed detectives he was clearing the loaded firearm when he pulled the slide back and emptied the chambered round from inside the firearm. When Smith sent the slide forward on the handgun, there was a magazine with ammunition still inside the handgun and the gun accidentally discharged.

“The projectile from the handgun traveled southbound, through the adjoining wall, and into Dara’s Nail Salon and Day Spa. Detectives say Gilbert was seated in a salon chair getting a pedicure at the nail salon when she felt the pain from the projectile striking her in the back. At the time, Gilbert was unaware of what happened until Smith came forward and reported the accidental discharge.”<sup>2</sup>

This past year in Waukegan, Ill., a gun shop and range employee unintentionally discharged his own pistol, sending a bullet into his own leg and a ricochet caused a hand wound to a male customer.<sup>3</sup>

In a Nashville-area gun store recently, a customer discharged a pistol that was on display, sending a bullet into the floor and spraying fragments which injured two other customers, one of them a Nashville Metro police officer. A report from NBC affiliate WSMV4 stated, “... police said a gun safety employee using the gun earlier put a loaded magazine back into the display gun accidentally.”<sup>4</sup>

### THE CUSTOMER’S LOADED GUN

I remember being in a gun shop a few years ago when an elderly customer fondling a handgun asked the man behind the counter, “Is it alright if I fire a few shots into the floor to make sure it works?” It took the gun dealer — and me — a few moments to realize the senior citizen was serious.

The dealer gently took the gun back and, needless to say, no sale was made. (It could have been worse, as we see from the Nashville area case above.)

In Monroe County, Ohio, gun-shop owner James Baker was shot in the neck and killed by a student while teaching a concealed carry class in 2016.<sup>5</sup>

In the past, there have been reports

“

## Eternal vigilance is the price of *safety*.”

of individuals (Psychopaths? Rabid anti-gunners? Who knows?) going to gun shows and surreptitiously inserting live rounds into display guns. This is one reason some gun shows require zip ties to disable display weapons. It may be one reason Walmart stores put trigger locks on all displayed firearms.

Zip ties and such are not, however, typical protocol in most retail gun shops. Thus, one critical safety protocol is to make sure a staff member checks the magazine and chamber of every firearm *before* they hand it to a customer, and to *do it again* when the customer hands it back before that gun returns to display.

### SAFETY PROTOCOLS

More often, it seems, these unfortunate events begin with a customer. They bring in a gun — for repair, for return, for trade-in or appraisal or whatever — and there is a round in the chamber. Obviously, the first thing the employee should do is get the muzzle in a safe direction, remove the magazine, open cylinder/slide/bolt and inspect the firing chamber(s). It's a good idea to check by both sight and feel: A finger is inserted into each chamber and magazine well to assure tactile *and* visual confirmation there are no live rounds in the firearm.

Some shops have found so many live rounds in guns under these circumstances they've made a collection: Usually, it's a glass jar of assorted live cartridges. The wise dealer keeps it where his or her employees can see it as a constant reminder of the importance of checking, and also where it can be pointed out to any customer who takes

offense at the practice of staff checking his gun and says something like “What, you don't trust me?”

“Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty” is a saying that has been attributed to Thomas Jefferson and many others, but probably originated in the year 1790 in Dublin, Ireland, by John Philpot Curran. For our purposes here, it can be paraphrased as “Eternal vigilance is the price of *safety*.”

Links to the various cases cited have been included as footnotes for your convenience. Feel free to use them to reinforce employee training, and perhaps even to show customers why your shop puts so much emphasis on firearms safety. **SI**

### Footnotes:

1. <https://tinyurl.com/counton2>
2. <https://tinyurl.com/pcsoweb1>
3. <https://tinyurl.com/33hv2z6y>
4. <https://tinyurl.com/3rcvpw5k>
5. <https://tinyurl.com/5f7rn6kz>

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BY NANCY KEATON

## SEE IT, TOUCH IT, TRY IT: PROVIDE A CC EXPERIENCE FOR WOMEN

**W**hen more women started carrying handguns for self-defense, we faced a bit of an issue. Most holsters were made for men — or at least people who wear belts. (Yes, some women wear belts, but many don't.) Then the "pink it and shrink it" idea came out and yet the holsters still didn't really catch up. Then they did. Now, there are so many options it can be overwhelming — whether it's belt holsters, bra holsters, belly bands, CC purses/backpacks or shirts/vests/jackets.

### SET UP A "CONCEALED CARRY CORNER"

While we were working at our state jobs, my friend and I used to talk about opening a "concealed carry boutique" where women could look at, touch and try on various holsters. We even talked about renting them for a week or two to see if it really worked for them like they hoped.

One thing we noticed was a lot of models wearing holsters show the women standing. Those holsters may work great for women who have jobs where they stand all day — and that's

◀ Offering a variety of carry methods — holsters, purses or jackets — will bring in a lot of women to your store. (Image: Just Holster It)

great for them — but that same holster can start to dig into your stomach, leg or back if you are sitting at a desk all day.

Buying holster after holster to find one both safe and comfortable for how we carry is frustrating. I personally have a box full of holsters I tried and only worked for me in one or two situations; not all the time. I keep them all, though, because I loan them to other women to see if they will work for them.

Knowing they like to touch, feel and try things on, retail stores would find a niche with women if they were to create a version of the "concealed carry boutique" idea by setting up a "concealed carry corner."

Providing a large variety of concealed carry methods, from holsters to purses to jackets, would bring in a lot of women. Adding a small dressing room to put on some of these items would be a great addition, as well.

Having staff members who are very knowledgeable about holsters as well as the various issues women face (think pregnancy, dressing in a variety of business clothing, etc.) would really up the game. As they help the customer select a holster, they can discuss any safety or fit issues. You could offer a holster-selection workshop or open house, inviting women to look over the options and sit down to learn about the safety requirements of a really good holster.

A fun thing to add to this workshop could be a "concealed carry fashion show." Women could really see how different holsters look under various kinds of clothing and on different body types. You could hold a vendor show where product representatives come and demonstrate their carry methods, which could expand your selection if there isn't room to carry all that you would like to.

### MEETING A NEED IN THE MARKET

Jeffrey Benty of Just Holster It created his business focused on this very topic. He discussed why and how it is focused on holsters and why it is important to offer the ability for customers to try various holsters.

"I was a sales and marketing manager for a company out of Atlanta. I worked out of my home office, but I was

always going out to do presentations and sometimes going to visit job sites and they weren't in the best of neighborhoods. I tried a lot of holsters, but as happens with many people, I ended up with a box full of holsters that didn't really work for me," he shared.

Benty was frustrated he could only find waist holsters.

"Nobody was really making a holster for inside the suit pocket which is what I wanted," he explained.

He started playing around in his basement and producing standard IWB-type holsters and putting them on eBay. They sold so well it ultimately turned into a regular business.

"We were originally only going to target online sales and gun shops, but we started getting phone calls from people saying the same thing; they had a box full of holsters and they'd rather come in and be able to try something on," he recalled.

Now Benty has two businesses, Just Holster It, which manufactures holsters, and a brick-and-mortar location in Alden, N.Y. He also just launched Just Holster It Firearms & Training Center in Elma, N.Y., which offers the full range of products from firearms, ammunition, accessories, training and specifically the largest selection of holsters in New York.

"We have a lot of women coming into our store, as more and more are starting to carry. And women have the same problem as men — they buy online and end up with a bunch of holsters in a box. So being able to come in and try them on is very important to them," he said.

#### MAKING CONNECTIONS WITH CUSTOMERS

Benty shared his store's approach to making suggestions for customers.

"We have figured out a series of questions so we can narrow down what they're after, and usually we're pretty good at hitting it consistently," he relayed. "We'll start with some basic questions such as how do they dress? Do they typically wear a belt? Around 80% of women don't wear a belt, so it helps us steer them toward the right options to try.



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**Around 80% of women don't wear a belt so it helps us steer them toward the right options to try. Women are such a growing demographic and we want to make sure we serve them.”**

Jeffrey Benty - Owner  
Just Holster It

“Women are such a growing demographic and we want to make sure we serve them.”

Through local partnerships, Just Holster It Firearms is able to further extend its reach.

“We're now partnering with other businesses in the community. One woman teaches Pilates classes and she wants to do a joint event where she'll teach Pilates in the morning and in the afternoon we'll do a class on introduction to firearms or something along those lines,” he said. “We also brought in a lot of the Well Armed Woman groups and offer them the latest and greatest products and get feedback from them as

to what works and what doesn't.”

At Benty's store, customers can bring in their firearm (store employees will clear it), and then they can try various holsters to see what works, what's comfortable and what's not.

“We also have the four sizes of blue guns because maybe they come in with a GLOCK 43 and we don't have a holster in stock or we have to order it or make it,” he informed. “So, we look to what is similar to it and have them try it on with a blue gun. This way they can still try something and see how that feels.”

Benty continued, “Every year when I go to SHOT Show, I'm on the mission of looking for what's next for women's holsters. There are always those novelty holsters and there are so many of them out there that just aren't right. I'll typically try to get one and then follow up with the holster maker. I've had other companies contact us as they are starting out and we worked with them on beta testing.”

Benty has a clear understanding as to why he sells so many holsters compared to some other stores.

“There are so many places where you see the holsters collecting dust and a lot of it is they don't demo the product,” he noted. “We outsell a lot of stores because we actually pull the product out and demo it. It's all about the personal touch, giving the customer the experience and letting them try before they buy.” ■



## BEST PRACTICES



BY DALE KRUPINSKI

# 7 ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE RANGE SAFETY & HEALTH PROGRAM

It's going to take more than just downloading written program templates to develop, implement and maintain safety and health programs at your shooting range. But if they're developed, implemented and maintained correctly, range owners can prevent workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths — while also reducing their financial liability.

Here are seven recommended practices to further improve your shooting range's safety and health program.

## 1. IT STARTS AT THE TOP

Range management leadership is essential to an effective safety and health program. Developing a written safety and health commitment statement that can be communicated to range staff and visitors is a good first step to showing management commitment.

However, it's more important for range management to set the example by following safety program requirements — even when they think no one is looking. Range management should set realistic and achievable goals for their safety and health programs and actively work toward meeting those goals.

Safety program roles and responsibilities need to be established and communicated to your range staff. The necessary resources (time and

money) to build your safety and health program must be provided.

Ultimately, you should integrate workplace safety into all facets of your range operations and develop a disciplinary action program to hold range staff accountable for workplace safety and health.

## 2. EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

Range staff represent an owner's most valuable resource and should be able to report safety and health concerns, incidents, near-misses and injuries without fear of retaliation. Safety information — like safety data sheets, injury and illness data and exposure monitoring results — must be readily available to employees.

A safety committee should be formed and used to incorporate employees from every level of your company to assist with safety and health program development, implementation and administration. Delegating or “dumping” safety program development and administration responsibility onto one staff member is not recommended. Instead, encourage staff with program area interest or related experience to take the lead on individual programs.

Mark Rice, director of range operations at The Gallery Sportsman's Club in Lakewood, Colo., shared this practice starts at the top.

“Through strong leadership, the staff will see the procedures and techniques

◀ Make it a priority to have regular safety and health program overviews with your staff. It takes the commitment of an entire team to accomplish a safer environment for all.

being completed by management and will follow suit,” he said.

## 3. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION & ASSESSMENT

Frequently inspect your shooting range for safety and health hazards. Evaluate the severity and probability of harm for each observed workplace hazard. Prioritize the highest risks for corrective action and utilize interim control measures to protect range staff until the permanent controls are implemented.

Investigate each workplace incident and near-miss report as soon as possible. Identify causal factors and root causes for each incident and near-miss report. Investigation findings placing blame on the employee are normally not the correct root cause. Dig deeper and ask why did the employee not follow procedure. Was it because of a lack of program training or enforcement?

Conduct full-shift personal airborne lead dust and noise exposure assessments on your range staff to evaluate employee exposures under peak operating conditions. Collecting this data will allow your range to evaluate regulatory compliance and the overall effectiveness of your hazard controls.

Be sure to sample non-routine tasks, like filter changes or range maintenance activities, to determine if the controls and personal protective equipment provided are acceptable for the airborne lead dust levels recorded.

## 4. HAZARD PREVENTION & CONTROL

Identify potential controls for each of the workplace hazards identified from your inspections, incident reports and near misses. Where possible, eliminate the hazard. If elimination isn't feasible, use a combination of engineering, administrative and personal protective equipment controls to mitigate it.

Be careful not to rely solely on personal protective equipment (PPE) because the hazard is still present and the PPE itself may be insufficient. Remember, you won't be able to fully evaluate the adequacy of your hearing and respiratory protection until you complete full-shift personal noise and airborne lead dust sampling.

## 5. EDUCATION & TRAINING

Train all range staff on the potential hazards and related controls present at your facility.

Provide safety and health training to all range managers, supervisors and employees upon employment and when new hazards or controls are introduced. Retrain staff when unsafe behaviors are observed following a near miss or after an incident.



**Range owners should be more involved in these seven practices. If ownership does not buy into safety, the range manager will face an uphill battle implementing these must-needed practices."**

**Mark Rice** • Director of Range Operations  
*The Gallery Sportsman's Club • Lakewood, Colo.*

Communicate your safety and health requirements to contractors working at your range and provide additional training to your staff if onsite contractors can potentially introduce new hazards at your facility. Ensure safety training is provided in a language and literacy level that all workers will understand and allow for participant questions and feedback.

Don't forget to document and maintain records of all safety training provided.

## 6. EVALUATION & IMPROVEMENT

Periodically, verify your safety and health programs are fully implemented and working as designed.

Range management staff should make frequent observations of

workplace operations to determine if the required work practices, procedures and controls are being followed. Review near misses, injuries and incidents to further evaluate the effectiveness of your safety program and solicit worker feedback for improvements.

Provide retraining if deficiencies are observed or if program gaps are identified. Reevaluate your safety and health program goals at least annually to determine if changes are necessary. Share your safety program evaluation findings with all range staff to further improve the program.

## 7. MULTI-EMPLOYER WORKSITES

Lead reclamation, range maintenance, cleaning and other trade contractors frequent both indoor and outdoor shooting ranges. Normally these contractors are in and out of your facility without incident.

However, contractors may be potentially exposed to hazards at your shooting range, or they may create hazards that could potentially harm your range staff. Given this risk, it's important for range management staff to communicate and coordinate with their contractors prior to arriving on site.

Inform contractors of the types of hazards that may be present at your facility, the means to avoid or control the hazards you identified and methods to report an injury or safety concern to your range management staff.

Notify your range staff of the potential hazards generated from the contractor's work, the means to avoid or control exposure to these hazards and how to report safety concerns related to the contractor's work.

## TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

Incorporating these seven elements into your shooting range's safety and health program will save your range money and better protect your range staff. Rice agrees.

"Range owners should be more involved in these seven practices," he said. "If ownership does not buy into safety, the range manager will face an uphill battle implementing these must-needed practices." **SI**



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WHAT SELLS? WHAT DOESN'T?

# FIRST OFF THE SHELVES: EYE & EAR PROTECTION

BY TIM BARKER

IF YOU WERE LOOKING TO NAME SOMETHING IN THE SHOP THAT ESSENTIALLY MOVES ITSELF OFF THE SHELVES, YOU WOULD BE HARD-PRESSED TO COME UP WITH SOMETHING BETTER THAN EYE AND EAR PROTECTION.

Anytime someone comes in to buy a gun, this safety gear is going to be among the first things you point them to. The same goes for any of your regular

range customers who tend to rent or borrow their eye and ear protection.

"Out of all the stuff in the shop, they're probably the easiest things to sell, maybe other than ammo," confirmed Tim Van Leiden, owner of The Gun Guys in Ottawa, Kan.

Indeed, this stuff is pretty much a mandatory part of every shooter's kit, suggests John Stephenson, general manager of Metro Shooting Supplies in Bridgeton, Mo. And that makes it part of his shop's standard rundown when promoting things to customers.

"You just bought this new gun? So now you need a range bag. How about a rag to wipe down your gun after shooting? And let's get your own eye and ear protection.' That's what we try and get them to do — and we're very successful at it," he said.



This is true, even though Metro's range fees include complimentary eye and ear protection. If someone is a regular range user, a Metro staff member will urge them to consider buying their own safety gear.

Stephenson shared, "I tell them it's like going bowling: How many times do you

**"YOU JUST BOUGHT THIS NEW GUN? SO NOW YOU NEED A RANGE BAG. HOW ABOUT A RAG TO WIPE DOWN YOUR GUN AFTER SHOOTING? AND LET'S GET YOUR OWN EYE AND EAR PROTECTION.' THAT'S WHAT WE TRY AND GET THEM TO DO — AND WE'RE VERY SUCCESSFUL AT IT."**

**JOHN STEPHENSON • General Manager • Metro Shooting Supplies • Bridgeton, Mo.**

want to put somebody else's shoes on your feet?"

Safety gear also makes nice impulse purchases for more established customers. You can make it more of a factor if you carry eye-catching options, according to Dave Neely, purchasing manager for Centennial Gun Club in Centennial, Colo.

For Centennial, this means carrying a wide range of colors and patterns of earmuffs (Howard Leight is a favorite).

"It's amazing how well they do, even with the special editions and colors that are more expensive," he stated. "You throw an American flag pattern on the side of earmuffs and people jump all over that type of stuff."

So, everyone needs eye and ear protection. But what sells and what doesn't?

#### EYE PROTECTION

For all three of these stores — each with an indoor range — there is a steady demand for shooting glasses. There are limits, however, to how much customers want to pay.

Centennial carries several brands, including Honeywell/Howard Leight, Champion and Peltor. None of them cost more than \$10. Still, the mix includes popular features such as clear, amber and dark lenses.

"We even sell the over-the-eyeglass ones, which are always surprisingly popular," Neely noted.

It's a similar situation at Metro Shooting Supplies, where customers often gravitate toward the less expensive options for \$6.

"They do scratch easily and things like that, but if you take relatively good care of them, they're going to last a long time," Stephenson rationalized.

This is fine for the vast majority of customers drawn in by the indoor range. They don't tend to be interested in paying \$100 or more for the types of glasses favored by competitive shooters and hunters.

"We do kind of push people toward an amber or a yellow lens, simply because the higher contrast makes it a little easier to see their sights in these lower light conditions," he expressed. "We used to carry some of the higher-end stuff, but we found it sat on the shelves forever. By the time somebody bought it, you couldn't even get replacement lenses."

There's a similar buying trend at The Gun Guys, in Kansas, where customers lean toward lower-priced options from Radians and 3M Peltor.

Still, they do offer some higher-priced options from Magpul, Oakley and Wiley X. Those just don't tend to sell very quickly.

"If customers are going to spend a lot of money on high-end glasses, it's usually prescription glasses," Van Leiden maintained. "And we're not eye doctors, obviously."

#### EAR PROTECTION

It's a different story when it comes to hearing protection. All three stores have found customers are more willing to pay up for pricier options, including those with electronics and Bluetooth features.



Priced on the higher end of the scale, the Magpul Rift is a versatile option for wearers who use the same glasses for most activities. The lens and frame are both ballistic rated. (Image: Magpul Industries)



Exposure to an indoor range may be a significant factor in those purchasing decisions, suggests Van Leiden. After customers experience how loud the range can be, they often consider a set of strong earmuffs.

"Then they realize if you get good enough earmuffs, you can't really hear anything," he conveyed. "So, they try the electronics. That way they can hear well enough to be able to talk to whoever else is in there."

The store offers options ranging from 50-cent foam plugs on up to electronic earmuffs for around \$200. Popular brands include Walker's and Caldwell. The sweet spot is in the \$70 range, which gets a decent set of electronic muffs.

Colorado's Centennial Gun Club offers a similar selection, with Peltor topping out the range at \$200. That's not the number-one choice for customers, but it does have enough appeal to keep them in stock with features like a Bluetooth connection to your phone, Neely said.

"Typically, once you get higher up in the price range, you also get better hearing protection," he explained. "There are some people who would rather spend a little bit more to get those extra couple of points of rating because they value their hearing."

It's not always the longtime shooters who are buying the more expensive earmuffs. Neely has watched novice shooters walk in and ask for the best option in the store. "They don't really care about the price. They'd rather 'buy once, cry once' instead of going through a



John Stephenson of Metro Shooting Supplies shared sales of safety-related products are a must for firearms buyers. They've had success selling women- and youth-specific options of hearing protection.

**"IF CUSTOMERS ARE GOING TO SPEND A LOT OF MONEY ON HIGH-END GLASSES, IT'S USUALLY PRESCRIPTION GLASSES. AND WE'RE NOT EYE DOCTORS, OBVIOUSLY."**

**TIM VAN LEIDEN • Owner**  
The Gun Guys • Ottawa, Kan.

bunch of different hearing protection," he shared.

It's the safety factor that helps drive sales at Metro Shooting, where range users are urged to go beyond earplugs or earmuffs with lower dB ratings. It's generally an easy case to make as soon as someone sets foot on the range.

"We try to push people into full coverage versus the simple plugs," Stephenson shared. "You know, for outdoor shooting and smaller calibers, those plugs are just fine. But really, the best protection is going to come from something with a higher degree of noise reduction."

#### LOOKING AHEAD

Van Leiden sees this market as being tied, to a degree, to gun sales and the economy in general — which is tempering his

expectations.

"I think based on the economy and the way gun sales have kind of flattened out, people are worried about spending money right now," he proposed.

The key to staying on top of the market, he contends, is to keep a strong variety of electronic earmuff options in stock. This means going beyond standard black and grabbing all the colors and patterns his suppliers can offer.

"We try to keep some of each," he added, "but we probably sell more of the colored stuff. It's surprising how popular the pinks and teals are."

In Missouri, Stephenson remains more bullish on the sector, likening eye and ear protection to other consumables such as cleaning solvent and gun oil. People are always finding

**"YOU THROW AN AMERICAN FLAG PATTERN ON THE SIDE OF EARMUFFS AND PEOPLE JUMP ALL OVER THAT TYPE OF STUFF."**

DAVE NEELY • *Purchasing Manager* • Centennial Gun Club • Centennial, Colo.



Allen Company Fit Over Shooting Glasses



Walker's Razor Slim Electronic Ear Muff

ways to scratch their lenses, he submits.

"Eventually they get fed up with looking through foggy glasses. They're going to buy a new set," he asserted. "For 10 bucks, it's sort of a disposable thing."

In Colorado, Neely sees no reason for this not to remain one of the store's best-selling categories: "We go through this stuff like crazy. It's hard to keep it on the shelf sometimes."

And there's still growth potential — from a technology perspective — in electronic hearing protection. He expects to see improvements in the protection ratings and features (Bluetooth, for example) as we move forward.

He sees the most promise in the type of form-fitted plugs usually handled by specialists or hearing professionals. Already, their store has started carrying do-it-yourself moldable earplug kits made by another Colorado company, Decibullz. All they require is five minutes in boiling water to get them ready for prep — at home.

"There's a variety of things you can do and they come in all kinds of colors," he said. "I would say those are probably going to be kind of the future."

Whatever the future holds, you can count on sales of eye and ear protection to continue padding the bottom line. **SI**

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BY BRYAN HENDRICKS

# PROTECT YOUR INVENTORY

## LOSS PREVENTION IS CRITICAL TO INDEPENDENT FIREARMS RETAILERS

**G**un shop owners are uncomfortable discussing theft, but theft is unavoidable in an industry that trades in highly valuable, highly desired merchandise.

Don's Weaponry in North Little Rock, Ark., is one of the last independent, dedicated gun stores in central Arkansas. It's in a gritty part of town about 100 yards from a railway, but it's not clear which side of the tracks is the wrong side. Nevertheless, the store's staff treats every visitor with respect, but always with an eye to security.

Lyn Forester, the manager of Don's Weaponry, said theft

is a major threat for a small, independent gun store. If losses exceed a certain threshold over a sustained period, it can influence a retailer's survivability.

"This store has been here since 1985," Forester said. "In the Little Rock area in 1985, you had Little Rock Arms, The Gun Exchange, Sipes Gun Shop, Razorback Shooting Supplies and R & L Gun Shop. They are all gone except us. It's really tricky for a real gun store to stay in business, and theft is always a big problem."

Every gun store has regular customers, but the location of Don's Weaponry draws customers from at least four counties. It's impossible to know everyone who comes through the door, and some might not visit again. It's important to establish a relationship to serve the customer, but also to protect the business's interests.

"When we enter people in our POS (Point of Sale), it's amazing how many thousands

upon thousands we enter in any given six-month period,” Forester shared. “You’d think we’d run out of people in a state as small as Arkansas, but it’s not unusual for us to see new faces.”

### INVENTORY PROTECTION STARTS AT “HELLO”

Forester and team’s stop-loss efforts begin with greeting the customer. The objective, of course, is to determine what the customer wants and if it is available. Also, it is an informal interview to determine the person’s intentions. If a customer is aloof or won’t make eye contact, he or she merits extra scrutiny, she contends.

“For every 100 people who come in here, 97 are not a problem,” Forester noted. “The two or three who come in to steal are the ones we’re looking for. We try to be discreet and not offensive. We’re an extremely small business, so we try to disperse around the store. Each employee takes an area and helps the customers in their area.”

A key is for employees to be familiar with the inventory in their area. The grips section at Don’s, for example, has four rows of product horizontally and four rows vertically. If a customer is thumbing through the

grips, Forester said an employee can instantly tell if an item is missing and match it with a customer who had been handling those items.

“The markup in our industry is not like it is in the furniture or jewelry industries,” she explained. “A true gun store does not have that kind of markup. We cannot afford that kind of loss.”

### SETTING UP A ZONE DEFENSE

Employees also pay close attention to groups of people entering the store. A shoplifting team engages and distracts employees while a designated member pockets items like grips, holsters, flashlights or ammunition.

Those items can account for substantial losses. It is very hard to steal a gun because they are kept in secure locations and are never out of sight of an employee, but accessories like scope rings and even sling swivels are easy to pocket and impossible to recover if stolen.

Another key to keeping those items from walking out the door is to maintain clear sight lines throughout the store.

“We’ve got an ‘L’ setup in our gun showroom,” Forester provided. “Basically the L is from south to north. The leg of the L heads west. If I’m sitting in the far corner, I can watch both sections. Employees deep in the L can watch

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**WE ARE A  
RELATIONSHIP  
VENDOR. WE  
WANT TO  
GIVE PEOPLE  
FREE REIN  
TO EXPLORE  
THE STORE,  
BUT WE’RE  
ALSO TRYING  
TO STOP  
THINGS FROM  
LEAVING.**

**MARK ABRAMSON, OWNER  
LOS RANCHOS GUN SHOP  
ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.**

“  
folks, too. Right now I have four employees in here with four customers. It’s harder to watch when we have 15 or 20 people in here. That’s when we have to disperse even more and make sure we have a ‘zone defense’ kind of thing.”

Even if 100 people are in the store, Forester reasons statistically, only three are potential thieves. Determining who those three are requires tact and



A secure vault protects the most valuable items at Los Ranchos Gun Shop in Albuquerque, N.M.



discretion, especially in a climate of racial sensitivity.

"It's a tricky thing," she confirmed. "We don't want to offend someone who's bored and just comes in to look around. We get people from all walks of life. When you come into our store, first we want to see if we can help you, and then we want to see if you're someone we need to worry about committing a theft."

#### WHEN DARKNESS FALLS

After hours, Don's Weaponry relies on exterior cameras, interior cameras with night-vision capability and an excellent alarm system. There are bars on the windows. There is also a door made of heavy iron bars that locks outboard of the main entrance. Firearms are stored in locked cases.

The showroom is elevated, and the back of the store goes down a long, steep hill. It is not possible to gain access to the showroom by driving a vehicle through a wall.

Luke Lombardi, manager of The Gun Room in Sunbury, Ohio, said crash-ins do occur, and always at night. The Gun Room is not at risk, according to Lombardi, because the building is made of stone and it is situated so a person driving a vehicle cannot get a running start at it.

"The parking lot just isn't big enough for it," Lombardi stated.

Concrete barriers around the building perimeter also impede crash-ins.

Lombardi is very familiar with about 70%

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**THE MARKUP IN  
OUR INDUSTRY  
IS NOT LIKE  
IT IS IN THE  
FURNITURE  
OR JEWELRY  
INDUSTRIES.  
A TRUE GUN  
STORE DOES  
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MARKUP. WE  
CANNOT AFFORD  
THAT KIND OF  
LOSS.**

**LYN FORESTER, MANAGER  
DON'S WEAPONRY  
NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARK.**

“  
of his clientele, and the only theft he remembers is when someone swapped a cheap AR-15 charging handle for an expensive one. Small, expensive items like electronic sights are kept where customers cannot access them without direct assistance from an employee.

#### RELATIONSHIP VENDING

Mark Abramson, owner of Los Ranchos Gun Shop in Albuquerque, N.M., also relies on personal contact with customers to protect

inventory.

"First, it's a matter of making sure our staff doesn't just greet somebody, but actually has a chat with them," he said. "We know who they are, and we start by getting some information about them. We are a relationship vendor. We want to give people free rein to explore the store, but we're also trying to stop things from leaving."

Ammunition, a desirable and easy item to steal, requires close attention, Abramson noted.

Customers want to inspect ammo. They want to hold and read the boxes, but a box of handgun ammo is small enough to easily slip into a coat pocket. Swivels, rings and holsters are also easy to snatch. It happens, but not on a large enough scale to threaten the business's survival, he said.

A big deterrent, Abramson believes, is subtle reinforcement thieves can be identified, if necessary.

"We have a TV screen so they can see they are being watched," he said.



As at many gun stores, cameras provide video coverage of every inch of Don's Weaponry in North Little Rock, Ark. Cameras are one element in a retailer's security suite, reminding potential thieves that they can be identified if necessary.

"Those things are subtle reminders they can't just take something."

As aggravating as it is to lose a holster, the after-hours thefts hurt the worst. To prevent late-night break-ins, Abramson installed 6" diameter steel bollard posts around the store. There is heavy-gauge fencing around the back of the building preventing access to the back parking lot. The building configuration also prevents unauthorized access.

"You can't drive around the building, and you can't drive two sides," he said. "The other two sides are protected with bollards. Our windows have reinforced shades that go down at night and are

attached to the building. We can lower them from the inside and outside. They're powered. If we had them on a pulley system, somebody could operate the pulley."

#### A TEACHABLE MOMENT

Even with all those provisions, Abramson experienced a serious theft from an adroit thief who broke in through a wall from an unoccupied adjacent space.

"They broke into the space next to us, busted through a wall, put a hand through the hole and grabbed six guns," Abramson recounted. "They knew exactly what they were stealing. They sent one guy into the store

after they did it, and he came in for one other gun, which was the most expensive gun in the store. They had clearly cased us."

The incident was a teachable moment for Abramson.

"We should have put an alarm in the adjacent space," he conceded. "It wasn't our space, but it was empty. By the time we got the call and ran over there, the police missed them by two minutes. Had we been able to respond more quickly, police may have been able to respond more quickly."

For that reason, Abramson has a policy limiting mobile phone use inside the store.

"People walk around

with their cell phones. You never know if they're talking on them or if they're filming your shop," he said. "We're pretty aware of that. You can take pictures of a gun, but we don't let them take pictures of the store where it's pretty clear they're looking for camera locations and things of that nature."

Another deterrent to theft, Abramson suggested, is the close proximity of law enforcement.

"The sheriff's department is a block-and-a-half away," he said. "Deputies are in here all the time. People see sheriff's cars out front. They're certainly aware it's probably not a good idea to take things from us." ■

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INSIGHTS FOR **FFL DEALERS**

# THE GUN SAFE MARKET

By *Shannon Farlow*

**G**un safes have become one of the most popular purchases for first-time gun buyers and longtime shooting enthusiasts. Safes offer a significant revenue stream for FFL dealers, generating both add-on and repeat sales. With the demand for firearms lingering above pre-pandemic levels, the gun safe market is expected to remain strong across the country.

What are the most popular types of gun safes today? Which brands are selling best? Do buyers prefer the newest models with the latest technology, or traditional, old-school gun safes? How are retailers leveraging sales and merchandising tactics? What does the future hold for the gun safe market?

To get answers to these questions and more, we spoke with Stephen Hall, founder and president of Lock It Up Safe Company in Edmond, Okla.; Brice McCunn, owner and president of Iowa Safe Company, located at McCunn Specialty Firearms in Massena, Iowa; and Larry Hyatt, president of Hyatt Guns in Charlotte, N.C.

## SI: What factors drive sales of safes?

**Hyatt:** In a word — unease. While gun purchases have driven up our gun safe sales, economic issues and rising property crime rates have also driven sales on large fire safes. These allow customers to secure their firearms, as well as documents and valuables.

**Hall:** Safes sell for a variety of reasons; emotion is toward the top of the list. The recent Silicon Valley Bank closure gave us a bit of a spike in sales, but it'll wear off quickly. Many of our safe sales are family decisions, such as inheritance of firearms, first-time gun owners or moving homes and getting a new or bigger safe. Being a safe-only store, we don't seem as affected by large market rushes. Even during the 2020 increase in gun sales, we ticked up a bit, but mainly just stayed steady, which is helpful from an ordering and delivering standpoint.

**McCunn:** Iowa Safes shares a building with McCunn Specialty Firearms, so it's a big opportunity for sales. The guest may be here shopping for a firearm and notice a beautiful showroom full of safes. We hear the phrase "I've been thinking about a safe" a lot and when

**"Giving our guest base a variety has helped win trust and increase conversion."**

**STEPHEN HALL,**  
Founder and President  
Lock It Up Safe Company  
Edmond, Okla.

there is a great selection in front of a customer, it's a good opportunity for a sale.

## SI: Which types of gun safes are the most popular these days?

**McCunn:** In Iowa, we've noticed a trend of larger safes being sold. For instance, 72" tall safes are by far the most popular for our region, but we do sell a variety of sizes. We offer a variety in the store so the guest has plenty of options, especially if space is an issue in their home.

**Hyatt:** Small handgun safes remain our top sellers. We use these as add-on sales for every gun sold in our store and we offer a discount at point of purchase. We want to be a good steward of the world around us, so we feel responsible to educate customers about securing their firearms.

**Hall:** In our store, we tend to divide safes in a few categories such as pistol/travel, “home safes” (which usually means 44” and shorter, small safes (think 1–20 rifles), big safes (20+ rifles) and extra-large safes, which can have capacities of close to 100. We seem to rotate through all of them pretty consistently, but if I had to pick one that’s a bit slow it would be the medium sizes such as 60” tall and between 36”–42” wide. Oftentimes, I think people want something much smaller or much larger.

**SI: How popular are portable gun safes?**

**Hyatt:** These are our top sellers by a significant margin. They are an inexpensive way to allow gun owners to secure their firearms, while still allowing easy access to them, both in the home and on the go.

**Hall:** Securing a firearm in a car is probably the most popular thing small handgun-style safes are utilized for. Vaultek has done a phenomenal job of addressing this with their LifePod and Barikade line of travel safes. They come in a variety of sizes, colors and features. Vaultek has biometric options along with keypad options, creating an option for most shoppers.

**McCunn:** Vaultek safes are a great seller for us. They offer multiple options for size and security and are great quality.

**SI: Which brands are selling best?**

**Hall:** In our store, we tend to sell by size. We’ve a few that pretty much sell as soon as we get them, such as the Rhino AIW series, but oftentimes we see our store go through phases such as small safes selling quickly, which then tends to slow and then big ones pick up. It’s so odd to watch because

it’s like everyone who needs a small safe gets together and buys within a month or two.

We really value the brands we work with. American Rebel, Rhino, Champion, Dakota, Superior and Vaultek, just to name a few, all have a special niche in the market that make the end user pick one over another. We’re big believers in buying intentionally. There are a few things some brands do well others don’t. Having a wide range of product to show our shoppers addresses what aspects are important to them. Another thing we hear often is having an assortment of manufacturers helps the guest feel like they can make a wise and informed decision because

they have seen a variety of options. There are some brands in the industry that want to be exclusive and there is a place for it, but we feel giving our guest base a variety has helped win trust and increase conversion.

**Hyatt:** We partnered with SnapSafe several years ago to brand safes with our logo. We sell a small car lock box, which includes a steel locking cable that makes it a “snap” to lock up guns in cars. We’ve offered several promotions in partnership with local law enforcement where we sold the safes at our cost. Champion remains our stalwart in the large safe space. Champion has great coverage across all price points, and we remain one of



**Top:** Iowa Safes exhibits at local home and garden shows to pick up additional business. **Bottom:** Hyatt Guns offers a variety of secure storage devices — such as the SnapSafe XL and a gun lock, seen here — to fit the needs of every customer.



the few Champion dealers in our area. We started carrying Vaultek a few years ago, and it fits into a nice higher-end slot for small safes.

**McCunn:** Champion/American Rebel safes offer a very wide selection of colors, fire ratings and sizes, which make them a top seller for us. Browning/ProSteel safes have been gaining popularity as we've increased our inventory and they offer some unique features. Currently, offered brands in the store include: American Rebel, Champion, Superior, Safe Guard, Browning, Rhino Metals, Dakota Safes, Surelock Security and the new Hornady Security Safe, all of which are a big advantage to our guests over other single-brand safe stores.

**SI: What strategies have been effective in selling gun safes?**

**Hyatt:** The best strategy is add-on sales. When a customer is buying a gun, it's the perfect time to let them know they need to keep it secured.

**McCunn:** Iowa Safe Company offers delivery and installation for the guests. That is a huge selling point, and when offered, it almost makes up their mind for them. For the guest, knowing a professional can safely bring the safe into the home takes a lot of their worry away.

**Hall:** Our sales and delivery team. We've a five-star review on both our website and Google. The number-one thing you will read about is our team. We've outstanding guest service, which follows them home when we deliver the safe to them. We use the same sales team to also deliver. This helps with comfort to the guest by seeing us again, and also helps us sell safes as we know what it takes to get the safes in homes.

**SI: What merchandising tactics work best?**

**Hall:** We like to lay out our safes by size and style. We choose to go with a more upscale and homey feel. When you enter our store, our safes are always clean, have a few decorations on or around them and are fully set up

and ready to be shown. We've staged a few safes to help the guest visualize what is inside a safe. All information about the safe can be found on an easy-to-read sales tag. We encourage our guests to take photos of the safes they're looking at, as each tag has the dimensions of the safe so they can go home and measure.

**“We're an old, family-owned store, and we've seen trends come and go. As experts in the field, we like to let our customers know what's really important in a safe, and most times it's not new technology.”**

**LARRY HYATT**, *President*  
Hyatt Guns, Charlotte, N.C.

**Hyatt:** End caps work best with bold signage. We like to remind our customers most guns used in crimes in our area were stolen from cars. No responsible gun owner wants their guns to be stolen and used in a future crime.

**McCunn:** With firearms readily available in the gun store, it is a good opportunity to grab a few and show guests how they can configure the safe to get maximum capacity. Showing them firsthand ways to organize and get the most out of the safe is a great tool.

**SI: Do customers typically buy multiple types of safes (large, bedside, etc.)?**

**Hall:** It depends on the guest. Many people really value protecting their items and also see the advantage to having a firearm ready for quick access. We'll outfit multiple areas of

a house for quick and safe firearm access along with a main safe for guns and other miscellaneous items. We see a lot of first-time safe buyers buying something small and non-intimidating, which quickly fills up.

**Hyatt:** Many customers will buy one large safe, and then several smaller safes to house guns close to where they may be at any given time. They may have bedside safes or car safes. It all comes down to their lifestyle. Do they have children in the house? Do they work at a place that doesn't allow concealed carry on the premises? Will they be traveling through states that require guns to be locked up while in transit? Will they need to fly with a gun in checked baggage? These questions will help drive sales of particular products.

**McCunn:** We do occasionally see a guest buy a larger safe along with a smaller bedside or closet safe. The Vaultek is a good example as many of them will fit in a bedside table for safe, but quick access.

**SI: What new technologies or products have stood out to you in this segment over the past year?**

**Hyatt:** Biometric technology was a big deal when it was first announced. Unfortunately, the technology is still not fully perfected. We've also seen safe technology hardened to electromagnetic pulse. However, the best technology we've found is old technology. Heavier steel, longer fire ratings, number of bolts, and overall quality construction are the most important aspects in safe shopping. We're an old, family-owned store, and we've seen trends come and go. As experts in the field, we like to let our customers know what's really important in a safe, and most times it's not new technology.

**McCunn:** Biometric tech is still relatively new, but seems to be gaining popularity. The tech has improved over the years and guests do like the easy and fast entry into the safe. New designs to maximize firearm capacity is also key. Rifle rods are an easy way to gain room for a few more long guns.



At Lock It Up Safe Co., lighted displays like this one give customers an opportunity to visualize how they want their safe to be organized.

**Hall:** The Rhino SAFEX system really has our attention as it seems to address a weak point on many safes. We're definitely keeping our eye on it. One

trend we see is some companies are switching to a thinner steel to stay at a price point. While keeping the price of entry attainable to consumers is very important, I really like Champion/Superior's motto "built up to a standard, not down to a price." Some companies are trying to use security grades to not publicly mention they're thinning steel, but everyone we carry clearly lists their steel thickness. Vaultek's DS2i has been wildly popular since release a few months ago. The product is dual feature.

**SI: What advice would you offer dealers who are considering stocking gun safes or expand their current offering?**

**Hyatt:** Safes take up a lot of space. They're heavy. They're expensive. They're hard to move. They require a lot of expertise to sell effectively, so it makes them difficult to stock. We took the risk many years ago to build a warehouse and a showroom strictly to house safes. We stock more in-stock safes than any other retailer in our area. We offer bonded delivery utilizing

former sheriff deputies, who are very skilled in delivery, moving and securing safes, even upstairs and in difficult and tight locations. We went all in at the beginning and it has paid off for us. It's really the only good way to get into the business.

**McCunn:** For new dealers, offering delivery and install is key. Also, offer incentives. Match manufacturer promos or offer your own. A good marketing plan can create sales you didn't know where there.

**Hall:** The two things I would recommend: having an in-house delivery crew also able to double as safe salesman, and have a good offering from a good, better, best perspective. **SI**

**Editor's Note:** An extended version of this story appears online at [shootingindustry.com](http://shootingindustry.com), where this experienced trio of dealers share insights on how to better appeal to repeat customers and their sales predictions for the rest of 2023.

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## AN ONION IS YOUR STORE'S BEST SECURITY FEATURE

BY HANK YACEK

**Y**es, you read the headline right — an onion!

Well, not literally ...

For those of you who are active military or veterans of an armored division (and thank you for your service), you're probably familiar with the term "survivability onion." For those of you not familiar with the concept, it shows, in a simplified way, combat can be viewed from a layered perspective, like layers of an onion, to maximize your ability to survive. The general concept identifies basic steps you can take

to examine your situation and adapt to it.

The basic layers are, in order, as follows ...

1. Don't be there. If you aren't there, you can't be attacked.

2. Don't be detected. If you aren't seen, you won't be attacked.

3. Don't be targeted. If they don't see you as a target, you won't be attacked.

4. Don't be hit. Employ countermeasures, should you be targeted, to not get hit.

5. Don't be penetrated. When you do get hit, prevent the round from getting through.

6. Don't be destroyed. If the projectile does get through, minimize the damage.

### LAYERS OF DEFENSE

It's a straightforward and common-sense list of precautions put in an easy-to-understand format. That being said, we can adapt this mindset to conceptualizing the security of our stores and ranges. Let's slice into the onion ...

Mark Wershay, principal, VP and senior project manager of Zimmerman Architectural Studios Inc., shared some insights on different aspects of how we can adapt the "survivability onion" to help harden off our businesses and minimize the potential of theft and break-ins.

Firearms are the most common target for theft during a break-

in. Knowing this fact, we can now apply the "survivability onion" and build out layers of defense to help secure our facilities.

### 1. DON'T BE THERE.

Seeing as our stores aren't mobile, it's always going to be where it's expected to be. Of course, we want people to know where we are! However, if we view the firearms in the store as the target instead of the store, there are steps we can take to have our firearms "not be there" when they are most vulnerable to theft.

Stores, particularly smaller ones, have the ability to secure their firearm inventory into safes or vaults at the end

of the business day. This can be a time-consuming process that adds wear and tear to the firearms; but for those who can do this practically, it's a means for the firearms to "not be there" when it comes to theft.

If a potential criminal knows you have firearms, but doesn't know where they're stored, we have satisfied the first layer of our "security onion." For the rest of us who can't (or don't want to) move our firearms every evening, we move to layer two.

## 2. DON'T BE DETECTED.

Again, if we view this from the firearms being the main target, we further cloud the environment for any would-be thief by obscuring where the firearms are. Another way to read "don't be detected" is "don't be *seen*."

It can be as simple as making sure there are no customers around when you store your firearms, so no one else knows where you put them. Install metal rolldown doors (or have them designed into the

original construction) in your store. Use fixtures to prevent a thief from knowing which area of the store to target.

Anything you can do to put question into the thought process of a thief as to "where the goods are" will only put the odds in your favor of not being broken into in the first place.

## 3. DON'T BE TARGETED.

Wershay offered sage advice to help ward off the threat of even being

targeted in the first place.

"You only need to be perceived to be 10% more secure than another shop in town and then you won't be identified as *the* place to break-into," he said.

The key message here: All you need is to be *perceived* to be well secured to minimize your theft risks, which takes us into layer four.

## 4. DON'T BE HIT.

So, what if our would-be thief knows where we are, we've chosen to leave the

firearms on the sales floor at the end of the day and we don't have the ability to hide their location in the store and our thief sees us as a ripe target? This is where we start taking a hard look at the facility itself and where we may have weak points in our security plan.

"Look around and make sure there is nothing outside the building that could be used to help the thief break in, such as chairs, tables, pavers, landscaping rocks or any other movable items," Wershay advised. "These objects need to either be removed or secured so a thief doesn't see them as a ready-made opportunity to break-in through glass or break down a door."

Taking steps to eliminate "blind spots" provides added security, Wershay added.

"Minimize blind spots where a thief might be able to act unseen. Be sure there are clean, well-lit lines of sight and be sure to use cameras to keep all the exterior monitored. You can even add in extra 'dummy' cameras to add in extra perceived coverage, but at the very least make sure you leave no blind zones," he said.

Therefore, make it obvious your store isn't the place to even try and break into. It may mean cutting down overgrown landscaping, removing banners or signs and making sure all the exterior lights are working properly.

## 5. DON'T BE PENETRATED.

You already know thieves don't think rationally, so if their

“  
**YOU ALREADY KNOW  
THIEVES DON'T THINK  
RATIONALLY, SO IF THEIR  
DESIRE TO BREAK IN  
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IS WHERE 'HARDENING'  
THE STORE BECOMES  
IMPERATIVE.**



According to Mark Wershay, if your business can be perceived as little as 10% more secure than another store, would-be thieves will target another establishment.





**Left:** At Point Blank Range's Matthews, N.C., location, it has heavy-duty safety bollards installed at the front entrance — deterring the threat of a car being used to breach the facility. **Right:** James Babiasz, president and owner of The Range of Richfield in Richfield, Wis., has multiple security measures in place — including a security bar for an exterior doorway and ample cameras to cover the show floor.

desire to break in exceeds your ability to dissuade them then this is where “hardening” the store becomes imperative.

Wershay shared some of the things his company is incorporating into its next project as means to prevent a break-in.

His first message was: “If a thief wants to break in, they’ll find a way. It’s simply our job to make it take as long as possible so authorities can arrive before they penetrate the facility.”

When asked for specifics, Wershay provided a laundry list of noteworthy considerations:

- Limit the number of entrances, and if a doorway is not specifically an employee or public entrance, make sure there is no exterior hardware to allow entry.

## “ HAVE A WELL THOUGHT- OUT AND DOCUMENTED ‘ACTION ITEM’ AND ‘CALL LIST’ OF WHO TO CALL AND WHAT TO DO AFTER A BREAK-IN.

- For public entryways, if possible, make it a two-threshold vestibule to add an extra layer of security.

- Add security glazing to all glass areas. This can even be an added membrane-type material that can be applied to glass surfaces, even showcases, so if the glass gets attacked/broken it keeps it all together due to the membrane being bonded

to all the pieces. This sort of glazing is also very tough and resistant to being broken through.

- Motion sensors and/or cameras on the roof. All too often this part of the building is neglected in the security plan and becomes the weakest link in the chain.

- “Bollards” is a fancy term for metal and/or concrete posts you see

out in front of buildings. These are a key deterrent to smash-and-grab-style burglaries where the thieves drive a vehicle through the front of the facility to gain entry.

Be sure all ground level entrances have these placed to barricade entrances off from this sort of attack. For other ground-level areas, such as windows or other perceived “soft spots” in the building exterior, large landscaping boulders can take the place of bollards.

- Be sure all exterior entryways have full jam protection to deter prybar attacks.

- Minimize the areas of glazing/glass. No emergency or employee entrances should have any windows.

- Have active monitoring of the interior of the facility. Use cameras, glass break

detectors, microphones and any other means of entrance detection you can afford. Even though most of these systems can send alerts directly to your phone, it's still worth it to have your store monitored by a third party so they can act on your behalf to get authorities on the way.

- Use cloud storage to archive monitoring footage for later review. This can come in handy to detect/identify shoplifters during operational hours.

- Keep clear lines of sight inside the facility and minimize areas people can hide. This will help minimize daytime shoplifting and help authorities determine if your store is secure after a break-in.

## 6. DON'T BE DESTROYED.

If all our efforts have failed and our thief gains full access to our facility and has time to take action, how can we minimize the negative impacts?

Make sure you've already done the following:

- Lock up all showcases and secured areas at all times.
- Upgrade showcases to have break-resistant laminates/glazing.
- Minimize the number of items on display. There's no need to have excessive numbers of units of the same firearm or high-value accessory in the showcase at the same time. Keep extra units in a more secure backstock area.
- Be sure to have any high-value accessories

secured and not just out on general display.

- Let the authorities do their job of securing the facility after a break-in. You can't run your business from the hospital or the grave by trying to be the hero. It's just stuff ... this is why you have insurance.

- Speaking of insurance, be sure you're properly insured! As your business grows so does the need to expand your coverage. Part of "don't be destroyed" means you can continue operations as seamlessly as possible after a break-in.

- Have a well thought-out and documented "action item" and "call list" of who to call and what to do after a break-in. Make

it readily accessible to all responsible owners/employees. In times like this it's easy to get caught up in the moment and forget the things you need to do in a timely fashion, or worse — you're not in the area and need to lean on others to get things done.

## HOW DOES IT SMELL?

Bottom line, it's essential for every facility to have a thoughtful, coherent and strong smelling "security onion." Looking at store security through this paradigm can help you build enough layers of deterrence to make the thief keep your store off their radar and help you survive should the worst happen. **\$I**

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By Jenna Buckley



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Chambered in .30-30 Win., the **MARLIN MODEL 336 CLASSIC** from Ruger sports a beautifully finished American black walnut stock and forend. Crisp, clean checkering on both the stock and forend improve the appearance and grip of the rifle. The stock's black pistol grip cap is inset with a Marlin Horse and Rider medallion and the forend is attached using a barrel band. The alloy steel rifle is richly blued, features a standard-sized finger lever and has a six-round magazine capacity. The 20.25" barrel is cold hammer-forged for longevity and ultra-precise rifling for exceptional accuracy. Like the classic 336, this rifle features a gold-colored trigger.



MESA MERINO HOODIE

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Duck Camp's women's spring collection includes four apparel pieces. The **ORIGINAL BAMBOO CREW** crew neck shirt is light and breathable, moisture wicking, UPF 30+ rated and 5% spandex. The **MESA MERINO HOODIE** combines warmth, odor control and moisture-wicking performance and features a full-snap hood for UPF 86+ protection. **GRUENE PANTS** have a stretchy, lightweight ripstop fabric for durability and an elastic waistband. Articulated knees aid range of motion, and the five-pocket design offers secure storage. **AIRFLOW JOGGERS** are fast-drying, packable pants great for use in and out of the water. Crafted from 100% recycled nylon, the joggers feature a PFC-free DWR coating for light-weather protection, comfort stretch waistband, quick-draining hand pockets and a zippered rear pocket.

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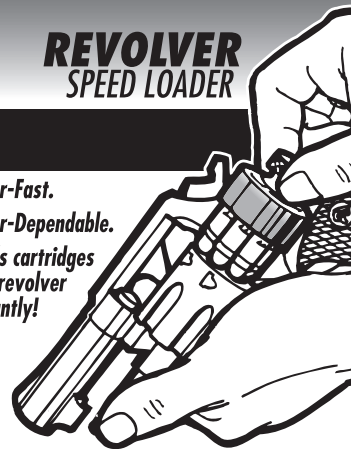
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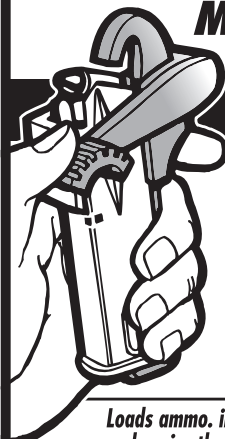
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## NSSF, USFWS & TAURUS RELEASE LATEST “PARTNER WITH A PAYER” VIDEO

NSSF highlighted a partnership with Taurus Holdings Inc., in support of the “Partner with a Payer” initiative by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS).

In the video, titled “Building Our Partnerships,” Taurus USA’s 205,000 sq. ft. Bainbridge, Ga., manufacturing facility is showcased. It has been vital to assisting the state of Georgia and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in its economic development of creating and maintaining resources for the public to utilize for outdoor activities.

Firearm manufacturers, like Taurus, contribute to the USFWS initiative by paying excise taxes into the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (known as the Pittman-Robertson Act).



An event hosted at Taurus’ Bainbridge, Ga., facility brought conservation partners together — providing an opportunity to develop shared goals.

More than \$16.1 billion have been contributed and distributed to individual states to allocate funds toward wildlife conservation, hunter-education programs and target shooting programs.

“This is a win-win situation for everyone involved, but especially outdoorsmen and women who are passionate about these activities and creating additional opportunities that future generations can utilize too,” said

Tom Decker, brand manager, USFWS. “It enables manufacturers to also be active participants in managing wildlife areas and improving resources and facilities such as target shooting ranges. In return, the available facilities encourage the local community and industry partners alike to increase their regular participation and recruit others to use them as well.”

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

## HENRY DONATES TO BPF, PEDIATRIC CANCER CENTERS

Henry USA announced a \$25,000 donation to the Border Patrol Foundation (BPF) in support of the organization’s mission to honor the memory of fallen U.S. Border Patrol agents and provide immediate financial aid to their families.

Growing in scope since its founding in 2009, BPF offers financial assistance to agents and Border Patrol support personnel who are wounded, injured or have fallen ill while performing their duties, as well as their family members, and a scholarship program for the children of fallen Border Patrol agents.

Henry also announced donations totaling \$200,000 to Arkansas Children’s Hospital and the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center at Nebraska Medicine. The funds will go directly toward supporting the hospitals’ efforts in treating and caring for pediatric cancer patients, ensuring that children and their families have access to the world-class care these healthcare providers are known for.



Henry Repeating Arms CEO and Founder Anthony Imperato presents a check for \$100,000 to Megan Flores, development officer of Arkansas Children’s Foundation, outside the Hematology/Oncology department at Arkansas Children’s Hospital in Little Rock. (Image: Katie Childs Photo)

The donations are part of Henry Repeating Arms’ \$1 million Silver Anniversary pledge through its charitable branch, Guns for Great Causes, and the company’s longstanding advocacy for American law enforcement agencies.

“Guns for Great Causes has always been about the kids, the future of America, and I am proud to make these

donations in their name,” said Anthony Imperato, Henry founder and CEO.

Henry has donated \$275,000 to organizations supporting law enforcement personnel and their families since June 2022, including Tunnel to Towers, Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.), First Responders Children’s Foundation and more. **SI**

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



BY JADE MOLDAE

# 4 THINGS NEEDED FOR A SUCCESSFUL SAFETY CAMPAIGN

**Y**ou don't need me to tell you: sales of safety-related gear can make a significant impact on your bottom line.

Dealers quoted in this month's "First Off The Shelves" feature were quick to sing the praises of this profitable product segment.

"Out of all the stuff in the shop, they're probably the easiest things to sell, maybe other than ammo," stated Tim Van Leiden, owner of The Gun Guys in Ottawa, Kan., when discussing sales of eye and ear protection.

Centennial Gun Club's Dave Neely added, "We go through this stuff like crazy. It's hard to keep it on the shelf sometimes."

With this in mind — and June being National Safety Month — you'd be remiss to not promote a safety campaign to customers. Here are four things you'll need for a successful safety campaign.

## 1. CELEBRATE WITH SAFETY-RELATED REWARDS

One way to get a successful safety campaign rolling is to get employees engaged. Present safety-related awards to employees — and guests.

Is there an employee who recently went above and beyond to ensure safety on the range, or at the counter? (If you

missed it, Massad Ayoob's *Personal Defense Market* column this month touched on near-misses with employees finding live rounds in supposed "unloaded" firearms.)

You can select a worthy employee or encourage a nomination process from your team.

For range operators, is there a regular range guest who demonstrates a commitment to safe gun handling or sharing safety tips with others? This could be a unique way to honor a regular at your range and foster more loyalty.

Be sure to promote these awards on social media — it not only demonstrates your commitment to safety, but also to developing a sense of community.

## 2. GET YOUR PRODUCT ASSORTMENT RIGHT

This is a no-brainer: You can promote sales of safety products all day long, but if you're not up to speed on what (and crucially, what isn't) selling for your demographic then it's not going to translate into increased sales.

As Stephen Hall, founder and president of Lock It Up Safe Company, shared in this month's "The Gun Safe Market" feature, giving customers a good variety to choose from is critical.

"Giving our guest base a variety

has helped win trust and increase conversion," he said.

Hall shared Lock It Up offers its guests a robust "good, better, best" perspective to encourage sales.

## 3. SEEK OUT LOCAL PARTNERS

Larry Hyatt of Hyatt Guns recounted a partnership with SnapSafe, which created Hyatt-branded safes. It's been successful — and has led to opportunities with local partners.

Hyatt relayed, "We've offered several promotions in partnership with local law enforcement where we sold the safes at our cost."

Relating to the first point, developing strong ties to the community is an astute move for any business — especially when our industry is so frequently attacked from anti-gun politicians and corporations.

## 4. FOLLOW-UP!

At the 2023 NSSF Marketing & Leadership Summit, Southwick Associates' Rob Southwick and Ben Scuderi presented key findings from their First-Time Buyers Report (which will be released in full at the Range-Retailer Expo next month).

One of their observations could certainly be added in to a safety push: following up with first-time guests! According to the report, less than 10% of first-time gun buyers expected a follow-up from their retailer. It turns out, 80% of them were contacted — leading to 95% of them revisiting the store.

If that doesn't "move the needle" to elevate follow-up efforts, you should reevaluate your commitment to growing your business.

(For more Summit insights, see Ashley McGee's online-only story: [shootingindustry.com/5-takeaways-nssf-summit](https://shootingindustry.com/5-takeaways-nssf-summit).)

## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Taking advantage of ready-made opportunities — such as National Safety Month — to promote your brand, product assortment and commitment to safety is, simply, "good business." It also represents an opportunity for your store to continue developing inroads with new customer groups and more.

**Continued on p. 45**



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**2.80"**

Barrel Length

**0.81"**

Width

**10.6  
OZ.**

Weight

Chambered in .380 Auto, the Ruger® LCP® MAX fits 10+1 rounds into the same footprint as the LCP® II.  
Compact and lightweight, the LCP® MAX continues to be the definitive pocket-sized personal protection pistol.



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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.



**RUGER®**