

**18**OLD IS NEW AGAIN?  
SELLING RETRO**30**BREAKING OUT OF THE  
SUMMER SLOWDOWN**38**FLASHLIGHTS: HANDS-ON  
APPROACH BENEFITS STORES

# SHOOTING INDUSTRY®

THE INDUSTRY'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE — EST. 1955

\$5 | AUGUST 2023

## — THE — RANGE ISSUE!

*Technology  
& Range  
Management*

**Tips For  
Opening A  
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### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Investing In The  
Next Generation p. 34

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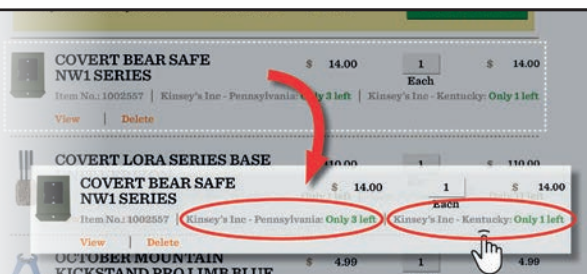
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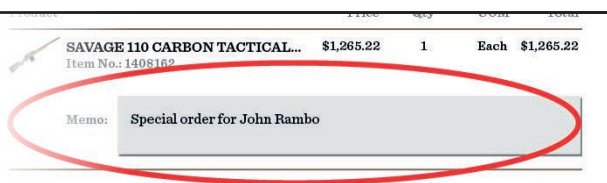
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# CONTENTS

*Presenting The Range Issue*

## COLUMNS

6

ITI

*Inside This Issue*

**Getting Customers To Your Range**

10

IN

*Industry News*

- Henry Repeating Arms Donates Over \$1 Million For Silver Anniversary
- Primary Arms Wholesale Joins NASGW
- Bushnell Celebrates 75-Year Milestone

16

NM

*Newsmakers*

**GunBroker.com Welcomes VP, EAA Corp. Hires Marketing Director + More ...**

18

PDM

*Personal Defense Market*

**Selling Retro**

*By Massad Ayoob*

20

AW

*Arms & The Woman*

**Making Women At Home On The Range**

*By Nancy Keaton*

22

BP

*Best Practices*

**Shocking Profitability In Paper Targets**

*By B.A. Stear*

46

IL

*Industry Link*

**What's Our "Barbenheimer" Moment?**

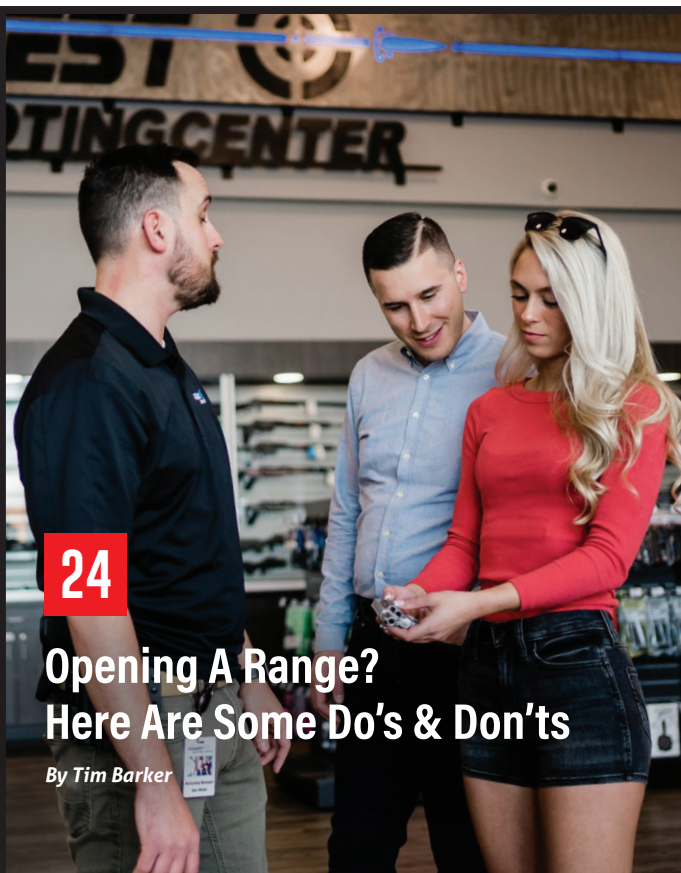
*By Jade Moldae*

## Departments

8 Letters To The Editor

42 New Products

44 Advertiser Index



24

## Opening A Range? Here Are Some Do's & Don'ts

*By Tim Barker*

## FEATURES

28

### Technology & Range Management

**Options Abound — Inside And Outside The Industry**

*By Carolee Anita Boyles*

30

### Boosting Summer Traffic

*By Doug VanderWoude*

34

### Investing In the Next Generation

**How The Firearms Industry Can Better Support Youth Shooting Sports Organizations**

*By Ashley McGee*

38

### Flashlight Sales

**A "Hands-On" Approach Favors Gun Stores**

*By Brian Armstrong*

5

### Zanders Sponsored Showcase! ▶

**Hand-Selected Zanders Exclusives To Carry In-Store**



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## GIRSAN MC P35 PI 9MM HI-POWER — BLACK & ZOMBIE GREEN

Zanders announces an exclusive Girsan MC P35 PI imported by EAA to their dealers. The Girsan MC P35 PI comes in 9mm caliber with a three-dot sight system. It features all-steel construction, an ambidextrous safety and a 3.88" barrel. The Zanders exclusive pistol features a black Cerakote frame and slide with Zombie Green Cerakote features and G10 grips. Item Number: G393617



## HOWA M1500 MINI 7.62X39 — 20" BBL BLUED/SYNTHETIC YOUTH GREEN HOGUE

The Zanders Exclusive Howa M1500 Mini Action rifle features an HTI synthetic, pillar-bedded stock and recoil pad and a 20" barrel with a 1:8" twist. It has a five-round detachable magazine and a forged, lightened one-piece bolt with two locking lugs, along with a three-position safety. Item Number: GHMA762GYTH

## HOWA M1500 .308 WIN. — 22" BBL BLUED/SYNTHETIC YOUTH GREEN HOGUE STOCK

The Zanders Exclusive Howa M1500 chambered in .308 Win. features the Hogue pillar-bedded OverMolded stock and recoil pad and Howa 1500 barreled action. The 22" threaded barrel has a 1:8" rate of twist and a blued finish. Additional features include a forged one-piece bolt with two locking lugs, three-position safety and sling swivel studs. Item Number: GHGR308GRNYTH

## HOWA M1500 MINI .350 LEGEND — 16.25" BL HB YOUTH GREEN HOGUE

The Howa M1500 Mini Action rifle, chambered in .350 Legend with a 16.25" barrel (1:8" twist), is a Zanders Exclusive. It has an HTI synthetic, pillar-bedded stock and recoil pad, five-round detachable magazine and a forged, lightened one-piece bolt with two locking lugs. It also has a three-position safety and sling swivel studs. Item Number: GHMA350GYTH

## HOWA M1500 .243 WIN. — 22" BBL BLUED/SYNTHETIC YOUTH GREEN HOGUE STOCK

The Howa M1500 in .243 Win. with a 22" threaded blued barrel and a Hogue pillar-bedded OverMolded stock and recoil pad is a Zanders Exclusive. Features include a Howa 1500 barreled action, a forged one-piece bolt with two locking lugs, three-position safety and sling swivel studs. Item Number: GHGR243GRNYTH



## EOTECH EXPS2-0 HOLOGRAPHIC WEAPON SIGHT BLACK W/TAN HOOD

Featuring a Zanders exclusive color combination, a black body and tan hood, the EOTECH EXPS2-0 Holographic Weapon Sight maximizes rails space with its compact size — also allowing for co-witnessing of iron sights. The EXPS2-0 has convenient side buttons to add a magnifier and features an adjustable, locking, quick-detach lever for easy attachment and removal. Item Number: EXPS20BT



## CVA CASCADE RIFLE — 350 LEGEND & .450 BUSHMASTER

Zanders announces an exclusive CVA CASCADE rifle in 350 Legend and .450 Bushmaster. Both will be offered in a Bronze Cerakote finish and Realtree EXCAPE camo pattern. The CVA CASCADE rifle comes with many features, including a 4140 carbon steel threaded barrel (5/8"x24), 70-degree throw bolt design and a two-position safety. These CVA rifles will also come with a cartridge limiter magazine for IL compliance. Item Numbers: GCR3927 (350 Legend), GCR3925 (.450 Bushmaster)



## Getting Customers To Your Range

**I**n honor of National Shooting Sports Month, the *Shooting Industry* team is proud to present the second annual Range Issue. This issue is packed with content geared toward helping range operators welcome customers and tips for expanding profits. Additionally, whether you're a storefront-only or a store/range facility, there are stories that will help you expand sales to more customers during the summer slowdown months.

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

### NOSTALGIA STILL SELLS

In his *Personal Defense Market* column, Massad Ayoob shares those stores that cater only to the black rifle and polymer pistol crowd are missing out on potential sales. Just the mere mention of the Colt Cobra, Marlin lever gun or Browning Hi-Power will instantly get customers' attention. The new Henry Big Boy .357 Magnum revolver is an example of how selling nostalgia will create interest from an influential segment of your customer base. See why on **p. 18**.

### TARGETS: TURN ONE INTO THREE

It may not be the first item flying off the shelves, but Shoot Indoors' B.A. Stear makes the case for why sales of paper targets should be a priority for your range staff.

"For a range handling more than 25,000 range visits per year, [a \$4 target] sale only needs to be landed 25% of the time to make an extra \$25,000 in profit," he contends.

For more insights on the topic, see *Best Practices* on **p. 22**.

### YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

Investing in future generations is the only way to preserve our legacy and heritage. When it comes to youth



AUGUST 2023

involvement in the shooting sports, R3 efforts are the responsibility of every individual and business in the firearms community.

Ashley McGee points out four things we, as an industry, can do better to welcome in younger shooters (**p. 34**).

### FLASHLIGHTS

The tactile experience of buying/selling in this industry means your store has an edge over those who can't offer in-person experiences. Brian Armstrong shines the light on flashlight sales — and how your establishment can beat out the infamous "price check." His story can be found on **p. 38**.

### COMING NEXT MONTH

The September issue will kickstart the first of a three-month series on gunsmithing and DIY sales, while also previewing the fall hunting season (including tips for expanding knife sales to hunters). Additionally, September is National Suicide Prevention Month. This issue will include content on how your store can positively impact your community. **SI**

### FEATURE HIGHLIGHT PAGE 34



"Investing In The Next Generation"  
By Ashley McGee

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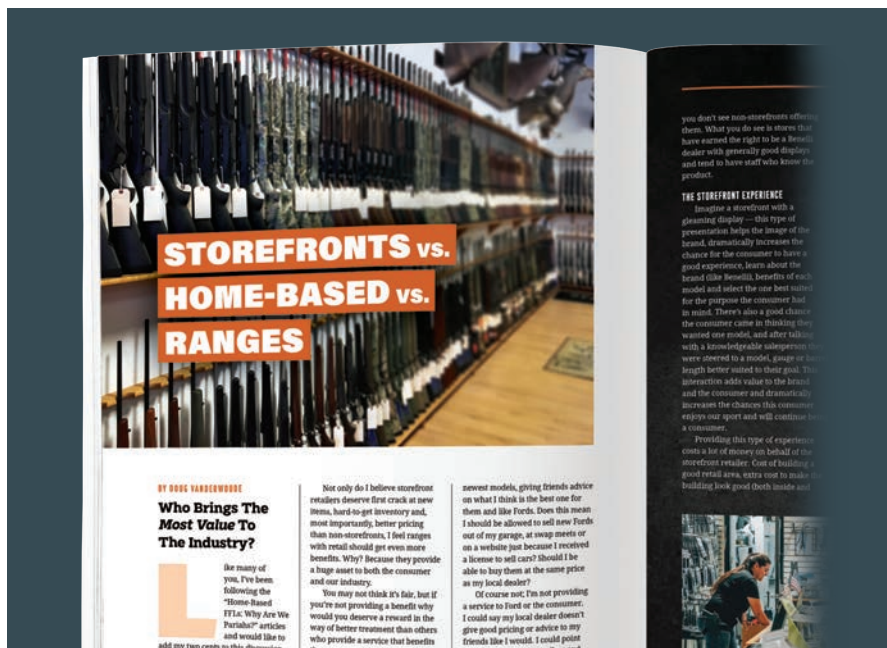
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## "BASEMENT BANDIT" ON THE FRONT LINES

**Editor's Note:** The home-based/pariah/basement bandit vs. storefront dealer debate has dominated this section over the past year and a half — and continues to generate feedback from readers. Here, we give *SI* Contributing Editor Doug VanderWoude an opportunity to respond to one dealer's query.

In the January issue I read Doug VanderWoude's comments to both dealers (*Letters*, Jan. 2023). It's unfortunate I have to agree with anybody this late in life, but Mr. VanderWoude is right. I'm 71, retired after building high rises, bridges and ships for 44 years.

Mr. VanderWoude is 100% correct: The entire shooting sports industry is screwed up.

I'm what Mr. VanderWoude calls a "basement bandit." I only stock high-end guns, leaving the junk to the big

If you  
refuse to  
help who  
*should*  
be your  
customer, I  
will.

gun shops. I volunteer my time and construction skills at several local ranges. I teach gun safety and marksmanship.

The brick-and-mortar gun shops around me refuse to accept guns purchased online for shipment to an FFL, so I do it for a paperwork fee. My feeling is if you refuse to help who *should* be your customer, I will.

During legislative sessions, I'm in the Washington State Capitol. This year alone, I've spent more than I made selling guns

on gas and parking. Over the last 25 years, the cost has run into thousands of dollars.

Two or even three times a week, I'm up at 4 a.m., get to the capitol building at 5 a.m., wait in line for two hours to get inside and then wait another two hours to stand in line at a hearing room until it opens at 9 a.m. It's a lot of effort for a chance to speak at a committee meeting on some obnoxious bill for two minutes.

It's funny: at the state capitol, I've only ever seen one brick-and-mortar gun shop owner even try to help us make a difference. In 25 years, I've never seen someone sent from Cabela's, Bass Pro Shops or Sportsman's Warehouse.

The only question I have is when Mr. VanderWoude's state legislature is in session and bad bills are before committees, where is he?

Sleeping in is my guess ... **SI**  
— Mike Silvers, Owner  
Silvers & Co.  
Federal Way, Wash.

Mike,  
At the end of the day, you owe the success of your hobby to others who are taking a far greater risk than you are, day to day, doing the hard work to keep this industry alive.  
While I greatly appreciate your efforts in legislative matters, there are many ways to do so. The millions of dollars brick-and-mortar gun shops spend on lobbyists and other advocacy through groups (like the NSSF) that work hard every day and represent the industry so gun shop owners can stay in their place of business and sell the goods to allow people to participate in the Second Amendment — with totals that add up to more than kitchen table dealers contribute annually many times over. The sooner manufacturers and distributors start treating legitimate retailers better than anyone with a pulse the stronger the industry will be.  
— Doug VanderWoude

HAVE A THOUGHT WHILE READING THE ISSUE?

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





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◀ Henry Repeating Arms Founder and CEO Anthony Imperato displays a Henry American Eagle lever-action rifle in the company's manufacturing plant in Bayonne, N.J. (Image: Michael Ives)

## HENRY REPEATING ARMS DONATES OVER \$1 MILLION FOR SILVER ANNIVERSARY

Last year, Henry Repeating Arms Founder and CEO Anthony Imperato pledged to donate \$1 million through its Guns for Great Causes charitable arm to celebrate the company's 25th year in business. The company proudly announced its fully honored pledge, with over 30 different organizations receiving donations totaling \$1,037,500 since June 2022.

"I am most proud of being able to look back on the last 25 years of business and say with conviction that we were able to make a positive difference in the lives of others," Imperato said. "More often than not, our industry is vilified

and left with a perpetual black eye by the media. We, however, are determined to continue leading the charge in counteracting that narrative by showing how much positive impact we have as responsible corporate citizens."

The primary focus of the company's Guns for Great Causes initiative is pediatric cancer care, which it addressed with over \$200,000 in donations. In addition, Henry Repeating Arms manages an ongoing program to provide financial relief to individual families of sick children going through treatments by creating, donating and selling limited-edition runs of custom-engraved rifles

and presenting the family with 100% of the sales. This program recently raised over \$40,000 for the family of 14-year-old Jack Troxel of Vancouver, Wash., who was diagnosed with brain cancer.

Military veteran organizations received a total of \$375,000 from the silver anniversary campaign, including the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Building Homes for Heroes and the Tunnel to Towers Foundation. In addition, charities benefiting law enforcement, first responders and their families received \$225,000, including the Border Patrol Foundation, National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and the First Responder's Children's Foundation.

Henry Repeating Arms also continued its support for some of the country's most impactful wildlife and habitat conservation groups like the National Wild Turkey Federation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever with a total of \$100,000.

Second Amendment rights advocacy groups, those working to preserve and promote America's shooting sports heritage, and programs responsible for teaching firearm safety and responsible ownership, received a total of \$130,000.

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

## SSSF AWARDS 2023 SCHOLARSHIPS TO SHOOTING SPORTS ATHLETES

The Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation (SSSF) awarded 183 scholarships totaling \$91,500 to student athletes this year. The latest awards bring the SSSF scholarship awards total since 2013 to \$818,000, assisting over 900 students.

The SSSF scholarships reward

qualifying graduating seniors in the Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) and Scholastic Action Shooting Program (SASP) with needed college assistance.

At the 2023 National Championships, SCTP sponsors Browning, CZ-USA and Beretta awarded additional special scholarships to athletes who shot either a Browning shotgun in trap singles, a Beretta shotgun in skeet events or a CZ shotgun in sporting clays events, respectively. Scholarships for athletes at SCTP Nationals totaled \$11,500.

Betsy Ross Arms, SASP sponsor, again

lent a helping hand to athletes who were unable to attend SASP Nationals because of budget concerns. A female-owned company, Betsy Ross Arms asked for preference to be given to young female athletes, whose participation continues to rise in youth shooting sports.

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







## Trophy Scan, Mini Muleys Announce Partnership

Trophy Scan, a leader in 3D scanning technology for hunters, and Mini Muleys, provider of miniature trophy replicas, announced a collaborative partnership that will create stunningly accurate and detailed miniature replicas of hunters' prized trophies.

Trophy Scan's patented 3D scanning technology allows for an unprecedented level of detail and accuracy in capturing the unique features of each trophy, while Mini Muleys' exceptional craftsmanship brings them to life in a tangible form.

"By integrating our cutting-edge technology with Mini Muleys' artistry and precision, we can provide our customers with a unique and unforgettable way to commemorate their hunting achievements, and ensure their memories live on forever," said Craig Harrison, CEO of Caza Outdoors, parent company of Trophy Scan.

The partnership between the two companies will provide hunters with an accessible and convenient way to order their miniature trophy replicas directly through Mini Muleys' platform, streamlining the process while ensuring the highest level of quality and customer satisfaction.

"The partnership between Trophy Scan and Mini Muleys is a natural fit. With Trophy Scan, the level of detail captured is unparalleled, and will allow us to create the most realistic replicas possible," said Cameron Manwaring, co-founder of Mini Muleys.

[/trophyscan.com](http://trophyscan.com)  
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## WHEN A DANGEROUS SITUATION MUST BE STOPPED NOW!

CALIBER	BULLET WGT., TYPE
.357 Mag.	180 gr., RNFP w/Gas Check
10mm Auto.	200 gr., RNFP-Hard
.41 Rem. Mag.	230 gr., SWC w/Gas Check
.44 Mag.	305 gr., WFN w/Gas Check
.45 Colt	325 gr., WFN w/Gas Check
.454 Casull	325 gr., WFN w/Gas Check
.460 S&W	325 gr., WFN w/Gas Check
.45-70 Govt.	450 gr., RNFP w/Gas Check

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## C&H PRECISION TO EXPAND GEORGIA FOOTPRINT

Firearms manufacturer C&H Precision announced its decision to continue operations in Bryan County, Ga., and unveiled plans for a significant investment in a state-of-the-art manufacturing and headquarters facility.

The new building will be located on Thunderbird Drive in the city of Richmond Hill. The project, estimated at \$10 million, is projected to create 20 to 30 new jobs.

"It has been incredible watching the success and growth C&H has experienced since the company moved to Richmond Hill in 2017," said Jon Seagraves, chairman of the Development Authority of Bryan County. "With the focus and value the company places on its employees, C&H is a great industry partner to have in the community, and we are glad they have chosen to undertake their expansion here in Bryan County."

Spanning 48,000 sq. ft., the facility will house modern offices and cutting-edge manufacturing space designed to elevate productivity and provide an



A rendering of C&H Precision's new headquarters in Richmond Hill, Ga. This expansion will bring 20 to 30 additional jobs to Bryan County.

optimal work environment for employees. C&H Precision also aims to enhance the overall experience by incorporating a 10-bay indoor shooting range featuring state-of-the-art equipment. Additionally, the facility will include a firearms retail pro shop with an extensive selection of products. A convenient coffee and sandwich shop will also be available on-site.

"The greatest compliment a company can give is to continue to reinvest in a community and its citizens. Thank you to C&H Precision for your commitment to Georgia," said Georgia Department of Economic Development Commissioner Pat Wilson.

Recognizing the importance of

collaborating with local partners, C&H Precision has joined forces with respected firms Coleman Company Inc. for all civil engineering needs, and Felder & Associates for the initial stages of the design process.

"The competition for talented employees in our region has driven us to make significant investments in our workforce. We are dedicated to providing our employees with an exceptional workspace and amenities that are unrivaled in the industry. This new facility embodies our commitment to fostering a vibrant and productive environment for our valued team," said Buck Holly, president and owner of C&H Precision.

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

## STREAMLIGHT SUPPORTS C.O.P.S. FOR 24TH STRAIGHT YEAR

Streamlight Inc., provider of high-performance lighting and weapon light/laser sighting devices for the law enforcement market, has renewed its sponsorship of Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.) for the 24th year in a row. The company's support helps to underwrite ongoing programs and activities for survivors of fallen officers.

Streamlight's 2023 contribution as a C.O.P.S. S. Guardian Sponsor totaled \$144,500, including proceeds from recent sales of its blue C.O.P.S.-logoed products. Every year, Streamlight earmarks \$1 from the sale of each Blue Nano keychain light and \$2 from the sale of each Blue Siege AA lantern for C.O.P.S.

Streamlight supports the C.O.P.S. organization by sponsoring multiple programs and events throughout the year,



From left: Madeline Neumann, Dianne Bernhard, Patricia Carruth, Clayton French, Brett Marquardt and Lauren Crisman.

culminating in this year's National Police Weekend activities in Washington, D.C., where the company was the presenting sponsor at the Blue Honor Gala on May 14. The company also is a sponsor of Law Enforcement United, which helps to raise money for C.O.P.S. through programs like The Road to Hope memorial bicycle ride.

"Streamlight is proud to serve as a Guardian Sponsor of C.O.P.S., and to support the organization's many programs for those who have lost loved ones in the line of duty. As a leading provider of lighting equipment for first

responders, we are committed not only to providing tools to keep police safe, but also to assisting C.O.P.S. in the important work they do for law enforcement," said Streamlight President and CEO Ray Sharrah.

Today, more than 50 C.O.P.S. chapters nationwide provide resources to some 50,000 survivors, including immediate and extended families and co-workers of officers who have died in the line of duty.

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

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



## BUSHNELL CELEBRATES 75-YEAR MILESTONE



Bushnell is celebrating its 75th anniversary with retail promotions, contests and social media campaigns.

Since 1948,

Bushnell has

emphasized precision, reliability and affordability in its signature optics. Hunting, shooting, birdwatching and other outdoor passions continue to draw consumers to the company's "Built for the Pursuit" riflescopes and binoculars.

Bushnell's patented technologies over the years have helped to reshape the industry. Brand innovations such as RainGuard HD water-repellant lens coating, EXO Barrier lens protection and ARC (Angle Range Compensation) technology have raised standards in optics while earning consumer trust.

"The 75th anniversary is a significant milestone for Bushnell, and we are incredibly proud of our journey so far," said Jim Bruno, president of Vista Outdoor Hunting and Shooting Accessories.

Bushnell prides itself on partnerships with leading outdoor enthusiasts and experts who share the brand's passion. Ambassadors such as Michael Waddell and the Bone Collectors, and acclaimed shooters and hunters KC Eusebio, Jessie Harrison and Will and Jimmy Primos, rely on Bushnell optics to achieve their success in the field. They inspire others in the process, and give useful feedback to Bushnell.

"Our success can be attributed to our loyal customers, dedicated employees and unwavering commitment to delivering superior optics that are built for your pursuit. We are grateful for the trust they have placed in us, and look forward to many more years of innovation and excellence," Bruno concluded.

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



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A Canadian soldier shoots the SIG C22, a modified version of the P320. The initial delivery of 7,000 pistols has been completed.

## CANADIAN ARMED FORCES SELECT SIG SAUER P320

SIG SAUER Inc. announced the transition of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) from the Browning 9mm pistol, adopted in 1944, to the SIG SAUER P320. The SIG pistol Canadian soldiers will now carry has the official designation of C22. The initial delivery of 7,000 P320/C22 pistols is complete.

"The selection process for the C22 was extremely competitive, with safety, reliability and accuracy at the forefront. The P320 delivers on all fronts and ensures operational readiness and effectiveness for the Canadian Armed Forces," said Tom Jankiewicz, executive VP of LE sales at SIG SAUER. "For the first time in nearly

80 years, our northern allies will field a modern, reliable pistol to support and carry out their mission."

The C22 is a P320 modular, full-size, 9mm striker-fired pistol. Contract pistol enhancements for the CAF include improved ergonomic design, 17-round capacity and a loaded chamber indicator that is visible to the user at any angle. Additionally, the C22 features the SIG SAUER P320 innovative three-point takedown safety for disassembly, which does not require a trigger pull, and the five-point safety system.

Jankiewicz added that SIG SAUER is receiving positive feedback from the CAF during the transition. The P320 pistols for the CAF are distributed through MD Charlton.

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

## NORMA PRECISION DEBUTS WEBSITE DEALER LOCATOR

Norma Precision Inc., manufacturer of premium ammunition, announced the launch of its new dealer locator feature on its website. This new tool aims to enhance the support provided to dealers and consumers by making it easier to locate authorized Norma dealers across the U.S.

The dealer locator will allow Norma to foster stronger relationships with its dedicated dealers while simultaneously improving accessibility for its consumers. The feature will enable dealers to

showcase their partnership with Norma and enhance their visibility within their communities.

"This new tool will not only connect consumers with authorized dealers, but it will also reinforce our strong dealer network and help them thrive," said Jeff Ausloos, VP of sales and marketing at Norma.

Norma encourages all authorized dealers to confirm their information is up

to date in its dealer locator by visiting the page on the Norma website or by emailing [sales@normausa.com](mailto:sales@normausa.com).

Norma Precision Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Beretta Holding S.A. Marketed under the Norma, Norma MLE and Swiss P brands, Norma Precision products are available at retailers throughout the U.S.

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



## NORMA DEALER LOCATOR GOES LIVE



## TIMNEY ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH REMINGTON

Timney Triggers announced Remington Model 700 rifles will now include Timney triggers as a standard feature. The Alpha 1 and Police models will come with the Elite Hunter trigger, and all other Model 700s will have the new Impact 700 trigger.

Timney was asked to build a replacement Remington Model 700 trigger that does not compromise on quality, and both companies believe Timney succeeded. The Impact 700 trigger is billed as the next evolution of accuracy for the iconic Remington Model 700 rifle.

Timney's engineers designed the

Impact 700 trigger by machining the parts from billet steel, utilizing no metal injection molding or rolled parts. Each trigger is hand-assembled, tested and calibrated at Timney's facility in Phoenix.

The Impact 700 has a factory-set, nonadjustable pull-weight of 3-4 lbs. that will give shooters a crisp, clean break. The Sear Engagement Adjustment Lock design (SEAL'd) ensures a user-friendly experience.

The trigger sear and trigger shoe are precision-machined and heat-treated from premium metal. The sear is carbonitrided for maximum lubricity and wear resistance, and the trigger shoe is coated with black oxide for enhanced corrosion resistance. The housing is constructed of anodized aluminum.



Timney Impact 700

All Timney triggers are made in the U.S., and backed by the company's "no-hassle, lifetime warranty."

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

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

## FREEDOM MUNITIONS, UNITED AG & TURF FINALIZE PARTNERSHIP

U.S. ammunition manufacturer Freedom Munitions announced a strategic partnership with United Ag & Turf (UAT), provider of agricultural and landscaping equipment. Freedom Munitions will supply ammunition directly to UAT's farm, fleet and turf customer base through UAT locations across the country.

Freedom Munitions will maintain brand exclusivity throughout UAT retail sites, offering many of their standard pistol and rifle calibers to provide a wide

selection of ammunition to UAT's customer base.

Fernandez Holdings Inc., which currently owns UAT and has recently acquired Freedom Munitions, facilitated the partnership.

"It's a very logical partnership. This move strengthens both Freedom and UAT by increasing Freedom's reach and offering UAT customers a key product (that is) most likely integral to their lifestyle," said Toby Thill, president of Freedom Munitions.

"We look forward to selling Freedom Munitions in select locations. We know our customers will respond well to having ammunition easily available to them. This agreement solidifies our position as a



full-service dealership," said Scott Miller, president of United Ag & Turf Northeast.

Freedom Munitions ammunition was initially made available in six of UAT's 93 store locations in July: Van Alstyne and Haltom, Texas; Ardmore, Okla. and Fairfield, Auburn and Presque Isle, Maine. Freedom will continue bringing more UAT stores on board.

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

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## PRIMARY ARMS WHOLESALE JOINS NASGW

The National Association of Sporting Goods Wholesalers (NASGW) announced the addition of Texas-based Primary Arms Wholesale as a wholesale member.

Primary Arms Wholesale carries a wide selection from all of the industry's top firearms, optics and accessories brands, including the complete Primary Arms Optics line. The company becomes the 29th NASGW wholesaler member.

The NASGW is the largest distribution network in the shooting sports industry, accounting for approximately 65% of firearms sales in 2022. It is comprised of wholesalers, manufacturers, independent sales reps, media and service providers — both national and international.

"Primary Arms Wholesale is joining the list of top shooting sports distributors in the country, and we welcome their participation and support in supplying retailers and dealers in the shooting sports distribution channel," said NASGW President Kenyon Gleason.

"This partnership will allow us to connect with like-minded individuals and businesses in our industry, and gain valuable insights and resources to enhance our services and offerings. We look forward to collaborating with this esteemed organization and making a positive impact together," said Özge Cumberland, senior VP at Primary Arms Wholesale.

Manufacturers can expect to see Primary Arms Wholesale at the 2023 NASGW Expo in Columbus, Ohio in October.

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

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



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## FEDERAL AMMUNITION AWARDS 2023 TOM KNAPP MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Federal Ammunition recently awarded 2023 Tom Knapp Memorial Scholarships to two 4-H student ambassadors: Ryer Roberts from Colorado and Colt Shackley from Nevada. The scholarships were presented at the National 4-H Shooting Sports Invitational held in Grand Island, Neb. June 26–30.

"As a former National 4-H Ambassador myself, reviewing these applications is a highlight to my year. All these Ambassadors are tremendous citizens, which made the decision challenging," said Jon Zinnel, senior manager of Youth Shooting Programs for Federal Ammunition "Both Ryer and Colt demonstrated an impressive understanding of how wildlife is managed, plus how hunting and shooting sports programs play a vital role in operating and funding the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation in our country," Zinnel said.

The annual scholarship program was created to honor top exhibition shooter Tom Knapp, who passed away in April 2013. In 2016, Federal Ammunition and Champion Traps & Targets teamed with the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee to continue the Tom Knapp



Federal Ammunition's Jon Zinnel (right) presents student-athlete Colt Shackley with one of two scholarships awarded during the National 4-H Shooting Sports Invitational earlier this summer.

Memorial Scholarship program. Knapp, a vocal advocate for supporting the next generation, was a longtime ambassador for both Champion and Federal Premium Ammunition. With the support of Knapp's wife, Colleen, Champion extended Tom's licensed products program to fund an endowed scholarship that awards \$2,500 each to two National 4-H Ambassadors per year. **SI**

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



A. FORKNER

### GunBroker.com Welcomes VP

Allen Forkner has joined the GunBroker.com team as its VP of public relations and brand management.

In this role, Forkner will help bring awareness and attention to GunBroker.com and its growing number of programs and services it offers. He will be involved with media relations, industry partnerships, content partnerships and a variety of campaigns and relationship-building endeavors.

GunBroker.com COO Beth Cross shared, "With GunBroker.com's 25th anniversary coming up in 2024, we all felt Allen was the perfect addition to pay homage to the previous accomplishments and create future ones."

Forkner brings more than two decades of marketing, PR and media relations experience to the brand. He previously led the PR team at Swanson Russell, and also served as communications director to the Nebraska Attorney General after spending a decade as a working journalist.



S. MOCKENSTURM

### EAA Corp. Hires Marketing Director

EAA Corp. announced Sam Mockensturm as its new director of marketing.

Mockensturm will cover all of the company's marketing operations and is tasked with growing the company's presence over all channels of reach to consumers and dealers.

Keith Bernkrant, president of EAA Corp., said, "We feel our products are becoming more and more sought after by the public. This will give him a great opportunity to build the brand and raise awareness to the

quality in which our firearms bring at such an affordable price point."

Mockensturm's background includes 11 years of military experience, gun store retail and most recently serving as the marketing manager for Kimber Mfg.



L. WALTERS

### Gunsite Academy Taps Pro Shop Manager

Gunsite Academy has appointed Lindy Walters its Pro

Shop manager. She has been a member of the shop's staff since 2020. Her appointment comes as Gunsite expands the 3,200-acre venue to include a new 5,000 sq. ft. pro shop.

Gunsite CEO Ken Campbell shared, "As we move forward in growth and into more and greater technology driving the new Gunsite Pro Shop, there are many new vendors and industry partners eager to have their products on display, Lindy will be a great new team leader."

Walters earned her B.S. from Morehead State University and a master's degree from Missouri State University.



H. CHOI

### Kahr Firearms Group Names Manufacturing Director

Kahr Firearms Group recently promoted

plant manager Hoonoh Choi to the position of director of manufacturing. Choi is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the company's manufacturing operations and will develop and implement new manufacturing strategies to improve the company's efficiency and productivity.

Justin Moon, CEO of Kahr Firearms Group, said, "[Choi's]

experience and expertise will be invaluable as we continue to grow our manufacturing capacity, introduce new products and meet the needs of our customers."

Choi earned an MBA from the State University of New York. He is a certified Six Sigma Green Belt, and a member of the Korea Facilitators Association. He served in the RoK Army.



J. BROTHERS

### NEXTORCH Industries Engages Sales & Marketing VP

As the new VP of sales and marketing for NEXTORCH

Industries North American market, Jordan Brothers will oversee all marketing functions with a direct focus on developing a program to drive consumer awareness at the dealer level. On the sales side, he will be responsible for the company's overall sales strategy in the North American market.

"Jordan brings with him extensive knowledge of the industry and products, and an established relationship base to NEXTORCH," said Robin Liang, president and founder of NEXTORCH.

Brothers most recently spent five years with Crescent Sock Company, first serving as a national sales manager and then as director of business development. He was also a channel sales manager for Outdoor Edge Knives.



L. GRAYER

### SIG SAUER Retains General Counsel

Laurence Grayer has joined SIG SAUER as EVP, general counsel and chief

compliance officer as a business partner to provide counsel while furthering corporate business



objectives.

"Larry is an extraordinary addition to the SIG SAUER executive team," said Tom Taylor, chief marketing officer and EVP, commercial sales. "Larry's skills, experience and leadership will be essential in supporting our strategic initiatives."

Grayer previously served as the general counsel for the global government services providers DynCorp International and Creative Associates International.

He earned his juris doctorate from St. John's University School of Law, and a bachelor's degree in business administration from The George Washington University.



R. JOHNSON

#### ASP Appoints Sales Director

Armament Systems and Procedures (ASP) named Ray Johnson its new director of sales for the southeast U.S. region.

He is responsible for law enforcement agency and distributor relationships in the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida.

Daryell Harmon, ASP's VP of sales, said, "Sales directors are responsible for distributor and agency relationships, assisting the organization of our law enforcement training programs and more. Ray is a natural for this position."

Johnson has a background in military, law enforcement and private security training.



M. WALSTON

#### Outtech Sales Services Taps Business Development EVP

Legacy1846 Outdoor Group and its wholly owned Outtech Sales Services LLC (OSS)

welcomed Mike Walston to its team as EVP of business development for Outtech Sales Services to focus on new sales channel opportunities for OSS and its partners.

Scott Blackwell, Legacy1846 Outdoor Group CEO, said, "His industry experience and expertise will undoubtedly enhance our collective



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efforts to bring further value to the partners of Outtech."

Walston joins Outtech with over 25 years of experience in the outdoor industry. He has also held board seats with the Archery Trade Association and the Treestand Manufacturer's Association.



B. PHILLIPS

#### Big Rock Sports Announces Promotions

Big Rock Sports has announced a quartet of promotions impacting its executive and sales teams.



M. CHARNOT

Brian Phillips has been promoted to president. In his new role, Phillips will assume responsibility for leading all aspects of the Big Rock Sports business. Since joining the company in 2010 as director of national accounts, Phillips has quickly rose through the ranks.



R. LINK

Most recently, Phillips served as Big Rock's senior VP of sales and merchandising, where he consistently delivered outstanding results, driving revenue growth and fostering strong customer and vendor-partner relationships.



B. MCNUTT

Mark Charnot is now Big Rock Sports'

chief operating officer. In his new role, Charnot will assume responsibility for leading the operations, supply chain, human resources and demand planning initiatives.

Charnot joined Big Rock in 2018 and quickly implemented the Achieve Labor Management Program to increase efficiency and lower operating costs. Shortly thereafter, he led the operational integration of a major acquisition and guided Big Rock through the COVID-19 pandemic — opening and expanding a new distribution center in Charlotte to meet volume and capacity challenges.

Ryan Link has been promoted to VP of merchandising. In his new role, Link will be responsible for merchandising and product strategy for the Big Rock Sports U.S. distribution market. His experience in merchandising, category management and vendor development — along with his deep background in the retail industry — will enhance the Big Rock executive team. Link joined Big Rock Sports in 2013 and has held leadership roles in national account sales and merchandising.

Lastly, Brad McNutt has been promoted to VP of sales — dealer channel. McNutt joined Big Rock in 2008, serving as its national accounts manager. In 2012, McNutt's performance led to his promotion as director of sales for the FCM division — later taking over the shooting division. 



BY MASSAD AYOOB

Image: MoreVector / Adobe Stock

## SELLING RETRO

**M**any gun shops today have little but black rifles and black polymer pistols on display. They're missing some sales. There's a reason so many *other* gun shops have older-style firearms in stock ... and keep selling them.

Consider the Henry brand. A Henry Big Boy .357 Magnum revolver sits on the file cabinet next to my desk as I write this. Purist collectors of 20th century Colts and Smith & Wessons may see it as a parody of their favorites; something a cartoonist might draw in the hand of Yosemite Sam. I dunno about that.

The rear of the Big Boy's frame harkens to double-action Colts of the late 1870s, while the front reminds me of the fixed-sight Mark III Colts of about a century later, the Metropolitan .38 Special and the Lawman .357 Magnum. The brass trigger guard and grip frame take you back to the cap-and-ball days.

The thing of it is, this first revolver from Henry is remarkably well made: great build quality, excellent finish. It takes an HKS speedloader for an L-Frame six-shot S&W, and the very nice-looking — and feeling — walnut stocks have been shaped to allow speedloading. Remember when we had to “hog out” the left stock panel of the target-type Colts and Smiths to get a speedloader past them? Someone at Henry put good thought and research into this design.

Take a look at the Henry catalog. Almost everything is a new take on an old design. The AR-7 takedown .22

rifle is the truest thing to the original design, in this case from Armalite. It was unique and “catchy” when it first came out, and it still is. The Original Henry line is reasonably close to the original namesake, too, and their single-barrel break-open shotguns remind me of my first firearm of my own as a little boy, an Eastern Arms brand.

Through the rest of the product line, you see Henry doing more of its own take on the older design: more ergonomic lever loops, for example. The little octagonal barrel .22 pump gun brings me back to when I was a kid, and those external-hammer Winchester pump guns chained to a bench were found in “shooting galleries” all over the country.

### INTANGIBLES

One thing you're selling with such firearms is *nostalgia*. Particularly for those of us who grew up in households with guns, they remind us of good times passed.

I haven't been bird hunting in a long time, but if I was to go afield for fowl tomorrow, I'd be inclined to leave my more efficient modern scatterguns in the safe and take a side-by-side double-barrel like my father carried when I first accompanied him into the field. I might even take his ancient Lefever I inherited. And if it had been left to someone else, well, I might just go to your gun shop to buy one reasonably close to it.

Yes, nostalgia is “a thing” — as they say today.

Another thing you sometimes need to sell is *simplicity*. Let's look at the opposite end of the gun-buyer bell curve: all those millions of non-gun-owning people who decided to purchase their first firearm sometime between 2020 and now.

Being a bit leery of this whole gun thing, they tend to look for something uncomplicated and foolproof. The coach gun, the short and handy double-barrel shotgun, is the essence of simplicity. Press a lever sideways and break it open.

(Sales tip: Sell the hammerless style with its easy-to-operate thumb safety, not the older dog-ear hammer style! Cocking the latter can be awkward and de-cocking them can be much more so, particularly for those unfamiliar with the design or with weak hands.)

Now, I personally don't care for a two-shot firearm as a home-defense weapon. That said, however, I remember visiting the late, great combat shooting expert Jeff Cooper at his home, The Sconce. He showed me the double-barrel coach gun he kept handy to, as he put it, “repel boarders.” Who am I to argue with Jeff Cooper?

And of course, some of your new gun buyers may have taken Joe Biden's suggestion to use a double-barrel shotgun for home defense. (Such a buyer should be reminded Biden's advice to fire buckshot into the air or through the front door can result, and has resulted, in tragedy.)

The same simplicity is found in the double-action revolver with swing-out cylinder. Wheelguns now occupy a shrinking space in handgun display cases, and in law enforcement have pretty much been transferred from the police armory to the police museum. For all of it, though, your new buyer appreciates the “easy to check if it's loaded or not” element.

### THE REVOLVER AS “RETRO”

Speaking of wheelguns, if you're in the gun business, you've witnessed the comeback of the Colt Python. Originally introduced in 1955, discontinued after half a century or so, it was reintroduced to resounding retail success in 2020. Let's look at why.

The Python had earned a mystique: extreme accuracy, and Rolls-Royce-level hand-built quality. As soon as they were discontinued, prices for existing samples skyrocketed. A near-new original Python was probably going to sell in the \$3,000



“

**One thing you're selling with such firearms is *nostalgia*. For those of us who grew up in households with guns, they remind us of good times passed.**

range, and for *way* more than that if it had the super-rare 3" barrel.

The 2020 Python looked a little different than the original to the most discerning eye, and felt different too: heavier single-action pull, but sweeter single-stage double action. It sold for \$1,500 brand-spanking-new. People who had wanted a Python could now

finally afford one. When they offered a 3" barrel version for the same price in 2022, well, it was icing on the cake.

Around the country, the firearms training community is seeing a small but distinct resurgence in double-action revolvers. We've talked about nostalgia and simplicity driving retro firearms sales: Here we have something different, *the simple pleasure of operating the machine*.

We all know drivers who would rather have a four-on-the-floor than an automatic transmission, even though they may have to special order a vehicle with that feature these days. Ask them why, and they'll tell you something like, "It's because I want to be driving the car, not having the car drive itself for me."

Running a double-action revolver is much the same. The autoloading firearm is named so because with

each shot it reloads its own chamber, but rolling the trigger of a double-action revolver lets the shooter know *he* is bringing that next cartridge in the next chamber up into line with the barrel.

And it's the same with the lever-action rifle or the pump gun: A subtle sense of more direct personal control, of mastery of the machine. It's subtle. You can see why I call it "an intangible." But it's *there*, and it sells those types of firearm for you.

We have only to witness the eagerness with which the return of the Ruger Marlin lever-action rifles has been greeted by the gun-buying public. And to finish this column where it began, we see it in the popularity of the entire Henry Firearms line.

"Retro" may not be your biggest seller ... but it still sells. **\$1**

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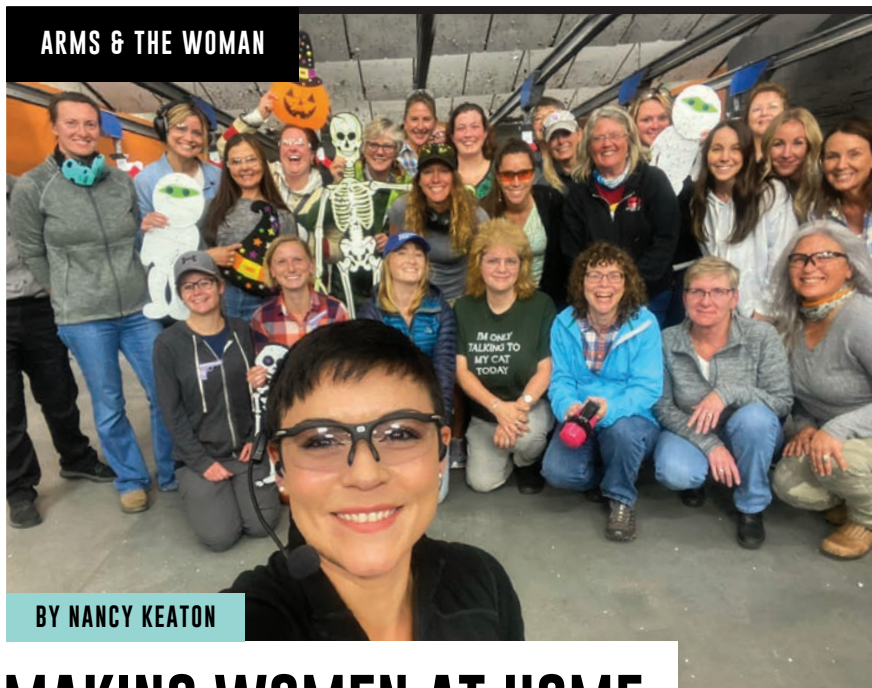
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BY NANCY KEATON

## MAKING WOMEN AT HOME ON THE RANGE

**W**hat do women want in their shooting range? What will make them comfortable and return time and again?

Let's evaluate.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS: THE IMPORTANCE OF A WEBSITE

Women like to do research. We want to know what we're getting into before we even step foot in an unfamiliar facility. This is where a top-notch website is important. A poor one looks unprofessional and makes us wonder about the quality of the training, as well.

The website should also contain as much information as possible. What safety mechanisms are in place? What services are offered? Will there be help for new shooters? Does it appear friendly to new shooters? What training is available for women?

Answer as many questions as possible online. Sometimes if we can't find the answers to our questions easily, we'll keep searching for another site rather than "risk" calling and feeling stupid.

Customer service is vital because when we do call to ask questions or walk into the store, if we're ignored or spoken to in a brusque manner, we'll be done with that range, right then and

there. And, understand we'll always look at reviews to see what kind of feedback other women give.

### TEACHING METHODS CAN MAKE OR BREAK

Tatiana Whitlock, director of training at Howell's Indoor Range & Gun Shop in Gray, Maine, tells about their unique situation: The entire training team is all women.

"We're one of the few — if not the only — range in the country with an all-female training staff. This wasn't by design; it's just how it panned out over time," she shared.

Interestingly, having an all-female staff has not only brought in more women but also more men. But it's not the makeup of the staff bringing people in — it's the style of the training.

Whitlock explained, "The NSSF and all of our industry resources show the fastest-growing demographic [besides women] is an age group of mid-50s to around the late 60s. This group of individuals is not necessarily looking for a 'tacticool' type of experience, they're looking for something where they're going to feel safe and welcomed and not intimidated."

It's the story the Howell's team hears often, according to Whitlock.

"They're seeking female instructors

◀ Take a moment and look at the smiling faces and notice the diversity in age of the women here at Howell's Indoor Range. When your range classes can get *here*, you've done it right!

and they're also seeking a more personable or civilian-style experience," she said. "We're seeing a real desire from our community for real-life application of skill sets in the unfortunate event they would have to use a firearm to defend their lives, and also for home safety practices."

Whitlock continued, "Don't get me wrong; the tactical stuff is so much fun and I love it, but for someone who's new, this is a slightly intimidating space to walk into. If you've never been exposed to it before, you have to have the courage to even set foot in a gun shop as a single individual with no firearms history.

"We have an opportunity as a retail/range staff to make each person feel welcomed, to make each person's questions feel valid and to be answered in a language they understand. We don't have to throw the hard-hitting terms around, we don't have to go all 'encyclopedic' on people or throw gunsmith or armorer's language at someone.



**We have an opportunity as a retail/range staff to make each person feel welcomed, to make each person's questions feel valid and to be answered in a language they understand."**

**Tatiana Whitlock** • Director of Training  
Howell's Indoor Range & Gun Shop • Gray, Maine

"So, they're walking into a staff who welcomes young families, as well as our older community. Just walking in and feeling accepted; being seen and heard is huge. We also serve a large portion of the LGBTQ+ community because they know they can walk in here and not be treated an ounce differently than anyone else, and their specific needs and questions



“

It's fun, it's fellowship, it's a really relaxing atmosphere. Do I put pressure on them? Absolutely, but it's in the right context.”

Judi Phelps • Owner  
On Guard Defense • Hocking Hills, Ohio

will be answered and heard.”

In addition, Howell's website clearly outlines class offerings, showing where to start and each next step, as well as the amenities, prices, fun activities and matches and an emphasis on customer service. It's an excellent example of an informative and professional website.

### TRAINING “LADY WARRIORS”

On Guard Defense in Hocking Hills, Ohio, has also noticed the kind of training women are seeking. They created a program just for women called Lady Warrior Weekend (or Lady Warrior Bootcamp for those who can't attend the whole weekend).

Owner Judi Phelps enthusiastically explained, “The primary focus of the Lady Warrior Weekend is pistol work and gun safety. Many of these women may leave and never get a gun, but the purpose of taking them through all the gun training is to make sure even if they don't carry a gun they're clear on safety and how they work.”

In addition to armed training, the class includes unarmed self-defense for places where carry is prohibited.

“We train ladies on how to use their bodies to inflict the most damage they can on their attackers to enable them to escape or to create enough distance in order to employ a more useful weapon,” Phelps shared.

Similar to Whitlock's observations, Phelps said their non-intimidating training methods create a more welcoming environment.

“One of the things I consistently hear from women on why they seek out women training women is they're not often treated with the respect and kindness from male instructors, who are often from law enforcement and military backgrounds. They're used to ‘barking’ and a lot of the women are already intimidated and they don't need that. The guys tend to speak with this industry nomenclature, and they use acronyms before they even explain to the ladies what they mean.


“So, we're careful to make sure throughout the whole instruction process all of the ladies are really comfortable with every step. So, it's fun, it's fellowship, it's a really relaxing atmosphere. Do I put pressure on them? Absolutely, but it's in the right context. Women come from all over the country for this training. There are just not a lot of programs out there like this for women and one of the key differentiators is not only is it for women, but it's taught by women. We understand the unique challenges associated with being a woman and we can relate to them.”

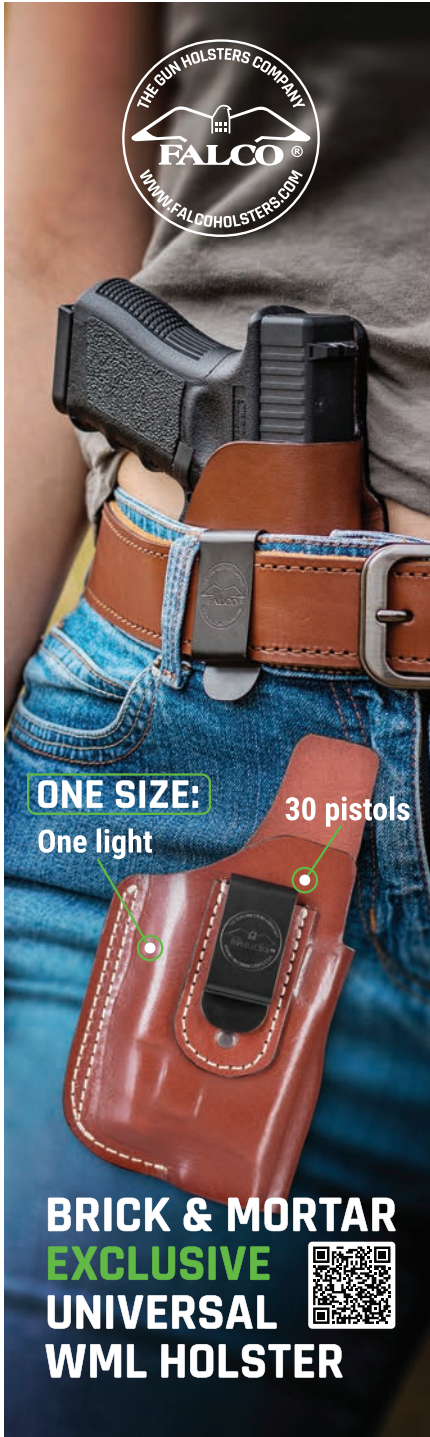
### THE BOTTOM LINE

To be clear, this is not in any way to suggest all training staff should be replaced by women; far from it. The point is simply to determine if your customer base is looking for different styles of training and communication than has been offered over the past several years.

All you need to do to make women feel at home on the range is simply provide:

- A professional, detailed website for a good first impression.
- Clean facilities.
- Personable customer service.
- Staff able to teach in a non-tactical, non-intimidating manner.
- Real-life self-defense training.

Before you know it, you'll have a customer base of happy women who will return over and over — and will happily refer all their friends to your gun range. 




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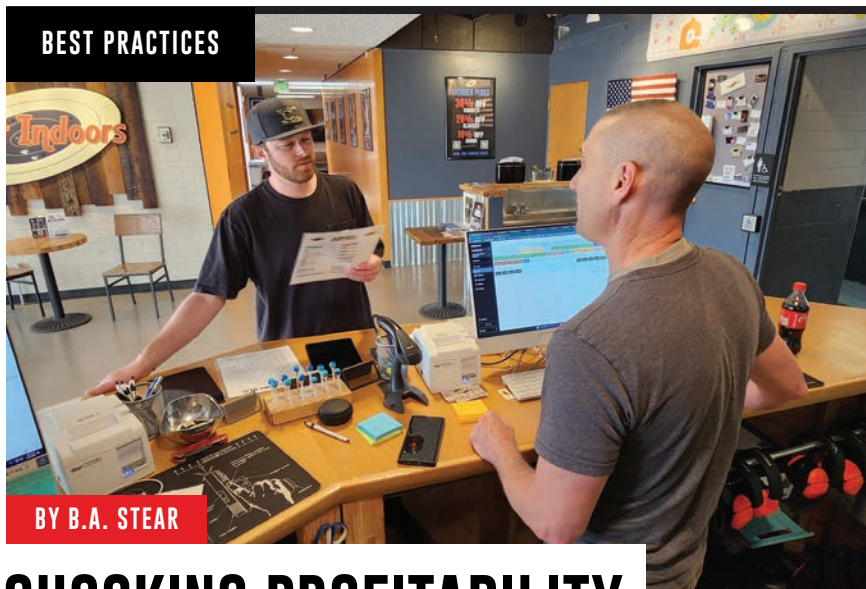
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BY B.A. STEAR

## SHOCKING PROFITABILITY IN PAPER TARGETS

**M**ost range owners overlook the most basic of shooting essentials — the paper target — since it's a very low-price item when compared to ammunition and range time. Well, we've discovered some surprising opportunities hidden in that cheap bull's-eye.

With some simple sales training, you should easily be able to double your target sales leading to some serious increases in profitability at the end of the year to the tune of \$50,000 (or more) for some high-volume operations. That's \$50,000 cash profit, not revenue. So, what's actually happening here?

### RESHAPING THE REFERENCE POINT

In 2022, I studied two range locations and calculated the average targets sold per customer visit. It was almost exactly one-to-one (totals targets divided by total range visits). This means one target is being sold per one customer visit. It's not a perfect metric since members tend to bring their own targets, but stick with me.

I also listened to some of the conversations at the check-in desk. Most range officers asked customers, "Do you need a target?" Well, unsurprisingly, the customer did need a target — exactly one — so one target was rung up. If a large target sells for \$2.50 and costs less than \$0.50, it's a \$2 profit for each target heading out on the range.

What was subconsciously happening in this typical sales transaction is what psychologists call "anchoring." Anchoring simply refers to setting a reference point. You have set the expectation most people shoot *one* target at the range. The range officer asked the customer if they wanted one target and they replied yes, assuming they needed only one.

We've found a very easy way to flip the narrative. For example, if the range officer asks, "Do you need some targets?" Most people shoot *three* targets. How 'bout I start you with three, and if you need another one, let me know."

You have immediately set the reference point an average person shoots three targets per range visit. No one wants to be perceived as out of the norm (or a rookie), so they buy three targets resulting in an extra \$4 in profit for one transaction. For a range handling more than 25,000 range visits per year, this sale only needs to be landed 25% of the time to make an extra \$25,000 in profit. If you can get this number up to every other sale, an extra \$50,000 in profit is generated.

### TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MODERN TOOLS

Although this is a very simple concept, in theory, it must be taught and frequently practiced by your staff. Even a great idea is worthless unless it is successfully applied.

◀ If you can turn "Do you need a target?" to "Do you need *some* targets?" you're well on your way to generating significant add-on profits at the customer service desk.

Luckily, modern software tools — thanks in large part to artificial intelligence — have made the creation of training content very easy to generate and accessible to staff who live in the world of podcasts and captioned YouTube.

One particular tool I've gravitated toward is text extraction from video or audio files using Rev.com. Most of you are familiar with voice dictation, which has been around for a while, but the new magic is the extraction of text from video or audio clips generated on a phone. Every staff member learns a bit differently. Visual learners like to see pictures and video, while auditory learners like to hear and listen.

The Rev.com automated transcription tools make it easy to satisfy both groups with very little extra work, plus they have their own app to make the content upload even easier.



**For a range handling more than 25,000 range visits per year, this sale only needs to be landed 25% of the time to make an extra \$25,000 in profit.**

Here's an example of how this works with audio: The range manager compiles some notes and opens a voice-recording app on their phone or computer. They hit "Record" and start talking like they would teach the lesson in a meeting. Once the recording is saved, it is uploaded to Rev.com, which will extract the audio and convert it to a transcript.

You can then send a staff email with the audio file attached (just like a podcast) as well as the transcript. What's great about this is just your voice can be recorded anytime (like when driving to/from work or waiting for a flight).

It's also effective with video: The range manager schedules a virtual staff meeting (using Google Meet or



Zoom) and records the meetings. That video file can be uploaded to Rev.com, which extracts the transcript just like before, except now there is a captioned video, audio podcast and the training transcript that can be emailed to everyone.

Once you get familiar with the tools, these short training clips can be very effective, especially knowing the average attention span for viewers online tends to be 2–3 minutes.

### MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

You can't walk into any shooting industry trade show without hitting a specialized point-of-sale (POS) solution for a range and retail operation. POS solutions were covered in *Shooting Industry* last year by Hank Yacek ("Point Of Sale Systems: They Got The Name Wrong!" April 2022), but I want to focus on one simple feature they all

offer — reporting.

As long as the system can export the number of range visits you had last week (and the number of targets sold during that period), you can easily create a way to measure how many targets the staff is selling per visit. Just divide the two numbers.

When we first started this initiative, we were at a straight one-to-one ratio: We were averaging one target per customer visit. This sounds low, but to simplify the measurement we grouped all of the visitors together (members and non-members).

Most of our members bring their own targets, and most non-members purchase more than one target, but complicating the calculation doesn't help anyone (and the trend should still be apparent). For the hard-sell members, we have had excellent luck offering the seasonal targets from

Gunfun.com. Not many people are printing their own Valentine's Day targets, but they do sell!

After training staff on this anchoring method, you should start to see that ratio rise, like 1.5 to 1, 2 to 1, etc., especially if they are motivated by an incentive.

### "LET'S START WITH TWO ..."

This sales technique isn't specific to targets — it works just as well on ammunition — but the target example is the easiest to teach, track and incentivize employees.

Once you have this concept down and staff fully trained, modify the script to say: "Most people shoot two boxes of 9mm. How 'bout I start you with *two* and if you need another one, let me know." It's not a hard adjustment, and ammunition can be even more profitable than paper. **SI**



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3 Range Operators Share Lessons Learned The Hard Way

## OPENING A RANGE?

### HERE ARE SOME DO'S & DON'TS

BY TIM BARKER

**N**o one builds a new indoor shooting range on a whim. It's an undertaking that demands an enormous investment in both money and time. If it's something you're considering, there are things you can learn from a trio of new range operators who offered to share their experiences.

#### ORIGINS

For Thom and Julie Beyer, co-founders of The Range In McKinney, Texas, it was an evolution that began nearly a decade ago when they started running a small gun business out of their insurance agency. They spent five years planning and traveling

the country, visiting other ranges, attending NRA range development conferences and NSSF meetings.

They wanted their own brick-and-mortar shop — but only if it included a range, which they opened in Nov. 2022.

"It's like selling someone a car," Thom suggested. "I also want to sell them the gasoline, the road to race it on and a place to store it."

Opening Alabama Firearms Academy, in Boaz, Ala., offered a chance for Jared Meeks and his niece's husband, Devin Campbell, to go into business together. After years of planning, they settled on a location in their hometown, where they renovated a building that was once part of an outlet mall. Meeks has owned a gun store — Jared's

Tactical & Firearms — for more than a dozen years, but he wanted a range. The new shop opened in Dec. 2022.

"I was convinced I was going to do it one way or another, even if it took me five more years by myself," Meeks said. "But with Devin helping me, it happened a lot faster."

David Sabo and his partner Jeff Swinford, of Midwest Shooting Center, came to the industry from an entirely different angle, with a background running franchises for an international fitness chain. They joined the firearms industry in 2016 with an e-commerce operation before quickly opening a small retail shop. Then in 2017, they opened their first range in Lima, Ohio. They'll open their eighth location this summer and are currently working with dozens of prospective franchisees.

"We felt we needed a range to tap into those other revenue sources, such as membership and training," Sabo explained. "So, we made what we considered our first real investment in the industry."



◀ Since opening its first location in 2017, Midwest Shooting Center will launch its eighth range later this year.

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIPS

Before getting serious about a range, you need to assess your chances of getting it approved by local government officials. Having a strong relationship could make or break your dream.

"I've actually lived through it," Meeks stated. "If you don't have a good relationship with the city, you're going to be miserable. They're going to cause you problems and it's going to cost you a bunch of money."

Before opening the Boaz range, Meeks tried to expand his original store, located in another city. Things went well initially, with the city offering to donate 15 acres of land for an indoor/outdoor range. But after some locals started complaining, the city's support evaporated. By the time it was over, Meeks said he'd sunk \$50,000 into lost development costs.

Switching to Boaz, Meeks and his partner found a more welcoming community, with support from several other nearby towns — all eager to have a new range close by.

"It has been really eye-opening for us," he shared. "If we need something, all we have to do is ask and the city will bend over backward to help us."

One of the challenges is figuring out whether government officials are truly open to your plans, contends Sabo, with Midwest Shooting. You could spend six months working through the bureaucratic process, only to find the person you're dealing with doesn't have the ability, or desire, to get it done.

In the end, Sabo asserts that you need the city's support for your vision: "They can stonewall you all day if they don't believe in the use."

While your project may need the approval of local council members, don't underestimate the importance

of city staffers. The Beyers first attempted to build a range in another Texas city but found only modest support. So, they switched to the more enthusiastic city of McKinney.

Yet even with robust support, they ran into a glitch the day before the project was heading to a vote at a planning hearing. They got a phone call letting them know staffers were going to recommend rejecting the project and why. This call gave the Beyers a chance to prepare answers for skeptics who were worried about noise.

**"WE GET SO MANY COMPLIMENTS ON HOW FRIENDLY AND WELCOMING WE ARE. OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE IS EXCELLENT AND OUR FACILITIES ARE NICE. AND THOSE ARE EXACTLY THE THINGS WE WANTED."**

**JULIE BEYER • Co-Founder**  
The Range • McKinney, Texas

"They were giving me a heads-up about what was going on," Thom said. "They were pointing me in the right direction."

When it was over, the project passed with a unanimous vote.

## PLAN FOR ROADBLOCKS

Undoubtedly, there are going to be obstacles — many of them outside your control — standing between you and your new range.

Supply logistics offered the biggest headache for the Beyers, who were trying to open their range in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic that created global supply chain issues.

It was easy to find inventory to sell, but they couldn't get everything needed for the building to be ready for occupancy, particularly when it came to the HVAC system. They found the air handling units, but not the computer chips — made in China — needed to control them. This added seven months to the project.

The Beyers also ran into roadblocks when it came to financing until they made a connection with a friendlier Oklahoma-based community bank.

"We were trying to figure out the best way to go and many of the large banks wouldn't even talk to us," Thom recalled.

For Sabo and Midwest Shooting, the real estate piece of the puzzle is often the trickiest. The company doesn't build from the ground up. Instead, they look for vacant retail box stores in areas that fit their business model.

"Once we have it acquired, we're fairly turnkey because everybody has done this multiple times now," he remarked.

This experience is one of the reasons the company is seeing so much interest from potential franchisees, Sabo informed. There's just so much to do when starting from scratch.

"They're trying to build out their business model, their staffing model, revenue models, their price structures and figuring out their initial store set up. It's just a huge project when you go through it the first time," he said.

## HOW TO STAND OUT

If you're going to make the investment, you need to give your business the best chance at success. For each of these ranges, it meant building modern facilities that are clean, well-lit, visually appealing and welcoming.

Julie Beyer recalled some of her early visits to gun stores, where she often felt ignored by staffers who were only interested in talking with her husband. She and her husband were determined to avoid this dynamic with their own store.

"We get so many compliments on

how friendly and welcoming we are,” she noted. “Our customer service is excellent and our facilities are nice. And those are exactly the things we wanted.”

For marketing, they’ve used radio, a local monthly magazine, a website and emails. In the end, social media has the largest reach. It helps they have an employee experienced with Facebook and other popular platforms.

“Radio can be great, but it’s expensive and you’re only getting one segment of the population,” she mentioned. “Social media is the only way to get everybody covered.”

Meeks, like his counterparts, spent a lot of time visiting other ranges around the country before building the Alabama operation. He came away from those journeys with a lot of ideas about what to do — and what to avoid.

“When you walk into our place, it’s clean and you should be spoken to every time you come in the door,” he said. “I have a little girl and I don’t want her to walk in somewhere and have to use a nasty bathroom.”

With his partner coming from a Walmart background, they’ve employed a modern retail approach, with TVs and electronic billboards throughout the store to market products and services. They have event space, an entertainment area and a beverage room for members.

For marketing, they use billboards, radio, email blasts and social media. Next up, Meeks plans to try a direct-mail campaign. Instead of hiring a pricey marketing firm, they’ll take advantage of a self-service option from the post office that allows them to blanket any individual zip code for \$300.

“If you do it yourself, all you have to do is take the flyer down to the post office and they’ll send it out for you,” Meeks shared.

Midwest Shooting focuses on making novice shooters feel comfortable. Stores tend to be run by gun enthusiasts who love the industry and have a passion for firearms, but according to Sabo, it often creates intimidating environments for newcomers.



**Whether it’s a private lesson (top) or a group (bottom), The Range in McKinney offers training to suit every level of comfort or expertise. Several classes, including intermediate and advanced levels, are available as women-only classes.**

“We go the complete opposite. We’re 100% tailored to the beginner and to the new shooter,” he expressed. “We go in and try to change the perception our industry has faced over the years.”

Once they get those newbies into the store, there’s a major emphasis on range memberships — with an average of 2,500 members at each location. They follow it up with six- to 12-month training programs, giving customers more reasons to come back.

For marketing, they’ve had the most success with social media, supplemented with modest use of radio and billboards. They’ve managed to avoid entanglements

with social media censors by avoiding mentioning specific products.

“You can’t say firearms and you can’t say ammo,” Sabo said. “So, we market the other aspects of the business. We just market the brand personality. It’s more or less awareness, and we can talk about training.”

## LESSONS LEARNED

Regardless of how much planning you do, it’s unlikely you’ll make it to the end without running into an unexpected development or two. There will be things you’ll wish you would have known from the beginning.



## **"WE'RE 100% TAILORED TO THE BEGINNER AND TO THE NEW SHOOTER. WE GO IN AND TRY TO CHANGE THE PERCEPTION OUR INDUSTRY HAS FACED OVER THE YEARS."**

**DAVID SABO** • Partner  
Midwest Shooting Center

For Meeks, it was a hard lesson in dealing with contractors. After getting his project started for an agreed-upon price, he remembers walking around the building with the contractor and asking for improvements or changes here and there. What he didn't realize was the contractor was adding up all of those

"change orders" without mentioning the impact on the final price.

His advice: Get everything in writing, signed both by you and your contractor.

"If I had it to do over again, I probably could have saved \$200,000 to \$300,000," he reflected.

For Sabo and his partner, who were coming from the world of fitness, it was the cyclical nature of the firearms industry.

"I don't want to say we didn't know it, but I don't think we knew the extent of it," he admitted.

The wild swings made things less financially predictable than a typical retail experience. They opened their first range during the lackluster years before the pandemic. They quickly learned not to rely too heavily on merchandise sales.

"We got good at selling memberships and training," he said. "Now, all of our expenses for our locations are covered by memberships and training."

For the Beyers, it was realizing how much work was involved in getting the back end ready for their opening.

"We picked out a great point-of-sale product, but it was making sure you've got the UPC codes in for all of your products, and that you really do have everything in the system," Thom Beyer acknowledged.

It's the kind of thing that can get lost in the shuffle when you have 200 different tasks needing to be completed before a grand opening.

"We were up until 2 a.m. the night before, putting things in and making sure it all worked out," he said.

There's no denying the amount of hard work needed to get a project of this magnitude off the ground and running. However, the reward of owning and operating a successful range business is, ultimately, a worthy endeavor. **\$**

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◀ Jacquelyn Clark (left) regularly seeks out innovative ideas from both inside and outside the industry. She integrates the ones with the greatest potential into Bristlecone Shooting, Training & Retail Center's operations.

# TECHNOLOGY + RANGE MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

BY CAROLEE ANITA BOYLES

**J**ust like technology in everyday life, technology on the range is changing almost daily. Whether this new tech involves hardware, programming of target systems or range management software, taking advantage of what will work for your specific range can improve the relationships with your customers and your profitability.

## DO-ALL SYSTEMS EASE BUSINESS BURDENS

At Bristlecone Shooting, Training & Retail Center in Lakewood, Colo., Owner Jacquelyn Clark looks for new technology in a number of places.

"Of course, we go to

the SHOT Show," she said, "but we also look in other recreational fields as well. We have looked into the restaurant industry to see how they solve scheduling problems. When we go skiing or to an escape room or another type of recreational activity, I'm always on the lookout for things we can use. I've heard people say there are no innovative ideas, just repurposed ones, and I definitely put that into practice."

Over the past couple of years, one part of the range Clark has been working on is the check-in experience and the customer interface before the customer enters the range.

"We had been using Smartwaiver for our waiver platform," she shared. "We've recently switched to CityGro,

a Cloud-based solution that integrates a little better with our point-of-sale system. Once we started really looking at CityGro and brought it in, we found a whole lot of benefits we didn't anticipate and we really like."

One thing CityGro has done, according to Clark, was to take the range's checkout function out of the hands of the staff and put it into the hands of the customer.

"This really reduces the bottleneck at the range check-in counter, especially if it's a busy Saturday and people have to wait," she said. "CityGro has tablets, and when customers come in the staff directs them to the table with the tablets. They enter their names, phone numbers, answer a couple of questions and then they're checked in for the range. So instead of waiting in line and having human interaction, they do it on their own and then they watch a safety video, which is another piece of technology we implemented to reduce the bottleneck and increase customer satisfaction."

This has made the entire process more streamlined

— resulting in happier customers.

CityGro also collects data Clark and her staff find useful from a marketing perspective. When a customer signs in for the range, he or she must enter a phone number, whether it's the first time they've come or if they come every day. The system tracks the frequency of range use for every phone number and asks if the user is a member.

"The possible answers are 'Yes, and I love it', 'No, but I'm interested' and just 'No,'" Clark shared. "We filter customers by how they answer those questions to market to them. Once a month we pull a list of everyone who answered 'No, but I'm interested,' and we send them a deal on membership."

Clark also can track how many times each person comes in and then she lets people who come in frequently know when it would be less expensive for them to have a membership than to just keep coming in one visit at a time without one.

"The way we can track things and then slice and dice the data has been extremely helpful," she said. "It's all stuff our point-of-sale system wasn't able to do in the past."

CityGro also has a text message marketing feature Clark has set up to send marketing messages according to what each user has done on the range; she can change the criteria and the messaging at any time.



"Its hands-off marketing is facilitated by the technology platform we brought in just to change the waiver situation," Clark said.

### ON-THE-RANGE REFINEMENTS

At Magnum Shooting Center's south location in Colorado Springs, Colo., General Manager Dan Jaeger has stayed with tried-and-true technologies that work for his range.

"We personally like rubber bullet traps," he said. "They seem to be cleaner than other systems. We can't mine the lead ourselves; we have to have someone with the equipment do it, which means my employees stay healthier. The system we have is from Range Systems."

Jaeger found the lower the tech carriers on the range are, the better they last.

"We had some pretty fancy robotic ones, but ended up going back to a cable style," he observed. "Now we have a lot less maintenance and a lot less breakage."

Magnum Shooting Center did keep the LED touchscreen control system from Range Systems, however, and just integrated it with the old-style carriers.

Kevin Cutter is assistant

manager at Centennial Gun Club in Centennial, Colo. He said the range is talking with Action Target right now about some of their new targets.

## THE WAY WE CAN TRACK THINGS AND THEN

**SLICE AND DICE  
THE DATA HAS  
BEEN EXTREMELY  
HELPFUL."**

**JACQUELYN CLARK • Owner**  
Bristlecone Shooting  
Lakewood, Colo.

"One of the things we're looking at is new methods of shot registration," he relayed. "Action Target has a new carrier that — if it's shot twice — will set off alarms and lock itself back at the ready area until a range safety officer unlocks it. This way, people aren't shooting into the roof

or things like that."

### LOOKING OUTSIDE THE INDUSTRY?

Nishan Campbell, CEO of Gunfighter Canyon (with three locations in Arizona), shared when he starts thinking about new technology, he looks outside the firearms industry.

"We go to the SHOT Show and do all the things everyone else does," he said, "but what we pride ourselves on is looking outside the industry. I like to see what restaurants are doing, so we look at point-of-sale programs, logistics, supply chain and the ways big companies move products and people. We try to adopt what they adopt."

As much as he loves the gun industry, Campbell thinks it lags a little behind on the tech side.

"I love seeing new vendors at the SHOT Show, and what NSSF does to bring in new technology," he noted. "We like to get out in front of it and ask what the best practices are right now that are happening outside of our industry."

One facet of this Campbell is looking at is how other facilities handle their wait lists. For instance, customers often have to wait to get onto the range, or they need to make reservations.

"We do a lot of online reservations," Campbell confirmed. "We have groups from two people up to about 50, so we have to flex our staffing so we don't drop the ball at the point of execution. We have three locations, and we need a way for both the customer and the staff to let customers select where they want to go so we have appropriate staffing for those staffing."

Campbell shared that

Gunfighter Canyon changes point-of-sale systems frequently.

"There are a lot of good systems in the market, but we haven't found the one that's quite the right solution for us yet," he stated.

Campbell tries to stay away from paper altogether. Of course, his 4473s are all digital, but he also uses digital ways of staying in touch with and serving customers.

"We use Constant Contact, and we have a built-in digital waiver system that works with Constant Contact," he shared. "This also allows us to market specifically to individuals."

Although they have played around with some of the big, interactive range systems with self-healing screen systems, Campbell said they haven't worked out for Gunfighter Canyon.

"They've got a 'cool factor,'" he maintained, "but we've found they just don't have the mass appeal in our market."

Campbell sees Gunfighter Canyon as being more than just a shooting range; he considers what the range offers as being entertainment, as well.

"We are primarily in the experience-based business," he said. "I'd say what we do is more tourism. It's why we look at restaurant-style systems and technology more than traditional firearms industry technology."

As we can see here, technology abounds when it comes to range management, scheduling, tracking consumer tendencies, marketing and more. Every store or range's needs are unique — and as owners and managers, you know your market better than anyone. **SI**



Adept range management software makes your job easier and enhances a customer's experience at your range. A win-win!



By Doug VanderWoude

# Boosting Summer Traffic

“

Enough of waving  
the white flag.  
Here are some ideas  
to bring you  
business during the  
slow season.

A number of years back, I was working at an outdoor retailer and responsible for its sales. When I didn't hit the target sales number due to slow business, I told the owner it was because of the recession. He replied, "Yes, I've heard about the recession but decided not to participate — you better hit the number next month." Good advice: his mentality was one of the reasons why his store was very successful for the 50-plus years he was at the helm.

Regardless of what my old boss expressed, we all know business slows down some in the summer months — when we compete against vacations, outdoor activities, folks not wanting to get out of their air-conditioned homes, etc. The million-dollar question is: What should we do about it?



## IS IT SELF-INFLICTED?

I'm of the belief some parts of our summer slowdowns are self-inflicted. At my store/range I cut back my advertising in late spring/early summer anticipating the slowdown. I often wonder how much did reducing my advertising spend affect my sales and range traffic. In addition, I also cut down on my sales staff hours. How much did less salespeople on the floor impact sales? Looking back, I would still lower advertising and staffing — just not as much.

Speaking of reducing expenses: Summer is a great time for staff to take some vacation, so maybe cut back some hours for the part-timers. Use your judgement on how much to cut back without affecting your level of customer service.

Use your point-of-sale (POS) software to follow traffic count trends in previous years.

## TIME FOR REFLECTION

Slow season is also a perfect time to look at your showroom. Does it need a makeover? Now's a good time for it — even if it's just a good cleaning and moving some fixtures around. If you have a range, you know they need maintenance and lead mining. Summer is a great time to get caught up on these projects and maybe do some upgrades.

Use this time when you're not running around with your hair on fire to meet with your key staff members and ask probing questions about how they feel the first half of the year has gone. What changes would they make if they were the owner? These should be some deep dives, really listen.

Get in touch with other store owners in our industry; ask what they're planning for the rest of the year. Right now — while there is still some time to save your year — is the time to make changes if things aren't shaping up how you hoped.

Next to labor, inventory is usually your largest cost. For this, plan your purchasing for the rest of the year. Don't book out your purchases to have the same amount of inventory year round, use your POS data and look at

previous years' product flow (of course the firearms industry has extreme swings in business that have nothing to do with summer slowdown, so you'll need to look at the data through the eyes of your gut).

The time to slow your buying down and reduce inventory intake is before the stuff stacks up. In no way do you want high carry costs of too much inventory during the slow season.

## KIDS' CAMP, WITH A FIREARMS TWIST

Enough of waving the white flag. Here are some ideas to bring you business during the slow season.

Remember going to camp as a kid? How about taking that fun experience and giving it a firearms twist? Host a shooting camp for kids at your range.

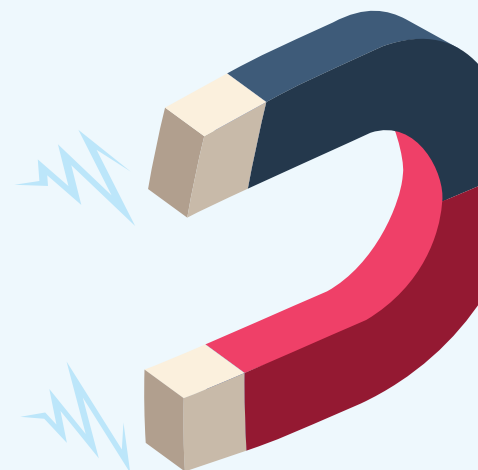
Ryan Burt, CEO of the Calibers Shooting Centers with three locations in New Mexico, has been hosting youth camps for 10 years. They currently offer two camps, one for ages 8–12 at a price of \$94.99 and another for teenagers from 13–17 years of age at a price of \$179.99. Camps are two to three days depending on the age group and include everything from lunch to bullets.

Some of the topics covered by the NRA-certified instructors include firearm safety, proper response to finding an unattended firearm, marksmanship fundamentals and, of course, actual shooting on the range — all taught in a safe, fun environment. Kids' camp participants get to shoot balloons, bowling pin shapes, plastic bottles filled with colorful liquid and more.

Burt shared some tips on hosting a Kids' camp. Number one, get the word out to the community far in advance. He recommends a minimum of 45 days before the event. As far as the number of instructors needed, he uses a 3:1 ratio of students to instructors. Last year Calibers decided to split the age groups into two, one for ages 8–12 and another for ages 13–17; this allows the older group to do more advanced shooting. The campers really like the new format. Calibers has received positive feedback from the community on the camp, especially parents.

“

Use this time when you're not running around with your hair on fire to meet with your key staff members and ask probing questions about how they feel the first half of the year has gone.



Putting on a camp is not without a lot of effort, but is it worth it? Face it, some events (especially during slow times of the year) will not bring in instant sales. Instead, you're planting seeds for the future by exposing your business to new potential customers.

With a kids' camp, many of the campers are under driving age — so you're also getting an adult who has to drop off/pick up inside the store, giving you a chance to show off your facility and maybe sell them something as well.

Speaking of selling them something, I'm a big believer of getting non-shooters into your facility. These non-shooters may become customers if they see a clean well-lit store with a friendly staff — so it could pay off in the future. Even if they don't become shooters today, they may need a gift for a shooter in the future and remember your establishment.

#### MAXIMUM BENEFIT FROM CHARITABLE EFFORTS

Hosting a fundraising event for a local charity is another good way to bring folks into your business during the summer, just make sure you actually get them through the door.

The following comes from an experience of a friend of mine. He had the great idea to be a stop for a motorcycle club charity poker run. All good so far: promoting his business in the community, helping a charity and getting the riders to come to his establishment during business hours to pick up the poker chip. However,



Mission Ridge Range And Academy challenged guests to face off against the Twisted Ballistics shooting team (top). The turnout from this year's event provided a welcome boost during the slower summer months — and supported a good cause (bottom).

**“**  
**The time to**  
**slow your**  
**buying down**  
**and reduce**  
**inventory**  
**intake is before**  
**the stuff stacks**  
**up.**

he lost the bet as the club set up to give out the chips in the parking lot. Riders and organizers came as far as the parking lot to get the chip, talked a bit and then went on to the next stopping point without stepping foot into his store. We need to at least get them into the building to get the maximum benefit.

Mission Ridge Range And Academy, with locations in San Antonio and Plano, Texas, is one of the nicer range and

retail stores you'll find. They got their charitable participation right: they not only got potential customers in the door, they also got them to shoot on their range.

Mission Ridge recently hosted a Twisted Ballistics Youth Shooting Team fundraising event at their San Antonio location. Rafe Corley, director of retail, said the event brought in over 200 shooters and was a fun day at the range for their customers and team members.





Calibers promoted its kids' camp — a certain memorable event for the kids who attended this year.

How did they get so many shooters? They made it exciting by asking "Are you faster than a

Twisted Ballistics Youth Shooter?" For \$10, they got to go head-to-head with a Twisted Ballistics

athlete on the range to see who could ring the steel targets the fastest. Rental gun/rimfire ammo were included in the price with all the proceeds going to the Twisted Ballistics team.

Mission Ridge also had multiple raffles and food trucks with Black Rifle Coffee, Sons of Liberty Gun Works and other vendors attend to make this a successful event.

Rafe is excited about partnering with them again in the future and quipped, "Hopefully I can improve my own shooting skills and maybe give them a little more competition next time."

Not only was the event a smashing success for Twisted Ballistics, Rafe shared, "It also hit on one of our core values of

community involvement. We're always looking for opportunities to 'Advance the Sport.' We believe partnering with youth shooters is a great way to engage with our local communities and Twisted Ballistics has been such a great partner through the years." **SI**

Following minor league baseball teams is another way to learn about promotions that may work for you. Have you found ways to make your summer slowdown better? Let others know by contacting this fine magazine: [comments@shootingindustry.com](mailto:comments@shootingindustry.com).

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How The  
Firearms Industry  
Can Better  
Support Youth  
Shooting Sports  
Organizations

# Investing In The Next Generation

BY ASHLEY MCGEE

**AS**

the firearms industry continues to be attacked on what seems like nearly every front possible, and spending and participation in hunting and shooting sports return to pre-pandemic levels, our future hangs in the balance. Investing in future generations is the only way to preserve our legacy and heritage.

In 2016, the Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation reported participation in youth shooting sport events increased by 142% over the previous 6 years. However, more recent data from the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) offers a different perspective. The 2023 edition of its annual U.S. Sports Participation Report revealed the shooting

segment showed slight declines compared to the previous year, as a slight increase in hunting with firearms was not enough to offset the decline in the other activities tracked in this segment. These segments include archery (target), archery (hunting), muzzleloading, paintball and target shooting (both live ammunition and airgun).

When it comes to youth involvement in shooting sports, recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) are the responsibility of every individual and business in the firearms community. Here are some things you can do:

## 1. EDUCATE

While critics may argue our efforts amount



to indoctrination, in reality, cultivating youth involvement in shooting sports helps develop strong character, teach invaluable life skills and open the door to future opportunities.

Similar to other youth sports, participation in shooting sports can help children and teens improve their focus and concentration, hand-eye coordination and motor skills, self-control and emotional regulation, mental focus and problem-solving and discipline, among other skills. Additionally, it helps teach social skills such as teamwork, camaraderie and sportsmanship, as well as responsibility. The only difference is instead of a bat or a ball, their equipment includes firearms and ammunition.

The shooting sports can also serve as a pathway to higher education. Many universities and colleges in the United States offer shooting programs and scholarships for talented athletes. Various shooting associations, foundations, corporations and state and local organization also offer scholarships specifically for youth involved in shooting sports. It's not uncommon for career opportunities to arise through building relationships with these organizations.

As a range or retailer, you can help educate others on the countless benefits of participating in youth shooting sports. Some ideas include inviting local teams for an exhibition match to help raise awareness. Or, if you don't have a range, consider hosting a parent information night where families can learn more about the various opportunities in your area.

## 2. DONATE

The most significant challenge impacting youth participation in the shooting sports is too many barriers to access, particularly for those from low-income households or living in urban areas.

Brittany French, CEO of Pass

It On — Outdoor Mentors said not having access, not having the confidence and/or skill set and not having anyone to go with are the most common barriers.

"We already knew this about hunting and fishing, but have found

**When it comes to youth involvement in shooting sports, recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) are the responsibility of every individual and business in the firearms community.**

the same to be true of shooting sports," she said.

In an effort to help break down these barriers, Pass It On — Outdoor Mentors founded the Wichita Clay Dusters Shooting Sports Team in 2021. The intramural team is part the Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) and operates independently of the local school system.

"The majority of our team are kids who have never shot a gun and are from a diverse population," said French. "Part of our recruitment for this team was to make an effort to engage a diverse audience because they face more barriers to outdoor recreation than others."

To do so, the organization partnered with the leaders of several Black churches in the inner city of Wichita, Kansas, some of whom serve as mentors themselves or provide group transportation to and from their churches for participants.

Not having access can mean a variety of things, from not having access to a range or outdoor recreation area to not having transportation, financial means or access to a firearm or other necessary gear.

Being keenly aware of these



John Annoni with Camp Compass participants. To better serve younger, diverse shooters, Annoni contends the industry needs to change its approach to organizations like his and listen to what they *really* need.

barriers, the Wichita Clay Dusters team keeps the cost of joining to \$25 per athlete for each 12-week season. The actual cost per athlete to participate is around \$320; the difference is subsidized by sponsorships and fundraising efforts.

Individuals and businesses in the firearms community can support shooting sports teams not only with monetary donations, but by donating equipment like targets, ammunition, personal protective equipment or even firearms. Those with a suitable facility may also consider donating range time for weekly practices or competitions.

Perhaps more valuable than money or equipment is your time. Most youth shooting sports organizations are led by volunteers. Consider serving as a mentor.

### 3. ASK, DON'T TELL

However you decide to get involved, John Annoni, career educator, gun rights advocate and outdoor mentor, encourages those in the firearms community to first decide how far they want to go.

"Are you willing to dig deep and do the hard work? Or is it about

sticking to the surface and doing just enough so you can check a box and feel good about yourself?," Annoni asked. "Do a sincere gut check."

Annoni also stressed the industry's need to flip the current



**Your voice is as valuable as your pockets. And if we as an industry don't collectively utilize every available avenue to support youth involvement in shooting sports, we can kiss our future goodbye.**



There's no place like a day out in the field — as these smiling Camp Compass students can attest to.

model on its head.

"The industry is used to people looking for donations or handouts, but instead of waiting for the ask why not say 'we're going to go to you and offer support in whatever way you need it,'" he said. "The burden shouldn't be on the smaller fish to ask the bigger fish for help when the bigger fish is the one with all the power, leverage and resources."

Based on the needs he saw as a public school teacher, Annoni founded Camp Compass Academy in 1994 — an organization with the mission to introduce urban, middle and high school students to various outdoor activities including hunting and archery.

In his experience running Camp Compass Academy, he's realized there isn't necessarily a shortage of people in the firearms community who are willing or able to help support youth programs: the problem is their support is often contingent upon meeting rigid stipulations and requirements. The result is a failure of the support provided to meet the actual needs.

"The industry can't tell these organizations what they need, they need to listen to what the actual needs are," said Annoni. "Instead of saying 'We'll give you \$5,000 but you can only use it for XYZ,' imagine the difference it would make if they said, 'We have \$5,000 to give your organization; tell us what you need.'"

### 4. ADVOCATE

Lastly, a completely free way for those in the firearms community to help grow youth participation in shooting sports is to simply be an advocate.

Proponents of anti-gun legislation will say they want to save lives, particularly the lives of school-aged children. What they fail to consider is how these measures, whether intentionally or not, often rob our youth of the invaluable opportunities previously mentioned.

For example, in May, the Oregon



House of Representatives passed HB 2005. The bill contains a myriad of new firearm regulations and specifically threatens youth hunting and high school trap shooting sports by preventing minors from accessing certain commonly owned firearms, even when fully trained in gun safety,

supervised by trained adults or participating in lawful and permitted hunting or sport shooting events.

In 2022, California passed AB-2571, which targets firearms advertising to minors with provisions such as prohibiting the use of: “images or depictions of minors in

advertising and marketing materials to depict the use of firearm-related products.”

Each violation of the provisions carries a civil penalty of up to \$25,000, which forced organizations like the California Youth Shooting Sports Association to cease operations until they could get clarity on how the bill applied to them.

As you become aware of these legislative efforts, contact your representatives to share the success stories of the children and teens who participate in shooting sports organizations. Advocacy can occur at the local level as well. Is your local high school's archery team on the chopping block? Show up to the school board meeting to voice your support.

The point here: your voice is as valuable as your pockets. And if we as an industry don't collectively utilize every available avenue to support youth involvement in shooting sports, we can kiss our future goodbye. **SI**



The Wichita Clay Dusters clay target team was established by Pass It On — Outdoors to give more youth the opportunity to participate in shooting sports who do not have a team at their school.

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A close-up image of a Weatherby Model 307 rifle. The rifle is black with a wooden stock. A scope is mounted on top. The text "MODEL 307" and "WEATHERBY SHERIDAN WY - USA" are visible on the receiver. A hand is holding the rifle's stock.

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Image: Powertac

BY BRIAN ARMSTRONG

# FLASHLIGHT SALES

**T**he LED flashlight market is huge and expected to continue to climb.

According to Research and Markets, consumers spent \$641 million on flashlights in 2020 and the market is expected to reach \$901 million by 2028 in North America.<sup>1</sup>

The first flashlight was developed

in 1899 and had a filament with three D batteries. The basic design remained the same for 100 years, until 1999. That's when Lumileds Corp. of San Jose, Calif., created a white-light emitter called the Luxeon LED. The LED was a game changer because it is energy efficient, inexpensive and can take a beating.

## FLASHLIGHT MARKET GROWTH PROJECTIONS

Jeremy Rosenberg, VP of sales and marketing for SureFire, reinforced the growth projections.



“Predicting future sales is always the most difficult part of managing our business. 2023 has been very strong for us, and so far, all indications are this trend will continue,” he said. “We’re optimistic we’ll come into a strong fall and upcoming new products will continue to drive strong sales through the end of 2023 and into Q1 and Q2 of 2024.”

#### TIPS TO BEAT THE PRICE CHECK

There is also no comparison when it comes to the light output of an LED versus an incandescent bulb, and this is where a hands-on approach can benefit a retailer.

Steve Meitzler, marketing director for Powertac, said, “Retailers need to understand the advantage they have and the value they offer to their customers online retailers do not have. People love instant gratification. Being able to hold a flashlight, feel its quality and see how bright it is in person is why we have found someone is more likely to buy a flashlight in person than online.”

For this reason, Meitzler recommends having demo flashlights available.

“A customer can’t appreciate the quality if it’s just another flashlight in a box. But if he has decided to buy the light while in the store, you have to assume they’ll get out their phone and check the price online. If the online price is considerably better, they’ll likely buy it online. Even though people like instant gratification, they’re often not willing to pay 20–30% more for the item now when they could have it shipped to them in two days.”

Meitzler said Powertac has a flexible stocking dealer program.

“We don’t require a certain buy-in amount, so this means

even small shops can try us out,” he stated. “We even allow retailers to exchange slow-moving SKUs for different ones as long as the products are still new in the box and in good condition.”

#### WHERE YOUR STORE HAS AN ADVANTAGE

SureFire’s Rosenberg highlighted a strong selling point: “Selling a premium product can often be a challenge for the guy or gal behind the counter. Customers are naturally drawn to lower-priced, seemingly equivalent items, but the challenge can be overcome when there is true value to be offered. Things like 100% U.S. design and manufacturing, time-tested and battle-proven quality and a lifetime warranty in the unlikely event something goes wrong with the light.”

This is where the “buy once, cry once” approach to selling comes into play.

“Most people would prefer to spend a little more if they knew they won’t have to replace it again for a very long time. When a premium product is able to offer this level of value and service to its customers, it makes the decision a no-brainer,” Rosenberg concluded.

#### IMPULSE BUYS & INSTANT GRATIFICATION

Patrick Cooper, U.S. director of sales for Fenix, said, “Within the world of FFL retail, Fenix is an ‘accessory’ category, offering a series of benefits to the dealer. Number one: There’s the add-on to the standard firearm order that helps increase the sales ticket. There’s the headache-free sale (less than 1% defect rate) for the dealer and the ‘impulse’ sale for the regular customer returning for ammunition. Accessories have long been the



**BEING ABLE TO HOLD A FLASHLIGHT, FEEL ITS QUALITY AND SEE HOW BRIGHT IT IS IN PERSON IS WHY WE HAVE FOUND SOMEONE IS MORE LIKELY TO BUY A FLASHLIGHT IN PERSON THAN ONLINE.”**

**STEVE MEITZLER**  
Marketing Director  
Powertac

**“THERE’S NO SUBSTITUTE FOR BEING ABLE TO ASK QUESTIONS AND SEEING HOW MUCH BRIGHTER A LIGHT IS WITH AN ACTUAL 1,000 LUMENS COMPARED TO A CHEAPER ONE ‘CLAIMING’ IT HAS 1,000 LUMENS.”**

secret to adding sales growth with attractive margins in traditional retail. Fenix Lighting plays this part for the FFL.”

As you’ve no doubt experienced: Impulse buys are often price-point driven.

“Our innovative ‘keychain’ products — like the E03R V2.0 — are the gateway models to the brand,” Cooper said. “But in this FFL world, where a standard shotgun can run \$500 or more — and a premium can run multiple thousands of dollars — a \$100 flashlight with \$40 in mounting accessories would qualify as an ‘impulse’ purchase.”

Don’t overlook other simple impulse buys, like a battery bank. You can go to a company like Plum Grove and get an inexpensive solar battery bank with your logo printed on it for as little as \$12. So many companies make products like this an entire article could be devoted to them.

Add-ons are often high-margin items that can significantly benefit your bottom line.

#### VARIETY & INNOVATION

With a wide range of flashlights, there’s something for everyone and every need.

Customers can get a super bright 1,000-lumen weapon-mounted light (WML) like a Streamlight TLR-1 HL or a purpose-built SureFire Stiletto Pro with a flat design easily able to fit in a pocket for everyday carry.

Today’s consumer is looking for a professional who knows what they’re talking about to guide them to what best fits their needs. Anyone who has worked with enough new shooters will tell you someone should shoot a gun before buying one because many factors are involved. All the options available in a flashlight — like rechargeable batteries, beam patterns, and physical design — can get confusing.

As a firearms instructor, I’ve seen the advantages of having a student try something out instead of just reading about it online. There’s no substitute for being able to ask questions and seeing how much brighter a light is with an actual 1,000 lumens compared to a cheaper one “claiming” it has 1,000 lumens. When you put them side by side, you can immediately tell the difference and see the value in spending a little more money.

Powertac’s Meitzler had this



Technology in this sector has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years — rechargeable batteries are no longer an elusive feature.





Products like Fenix's keychain flashlight (E03R) make for valuable impulse buys for the dealer to offer to enthusiasts or those buying for loved ones.

insight: "My best dealers are the ones who have a demo light on display and are passionate about our products. I have some very small stores that sell more than larger ones simply because they have demo lights and love talking about our product. Once a person handles our lights, they tend to sell themselves. And when you mention we have the best lifetime warranty in the industry because as long as they have the light, we will repair or replace it, it becomes a very easy purchase."

Another tip to remember that often happens in the firearms industry is we forget the person we're talking to might not know the basics. We tend to assume

a customer knows more than what they do. The downside is we're missing the opportunity to educate and nurture them into becoming loyal regulars.

Michael Dineen, Streamlight VP of sales and marketing, summed it up: "Streamlight is always looking for dealers who are like us — those who understand what our customers need because they're out there doing what they do."

Asking questions will help you determine what is essential and will help you guide the customer to the best solutions for them. **SI**

#### Footnotes:

1. [www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/5331773/north-america-led-flashlight-and-headlamp-market](http://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/5331773/north-america-led-flashlight-and-headlamp-market)

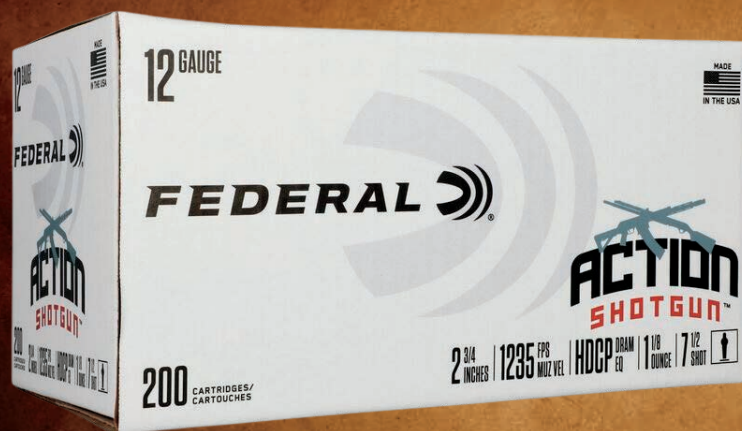
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By Jenna Buckley



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With the same durability of the RMR, the Trijicon **RMR HD** is designed to meet evolving user needs. The top-loading battery offers convenience like never before, and the forward-mounted light sensor adjusts the reticle for light at the target. Within the same footprint as the RMR, it features an even bigger window to maximize the field of view, and a dot or segmented circle reticle.

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Federal **ACTION SHOTGUN** was created to deliver a balance of power, shootability and control needed in multi-gun competitions. Action Shotgun features an overshot card and roll crimp that adds strength and rigidity to the mouth of the shell, allowing for improved cycling in both tube-fed and magazine-fed shotguns. The shell cup is made of brass-plated steel for reliable feeding and extraction to reduce the risk of jams. The 1 1/8-ounce payload of high-quality No. 7.5 lead pellets is pushed out the muzzle at 1,235 fps. The loads also feature temp-stable powder and proven primers. They are bulk-packed in 200-round cases for convenience and reduced waste at the range.



## OUTDOOR EDGE

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The **2.2 INCH RAZORMINI** from Outdoor Edge is the latest addition to the replaceable blade knife series. The 2.2" blade is made from Japanese 420J2 stainless steel that has been heat-treated and hand-finished. The blade is easily replaced with the patented RazorSafe system that features a flush-mount blade release button. The blade is held securely in place with durable 420J2 stainless steel, and the knife handle is made from rugged ABS polymer with stainless steel liners for long life and a no-slip grip. Compatible with all 220 blades, the RazorMini has a lanyard hole, lock-back design and an OAL of 5.1". Two replacement blades are included with each knife.

## NIGHTSTICK

(469) 326-9400  
[nightstick.com](http://nightstick.com)

Nightstick introduces the **TCM-365** for the SIG SAUER P365 family and **TCM-5B** for narrow-rail EDC handguns (i.e., GLOCK G43X and G48X MOS, Springfield Armory Hellcat and SIG P365 X-Macro). Both feature ultra-performance LEDs and an optimized TIR lens to deliver a bright and penetrating 650-lumen beam for up to two hours and illuminate objects up to 136 meters away. The TCM-365's unique rail clamp is engineered to lock into the proprietary slots on each side of the P365, X, XL, SAS, 380 and Specter Comp frames. The lights weigh 2.2 oz., are constructed of aircraft-grade aluminum and rated as IP-X7 waterproof. Both have intuitive dual rear-facing switches, programmable ON/OFF strobe mode and a "Safe Mode" battery lockout.



## INFINITE DEFENSE

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

The **GEN 2 INFINITY TARGET** from Infinite Defense boasts denser, thinner and stronger self-healing target material than the first generation. The synthetic ballistic blend is 100% recycled. The target is self-healing up to 110 rounds per square inch, there is no ricochet so it is safe for use in close quarters, spray paint can be used to cover hits and it has engraved zones. The 9-lb. target is offered in two styles: silhouette and sheet.







## STURM, RUGER & CO.

(336) 949-5200  
ruger.com

Ruger reintroduces the **MARLIN MODEL 1894 CLASSIC** chambered in .44 Rem. Mag. It sports a beautifully finished American black walnut straight stock and forend. Richly blued and featuring a square finger lever, the alloy steel rifle is equipped with a 20" cold hammer-forged barrel with standard six-groove rifling and a 1:20" twist rate. It's also capable of shooting the lighter-recoiling .44 Special. The Ruger-made 1894 Classic is marked "Mayodon, NC," bears a "RM" or Ruger-made serial number prefix and features the red and white "bullseye" in the stock. Additional models will be released throughout the coming year.



MODEL 307 ALPINE MDT

## WEATHERBY

(307) 675-7840  
weatherby.com

The **MODEL 307** rifle from Weatherby is a two-lug, fully cylindrical action compatible with many aftermarket accessories. Three variants are currently offered with a range of features: Builders Action, Range XP and Alpine MDT. The Alpine MDT sits on MDT's lightweight HNT26 chassis system. This stock provides v-block bedding, adjustable LOP, adjustable comb and AICS magazine compatibility. The forend has an integral ARCA rail and a foldable buttstock. It comes standard with an externally adjustable TriggerTech field trigger and PEAK 44 Picatinny rail. The spiral-fluted barrel is threaded and comes with a recoil-reducing Accubrake. The Alpine MDT is finished with a durable Graphite Black Cerakote. The Model 307 is offered in a variety of chamberings, including .243 Win., 7mm Rem., .280 Ackley, .300 Wby. and more.

## RE-NINE

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re-nine.com

Re-Nine's **COMPACT 1X2 TARGET STAND** is a welded steel stand for use with 1x2's and targets. Ground stake holes on the legs provide anchoring locations and a tent stake pivot is at the center of the base for added stability. For compact storage, the legs can be removed from the side of the base. The stand measures 19" x 7" x 2" and weighs 5 lbs.



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The **LV COVERT CARRY PACK** features 5.11 Tactical's signature CenterLine design and tuckable labels to help users keep a low profile. The exterior has quick-release shoulder straps, a removable sternum strap, a side carry handle and lower webbing straps for extra cargo or for attaching the 5.11 LV6 bag. Dual front pockets include MOLLE webbing. Inside the main compartment, a padded laptop sleeve and a mesh zippered pocket provide more storage. The secondary weapon compartment has a reinforced muzzle pocket, web loops and two rifle retention straps. A 3" drop-down extension in the primary weapons compartment can hold compact or full-size firearms.



## BADLANDS

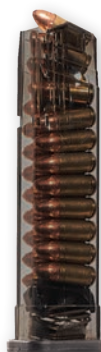
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Badlands' **ANDAIRE** line of hot-weather gear features superior breathability to keep air flowing, moisture-wicking technology and is ultra-quick drying. Eclipse Air-Vent fabric is Badlands' lightest-weight, most-breathable, hunting-capable fabric designed to throw off as much heat as possible. Andaire shirts are available in men's short sleeve crew or long sleeve crew, and a women's long sleeve crew. Men's Andaire shorts and pants both feature the Eclipse Air-Vent fabric offering breathability, moisture wicking and quick drying performance for heat-drenched hunters. The women's lightweight yoga/athletic-style leggings is a warm-to-hot-weather option that boasts four-way stretch fabric (with thigh pockets) with durability.

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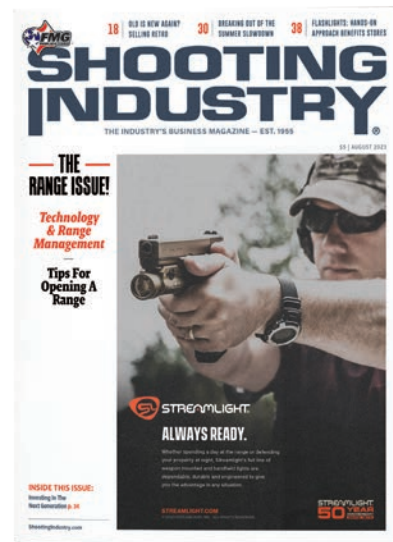
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# ADVERTISER INDEX

ADVERTISER	PAGE	ADVERTISER	PAGE
Camfour	19	MGE Wholesale Inc.	47
Davidson's Inc.	23	Ruger	7
Electronic Transfer Inc.	15	Sage UW	3
Falco SK s.r.o.	21	SIG SAUER	48
Great Southern Agency LLC	13	Sports South LLC	27, 33, 37, 41
HSM Ammunition	11	Streamlight Inc.	1
Joseph Chiarello & Co. Inc.	17	Zanders Sporting Goods	5
Kinsey's Inc.	2		



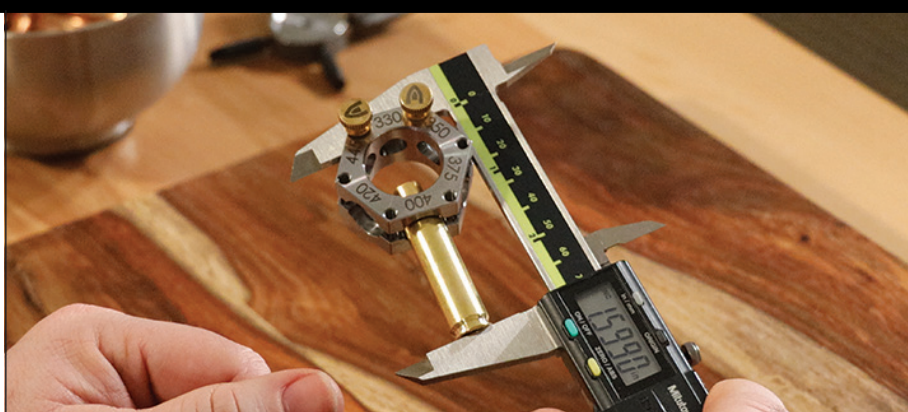
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### CREEDMOOR SPORTS

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Taking inspiration from the Creedmoor Sports Bullet/OAL Comparator Tool, the **SHOULDER DATUM TOOL** allows users to accurately measure their cases for proper shoulder bump when reloading. It's designed to be mounted to standard calipers to allow for ease of operation. With six different positions, the Shoulder Datum allows for measurement of over 75 different cartridges simply by rotating it on the caliper jaws. There are no tools or inserts needed to change between cartridges.



## Continued from p. 46

A rising tide floats all boats, right? Small things like this can create more of a bond with your community and encourage growth — which brings me to the final point here.

## TRUE POWER

Word-of-mouth marketing still has immense power — it can create a boisterous buzz or a black hole of

negativity. If you can get customers highlighting their positive experiences at your facility (either on social media or with their friends), then you're bound to see good things come from it.

The fall hunting and year-end buying seasons will be here imminently. Take the time during these slow periods to think through how your brand can creatively connect with consumers and create enthusiasts. If a lesson can

be gleaned from the “Barbenheimer” hype, it's that consumers are hungry for unique experiences and connections. Your facility already offers both in droves — let them know!

Dealers, what are you doing to create unique experiences for customers? Drop me a line: [editor@shootingindustry.com](mailto:editor@shootingindustry.com)

## SOUTHWICK ASSOCIATES RELEASES MARKET SIZE REPORT

The industry has been challenged with numerous demand and supply-side issues over the past few years. To help businesses understand the size of the hunting and shooting retail market, Southwick Associates has released a report estimating the more than \$23 billion hunting and shooting equipment market.

After two years of unprecedented demand and supply issues, demand eased and retail inventory largely replenished in 2022. Sales were strong in the first part of the year, but softened in the last half as inflationary pressures and economic uncertainty inhibited consumer purchases. Although sales were down from the prior two years of the pandemic, NICS firearm background checks were the third highest on record, indicating a still higher than “normal” year for firearm sales.

“Many of the supply challenges



**After two years of unprecedented demand and supply issues, demand eased and retail inventory largely replenished in 2022.**

presented in 2020 and 2021 improved through 2022,” said Nancy Bacon, vice president at Southwick Associates. “Although sales were down for most categories in 2022, many were still higher than pre-pandemic years. The new market size report will help businesses better understand the operating environment and where potential opportunities lie.”

The new “Hunting & Shooting Retail



Market Size Report” includes both retail unit and dollar sales estimates of more than 80 products directly associated with hunting, recreational shooting and personal protection. In addition to the accessories categories, firearms and ammunition markets are broken down by various attributes such as caliber/gauge, action type, the primary purpose for consumers' purchases and more.

Only equipment directly associated with hunting, recreational shooting and personal protection are reported. Other items such as travel-related spending, real estate and indirect equipment such as vehicles are not included.

For more information on Southwick's market size report and to view a sample report, visit [southwickassociates.com](https://southwickassociates.com). Custom research into specific market niches is also available, as are reports identifying the top brands, sales by retail channel and more.

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

## SAAMI POSTS RANGE CLEANING GUIDANCE

The Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute (SAAMI) has released its latest publication — “Considerations in Range Cleaning” — and posted the document to the SAAMI library of informational publications and advisories on its website.

“This document reviews areas that must be taken into consideration when

conducting range cleaning to ensure the safety of range personnel, employees and those handling the waste stream for collection, transport and disposal,” said Alan Serven, SAAMI senior director, Technical Affairs.

SAAMI is the organization at the forefront of promoting firearm safety by creating standards that ensure safety, reliability and interchangeability of firearms, ammunition and components.

The new title is one of many guides in the SAAMI resource center, which



includes informational brochures, guidance documents and advisories on topics related to the storage, use and transportation of firearms, ammunition and propellants. [SA](https://saami.org)

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



BY JADE MOLDAE

## WHAT'S OUR "BARBENHEIMER" MOMENT?

Last month a rare phenomenon captivated the pop culture landscape with the same-day release of two blockbusters — *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer* — from competing studios, which came to be known as “Barbenheimer.” Though their subject matter and tone couldn’t be more different, these films will be forever linked for two reasons.

One, two studios releasing blockbuster-caliber films on the same day is a rarity. It makes sense: a studio would prefer to enjoy the “exclusivity” of an opening weekend to itself as opposed to sharing the spotlight. But what if it was a brighter spotlight?

Clearly, counterprogramming was effective in this instance. Having the films released on the same day meant the promotional circuits ahead of each film’s premiere were also timed similarly — and the casts and crews of each respective film joined in promoting the other, further fueling the hype.

But the most influential aspect of this sensation was the organic engagement it received from Average Joes and Janes. Social media ignited interest in these films of such contrasting subjects. (If you like memes, there were troves of them created ahead of the films’ July 21

release.) Without such strong interest from the public, these films may have still experienced a strong draw at the box office — but there’s no question word-of-mouth played a critical role in sustained interest in each of these films ahead of their release.

The results from opening weekend speak for themselves. It was the first time one movie opened to more than \$100 million (*Barbie*) and another opened to more than \$80 million (*Oppenheimer*) in the same weekend. *Time Magazine* concluded, “‘Barbenheimer’ didn’t just work — it spun box office gold.”

This captivating phenomenon got me thinking — as silly as it may read in writing — how can our industry create a “Barbenheimer”-type movement?

### PROMOTE & CROSS-PROMOTE

As noted above, one of the successes of “Barbenheimer” was the existence of counterprogramming. There’s no bigger stage in our industry to promote and cross-promote than SHOT Show.

There are more exhibitors, more attendees and more excitement to start a new year on the front foot by discovering “what’s new” during SHOT Show week than at any other time of the year. And, many manufacturers still time their

new product releases around SHOT Show. It causes an even greater ripple effect when firearms manufacturers partner with holster, optics, magazine, ammunition and even clothing companies to create a coordinated product-line launch.

There are ample opportunities to cross-promote during SHOT Show week — as we’ve seen exhibitors share their space with up-and-coming companies or join together for product giveaways, with each promoting the other.

However, here in August, it has to be said: SHOT Show 2024 is more than 150 days away.

Thankfully, this month provides a natural opportunity to promote shooting sports participation — as August is National Shooting Sports Month (NSSM).

If you’re a range, do you have an event planned? It’s not too late, and you can even join in with NSSF’s official website ([shootingsportsmoon.org](http://shootingsportsmoon.org)) to promote it.



**If a lesson can be gleaned from the ‘Barbenheimer’ hype, it’s that consumers are hungry for unique experiences and connections. Your facility already offers both in droves — let them know!**

Are there other ranges or gun stores in your area you’re on friendly terms with? Why not set up a bingo-type promotion to encourage guests to visit both facilities and shoot a target, make a purchase, tag/follow the store/range on social media or take a selfie at the facility and win prizes from local partners?

**Continued on p. 45**



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