PUBLICATIONS .

SHOOTING INDUSTRY

THE INDUSTRY'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE — EST. 1955

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Getting Started

GUNSMITHING |& DIY|

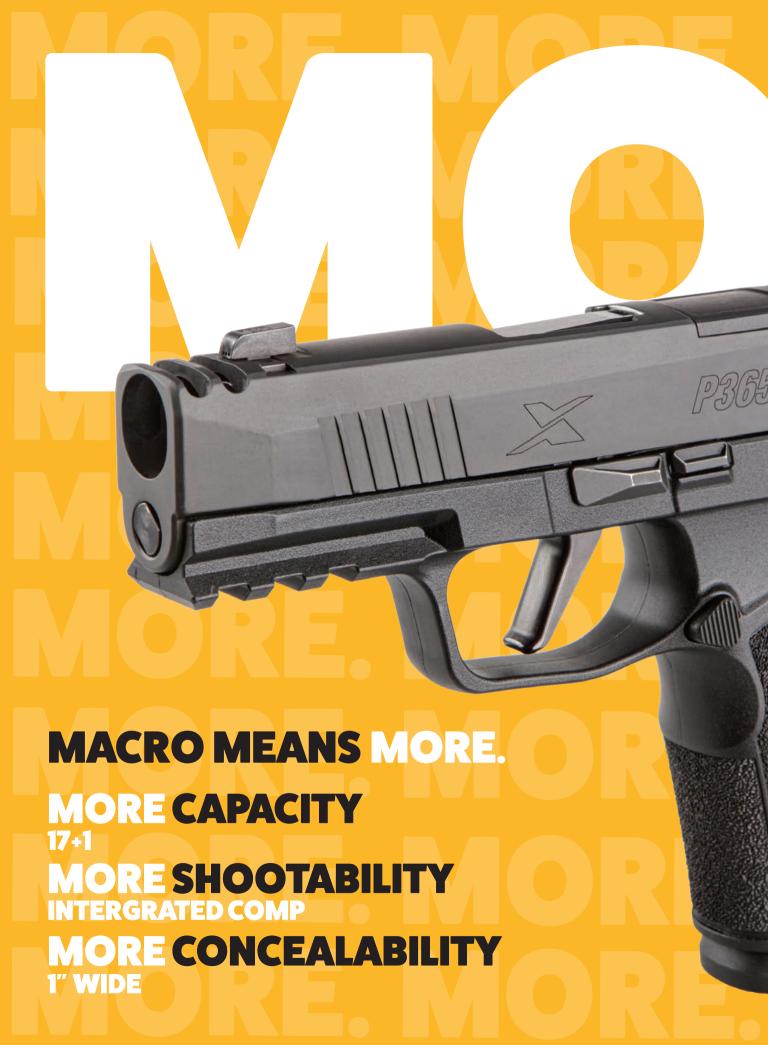
Fall Hunting

- Preview Of Trends
- PLUS: Hunting Knives



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Plan Now For Year-End Success

lanning for year-end success? It starts now. In this month's Best Practices column, Hank Yacek contends, "Now is the time to start rationalizing our business plan for the end of the year. This takes time, work and coordination to have a successful year-end quarter."

What is your store doing to prepare for a successful end to the 2023 business year? We want to hear from you: editor@shootingindustry.com.

BREAKING "THE TIE"

If you've been a retailer for any length of time, you've probably lost track of how many occasions a customer comes in and can't decide between two viable options. (Too bad "both" isn't more common!) Massad Ayoob shares this is a moment your store was made for.

"Do not despair. Rejoice," he says. "This is the moment the customer will find out why he or she came to you, and not to a big-box Monster Mart where the guy who was assembling bikes yesterday is working the gun counter today."

Find insights on how your sales staff can tip the balance in Personal Defense Market on p. 22.

GUNSMITHING/DIY TIPS

In June 2021, the Shooting Industry team received a letter from gunsmith Don Keller, who shared his concern for the future of the gunsmithing industry - asking if we could "support the little guy with a crumb or two."

This month, the first in what will be a three-part series on gunsmithing/ DIY strategies for retailers launches. As AGI's Gene Kelly suggests, providing gunsmithing services offers a particular advantage to generate repeat visits.

"One reason a retailer should offer gunsmithing services — on-site or sending it out — is because a guy



SEPTEMBER 2023

has to come into his gun shop twice," he explained. "Once to drop off the gun, and again to pick it up. Here are two opportunities to see all the new and used guns. To look at ammo and accessories."

For more, see pp. 28-31.

FALLING INTO HUNTING SEASON

It's September, which means dove hunting is in full swing out West, and your customers are anxiously awaiting opening day and the comfort of their treestand.

Dealers share what they do to ensure the fall hunting season is a success in Shannon Farlow's feature

"Be promotional! Get involved with what your customers do. Have a big buck contest, a youth spring turkey competition, or a 'post your best outdoor picture' contest on Facebook," advises Green Top's Hunter Brooks.

Speaking of hunting — hunting knives can generate a significant slice of income for your bottom line. In "Dress For Success" TOPS Knives' Craig Powell recommends dealers "strike while the iron is hot" and include hunting knives as an upsell to a hunter getting outfitted for the season.

"For a firearms retailer, knives are a great way to get customers to make supplemental purchases. If someone is buying a hunting rifle, then it's the absolute best time to make sure they have a solid hunting knife to go along with it," he said.

For more, see p. 40.



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"I feel this is the best gunsmithing school out there. I took another course prior to AGI, and it was nowhere near as complete as AGI's. Learning design, function and repair has helped me feel comfortable repairing any gun that has come into my shop."

Glade Ridd. Sandv. UT

"I hadn't planned on opening a gunsmith shop as soon as I did, but the company I worked at had a different plan. And, because of AGI's training, I was able to open my own shop quickly.

I have taken in hundreds of guns already with no previous customer base at all. I would never have imagined I would be three months back logged with gunsmithing work less than a year after opening. All of this and I haven't even completed the course yet. AGI's training works! Thank you AGI!"

David Johnson, Johnson Gunsmithing LLC, Athens, AL

"Your program changed my life and I am now an AGI Certified Master Gunsmith. Hands down, the best knowledge base I have seen yet. The instructors are successful business owners and true Masters of their trade. Thank you for your dedication and perseverance. Our nations Veterans need more of you in the world! Bravo Zulu!!

James N. Woods, Master Gunsmith, CJ's Custom Shop

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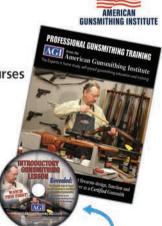
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The American Gunsmithing Institute's approval to operate as a private postsecondary institution in the state of California is based on provisions of the California Private Postsecondary Education Act (CPPEA) of 2009 (California Education Code, Title 3, Division 10, Part 59, Chapter 8), which was effective January 1, 2010. The Bureau can be reached at 2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 400, Sacramento, CA 95833, www.bppe.ca.gov, toll-free telephone number (888) 370-7589 or by fax (916) 263-1897. Professional Gunsmithing Courses not available to Oklahoma residents at this time.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



JOINING THE DEBATE

I read the debate on basement FFLs versus brick-and-mortar (BM) businesses. The argument is moot, in my opinion. The dissenting opinion makes the statement "One brick-and-mortar 'mom and pop' shop will sell more units of firearms and accessories than dozens or even hundreds home-based businesses."

If that's a true statement, then basement FFL businesses aren't making any dent into the BM market anyway.

I have a basement FFL business, I am in business to transfer firearms that were purchased online because local sellers don't have the inventory or charge way too much (as to punish an internet purchaser for buying online instead of from their inventory). I don't care about how much of a substantial investment someone makes in their business efforts ... it comes down to buyer's choice!

A BM retailer can offer to get the gun for a buyer, or they can do the transfer. Better to have the customer come to their store to get the online firearm they purchased (and buy accessories like holsters, bullets, targets, etc.) rather than leave them to basement FFLs. But many do not. There's a market for basement FFLs.

Like the pro-basement FFL writer said in last month's Letters section, we don't get rich off of these transactions. I transfer weapons for first responders for free.

In the four years I have transferred guns I've made \$2. Gross!

And I don't think I have put any kind of a dent in any BM business in the five towns that border mine. Not one BM firearms business has closed its doors.

- Bill Artemik, President/CIO **Innovative Systems Direct** Wilton, N.H.

I don't care about how much of a substantial investment someone

makes in their **business** efforts ... it comes down to buyer's choice!

Bill, thank you for reading Shooting Industry and joining this discussion. The market certainly has changed, and Shooting Industry is committed to helping retailers serve customers better. Ultimately, if a customer isn't getting the service he or she isn't looking for, it's their choice on where they want to spend their hardearned money.

SI is committed to helping both brick-andmortar and online-only retailers succeed in today's market.

Dealers, have a reaction to share? Send anytime to editor@shootingindustry.com. - Jade Moldae, Editor

HAVE A THOUGHT WHILE READING THE ISSUE?

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

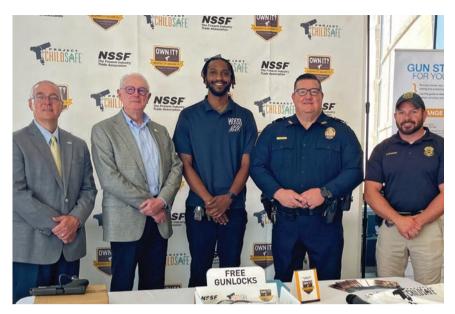


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NSSF, CITY & OUTDOOR LEADERS LAUNCH PROJECT CHILDSAFE GALVESTON

The NSSF has partnered with the mayor, police chief and several council members of Galveston, Texas, along with various outdoor and community organizations, to launch the citywide firearm-safety initiative, Project ChildSafe Galveston.

The community-led effort focuses on promoting secure firearm storage, including free gun-lock distribution, to help prevent firearm-related accidents, thefts and misuse, including suicide.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Galveston Parks and Recreation and the local hunting and shooting sports community were present at a press conference in Galveston to kick off the effort.

"Educating gun owners on secure storage does more than prevent tragic

accidents. It helps prevent firearms from being stolen and used in crimes, and as a result, it makes our whole community safer," said Mayor Craig Brown.

"The vast majority of gun crimes involve stolen firearms, so by properly securing firearms you're not only protecting yourself and your family, you're protecting your neighbors and making our community safer," said Galveston Police Chief Doug Balli.

Following the press conference were two gun-lock distribution events allowing Galveston residents to pick up free Project ChildSafe gun locks and safety kits at local community centers. NSSF is providing thousands of firearm safety kits that include a gun lock and safety brochure to local organizations and Galveston residents through its Project

◀ From left: NSSF President and CEO Joe Bartozzi, Galveston Mayor Craig Brown, Hoodneck Founder Chris Allen, Galveston Police Chief Doug Balli and Lieutenant Clint Stevens.

ChildSafe initiative.

Additional partners in the Galveston Project ChildSafe initiative are Texas Senator Mayes Middleton, the La Marque Police Department, Chris Allen (founder of Hoodneck), Galveston Gals Firearms Training, A Girl & A Gun, 4-H, Texas Gun Club, U.S. Concealed Carry Association and Heidi Rao (local hunter education specialist).

"We're doing this because we know secure gun storage works; firearm accidents are preventable," said Joe Bartozzi, NSSF's president and CEO. "Fatal firearm accidents are at historic lows, and that's a trend we want to see continue in the right direction. That starts with a community-shared responsibility and emphasis on firearm safety. We're grateful to Mayor Brown, along with Galveston's city leaders and all our local partners for taking on this initiative."

In addition to free gun locks, NSSF will support the initiative by providing law enforcement agencies and other partners with free resources on gun safety in the home and in vehicles, an overview of safe storage options such as lock boxes and safes, tips for safe handling of firearms, hunting safety and other topics. Complementing these efforts will be billboards and social media ads urging residents to be responsible gun owners, and directing them to local partners, including the Galveston PD, for resources.

/ projectchildsafe.org

TETRA GUN UNDER **NEW OWNERSHIP**

Earlier in 2023, Tetra Gun was sold and is now part of Engineered Materials Inc., based in Statesville, N.C. The company is run by Greg Cohen, who was the general manager of Tetra's former company, FTI Inc., for nearly a decade.

"After 30 years in the firearms industry, with a specialization in maintenance products, I am excited to lead the next chapter for the Tetra Gun brand," said Cohen, president of Engineered Materials Inc. "With loyal customers worldwide, I am proud to serve the firearm end-user community by continuing this company's legacy."

The Tetra Gun care brand, founded



in 1985, offers nearly 200 SKUs and is distributed in more than 40 countries worldwide.

/ tetraguncare.com

WALTHER PDP NAMED OFFICIAL DUTY HANDGUN BY FLORIDA AGENCY

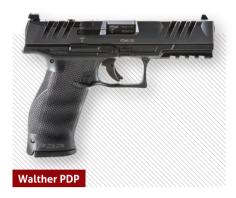
Walther Arms Inc., in conjunction with its law enforcement distributor Shoot Straight Defense, announced the Walther PDP is the official duty weapon of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS).

The partnership between FDACS and Walther Arms means effective, precise and capable protection throughout the state of Florida, as officers work alongside federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

The FDACS works to promote Florida agriculture, protect the environment,

safeguard consumers and ensure the safety and wholesomeness of food. By choosing a mixture of the compact and full-size PDP models, each law enforcement officer has the opportunity to carry the PDP they are most comfortable with and confident in.

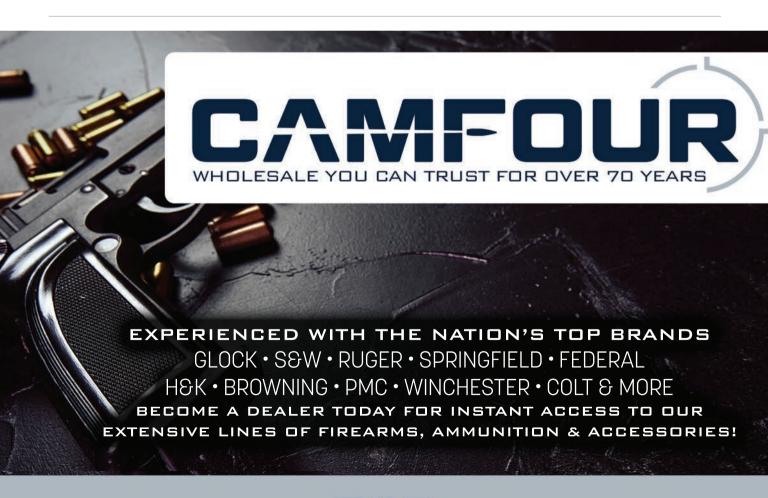
"The PDP series was developed with tactical capabilities at the forefront to provide law enforcement, military and other tactical shooters with the ideal weapon. Providing the FDACS officers with an adjustable, reliable and capable handgun allows their focus to be on precision and technique rather than the weapon itself. By doing so, it builds the confidence necessary to never secondguess yourself in situations where timing and responsiveness are everything," said Ron Decker, East Coast L.E. sales channel



manager for Walther Arms Inc.

The PDP compact and full-size models both feature revolutionary ergonomics, SuperTerrain slide serrations and the new Performance Duty trigger.

/ waltherarms.com









INDUSTRY NEWS

GUNBROKER REACHES 1-BILLION-ITEM MILESTONE

GunBroker.com, the largest online marketplace serving the firearms, shooting sports and outdoor industries, recently celebrated the 1 billionth item to be listed on the site. This milestone listing came as Gunbroker.com prepares to celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2024.

The milestone item, a green Bee Stinger Microhex bow stabilizer, was posted by 2A Surplus of Terre Haute,

Ind. Seeing an archery product as the 1 billionth item wasn't surprising to the GunBroker.com team.

"We always say we serve all outdoor enthusiasts, not just the firearms community. To be honest, the milestone listing could've been a rifle, bow, reloading press, knife or even a fishing reel, and it wouldn't have been a surprise," said Allen Forkner, VP of PR and brand management.

The seller, 2A Surplus, is a verified and Gold member seller, and is just one of the tens of thousands of sellers from



across the country with products available on GunBroker.com.

GunBroker.com was launched in 1999, and is owned by AMMO Inc., a leading vertically integrated producer of high-performance ammunition and components, headquartered in Scottsdale,

/ gunbroker.com

BURRIS LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

Burris Co. announced the launch of its new website, offering an improved user experience and easier customer access to products.

The new Burris Optics website features a modern design and intuitive navigation that allows users to quickly find the products they are looking for. The site is also mobile-friendly, making it easy to browse and shop on any device.

"Our goal is to make it as easy as possible for customers to find the right products for their needs and make

informed purchasing decisions. Burris is committed to providing our customers with the best possible service and support, and our new website reflects that commitment. We encourage our customers to visit the new site, explore our products and let us know how we can continue to improve their experience with Burris Optics," said Joshua Lawley, director of customer service at Burris.

The new website features detailed product information, high-quality images and easy-to-access product manuals that allow users to learn more about Burris Optics products and make informed purchasing decisions.

In addition, the site includes a dealer



locator tool that enables users to find authorized Burris Optics dealers in their area.

Founded in 1971 and headquartered in Greeley, Colo., Burris Co. offers a complete line of premium rifle and handgun scopes, sights, binoculars, spotting scopes, mounts and accessories for the outdoor, hunting, competition and law enforcement markets.

/ burrisoptics.com

NIGHT FISION DEBUTS CERTIFIED INSTALLER PROGRAM

Night Fision, a leader in advanced tritium insertion solutions, handgun sights and rifle accessories, announced its Certified Installer Program (CIP), offering stepped-up support for its dealer network.

The CIP program is meant to bolster the company's presence within the marketplace and elevate the level of service provided to Night Fision dealers' valued customer base.

In collaboration with Real Avid, the CIP kit provides a comprehensive set of tools required to offer a professional sight installation service, featuring the indispensable Real Avid Master Sight Pusher.

"As a manufacturer, we are always striving to bring more value and opportunity to our dealer partners. Throughout the Certified Installer Program, we will be training and equipping stores nationwide to provide proper handgun sight installation to their customers," said Pat Murphy, director of sales for Night Fision.

To ensure dealers are sufficiently equipped and confident in their abilities, a Night Fision representative will conduct an in-store training session for both dealers and their counter staff. Following



the successful completion of the training, dealers will achieve the status of Certified Installer with Night Fision, earning prominent recognition in the company's marketing and social media platforms.

Night Fision's proprietary Perfect Dot, combined with CNC precision-machined bodies and a higher concentration of Swiss tritium, allows for the creation of the highest-quality, U.S.-manufactured pistol night sights, with enhanced brightness.

/ nightfision.com

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NOSLER CELEBRATES 75-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Nosler Inc., leading manufacturer of premium bullets, ammunition, brass, firearms and suppressors, is celebrating its 75th anniversary.

Nosler's mission continues to be putting the highest-quality tools into the hands of hunters and shooters, making them more effective in the field and on the range.

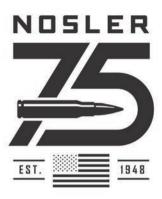
"We're humbled to celebrate a journey that started three-quarters of a century ago. It began with my grandfather's dream to design a better bullet, the Nosler Partition. Today we're carrying on his legacy by innovating and building the most accurate, effective bullets and ammunition in the industry," said John

Nosler, president and COO of Nosler Inc.

Nosler recently blazed new trails for backcountry hunters with its new Carbon Chassis Hunter rifle and compact SR-30K suppressor. The new rifle combines the pinpoint accuracy required by competition shooters with the rugged portability needed for hunting, all in a 7-lb., magnesium-alloy and carbon-fiber system.

The SR-30K suppressor is 2" shorter and 2 oz. lighter than Nosler's proven, aluminum and titanium SR-30AlTi suppressor, making it ideal for backcountry hunters.

Nosler's foundation continues to be engineering premium bullets, components and ammunition trusted by big-game hunters and precision shooters. The company expanded beyond its legendary Partition bullet in 1948 to innovative



bullets such as the AccuBond, Ballistic Tip, AccuBond Long Range, monometal Expansion Tip and the advanced RDF (Reduced Drag Factor).

/ nosler.com



INDUSTRY NEWS

MIDWAYUSA FOUNDATION **AWARDS RANGE DEVELOPMENT GRANT**

MidwayUSA Foundation announced an \$18,000 grant to the Wichita (Kan.) Clay Dusters to help Michael Murphy & Sons (MMS) build an additional trap/skeet combination field at its range.

With only one trap range at MMS, there was limited facility to practice for the Wichita Clay Dusters, a Scholastic Clay Target Program team sponsored by Pass It On — Outdoor Mentors.

For the third year in a row, MidwayUSA Foundation has provided cash grants to help ranges across the country improve and allow for more youth shooting sports activities. This year, the foundation awarded \$900,000 to 45 recipients. These grants allow shooting ranges to improve, providing every new

generation that utilizes the facility with the best shooting experience possible.

"We have as many as 20 young trap shooters on our team practice on any given evening, and with only one trap field, we weren't able to get as much practice time as we would like," said Mike Christensen, president of Pass It On — Outdoor Mentors, and one of the coaches of the Wichita Clay Dusters shooting team. "We partnered with Marc Murphy and Michael Murphy & Sons to apply for this grant to build an additional trap/skeet field to accommodate our needs."

"The addition of this trap/skeet field will benefit untold numbers of area youth for years to come," added Marc Murphy, owner of MMS.

Since 2021, MidwayUSA Foundation has awarded 122 grants, totaling \$2,150,000, for range improvements. These funds have been dispersed throughout the entire U.S. To be eligible for a Range Development Grant, the range must have a

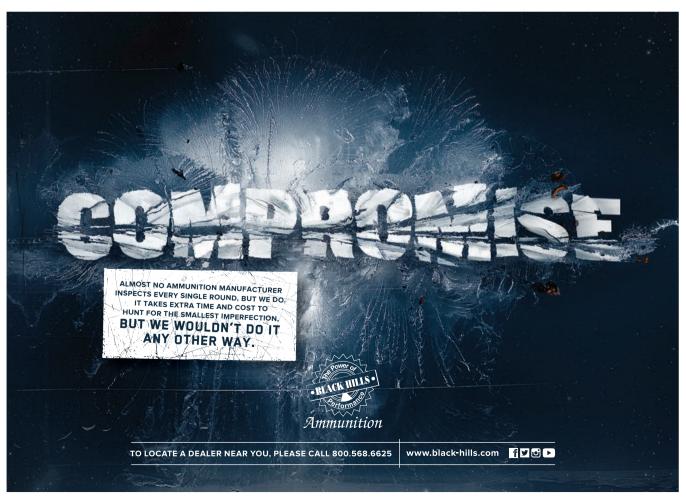




team practicing at their facility that has a MidwayUSA Endowment fund.

Community members interested in supporting a local youth shotgun team may make tax-deductible contributions directly to the team through MidwayUSA Foundation's website. Every dollar donated to the team is matched by the foundation.

/ midwayusafoundation.org



USA HIGH SCHOOL CLAY TARGET LEAGUE ANNOUNCES 2023 NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

Athletes and teams representing 466 high schools from across the nation competed at the 2023 USA High School Clay Target League (USAHSCTL) National Championship, held July 5–10.

Hosted by the Michigan Trapshooting Association in Mason, Mich., and presented by SCHEELS, the USAHSCTL National Championship series determined the top 10 male and female high school athletes and the top five high school teams in the country.

The team qualifying round on July 7 narrowed the field from 240 teams to 80 teams. Those qualifying teams moved on to the championship round on July 9.

On July 8, 1,800 of the top high school athletes competed in the USAHSCTL National Individual Championship



The top 10 male and top 10 female athletes on the podium at the 2023 USAHSCTL National Championship.

qualifier. The top 400 went on to the final round.

Calhoun High School (Illinois) captured the top honor of National Team Champion — the school's third National Team Championship title in as many years.

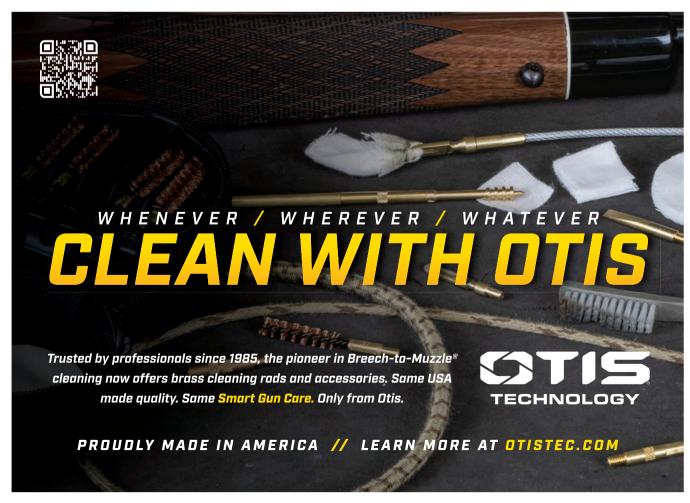
The individual final featured 19 athletes shooting perfect scores at the end of regular competition. Those 19 went on to compete in a grueling shoot-off in which recent graduate Landon Sievers from Calhoun High School prevailed to claim the Overall National Champion crown.

Audrey Gordon of Southwestern High School (Illinois) was one of two females who shot perfect scores and went on to compete in the shoot-off. Gorden edged out her competition to take home the title of top high school female in the nation.

Full scores and standings from the event can be found at claytargetleaderboard.com.

This year's USAHSCTL programs included 34,629 student athletes representing 1,625 high school teams across the country. The top athletes and teams qualified to register for the National Championship were based on season averages at the completion of the spring season.

/ usaclaytarget.com



INDUSTRY NEWS

NSSF NAMES 2023 HUNTING HERITAGE TRUST GRANT RECIPIENTS

The NSSF announced five organizations advocating diversity in hunting as recipients of a portion of the \$100,000 grant allotment provided by the NSSF Hunting Heritage Trust for 2023.

"We're pleased to see numerous passionate organizations dedicated to getting more non-traditional audiences involved in the proud traditions of hunting and the shooting sports. We are honored to support them through these grants," said Joe Bartozzi, NSSF President and CEO.

- The Georgia Wildlife Federation received a grant of \$20,000 to prepare BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) college students for careers within the outdoors industry.
 - Hunters of Color will train BIPOC

ambassadors to lead local hunter recruitment efforts in their communities with its grant of \$26,000.

- The National Deer Association received a grant of \$20,000 to introduce a BIPOC Field to Fork program just outside Philadelphia in a National Wildlife Refuge.
- Pheasants Forever will launch a BIPOC Learn to Hunt/Learn to Shoot program with its \$10,000 grant.
- · Ambassador Academy received a grant of \$24,000. It will educate 16 non-traditional participants to be more effective communicators in the hunting. conservation, shooting sports and Second Amendment communities, while promoting personal safety and proficiency with firearms.

"Preserving our hunting and shooting heritage relies on community-driven initiatives that find new and creative ways to engage both longtime enthusiasts and newcomers. Making hunting more accessible and welcoming for everyone is crucial for ensuring the future of these

Trade Association

activities we hold dear," added Bartozzi.

These 2023 grant funds are the fifth to be released from the \$1 million fund established in 2018 as the NSSF Hunting Heritage Trust. The grant is funded equally by NSSF and the Hunting Heritage Trust founded by retired NSSF President and CEO Bob Delfay.

This first-of-its-kind grant program works directly to support NSSF's mission of promoting, protecting and preserving hunting and the shooting sports. It is designed to distribute funds for 10 consecutive years to organizations meeting eligibility requirements and intending to use the funds to support recruitment, retention and reactivation programs, known collectively as R3 efforts.

/nssf.org



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CELERANT TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS WITH GUNARAMA WHOLESALE

Celerant Technology, leading provider of retail software for the sportsman industry, announced a partnership with Gunarama Wholesale, distributor of hunting, fishing and camping products.

Through the integration, independent dealers working with Gunarama can streamline their ordering process and carry more products, both in-store and online, with less effort.

"Integrating with Celerant was an easy decision, as they are not only the industry's leading retail point-of-sale provider, [but] they made the entire integration process streamlined and

simple. Now dealers anywhere can import our inventory catalog, access our live data feeds, streamline their reordering, as well as manage inventory all in one place," said Jeff McGowan, president of Gunarama Wholesale Inc.

Gunarama offers its dealers a product catalog of over 30,000 items related to hunting, fishing, camping and law enforcement. Through Celerant's integration with Gunarama, dealers can easily access and import the products they want to sell directly into their Celerant point-of-sale software. This enables them to quickly build their product databases, and ensures they have the most current and accurate product data without having to manually enter it.

Firearm dealers also can maintain FFL compliance by syncing their inventory data with Celerant's integrated bound





book, or with Celerant's integrations to third-party A&D software providers.

"By adding Gunarama Wholesale to our list of distributor integrations, dealers have yet another option to gain easier and faster access to even more products and accurate product data, build their product database by importing catalogs and automate store replenishment," said Ian Goldman, president and CEO of Celerant.

/ celerant.com / gunarama.com

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INDUSTRY NEWS

SIG SAUER AWARDED CONTRACT FOR BRITISH ARMED FORCES

SIG SAUER announced the award of a contract within the Support Weapons Sighting System (SWESS) program of the British Armed Forces to include the ROMEO8T, JULIET3 and JULIET4 from SIG SAUER Electro-Optics.

"This combination of the ROMEO and **JULIET** products chosen for the Support Weapons Systems Sighting Program by SIG SAUER Electro-Optics will easily increase the effective range and accuracy at greater distances for operators in both day and night operations," said Andy York, president of SIG SAUER Electro-Optics. "Further, the SIG-designed system is completely versatile and will easily

compensate for bullet drop at various distances and designed to withstand the rigors of the 5.56 and 7.62 lightweight or medium machine gun platforms."

The SIG SAUER ROMEO8T is a 1x38mm full-size red dot sight with an exceptionally large field of view, a rectangular lens, in a ruggedized housing with integral steel shroud design. The optic is designed and tested to withstand extreme conditions and will maintain zero under the most hostile temperature differentials.

The SIG SAUER JULIET3 and the SIG SAUER JULIET4 magnifiers extend the effective range and augment the red dot experience with crystal clear optics in a ruggedized aluminum housing and a flip-to-side mount. Combining any SIG SAUER JULIET series magnifiers with a



ROMEO Red Dot allows hits on targets, with ease, beyond 200 yards. The JULIET3 offers 3x magnification and the JULIET4 4x magnification.

/ sigsauer.com







VISTA OUTDOOR REBRANDS SPORTING BUSINESS

Vista Outdoor Inc. announced its new name and identity that will be effective following the planned spinoff of Vista Outdoor's Outdoor Products business.

With the input of employees, Vista Outdoor will be rebranded as The Kinetic Group, a name representing the energy behind the company and its leading ammunition brands. The Kinetic Group will trade on the New York Stock Exchange under the stock ticker "HUNT," and the brand will feature original logo artwork of a North American ram.

Jason Vanderbrink, Sporting Products president and CEO, stated, "The process of developing a new company name and

identity has been exciting and inspiring. We're all proud of the brands we represent and the products we make in our four American factories."

The rebranding of Sporting Products is one of several milestones for Vista Outdoor as the company plans to separate its Sporting Products and Outdoor Products segments. In the Sporting Products segment, Vanderbrink was named CEO in addition to his role as president. He was also appointed to the Vista Outdoor board of directors, and he will be a director on The Kinetic Group's board of directors post-spin. Joining Vanderbrink on The Kinetic Group's leadership team are Andy Keegan (CFO) and Jeff Ehrich (general counsel and corporate secretary).

May 5, 2022, Vista Outdoor



announced the company plans to separate its Outdoor Products and Sporting Products segments into two independent, publicly traded companies. The company expects to create these companies through a tax-free spin-off of its Outdoor Products segment to Vista Outdoor shareholders. The company is on track to execute the separation in calendar 2023.

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AMMO Inc. **Announces CEO**

AMMO Inc., the owner of GunBroker.com, announced Jared Smith is officially

the company's new CEO.

"It was always my intent to engage a permanent successor when I founded AMMO in 2016 and took the reins as CEO. Jared has impressive leadership skills and knowledge of our company's targeted marketplace, and he is singularly focused and committed to deliver on the strategic imperative of further strengthening and growing AMMO and GunBroker. com, leveraging our amazing employees and technological market differentiators," said outgoing CEO and Executive Chairman Freg Wagenhals.

Smith has 17 years of experience in the firearm and ammunition sector. He most recently served as the GM of Fiocchi of America and held other executive positions during this time there.



C. TINKLE

Fiocchi Names Sales VP

Fiocchi USA recently welcomed Chris Tinkle as its new VP of sales.

David Blenker,

Fiochhi USA president and CEO, said, "As we continue to expand our manufacturing capacity and footprint in the U.S., and integrate new technologies across our product lines, having an experienced and proven leader like Chris guiding the sales effort is essential to effectively communicating with and servicing our valued customers."

For the past decade, Tinkle has held roles at Remington, LaserMax, Steiner E-Optics, Flir Outdoor and Tactical Systems and most recently, Leica Sport Optics.



Pass It On - Outdoor **Mentors Adds Board Member**

Beth Shimanski. Savage Arm's director of marketing, has

joined the Pass It On - Outdoor Mentors board of directors. Shimanski plans to support Pass It On - Outdoor Mentors as they grow throughout the nation and help them make an impact in the industry by pairing the Outdoor Mentors' mission with Savage Arms' products and platform.

Brittany French, CEO of Pass It On - Outdoor Mentors, shared, "Under Beth's leadership, our partnership with Savage Arms has allowed us to grow our mission and provide continued outdoor opportunities through mentorship to youth in our community! I am beyond thankful for the opportunity to learn from her and continue our great work at Outdoor Mentors!"



S. CUPERUS

Luth-AR Advances National Sales Manager

Luth-AR announced Shane Cuperus's promotion to

national sales manager. Cuperus will lead all North American distributor and dealer-direct sales activities for Luth-AR's L.E., dealer, wholesale and OEM markets.

Randy Luth, CEO and founder, said, "We are excited to have Shane out generating excitement around the Luth-AR products and innovations. His depth of experience and capabilities will complement our growing team and initiative to support our national growth."

Cuperus joined the Luth-AR team in 2019 as the GM with an extensive background in distributor sales, dealer direct sales, law enforcement and government bids.



Davidson's Inc. Taps Merchandising Director

Davidson's announced the addition of Ronald Dan as the director

of merchandising.

"Ron has an outstanding reputation and brings extensive industry knowledge with him," said Wayne Tumlin, president of Davidson's. "We look forward to having him lead our merchandising efforts as a member of the executive team."

Dan joins Davidson's with 16 years of experience in the firearms industry. He most recently served as the president of Trailblazer Firearms.

He is a graduate of the University of Central Florida where he earned a B.S. in business marketing.



H. STANFORD





PRADCO Outdoor **Brands Expands Sales Team**

PRADCO Outdoor Brand's **Hunting Division** announced new hires for its sales division: Heath Stanford as director of sales, Jimmy Smith as national sales manager and Joshua Liley as e-commerce sales manager.

Brian Malone, VP and GM. PRADCO Signature

Game and Land Management shared, "Adding these three talented individuals rounds out our strong existing sales arm and puts PRADCO Hunting in the best position to service our retail partners."

Stanford joins the team from within PRADCO and held a similar position at Texas Hunter Products. He will oversee all sales efforts for PRADCO Hunting,

Have new hires or promotion announcements to share? Send releases to: editor@shootingindustrv.com

including national accounts and manage the entire sales team.

Smith now has responsibility for managing regional, distributor, independent and buying group accounts.

Liley joins PRADCO's Moultrie Mobile and Signature Game & Land Management teams to set account strategy and drive execution to meet and exceed sales goals across e-commerce platforms.



Hi Mountain Seasonings Promotes Assistant GM

Hans and Kimberly Hummel, owners of Hi Mountain Seasonings, announced the promotion of Brian Tucker to assistant

GM where he will maintain his sales responsibilities and take on overseeing the production department.

Hans Hummel said, "He has been a tremendous asset to our team, and we look forward to Brian continuing to play an integral role in all aspects of our company as we move forward."

Tucker joined the company in 2013 as an account executive. In 2016, he advanced to the role of national sales manager.



M. LOHMEIER

Smith & Wesson Brands Inc. **Elects Board Member**

Michelle J. Lohmeier is now serving on the Smith & Wesson Brands Inc. board of directors.

Robert L. Scott,

chairman of the board, shared, "[Lohmeier] brings substantial experience serving on other public company boards of directors, and her experience working for companies in heavily regulated industries, including aerospace and defense, will be a tremendous asset to Smith & Wesson."

Lohmeier is a former senior advisor to the CEO of Spirit AeroSystems Holdings Inc. She previously served as SVP and GM of Airbus Programs at Spirit AeroSystems until her retirement in 2019. She also held a number of senior positions with Raytheon Company.

She holds a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in systems engineering from the University of Arizona.





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"BREAK THE TIE" FOR THE UNDECIDED GUEST

you've been a firearms retailer for a while, you've probably lost count of how many customers have thrown their hands up in frustration and blurted, "I don't know which one I want!"

Do not despair. Rejoice. This is the moment the customer will find out why he or she came to you, and not to a big-box Monster Mart where the guy who was assembling bikes yesterday is working the gun counter today.

You and your staff are the ones who know how to quickly and efficiently question them as to their needs, guide them to the products that have the attributes most suitable for those needs and seal the deal with the best possible product selection.

THERE'S A HISTORY ...

You're not by any means the first gun dealer to face this problem. Let's go back 50 or 60 years: A cop comes into the gun shop, proudly announces he has earned a spot on the department pistol team and needs a 6" barrel .38 Special target revolver. The choice then was one of the classics in the firearms "brand wars" -Colt vs. Smith & Wesson.

Both were finely made revolvers, accurate enough to set records and win national championships. The first thing you would have asked that customer is, "Do you shoot bull's-eye or PPC

(Police Pistol Combat)?" The answer would inform your advice. The Colt's long action gave more "mechanical advantage," and in a bull's-eye match generally shot single-action in the centerfire class with a .38 wheelgun, the Colt Officer's Model was, therefore, the choice of champions because it was easier to thumb cock.

But in double-action shooting required in PPC, the Colt's two-stage trigger was harder to manage than the single-stage pull of the Smith & Wesson, and you would have steered this customer into S&W's K-38 Masterpiece.

During this same time period, the classic gun for off-duty or plainclothes cops and the most common concealed carry gun for lawfully armed citizens were one and the same: the "snubnose .38 Special revolver." The choices then were also Colt and S&W. The little five-shot J-Frame was a bit smaller and lighter, but Colt advertising countered their D-Frame snub had "the all-important sixth shot." (Funny - I always thought if any shot was "allimportant" it would be the first one, but I digress.) The Colt had better sights. The S&W had the smoother action.

And of course, there was always the customer with the full wallet who was amenable to cutting the Gordian Knot if you suggested, "Well, you could always buy one of each ..."

TODAY'S OUANDARIES

Today, of course, the choices are somewhat different. The most popular self-defense handgun today is the polymer-framed 9mm micro-compact with as many rounds as it can hold but it's not the only choice your customer is looking at.

Around the country, we've seen a renaissance of the 10mm pistol, largely because it can be had with deeppenetrating bullets capable of killing an attacking bear and moose. For a long time, the Magnum revolver was the choice of the outdoorsman in Alaska and other places where large, dangerous game shared the woods with them. The choice essentially came down to the sixshot .44 Magnum revolver or the 16-shot polymer-framed 10mm Auto typified by the GLOCK 20.

The last time I was in Alaska and informally surveying gun dealers on what was selling, I was told the tie for "bestselling firearm" was between the 10mm GLOCK for outdoor carry and the 9mm GLOCK 19 as a personal-defense gun for "in town."

Do not despair. Rejoice. This is the moment the customer will find out why he or she came to you, and not to a big-box **Monster Mart where the** guy who was assembling bikes yesterday is working the gun counter today.

The .44 Magnum revolver can be had with ammunition exceeding 1,000 foot-pounds of energy, and the 10mm can't come close to it. In many bear attacks, the animal is upon the human and already in bodily contact, meaning the human may have to shoot the creature at muzzle contact. Press contact with a revolver allows six for six shots, and muzzle blast directed into the body magnifies the wound effect. Advantage: six-shooter. (Most Auto pistols will go out of battery and not fire at all in hard-press contact.)

"

Issues such as these may seem like minutiae to the gun expert behind the counter, but for the customer on the other side of the showcase they may be dealmakers or — breakers.

On the other hand, if there is warning and time to shoot before bear reaches human, 16 chances to stop the charge are obviously better than only six, and the right 10mm ammo can still penetrate the skull for a brain shot or drive deep enough into a large quadruped to reach the heart. Recoil recovery time between shots will be better with the Auto, and the shorter trigger pull improves hit potential. Advantage: 10mm Auto.

Let's say the customer is convinced: a 16-shot striker-fired 10mm Auto is their chosen Bear Medicine! Now we come to the next stage of selection: choosing the particular pistol.

NARROWING IT DOWN

We come down to three choices presently on the market: the GLOCK, Springfield Armory XD(M) and the recently introduced Smith & Wesson M&P 10mm. All are 15+1 10mm Auto capacity, optics-ready (which more of your customers want every day) and have light rails.

The latter is important in the wilderness. If something large and furry comes into the customer's tent at 3 a.m., the weapon-mounted light will tell the customer if it is a hungry bear and not his guide's Siberian Husky who wants to get warm or the guide himself in a fur coat.

So, now we get down to the details.

All three of these pistols are in roughly similar price ranges. If you got a really good deal on one brand from the distributor or the manufacturer is offering a rebate right now, price could make the determination by itself. Failing that, we go to gun features your particular customer may or may not need.

Hand size vis-à-vis trigger reach? The large-frame GLOCK will have the longest trigger reach, the Springfield the shortest with the S&W in between. See which fits the customer's hand better.

Does the customer have short fingers? Advantage: Springfield. Does the customer want to accessorize? Advantage: GLOCK — that brand of 10mm has been out since 1990 and has the most accessories available. Does your customer like the idea of a manual safety? S&W gets the nod: Only S&W offers this feature as an option on their polymer 10mm.

BE A DEAL MAKER

And the choice factors go that way across the board. Does the customer need a small, concealable carry gun with light recoil, and can be comfortable with .380 caliber? It would be hard to beat the .380 GLOCK 42 in this scenario.

Do they want the simplicity of loading/unloading/checking a revolver still provides better than anything else? A lightweight snubnose .38 might be the best choice even now. And its nasty recoil with "hot loads" is ameliorated with a mild .38 Special 148-grain target wadcutter bullet, which combat shooting experts such as Chuck Haggard and others now consider adequate for winning gunfights.

Issues such as these may seem like minutiae to the gun expert behind the counter, but for the customer on the other side of the showcase they may be dealmakers or —breakers. The more you and your sales team can probe their needs and serve them, the more likely a seemingly indecisive customer will be to leave the store with something likely to save their or their loved ones' lives.







IT'S IN THE BAG — CHOOSING A RANGE BAG

ou helped your female customer choose her firearm and her eye/ ear protection. Now it's time to talk range bags.

There are numerous articles titled something like "The Best Range Bags For Women." You read them and wonder if any of them are really the best bag for female customers. Are the reviewer's likes and preferences the same as your typical customer's? Will their recommendations actually work for her?

You can help your female customer by asking her some questions to help her decide which range bag will best work for her needs.

Choosing a range bag is like choosing anything else — it starts with asking questions, such as:

- What will she be using it for?
- What *should* she put in the bag versus what does she just *want* to put in the range bag?
- What features and options should she consider?

HOW WILL SHE USE IT?

If she's just going to an indoor range, she might want a simple bag she can move discreetly from her car to the indoor range. If she's parking right out in the parking lot, she may be able to

leave any "extras" in her car and go out to get them if needed.

But if she's shooting at an outdoor range, she may need to walk quite a distance from her car. Then she may want to think about what she can reasonably carry so her bag isn't too heavy since she likely won't want to run out to her car.

If she's just shooting a handgun, again, a simple range bag may suffice. However, this may also depend on whether she's planning to shoot more than one during practice or competition. Then she may need a larger bag to hold multiple handguns.

If she's shooting long guns as well, such as in a 3-Gun match, she will also need to be able to carry ammunition and magazines and other supplies for each firearm, thereby requiring a much larger bag.

FEATURES & OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

Since you've helped her think about how she plans to use her bag and what she wants to carry in it, it's time to talk about the options. Fortunately, there is a large variety of bags available to her, and at reasonable prices. If you don't have what she wants in stock, offer to order it for her or at least help her find it online or elsewhere.

CONSIDERATIONS

What should she put in the bag and what does she just want to put in the bag?

A list could be helpful for her to remember all the items. At a minimum, she will need:

- · Eye protection
- Ear protection
- · Empty chamber Indicator
- · Hat or visor
- Ammunition
- Magazines
- Firearm
- FIIEdIIII
- · First-aid kit

She may also want:

- Lead wipes
- Towel
- Multi-tool
- Gun oil
- Rods
- Shot timer
- Stapler
- Trauma kit with tourniquet
- Ammunition loader (such as an UpLULA)
- Sunscreen
- Cooling towel
- Small flashlight with extra batteries
- · Permanent marker
- Masking tape
- · Rain poncho
- KT tape
- Scissors
- Gloves

You can show her the simplest (and typically least expensive) option of the duffel bag style. Explain they are available without padding, which will work fine, but a padded one will protect her guns and supplies better.

Discuss how a heavier, thicker bag will simply hold up longer to extra weight, and a bag with several pockets for organization is important and can also save time during practice or a competition when she needs to access her supplies quickly and efficiently.

Show her backpack range bags that help distribute the weight across her back, allowing her to carry a little more than she might otherwise. Make sure to show her both single-gun bags and multihandgun bags.

Wheeled options can be helpful, particularly if she isn't able to carry a heavy bag on her shoulder or if she wants to carry extra supplies with her.

If she's shooting a multi-gun competition, she may not want a typical duffel-style bag at all, but one specifically to hold her assortment of guns and all the supplies required for each of them.

As for colors, show her while black and tan are the most common, range bags don't have to be boring. Maybe she's a bling gal, or she simply wants to be able to pick her bag out quickly from a sea of black bags when she's with other shooters. Or maybe she doesn't want it to be obvious what she is carrying around. Most people don't suspect a colorful bag to contain a firearm. Encourage her to go for those great colors if it's what she likes!

"

If you don't have what she wants in stock, offer to order it for her or at least help her find it online or elsewhere.

VALUE OF PERSONALIZED RECOMMENDATIONS

Does she still need help trying to decide? Encourage her to ask her friends and other shooters about their bags, what they keep in them, what they like and dislike and where they bought them. People are always happy to share information.

For instance, firearms instructor Dolly Hughes likes her all-in-one wheeled bag and chair called the ZÜCA Cart.

"I like the convenience of it; it's roomy and I love sitting on it when I need to sit. You can fit anything in it you need and everything I need on the range fits easily. Everybody who has tried sitting on it just thinks it's so comfortable because it's the right height," she said.

Tiffany Venters, a competitive shooter and member of the IPSC Shotgun World Team, prefers the Safariland 3 Gun Range bag.

"I like that one end has a zipper we can unzip so our longer shotguns can fit in the bag (with our extension tubes on them). I also also like that they fit perfectly in our Pelican travel cases. We just put the range bags in the Pelican case and then pack the guns into the range bag. There are pockets for handguns, ample room for ammo and other 3-Gun equipment in the side pockets. The backpack straps make it easy to haul gear around the range," she explained.

And of course, online reviews can be very valuable. She'll want to look for reviews that discuss the features and uses of most interest to her.

FINAL THOUGHTS

You can show your female customer there really is a large variety of range bags available to fit her budget. However, if she's concerned because money is tight and the last thing she wants to spend it on is another kind of bag, let her know you get it, and truly, she can simply start with one of the reusable grocery bags if she needs to. Or she may start with one kind of bag, decide it doesn't work for her and try another, and of course, that's fine as well. We all continue to learn what works best for us as we go along.

As long as she has her necessary basic supplies, safety gear (eye/ear protection) and her gun is held safely in a bag or box, she really can use whatever she wants, whatever fits her budget. Encourage her to just get started and not let the lack of a fancy range bag stop her from getting out there and practicing and joining in the fun.





IT'S (ALMOST) CHRISTMASTIME!

ep, you read the headline right. Sure, we're in the final days of summer but for a retailer, we need to be putting on our Santa hat and thinking about what all the good girls and boys will be asking ol' Kris Kringle for 2023.

All kidding aside, now is the time to start rationalizing our business plan for the end of the year. This takes time, work and coordination to have a successful year-end quarter. The adage in retail contends all your profits are made from Black Friday through the end of the year, so let's look at ways to maximize that potential and have the holiday season leave us as big a pile of cash as possible.

FIND A RELIABLE BENCHMARK

It all starts by making a measured estimate of what we think our sales volume will be as this is the bedrock from which we'll make all our other estimates of needs.

So how do we make this season's sales goal? Use historical data along with market trends. If your store sold \$75,000 in products in December last year and you feel this year will be better than last year, you might make an educated prediction you're trending to

sell \$80,000 this December.

Factors such as retail trends, an upcoming election, local legislation or simply new "hot" products coming out all might spur you to feel sales growth is inevitable. On the other hand, you might feel the reverse is true and sales are trending downward, and you might only sell \$70,000.

The point: make a prediction based on all the facts available to you, draw your line in the sand and use this to make your plans.

INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

What plans can you make off of a simple sales goal? Let's evaluate.

If we have a sales goal, then we need the appropriate inventory to achieve it! How much inventory do we need? What is the correct type of inventory for the season? How much inventory will we need to buy? How far ahead of time will we need to order it?

Every inventory manager needs to take a keen look at the landscape and set goals for their inventory plan now. Some products may have long lead times and if you wait, you may not get any of those hot products in time. In addition, it's imperative to set limits on how much inventory you need to buy, so

establish a plan on how much cash will you be portioning to each inventory category to maximize the profit potential for the season.

How do we calculate the right level of inventory? A good rule of thumb is to have on-hand inventory (at wholesale cost) be roughly three-to-five times your sales goal. Ergo, if you plan to sell \$55,000 in product for December (again, at cost) then you might set your overall inventory budget at somewhere between \$165,000 and \$275,000 to make sure you aren't pushing customers to the competition simply because you were out of stock.

GET STAFFING RIGHT

Making an inventory plan based on a sales forecast makes sense, but what else can we do with our sales plan to predict and plan for future needs? Staffing! So how does a sales goal affect staffing? Again, we can use our historical data to help make more accurate assessments.

"

If we have a sales goal, then we need the appropriate inventory to achieve it!

If we look at our sales team and everyone's sales volume for the same time of year in the past and divide it by the number of hours worked to produce those sales, we can come up with a pretty accurate estimate of sales per hour. Applying this metric to our sales goal for December, we can make an estimate of how many work hours we will need to be properly staffed.

If our sales goal is \$75,000 and our sales team averages \$100 in sales per hour worked, then we will need 750 work hours covered to achieve our goal. If we currently have three sales team members to cover those hours, they would each need to be working roughly 62 hours per week to meet those goals! As you can see, this is a

very important number to consider.

Do we want to pay each of our team members 22 hours in overtime each week or should we consider adding a part-time employee to our team to cover the extra demand? This business-minded choice is simple: hire a part-time employee. The key here is because of our plan, we can start looking for a new employee well ahead of time, have enough time to hire the right person, as well as have the time to properly train him or her for the fast-paced time that is the holiday season. By hiring staff according to plan, we maximize the profit potential of this resource.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Other factors that help us make decisions simply by setting a future sales goal extend into things such as marketing decisions, promotions, as well as staff development. From a marketing perspective, if we set our inventory plan ahead of

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Setting a metric seemingly as simple as a December sales goal now can put several wheels in motion to help you plan to have a December succeed beyond expectations.

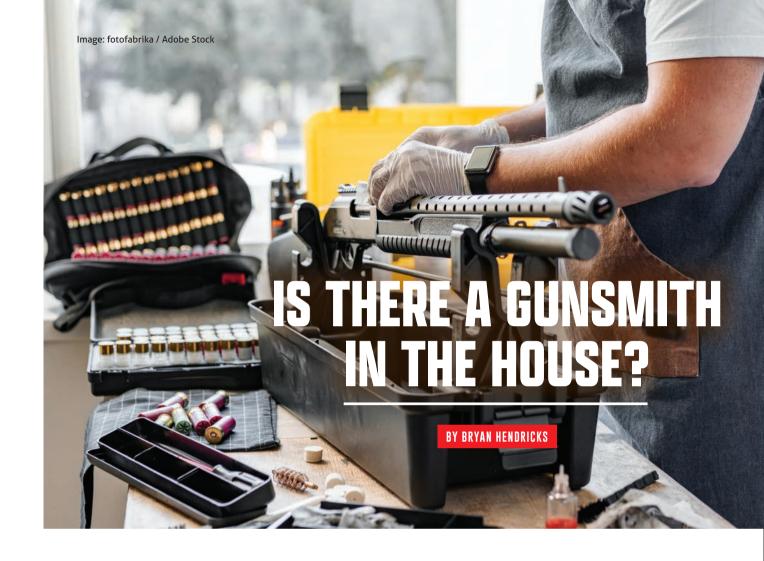
time we can try and leverage the brands we plan to buy to help offset holiday marketing expenses through cooperative funds supplied through our vendors and manufacturers.

If we are scheduled to carry a significant amount of any one brand's inventory, it gives us firm ground to ask for these co-op dollars.

Regarding staff development, if we know our sales goal along with our inventory plan we can prepare our team to be as effective as possible by making sure our team is well trained on the products we plan to carry, give them sales goals to strive for, an incentive to exceed those goals and build their confidence to succeed based by giving them all the tools they need to thrive.

So yes, setting a metric seemingly as simple as a December sales goal now can put several wheels in motion to help you plan to have a December succeed beyond expectations. The key is to *start* — and start now!





mploying a fulltime gunsmith can reap dividends for a firearms retailer, but the decision requires careful consideration.

There are reasons for and against employing a full-time gunsmith, but the key determinants are whether it's profitable and whether a gunsmith's services generate an acceptable return on the investment of having this person on the payroll.

If a full-time staff gunsmith isn't a good option, a retailer should have a close relationship with an independent gunsmith who provides prompt and reliable service. Gene Kelly, owner and founder of American Gunsmithing Institute in Napa, Calif., said offering gunsmith services — on-site or off — can be the difference between a vibrant business versus a stagnant one.

TWO VISITS IS BETTER THAN ONE

Having studied his craft in a campus-based school, Kelly has worked as an in-house gunsmith, as an independent and as a third-party supplier to multiple dealers. He says now is a fine time to be a gunsmith because the demand for quality gunsmith services is very high.

"It is a great primary or secondary career," Kelly said. "The days when gunsmiths didn't make good money are over. What the market will bear is significant. It's a great retirement career, and because there's so much demand, there's so much flexibility."

Because there's so much demand for gunsmiths, there's also demand for retailers to connect customers to gunsmiths. According to Kelly, the availability of a gunsmith is often the factor that leads a customer to one store and away from a different store unable to readily accommodate his need.

"One reason a retailer should offer gunsmithing services — on-site or sending it out — is because a guy has to come into his gun shop twice," Kelly explained. "Once to drop off the gun, and again to pick it up. Here are two opportunities to see all the new and used guns. To look at ammo and accessories."

It's also two opportunities to establish a relationship with the proprietor and staff, which can lead to future visits and future sales, and also to referrals.

"It's an opportunity to talk to them about, 'How do you use this gun? Who is using it? If it's your wife's gun, maybe you need some custom work to optimize it," Kelly suggested. "The bottom line is the customer needs to come in twice. It's the same if services are in-house or out-of-house."

PROVIDE WHAT OTHERS DON'T

Most gun shops have people who install scope bases, rings and scopes. They bore-sight scopes. Those people might be sales associates who merely know how to perform those tasks.

Actual gunsmith work is specialized. It requires special skills, special tools and special training to diagnose and remedy problems beyond the abilities of an untrained sales associate. A gunsmith will get a disabled gun running again. It might require making parts, doing some fine welding, brazing or soldering. Even something as seemingly simple as bedding an action or barrel requires time and skill.

"If someone is a part swapper,

I can tell a customer something until I'm blue in the face, but when a gunsmith comes out and tells him the same thing, I mean, he's got 35 years of experience. It's hard to argue with that. A customer believes the gunsmith when he doesn't believe me."

Jim McQueen, Owner On Target Guns & Gunsmithing Kalamazoo, Mich. they're guessing," Kelly stated. "Other parts can be worn. They can be out of tolerance. To be a safe gunsmith, you have to understand design, function and then repair. This is what American Gunsmithing Institute is all about at the base level. Because you understand the systems — this type of lockup, this type of feed system, if it's hammer-fire, striker-fire or whatever — you have to be able to understand breakdowns in systems and understand the repair."

If your shop doesn't provide the services a customer needs, he will find a shop that does. Especially if the repair is satisfactory and prompt, the second visit to pick up the customer's gun will probably lead to a permanent relationship with the retailer and end a relationship with the unsatisfactory retailer.

"FIRST TIER" GUNSMITHING

Interestingly, many repairs begin with a simple cleaning, Kelly said. While performing a thorough cleaning, an experienced gunsmith often discovers problematic issues that haven't surfaced yet. He might also discover the source of a customer's complaint about their gun.

"The first level of service is doing cleanings," Kelly informed. "Many



There's something to be said about being equipped to offer extensive, handcrafted gunsmithing solutions to customers. (Image: Wilson Combat)



AGI's Gene Kelly says diagnostics is an important facet of "First Tier" gunsmithing. Often, a customer may bring in a gun for a basic cleaning, not knowing there are other issues impacting its functionality. This is where an on-site or contracted gunsmith can prove their worth to your business.

cleanings will turn into repair jobs. Springs are out of tolerance. A spring is broken. An extractor is broken. The customer didn't know, he just thought the gun was dirty. Sometimes he brings in a bag of parts after he tried to clean it himself and couldn't get it back together."

These interactions provide opportunities for a gunsmith to explain issues to the owner and discuss repair options. This establishes trust and confidence between the gun owner and the 'smith. It also deepens the trust between the owner and the retailer.

Diagnostics is an important component in "First Tier" gunsmithing, as Kelly calls it. For

example, a customer might bring in a gun for cleaning, not knowing the gun has a non-functioning safety. An experienced gunsmith will notice the flaw and recommend its repair. A regular employee will clean the gun and return it to the owner without paying any attention to the

"You send it out and the safety doesn't work," Kelly proposed. "Maybe it didn't work when he brought it in, but who gets blamed?"

Customizing guns is another level of gunsmithing. This includes mounting scopes, sling swivels and bolt-on additions.

"You can do it fairly easily at the two level, but you still need to make it look right," Kelly asserted. "You

don't want it to look amateurish. Then you get into altering parts, customizing or doing major restorations. Sometimes you would be better off jobbing it off to a gunsmith offsite if you don't have one on staff."

RETAILERS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES

Wildman Arms in Bryant, Ark., has been in business since 2012. John Douglas, owner, said outsourcing repairs to a trusted gunsmith is a better option for him than having one on staff. However, he makes it clear to a customer the gunsmith is independent from Wildman. Any further communication about the matter is

One reason a retailer should offer gunsmithing services - on-site or sending it out — is because a guy has to come into his gun shop twice: once to drop off the gun, and again to pick it up. Here are two opportunities to see all the new and used guns. To look at ammo and accessories."

Gene Kelly, Founder American Gunsmithing Institute between the customer and the 'smith.

"What we found is parts can be difficult to acquire. A high level of skill is required, and the time requirement versus how much you can charge the customer for the time it takes to diagnose his problem, to find parts and make the repair, the value wasn't beneficial to the customer, and it definitely was not on our behalf," he reasoned.

Another problem is gunsmiths often have a backlog of work from multiple sources. Customers don't like waiting to get their guns back.

"When we told people, ves we would work on their gun, they didn't want to wait two or three weeks for the repair," Douglas shared. "It made us look bad on the retail end. It made us lose business in addition to the loss of profit on their time. We were the bad guys even though we tried to do good."

Jim McQueen, owner of On Target Guns & Gunsmithing in Kalamazoo, Mich., indicates a much different

experience. He contends having a fulltime gunsmith on staff is a tangible asset that enhances his business and reputation. Demand is so high he also employs a part-time gunsmith who has been with him for more than 10 years.

"I think it builds confidence with our customers," McQueen posited. "A lot of people come in. They think they know a lot about guns. I can tell a customer something until I'm blue in the face, but when a gunsmith comes out and tells him the same thing, I mean, he's got 35 years of experience. It's hard to argue with that. A customer believes the gunsmith when he doesn't believe me."

What about the customer who isn't quite ready for gunsmith services, but would like to try his hand at an entrylevel modification or repair? The DIY market offers options for retailers to help this hobbyist get started.

Do-it-yourself gunsmithing workshops are increasingly popular, mostly in stores that sell a lot of modern sporting rifles and accessories. McQueen maintains that DIY workshops would not fill a gunsmith's niche.

"We do sell some kits, punch kits, gunsmithing screwdrivers, that sort of thing," McQueen confirmed. "We talk people through it when they come in, but I'm not sure it's worth the time. We don't have the capacity for it, but it might work in some shops."

The takeaway is offering gunsmith services is a vital part of a firearm retailer's reputation. A retailer's business model and experience with his customers will determine how he will provide the service.

Editor's Note: This is part one of a three-part series, continuing in October and November. Next month, Bryan Hendricks will provide insights on marketing these services to customers. Have a comment? Let the SI team know: comments@ shootingindustry.com.





often seems like there isn't a lot of change in the world of handguns. Ask a gun store owner about top sellers and the answers tend to be pretty similar —

regardless of where the store is located.

Customers reliably lean toward the GLOCK 19, SIG SAUER P320, Springfield Armory Hellcat, Smith & Wesson Shield EZ and other mainstays. Still, this doesn't mean change is absent from the market. It's just that sometimes you need to squint

to see it.

Consider the recent revival of 10mm. While .40 caliber has been in a steady decline in the wake of abandonment by police departments across the country, its big brother is experiencing a resurgence.

"Forty caliber is extinct. I mean, it's a dinosaur right now," asserted Patrick Hayden, owner of Kentucky Gun Company in Bardstown, Ky. "But 10mm is kind of a sleeper. It's still a niche thing, but it's growing in popularity."

Hayden attributes the change to recent handgun introductions — including 10mm variants of the Springfield Armory XD-M Elite and Smith & Wesson M&P — and the marketing efforts supporting them.

There's also the uniqueness

factor, suggested Henry Parro, owner of Parro's Gun Shop in Waterbury, Vt.

"It's one of the calibers you either like or you hate," he proposed. "It has a mystique about it. Everyone else has a 9mm, so I want a 10mm."

CARRY GUNS

Even when it comes to the industry stalwarts, there's sometimes room for a little variety. Parro's, for example, has had success with a GLOCK 43x MOS package by Shield





Springfield Armory Echelon

◀ The new Springfield Armory Echelon features a host of patentpending features — designed around a robust stainless steel chassis and revolutionary opticsmounting system.

Arms that includes 15-round magazines. It has quickly become a top seller for Parro's concealed carry market.

Interestingly, it wasn't even something they were considering selling until customers started asking about it.

"We looked into them and the next thing you know we're carrying them, and everybody loved them," Parro recalled.

Of course, there's always going to be a strong demand for guns like the SIG SAUER P365 and Smith & Wesson Shield EZ, said Kathy Peisert, owner of Great Guns in Liberty, Mo.

The latter is particularly popular with women.

"The slide is so easy; a lot of women shooters can pull it back where they can't with some of the other guns," she noted.

The P365, on the other hand, appeals to people more concerned about magazine capacity.

"That's really important," she confirmed. "They want as many as they can get in a small gun. Just in case."

Hayden, in Kentucky, is also seeing interest in the new FN Reflex, one of the latest micro 9mm high-capacity handguns.

"It's basically a copycat of the SIG P365, but it's been a pretty good seller so far," he shared.



Forty caliber is extinct. I mean, it's a dinosaur right now. But 10mm is kind of a sleeper. It's still a niche thing, but it's growing in popularity.

Patrick Hayden, Owner Kentucky Gun Company Bardstown, Ky.



RANGE GUNS

While we may love those micro 9s when it comes to carrying, it's a different story when it's time to pack a range bag.

"Most people aren't taking their concealed carry guns out for true range work or to shoot for enjoyment," Hayden contends.

Instead, they prefer highercapacity guns that are bigger and heavier, often with an optics cut.

"Not everybody has the intention of putting a red dot on there, but they want the option down the road." he said.



It's also not unusual for customers to include a .22 rimfire among their range options. This trend has accelerated with the introduction of higher-capacity .22s like the SIG SAUER P322 and others that mimic larger-caliber counterparts.

"They're trying to imitate the full-size gun without the price of shooting 9mm," he said. "It's just a cheaper way to shoot."

At Parro's in Vermont, customers are showing interest in the new Springfield Armory Echelon, one of the latest modular polymer handguns. Boosting this interest was a special event where the shop was given the state's first look at the new gun, with customers getting a chance to shoot it on the range.

Other popular range options include the FN 509, SIG 220 Legion and various offerings from Dan Wesson.

"A gun we just started carrying on a regular basis is the new DWX.



FN 545 MRD

► FN has released its FN 510 MRD and 545 MRD optics-ready big-bore pistol — offering 15+1 rounds of 10mm or .45 ACP.

It's kind of a hybrid and people love it," Parro relayed.

At Great Guns in Missouri, range-oriented customers are more likely to pick from a 1911 stable that includes Kimber, Springfield Armory, SIG SAUER and Wilson Combat.

But when are customers ready to move on from a less-expensive polymer gun to one of these pricier options? There's no way to predict it, according to Peisert.

"It's hard to tell. It might be their first gun; if they want it they don't mind spending that kind of money. Some people want the best there is out there," she acknowledged. "It's more likely they'll start out with something less expensive."

THE RANGE RENTAL ADVANTAGE

There is a built-in sales advantage for shops with a range — at least in terms of helping customers figure out what's best for them. A well-stocked rental wall allows shops to offer something like test drives at a car dealership.

"Obviously you can't have everything in your display cases, but we try to have the most popular guns," said Parro, in Vermont.

The option can be attractive to veteran customers when something higher end — like the new Dan





I like to be the first kid on the block. When we get a **Dan Wesson** DWX, we get pictures of it and get it right up on social media.

Henry Parro, Owner

Parro's Gun Shop Waterbury, Vt.



Wesson DWX - shows up on the rental wall. But it's particularly valuable for newer shooters.

His store offers a "try before you buy" program. If someone is serious about a particular gun, the sales staff can set them up.

"We give them the gun and some ammo and they go to the range to shoot it," Parro said. "They can purchase it or maybe try something else. It gives them the option of trying different guns."

Hayden at Kentucky Guns sees the same thing playing out at his shop, which offers a \$10 hourly rate giving customers access to numerous rental options. This helps novice shooters get a better handle on the right caliber and platform - before they spend a lot of money on a gun.

"Some of them are a little bit nervous and don't really know what to ask for or what they need," Hayden shared. "A gun might look cool, but when you shoot it, it might not fit quite right. So, you've got to find the right match."

GETTING THE WORD OUT

Among the bigger challenges facing shops these days are finding ways to reach customers. It's not easy for any business. It becomes far more complicated after

factoring in the difficulties in working with social media platforms that are unfriendly toward guns.

The Kentucky Gun Store has taken an aggressive marketing approach, with a full-time employee managing the shop's digital-centric message. This includes social media and email campaigns, with the occasional foray into television and radio.

Radio and TV are good for locally focused promotions, but the digital options — including weekly email blasts and a newsletter — allow a much larger reach. And with 80,000 Facebook followers, they do their best to keep the avenue open, without running afoul of the company's censors.

"Occasionally we get caught up doing something against their policies, but you just need to know you've got to follow their rules," Hayden stated. "It's their platform, and it's still such a very powerful way of advertising that

is relatively inexpensive. You can't ignore it."

Parro's uses a similar approach. While there wasn't much need to advertise during COVID, everyone is getting back to full inventory, reviving the need to stand out against competitors.



They'll dip into the local radio market during store events, but most of the emphasis is on Facebook and Instagram. They're also starting to explore videos.

One of the major goals is to make

sure customers know when the shop has something different or unique.

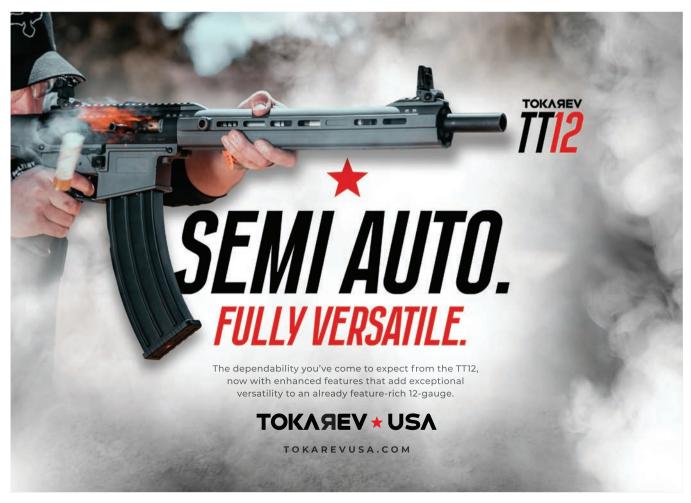
"I like to be the first kid on the block," Parro explained. "When we get a Dan Wesson DWX, we get pictures of it and get it right up on social media. What seems to drive the conversation is when you get a new product."

One of the keys to staying out of trouble, he said, is "We make it very clear we don't give prices out and nothing is for sale on Facebook. This is just purely what's new."

Social media isn't for everyone, however. At Great Guns, Peisert prefers to skip social media in favor of using local radio, particularly for special events.

Otherwise, she relies on the reputation of a shop that's been there for 43 years.

"It's being in business for so long and having good pricing," she reasoned. "I think word of mouth is probably the best for us." §1





BY SHANNON FARLOW

Seasoned Dealers Share Their Insights

all hunting provides a major source of revenue for many gun stores and shooting ranges across the country. Despite the rise of big-box chains, local gun stores remain a go-to destination for firearms, ammunition, gear, hunting tips and advice. As pressure from anti-hunting groups and dwindling access to land continue to threaten participation, independent dealers are not only outfitting hunters — they're helping keep hunting traditions alive.

How are hunting sales stacking up in 2023 compared to last year? Which firearms, gear and accessories are hunters purchasing? What new hunting products are dealers most excited about this season? How are gun stores maximizing promoting their fall hunting?

For answers to these questions and more, we spoke with Bob Porter, general manager of Oasis Outback in Uvalde, Texas; Hunter Brooks, store manager at Green Top Sporting Goods in Ashland, Va.; Mark Gore, president of Black Wing Shooting Center in Delaware, Ohio; and Jeania Canel, gun department manager at Jay's Sporting Goods in Clare, Mich. Here are the insights, tips and advice they shared.

SI: How important are huntingrelated sales to your business?

Porter: Our idea to build this store, at this particular location, was based on the extensive hunting opportunities this area

"Silencer sales continue to grow despite the long wait times. Hearing protection, recoil reduction and stealth in the field just make a lot of sense to so many more hunters."

BOB PORTER General Manager Oasis Outback Uvalde, Texas of Texas has to offer. **Brooks**: The hunting segment is a vital part of our annual sales. **Canel**: As a retail business, all sales are important to our business. We can capitalize on the seasons with the variety of products we carry.

We have something for every season, whether it is big-ticket items or accessories.

Gore: It is a small, but not unimportant part of our business. The hunting market is not huge for our customer base. However, we feel it is important to offer those products and knowledge in the name of being a one-stop-shop for gun owners.

SI: How do your hunting sales so far this year compare to the same time last year?

Brooks: We just finished

up a great spring turkey season. Early shipments of product helped contribute to earlier sales. We will likely see these earlier shipments later this summer for the fall season. We hope this trend will continue. Porter: Our sales are down a little from 2022. I attribute it to the economy and fuel prices. Canel: In the past couple of months, we have slowed down considerably. Last year, it seemed to be more of a steady flow at this time. **Gore**: Most of our hunting sales center on deer season in the fall, which we haven't hit yet. The 2022 season was slightly better than 2021, but mostly due to having a larger hunting inventory

going into the fall.

SI: What are your expectations for the fall hunting season?

Porter: We have finally

received some really good rains across the area. This should make for a really good dove season, and then carry right on into deer and quail season. Gore: We expect it to be similar to prior years. Brooks: With the availability of so much product, our expectations are high. Canel: To have the product our customers are seeking with qualified staff throughout the store to assist our customers!

SI: Which types of hunting are most popular with your customers?

Canel: It depends on the time of year, of course. We get customers through here who are going on big-game hunts all over the country and on safaris. There are those looking to fill a bear tag or, if they are lucky enough to get drawn, for a Michigan elk tag. Turkey hunting is huge in this area as well. Of course, whitetail hunting runs from September through December, so we get several months of that

Gore: Deer hunting is the most popular with our customers, but we also have some turkey, pheasant, coyote and a little waterfowl. We also have the usual group of hunters who go out West to hunt.

Porter: We have extensive opportunities for all species of game animals found in this part of Texas — whitetail deer, mourning and white wing

"Henry is a leader for us and a lot of it has to do with the wide variety of models and characteristics of their firearms."

JEANIA CANEL Gun Department Manager Jay's Sporting Goods Clare, Mich.

dove, bobwhite quail, blue quail, non-game species like Axis deer and other exotics. Hunting wild hogs and coyotes from a helicopter has really grown in this area. Brooks: Archery season is a big deal in Virginia, and then we roll right into muzzleloading season (which is just as popular) and then gun season. So, deer is probably our most popular type of hunting. Waterfowl hunting is very strong as well. Spring turkey season never disappoints, because Virginia is one of the best places in the country to hunt an eastern gobbler. Predator hunting seems to gain popularity each year.

SI: Who is buying hunting products? Are they mostly longtime hunters or newcomers to the sport?

Canel: We get both! Last year we noticed customers bringing in older model rifles and getting scopes put on them, rather than getting a whole new setup. However, those new to the sport would get set up with a new rifle and scope. Lots of women and youth are getting involved and we love to see that!

Porter: Most of our

customers are longtime hunters who have traded with us over the years. **Brooks**: The majority of our customers are longtime "veterans" of the hunting community. Our customer base is large and I have personally seen generations of hunters since I began working for the company in the '90s. We still see newcomers each and every year. I am always happy to see more and more youth hunters and female hunters.

Gore: Most of what we see are people who grew up hunting and are now getting back into it.

SI: Which type/brand of firearms are your best sellers for hunting?

Gore: We're restricted to straight-walled cartridges in Ohio, so lever actions from Henry and Marlin/ Ruger, bolt guns from Winchester, Ruger and Mossberg and semi-auto AR-platform guns in 350 Legend.

Porter: Bolt action and lever guns are extremely popular. Semi-autos are really popular with hog and predator hunters — tricked out with thermal and night-vision optics.

Brooks: In shotguns

Brooks: In shotguns, Benelli is number one. Beretta and Browning



As a Premier Benelli Dealer, Green Top is able to offer an expansive line of offerings to prospective fall/winter waterfowlers and spring turkey hunters.

come in together as a close second. In rifles, Savage is number one, while Bergara and Tikka make it interesting in a close tie for the numbertwo spot.

Canel: Entry-level guns, Savage, Ruger and Mossberg are in line. However, when you get into the higher-end guns, it varies on the type of hunting the customer is doing. Henry is a leader for us and a lot of it has to do with the wide variety of models and characteristics of their firearms.

SI: Which hunting accessories, gear and equipment are most popular with your customers?

Porter: Camouflage apparel, game cameras, hunting blinds, feeders, knives and in Texas, deer corn is huge.

Brooks: Treestands (climbing or ladder) are always a big part of our business each year. Hunting blinds have become very popular in the past few years as well. Comfort plays a big role in what customers look for and purchase. With that being said, warmth sells. SITKA apparel and gear, Lacrosse boots, the new Lite boots — anything that will keep you warm or comfortable sells.

Canel: We sell a lot of bipods, tripods, slings, shooting rests and bags. It varies from customer to customer, depending on if they are new to the sport or just getting some accessories. Ammo,



At Jay's Sporting Goods, Jeania Canel says customer service is the number-one way to retain customers. "If you take care of your customers, they're going to keep coming back," she said.

cleaning supplies, hearing protection and targets are always staple items. Gore: Scopes and ammo are the most common needs on top of the gun. On top of that, we sell more bore sighters, cases, slings and even snap caps.

SI: What new hunting products stand out this vear?

Gore: The biggest for us is the .360 Buckhammer cartridge. It is always hard to tell if a cartridge will succeed, especially when it is entering a crowded market. People love new and improved, though, so we hope it takes off. When 350 Legend came out, it unseated .450 Bushmaster pretty quickly.

Porter: Nothing really iumps out at me right now. Silencer sales

continue to grow despite the long wait times. Hearing protection, recoil reduction and stealth in the field just make a lot of sense to so many more hunters. Thermal and night-vision optics are gaining ground in this area.

Brooks: The quality of hunting blinds seems to be getting better and hetter

Canel: Curious to see the new custom-loaded ammo by Federal and some of the new rifle calibers being offered.

SI: How are you marketing hunting products?

Porter: We actually don't do much advertising of specific products. Early on, we put significant effort into getting our name out there and then let word of mouth, our

"Get involved with what your customers do. Have a big buck contest, a youth spring turkey competition or a 'post your best outdoor picture' contest on Facebook."

HUNTER BROOKS

Store Manager

Green Top Sporting Goods

Ashland, Va.

good reputation and our location do the marketing. I'll admit more marketing efforts would have helped, but we've done well so far. **Brooks**: We constantly use social media to assist in educating our customers and keeping them informed of "what's new." We promote particular items during pertinent seasons, working with industry brands and sharing their content as well.

Canel: Merchandising strategies, social media, billboards.

Gore: Given hunting isn't a huge part of our sales, we focus our marketing efforts on the services side — mounting scopes, bore sighting, etc. Typically, this takes the form of social media posts, signs in-store and mentions in our email blasts.

SI: What advice would you give to dealers who want to maximize their hunting sales?

Porter: Number one is to have a sales staff who know the products and have good people skills. Next, be as close to the hunting opportunities as feasible. Keep good inventory levels of the core items and brand names most hunters know and trust.

Brooks: Be promotional! Get involved

with what your customers do. Have a big buck contest, a youth spring turkey competition or a "post your best outdoor picture" contest on Facebook.

Gore: Our success in a particular season, especially the past few years, depends on if we have the right products at the right time. Often this means ordering earlier than you would typically and sitting on it for 6+ months. We do this with the "no-brainer" products. In our market, some examples are .45-70 ammo, lever actions in deer-legal calibers and Remington AccuTip slugs. Canel: Customer service is number one! If you take care of your customers, they're going to keep coming back. Product knowledge is crucial. Inform your associates; get them training on the product they are selling. Get it in their hands, let them use it so when they are waiting on the customer, they have confidence and can speak based on experience. Make every experience personal. Build that relationship early in the game.





line in the upcoming game seasons look no further than hunting knives.

All hunters need one good hunting knife, but more often than not they'll carry or stow two and even three. While hunting knives are somewhat seasonal, they're not restricted to the rigid "hunting seasons" designated by individual states. This raises questions for the firearms retailer as to when to stock up on knives for their customers.

To help us sort this out, we've recruited a couple of experts from the cutlery manufacturing industry that specialize in hunting and outdoor knives. John Cammenga is the founder and president of White River Knives, a company specializing in middle- and upper-end knives for outdoor enthusiasts, including

abundant line of affordable hunting and outdoor knives - as well as tactical fare. Both companies are highly respected in their end of the hunting market.

THE SEASONAL FACTOR

First, we asked our experts about the seasonal effect annual hunting seasons have on hunting knife sales.

"We do experience some season-specific sales bumps," lends White River's Cammenga. "In the spring there's often an increase in our fillet knives and in the early fall our hunting knife sales increase — especially in the Midwest, Southeast and upper Northwest. Our bushcraft and survival models stay strong and steady all year."

As for TOPS Knives, Powell notes, "We do see an uptick in the summer months leading up to September and October, but it's not

lot of our hunting knives are great for other cutting tasks, too."

To Powell's point, an overwhelming number of hunters choose the droppoint blade style because it has the ability to wear a lot of hats.

Notice neither of our two experts mentioned radical swings due to designated annual hunting seasons. Firearms calibers are very important to the hunter depending on the size and type of the game they're pursuing, but one gameprocessing knife can cover a wide variety of animals.

Take skinning knives as an example. A hunter can cover all his processing bases with a mid-to-large size skinner and one for small game such as a bird and trout knife. An average hunting knife with a 4" blade — such as the aforementioned drop point — can crossover from

game-processing chores to light camp duties effortlessly. The average bushcraft knife has a 4" blade so it's easy to see how knives can be multipurpose. Also remember: there are no hard and fast rules with hunting knives. I've seen seasoned hunters filet fish and skin game with a large 6" drop-point blade — and they wouldn't have it any other way.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

White River Knives uses social media and its website wisely to keep customers informed and they recommend their dealers do the same.

According to Cammenga, "For dealers who have a strong social media presence, we like to announce when we're sending them limited or exclusive editions. If we've been out of stock on certain models and they are available again, we spread that information as well."

This not only keeps their customers informed, but also creates ongoing top-ofmind awareness. Cammenga recommends a measured approach.

"We always prompt customers to subscribe to our newsletter," he notes. "Then, we only send mass emails when posting new or updated information on our website. As consumers, we don't like constant emails from any source and assume our customers don't either. In doing so, we experience only a fraction of customers who eventually unsubscribe."

THE SECONDARY SALE

TOPS' Powell recommends knives as secondary sales to boost your bottom line.

"For a firearms retailer, knives are a great way

to get customers to make supplemental purchases. Every time I buy or see someone buy a new firearm. accessories are offered immediately like optics, carry case, range bag, extra ammo, etc. Knives should be an automatic and easy option to include in the conversation. If someone is buying a hunting rifle, then it's the absolute best time to make sure they have a solid hunting knife to go along with it. In other words, strike when the iron is hot," he reasoned.

We asked our experts about the importance of stocking fresh, hot new knives on their shelves.

"By making sure you have all the newest gear available when it comes out, you put yourself in a position to be the go-to for all gear, not just new stuff," Powell stated. "Exciting new products are important to keep customers engaged — especially in the age of social media. But make sure it's a great product before bringing it to your customers!"

The good news here is more and more customers know what they want before they ever come into your store. The challenge is to have it in stock for them. It helps to have your cutlery buyer or a sales associate who takes a special interest in knives on staff to help "fill in the blanks" during a sale.

KNOWLEDGE SELLS PRODUCT

The adage "A little bit of knowledge goes a long way" is very true in selling any product and knives are no exception.

"The simple answer to selling more cutlery to customers is for your sales force to be knowledgeable about the features of your knives so they can sell them effectively based on their customer's needs and preferences," Powell said.



It helps to have your cutlery buyer or a sales associate who takes a special interest in knives on staff to help 'fill in the blanks' during a sale.

Fortunately, most retailers that sell hunting firearms have experienced practitioners of the sport with a working knowledge of all aspects of hunting, camping, dressing game and the like already on staff. Make them your go-to person to assist fellow associates. Also, it never hurts to devote a sales meeting to accessories — including knives — to harvest those valuable secondary sales.

Today we're seeing more manufacturers turning to hunting and outdoor knives as an alternative to getting deeper into a crowded tactical knife market that has ruled the industry for some 25 years now. This is good news for the storefront firearms retailer as many sell hunting fare.

Better yet, profit margins are better in the cutlery end than in the highly competitive gun market. Isn't it time you fattened up your bottom line with the highly lucrative market that is hunting knife sales?



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By Jenna Buckley



DAVIDSON'S INC.

(800) 367-4867 davidsonsinc.com

Following the success of Davidson's Exclusive single-action 1873 Western single-action revolvers from Pietta, eight new offerings are now available. The UPGRADED PIETTA SINGLE-ACTION EXCLUSIVES feature color case hardened frames and either steel or brass barrels. Sights are the open fixed type with a notch at the rear and a bladed front. Each model has a traditional four-click hammer, fluted cylinder and two-piece walnut grips. The eight exclusives are offered in .45 Colt, .357 Mag. and two convertible models are available chambered in .357 Mag. with an additional 9mm cylinder. They come with either 4.75" or 5.5" barrels and have six-round cylinders.



SPYPOINT

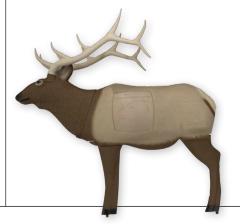
(888) 779-7646 spypoint.com

In addition to the integrated solar panel, the FLEX-S from SPYPOINT also offers users the option of choosing to operate in Instant Mode, which allows for the request of a photo or video preview from the camera at that moment. Key features include photo and video transmission, 36 MP photos, 1080p videos with sound, dual-SIM for multi-carrier auto-connectivity, optimized antenna, 0.3s responsive trigger, 100' flash and detection range and rechargeable lithium battery.

GLENDEL 3D TARGETS

feradyne.com/glendel-3d-targets

Utilizing the field-proven design of GlenDel's PolyFusion four-sided core technology, the anatomically accurate HALF-SCALE ELK archery target is constructed of ultra-durable self-healing polyfoam and combines easy arrow removal with exceptional target life in a manageable package. Features of the simulated bull include a large removable six-point rack, plastic molded head and legs, lifelike paint combination and a detailed vital section depicting the location of the heart, lungs and liver at simulated angles. (Easily replaceable vitals are available separately.) The Half-Scale Elk stands 38" tall at the shoulder.



MISSION FIRST TACTICAL

(267) 704-0001 missionfirsttactical.com

The PRO SERIES GUARDIAN OWB HOLSTER

features a sleek and slim holster body for maximum concealability, softened radius to prevent discomfort during extended wear, midheight sweat guard to prevent direct contact between body and pistol, full trigger guard coverage for enhanced security, slide-mounted optic relief cut and co-witness capability with a suppressor-height sight channel. Its Integrated Barrel Stabilizer Insert (IBSI) is designed to maintain the alignment of the pistol with the holster body spine, allowing the IBSI system to function flawlessly, with or without an underbarrel-mounted weapon light.



ZEISS

(800) 441-3005 zeiss.com

ZEISS introduces the SFL 30 compact binoculars in two models, 8x30 and 10x30. The reduced lens diameter, the use of thinner and more closely spaced lens elements and the magnesium housing make the ZEISS SFL 30 up to 23% lighter than comparable models. The binoculars are extremely compact and conveniently fit in a bino pouch, backpack or jacket pocket. The binoculars deliver a high level of detail and reproduce colors with natural fidelity thanks to special coatings, highquality glass types and an improved optical design. Featuring the SmartFocus concept and a well-positioned larger focusing wheel, hunters can focus quickly and precisely, and the modified eyecups offer a comfortable viewing experience.





LEUPOLD & STEVENS INC.

(800) 538-7653 leupold.com

Joining Leupold's Performance Eyewear line, the **DESOTO** is made from lightweight, ballistic-rated materials and ships with scratch-resistant polarized lenses. The no-slip padded bridge provides all-day comfort, and In-Fused polarized lenses eliminate glare on the water and in the field. Daylight Max technology provides UV protection for optimal performance in bright conditions. Multiple lens and frame combinations are available.



SAFARILAND

(800) 347-1200 safariland.com

The latest additions to the Safariland 6000 SERIES most notably include fits for the 2011 Staccato XC and Springfield Prodigy, both feature a 5" barrel. The models available include both RDS and RDSO options. Safariland RDS holsters are designed for firearms equipped with red dot sights and incorporate the Automatic Locking System. ALS/SLS combination holsters are also available and come standard with the Self-Locking System pivoting hood. Safariland's RDSO (Red Dot Sights Open) holster line has an open pocket that protects the optic without the use of a flip-up dust cover.



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ROCK RIVER ARMS

(866) 980-7625 rockriverarms.com

The BT3 PREDATOR HP 6.5 CREEDMOOR RIFLE from Rock River Arms boasts an innovative billet aluminum upper and lower receiver set, providing enhanced strength and rigidity and ensuring consistent performance. The 24" precision-machined, match-grade stainless steel barrel delivers accuracy and longevity. The rifle is also equipped with an adjustable two-stage match trigger, and the six-position Operator CAR stock provides a customizable fit for comfort and alignment. It weighs 9.6 lbs., and its OAL is 43".



Springfield Armory's MODEL 2020 RIMFIRE .22 LR family is offered in two primary versions: the wood-stocked Classic model and the synthetic-stocked Target model. The Classic is offered in four grades of Turkish walnut with a satin finish, while the Target features a reinforced polymer stock. Each model has a 20" free-floated barrel, adjustable trigger, dual standard sling swivels, dual cocking cams and a hard chrome bolt, a Picatinny rail, threaded bolt handle and 60-degree bolt throw. All models ship with a .22-caliber rotary 10-round magazine. The rifle and magazine are cross-compatible with Ruger 10/22-pattern magazines of the same capacity.

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NEW PRODUCTS

VERSACARRY

(979) 778-2000 versacarry.com

From Versacarry, the optics-friendly V-SLIDE OUTSIDE THE WAISTBAND HOLSTER has a smaller footprint and features a custom-molded polymer front and an open bottom to accommodate threaded barrels. For a confident and customizable draw, it has an adjustable retention screw, and two belt loops keep the V-Slide securely in place when in use. It's constructed with premium water buffalo leather and available in three colors: black, Distressed Brown and Gun Metal Gray with khaki thread. The V-Slide is available for popular firearms including the GLOCK 19 and 43; SIG SAUER P320, P365, P365 XL, P365 and X-Macro; Springfield Hellcat and XDM; Taurus G3C, GX4 and 1911; and more.





RANGER

(800) 541-1405 reranger.com

Ranger unveiled the **ULTIMATE LIGHT LENS** — an addition to the RIACT A.I. lineup. The lenses feature TRUDEPTH for enhanced depth perception to separate the target from the background, while COLOR BOOST utilizes precious metals that boost target colors to enhance focus in shooter's field of view. IN BALANCE delivers a more balanced and natural field of vision from less color saturation and VIZN SHIFT shifts lens brightness during low light conditions, making it easier to see the target. Lastly, QUICKTRAK allows shooter to track the target much quicker for faster reaction time.

INDUSTRY LINK

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He continued, "We care about this topic, we're invested in this topic — and we're doing something about it. We're asking everyone to consider the options of how to securely store firearms. Consider having that conversation with someone who might be having a hard time."

Bartozzi hopes a discussion on mental health and suicide prevention can be normalized.

"We're an industry — a community — that cares about this topic and we care about those who are dealing with this," he said.

Finally, Bartozzi said the onus rests

on all of us, collectively, to do something.

"No one can do everything, but everyone can do something," he said. "We're bringing every resource to bear, social media, webinars, live events, outreach to our industry. Every chance we're doing this, and I'm proud to be a part of it."

NASGW ADDS MORE DATA TO SCOPE DLX

NASGW has added three additional distributor data feeds to its distribution sales and inventory analytics platform, SCOPE DLX. Updates to the platform, which had already tracked more than 65% of all new and imported firearms, went live Aug. 16, 2023.

"The industry's most accurate and expansive data set keeps getting better," said Kenyon Gleason, NASGW president. "This update will add more distributor data and inventory to our DLX platform as well as continue to enhance our robust data tagging matching nearly 99% of the available firearms UPCs."

Distributors that are now contributing data include new members Primary Arms and 2nd Amendment Wholesale — as well as longtime member MGE Wholesale, which was

previously limited in its ability to share data. Manufacturers will also be able to automate reports for their products from all 21 distributors.

"We continue to look for ways to expand and improve SCOPE for the benefit of our subscribers and the shooting sports industry," said Tom Hopper, NASGW senior data analyst. "We've seen incredible adoption of our members utilizing the data to understand the market and strategize ways to capitalize on future opportunities. SCOPE is becoming an increasingly valuable tool for those businesses who are leveraging data within their business operations."

In addition to increased distributor data, the Aug. 16 update will include an update of UPC tagging, resulting in the most current and accurate categorization of products. This round of data attribute enhancements has been an ongoing effort to catalog and map



existing UPCs that were missing standardized attributes most products across the industry include. These attributes help with data segmentation, reporting and product comparisons.

Accurate attribute tagging is one of the key features that sets SCOPE apart from other industry data platforms. Accuracy of the data is crucial to creating quality reports that users and the industry can rely on. When the products are not cataloged consistently it makes it difficult, if not impossible, to collect accurate data. This attribute update is a big step forward in SCOPE's progressive development.

/ nasgw.org

RUGER SUPPORTS MIDWAYUSA FOUNDATION

Throughout 2023, Ruger Firearms has stepped up to support MidwayUSA Foundation and the future of shooting sports and the outdoor industry. From January to July, Ruger hosted 26 auctions with GunBroker.com. The combined proceeds from all of the auctions totaled \$40,000 and benefited MidwayUSA Foundation, a public charity working to sustain and grow youth shooting sports by providing long-term funding to youth shooting teams. Every dollar will directly benefit youth shooting sports.

"Ruger Firearms is pleased to support MidwayUSA Foundation with the proceeds from our special GunBroker.com fundraising auctions," said Paul Pluff, Ruger public relations

manager. "These funds will help continue the Foundation's efforts to support youth shooting sports programs that provide the critical safety and firearms training that focuses on the development of our next-generation shooting sports enthusiasts."

MidwayUSA Foundation funds approximately 2,800 youth shooting teams through earmarked endowments. Each year, a team can receive a 5% cash grant from their endowment balance to cover expenses like ammo, targets, safety equipment, travel and more.

"Once again, Ruger has set the example by choosing to directly support youth in shooting sports. Their generosity to ensure America's youth have the opportunity and funds to participate in the shooting sport of their choice is not only appreciated, but impactful," said G. Scott Reynolds,





YOUTH SHOOTING SPORTS

MidwayUSA Foundation executive director.

Tens of thousands of young shooting athletes rely on MidwayUSA Foundation's funding to participate, and the resources and generosity of large companies are irreplaceable. MidwayUSA Foundation also provides Coach Training and Range Development grants to further the sport.

/ midwayusafoundation.org



BRAVE CONVERSATIONS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

eptember is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Perhaps this time of year, over any other, would be the time to emphasize brave conversations with those in our circles going through difficult times.

This topic hits a little too close to home for many — especially as suicide rates climbed to a new high last year.

In August, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) released the latest provisional estimates for suicide deaths in the U.S., which climbed from 48.183 deaths in 2021 to an estimated 49,449 deaths in 2022 (2.6% increase).

Suicide by firearm accounted for more than half of suicide deaths in the U.S. in 2022 — something anti-gun groups have seized upon to advance their agendas. However, despite efforts of anti-gun groups to demonize the firearms industry, industry leaders are committed to doing something to prevent suicide by firearm.

MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATIONS

Joe Bartozzi, president and CEO of NSSF, sat down with Shooting Industry to highlight how his organization is spearheading an industry-wide effort to educate and emphasize the safe, secure storage of firearms.

Later this month, NSSF is hosting a roundtable discussion on the topic of

mental health, suicide prevention and the importance of secure storage of firearms with the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA) in Denver. A roundtable discussion was held last year, and it made such a lasting impact among attendees the NSSF and VA decided to make it an annual event. Significant representation by industry companies is expected this year — from both manufacturers and retailers.

According to Bartozzi, this year's roundtable will focus on how industry companies can educate their employees and customers about this sensitive topic.

"Our members have direct-consumer customers who can be very impactful in this process," he said. "The focus of this year's roundtable is on the need to get more granular and impact consumers. We'll talk about having meaningful communications, how we can reach the entire industry from top to bottom and what steps we can take together to, collectively, educate folks on the fact suicide is preventable and we can do something about it."

NSSF's leadership in this discussion is nothing new, as it has been working with the VA and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) since 2019. The three organizations combined to produce a downloadable toolkit, "Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Business: A Toolkit for Safe Firearm Storage in Your

Community." Bartozzi shared it has been well received.

"This is a difficult topic, but I really believe there's a willingness in our industry to do the right thing — to be engaged, learn more and prevent suicide," he said. "We've been sending out thousands of toolkits to interested dealers. It's encouraging they're seeing their part of the process."

IT'S GOING TO TAKE ALL OF US

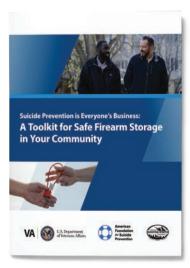
Bartozzi noted our industry has a significant veteran presence — which further propels the importance of this initiative. Bartozzi emphasized: "Let's have each other's back."

Continued on p. 45

"

No one can do everything, but evervone can do something. We're bringing every resource to bear - social media. webinars, live events and outreach to our industry."

Joe Bartozzi, President & CEO NSSE



NSSF has numerous safety and suicide prevention resources available for download on its website at nssf.org/



GAIN YOUR ADVANTAGE

The EOTECH OGL (On-Gun Laser) provides both an active and passive aiming solution. Starting with rugged aluminum housing, the OGL provides extreme durability for any mission. The IR and visible laser are optically paired making zeroing simple and its unique, sliding lever quickly adjusts the illumination beam divergence from flood to spot. Only slightly bigger than a deck of cards, the OGL is packed with features to let you seize the night.



OGL™





The Ruger American® Rifle is a 100% American-Made firearm that offers outstanding performance at an affordable price. It combines Ruger's famous rugged reliability with all of the award-winning ingenuity featured in so many Ruger products. With seven different model variations and 19 calibers, you're sure to find the perfect Ruger American® Rifle for your next hunt.







