

**26****CO-OP ADVERTISING:
DON'T COP OUT!****38****GUNSMITHING — A
PROVEN MONEY MAKER****46****A CASE FOR
“GIVING BACK”**

SHOOTING INDUSTRY[®]

THE INDUSTRY'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE — EST. 1955

\$5 | NOVEMBER 2023

YEAR-END PROFITS

How To Maximize Sales

High-End & Custom Guns

*Is Economic Uncertainty
Good, Bad Or Indifferent?*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Special Prices For
“Special Customers?” **p. 22**

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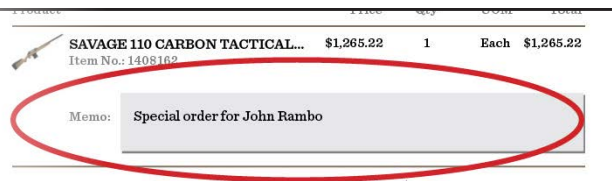
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CONTENTS

COLUMNS

6

ITI

Inside This Issue
On The Home Stretch

10

IN

Industry News

- **SHOT Show Named Eighth-Largest Trade Show In The U.S.**
- **SIG SAUER Golf Tournament Supports HAVA**
- **Henry Launches Videos For Youth, Hunting Safety**

20

NM

Newsmakers

Zanders Sporting Goods Enhances Leadership, Alien Gear Holsters Retains Specialist + More ...

22

PDM

Personal Defense Market

Special Prices For "Special Customers?"
By Massad Ayoob

24

AW

Arms & The Woman

Ladies Hunting Camp: Inspire, Motivate & Empower
By Ashley McGee

26

BP

Best Practices

Don't Cop Out From Co-Op Challenges
By Hank Yacek

46

IL

Industry Link

A Case For Giving Back
By Jade Moldae

Departments

8 Letters To The Editor

42 New Products

44 Advertiser Index

38

Gunsmithing: A Proven Moneymaker

By Bryan Hendricks

FEATURES

28

5 Ways to Boost Year-End Profits

By Doug VanderWoude

32

High-End Guns — Worth The Risk?

By Tim Barker

36

Make The Most Of Predator Hunting Sales

By Carolee Anita Boyles



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On The Home Stretch

Incredibly, we're now in the penultimate month of 2023. Inside this issue, experienced retail guru Doug VanderWoude shares tips for getting the most out of sales during the holiday and end-of-year buying season.

One tactic VanderWoude suggests is your sales staff should try and get products into the hands of customers, which will increase the odds of a sale.

"Instead of just buying the products with a click of the mouse, shoppers are in your store to touch and hold what they're interested in — teach your sales staff to help them do just that," he advises.

Additional tips can be found on **pp. 28–31**.

MAKE THE MOST OF PREDATOR HUNTING

While the focus above might be on the end of the year, predator hunting sales — depending on your locale — offer year-round opportunities. Retailers pinpoint what it takes to profit from this segment in Carolee Anita Boyles' story "All-Season Appeal: Predator Hunting." See **pp. 36–37**.

FINAL LOOK AT GUNSMITHING

This month, the three-part look at gunsmithing concludes. In the first two installments, Bryan Hendricks explained the tactical and strategic aspects of employing a gunsmith in your store. In this final segment, he answers the question that really matters: Is the ROI worth it? A roundtable of dealers provide their thoughts on how this service is used to complement the rest of their retail operations. See **pp. 38–41** for more.

TIME TO GIVE BACK

There's something about this time of year that brings gratitude and generosity to the forefront of our minds — so as Thanksgiving and Christmas approaches, consider putting together a charitable campaign. Yes, it will increase your store's standing in the community and likely generate



NOVEMBER 2023

goodwill for future purchases, but it also represents a way to serve others and demonstrate generosity to your employees.

In this month's *Industry Link* column, Jade Moldae shares insights from several dealers on the "why" behind giving back to others. See **p. 46** for more.



Shoppers are in your store to touch and hold what they're interested in — teach your sales staff to help them do just that."

NEXT MONTH: NEW BUSINESS YEAR EDITION!

The 2024 New Business Year is less than 60 days away — and the *Shooting Industry* team is fully focused on preparing for a successful start. In next month's issue, there will be features on predictions for 2024, uncovering trends with staying power, SHOT Show preview and, of course, the first installment of the venerable three-part 2024 New Product Showcase.

If you have a comment on this issue or on any topics you want to see covered, drop us a line anytime: comments@shootingindustry.com. **\$1**

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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THE GUNSMITH'S PERSPECTIVE

Dear Editor, I read with interest the article, "Is There A Gunsmith In The House?" in the September 2023 issue. In addition to regular customers who hear about my services — mainly through word of mouth — I also provide general repair and gunsmith work for three local retail stores.

Typically, I either pick up at their store or have delivered the firearms for repair here at my rural shop. Since these three retail stores are 30 miles from my home and I shop in both towns regularly, I often save them the drive by picking up or delivering the repaired firearms. It works out pretty well, but often I feel I'm doing too much of their leg work. I mean, does your barber come to your house to cut your hair or your car mechanic come with his tools to work on your auto in your driveway?

Another downside is I can't talk directly with my customer and ask those pertinent questions as to what is going on with his problematic firearm. Having a clerk at the store tell me the customer says his "gun jams" is no help at all and makes my job tougher. Communication with the customer is critical and prevents misunderstanding.

Since I just do the repairs, charge the store a reasonable fee and get paid, I have no control if the store then "pads" the bill over the amount I charge — the word then gets out I do good work, but

I'm very expensive. And, of course, if the customer is not happy with his firearm repair, the retail store can always say, "Well, the gunsmith did the work. We had nothing to do with it — take it up with him."

So far, though, things are working out well. The staff at these stores are all great, pay me on the spot and send me a lot of work. Gene Kelly (of the American Gunsmithing Institute) is correct in saying gunsmithing is a great retirement activity.

P.S. I know it might be a stock photo, but the main photo of the fellow working on the shotgun with live ammo on the bench scares me. **SI**

— **Richard Peterson**
Gunsmith (Since 1982)
Crook, Colo.

Richard, thank you for providing your feedback on the first article of this gunsmithing series (which concludes with this issue). Learning your perspective offers excellent insights for other gunsmiths and retailers. There's still something to be said about getting the job done and following through on what you promise to deliver.

Also, the image with live ammunition was an oversight — thank you for bringing that to our attention. You can bet it won't happen again!

— **Jade Moldae, Editor**

HAVE A THOUGHT WHILE READING THE ISSUE?

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

FFL Dealers! Make More Money with Gunsmithing!



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

Glade Ridd, Sandy, UT

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

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

David Johnson, Johnson Gunsmithing LLC, Athens, AL

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

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

For more student reviews go to:

AgiReviews.com

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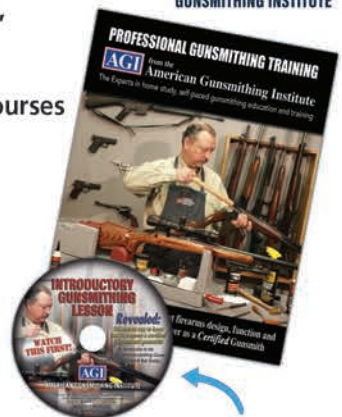
With Gunsmithing every customer needs to come into your shop at least twice: once to drop off the firearm, and a second time to pick it up. That's two more opportunities to make sales! *That's in addition to the money you will make Gunsmithing!*

Study and work, even from home, and become an AGI Certified Gunsmith. This is a trade anyone with average skills can learn. Here's how:

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



Image: NSSF/SHOT Show

SHOT SHOW NAMED EIGHTH-LARGEST TRADE SHOW IN THE U.S.

The NSSF's SHOT Show is now the eighth-largest trade show in America, according to *Trade Show Executive's* recently released Gold 100 rankings. The rankings were based on trade shows held throughout the U.S. in 2022, measured by net square feet.

Owned and operated by NSSF, the SHOT Show is the annual trade show of the shooting, hunting, outdoor and law enforcement industries. The 2021 show was canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2022 SHOT Show featured the event's largest floor plan ever with

804,000 net sq. ft. of exhibit space — up from 676,000 net sq. ft. in 2020.

"The SHOT Show was the only trade show in America to grow by 20+% in 2022, which was quite the feat after having to cancel the 2021 event. That's a testament to the amazing industry we serve, and we're very thankful for this great honor by *Trade Show Executive* in recognizing the show's growth," said Chris Dolnack, NSSF's senior VP and chief customer officer.

In addition to its exhibit space at The Venetian Expo, the 2022 SHOT Show

◀ Exhibit space for SHOT Show 2023 totaled more than 816,000 sq. ft. With the addition of an Archery Business Pavilion coming in 2024, next year's show will be even bigger.

featured an expansion to Caesars Forum, with the two facilities connected by a footbridge. This expanded floor plan allowed more companies than ever before to exhibit at the show.

The show is now the third largest trade show held in Las Vegas. The 2024 SHOT Show will return to Las Vegas Jan. 23–26, again at both The Venetian Expo and Caesars Forum.

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

“

The SHOT Show was the only trade show in America to grow by 20+% in 2022, which was quite the feat after having to cancel the 2021 event.”

Chris Dolnack, NSSF

SPEER AWARDED DUTY AMMUNITION CONTRACT

Speer was recently awarded ammunition contracts from the Miami-Dade Police Department in Florida. The 9mm duty handgun ammunition contract is for Speer Law Enforcement 124-grain +P Gold Dot, and the .223 Rem. duty rifle ammunition contract is for 75-grain Speer Gold Dot.

"Miami-Dade is the eighth largest

police department in the U.S. with approximately 3,500 officers. We are extremely proud of this important contract award," said Steven Jenkins, senior L.E. sales specialist for Speer. "It validates the high level of trust our nation's law enforcement agencies have with our extremely reliable and innovative products."

Each Speer LE Gold Dot bullet is individually engineered to provide shot-to-shot uniformity and ensure optimum performance when fired



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HENRY LAUNCHES VIDEO GUIDE FOR YOUTH SHOOTING SPORTS, HUNTING SAFETY

Henry Repeating Arms announced a new video guide promoting safe participation in youth shooting sports and hunting.

Hosted by trick shooter and brand ambassador Dave Nash (“22Plinkster”), the video extols the benefits of being involved in these sports when introduced properly. Featuring many of the nation’s most impactful safety and educational programs, the video also reviews the line of youth-model rifles and shotguns offered by Henry.

“America has a long history of instilling life skills in youth through shooting sports and hunting, and part of our mission is to provide a gateway for passing down this heritage safely and responsibly,” said Anthony Imperato, founder and CEO of Henry Repeating Arms. “We’re committed to championing organizations



Image: Screenshot from Henry USA

that allow more youth to get involved and get outdoors. The future strength of our country depends on it.”

As part of the company’s 25th anniversary celebration, Henry Repeating Arms donated over \$1 million to a variety of organizations, including the Youth

Shooting Sports Alliance and the Eddie Eagle GunSafe Program, both mentioned in the video.

The video is available to view on Henry’s website, YouTube and Rumble. [/ henryusa.com](https://henryusa.com)

NSSF’S FIRST SHOTS OFFERS NEW ONLINE RESOURCES

The NSSF announced its First Shots program has posted new online resources for ranges and customers, including new promotional videos and Spanish-language instructional materials.

First Shots is an introductory and refresher program made available through host target-shooting ranges across the country. By providing educational experiences that are safe, fun and memorable, host ranges are having great success in attracting first-timers, further engaging new gun owners and reactivating lapsed participants.

Ranges that host First Shots are encouraged to use a new 90-second customer-facing video to promote their classes to those who want to learn more about firearm ownership and target shooting, or those who want a refresher course on safely using firearms and how to enjoy the shooting sports. A 30-second promotional video is also available.

Host ranges are encouraged to

integrate the videos into their websites and share them on social media as part of their recruitment, retention, reactivation (R3) marketing and outreach efforts. The videos may also be downloaded from NSSF’s First Shots Host Resources portal.

Ranges, firearm instructors and shooting-sports organizations are invited to learn the many benefits of being a First Shots host by watching the video available at [NSSF.org/FirstShots](https://nssf.org/FirstShots).

Spanish-language materials are now available to ranges for use by Spanish-speaking customers enrolled in First Shots classes. Ranges now have access to the “Intro to Handgun” slide deck in Spanish through the First Shots host portal, and can request printed handbooks in Spanish for their future events.

“By creating these new First Shots resources, NSSF has responded to requests from its host ranges for educational materials to meet the demand they’re seeing from their growing base of Hispanic American customers,” said Zach Snow, director of NSSF membership development.

NSSF research has shown that in

FIRST SHOTS®

AN INTRODUCTION TO SHOOTING

2021 alone, 40% of firearm retailers saw an increase of Hispanic Americans purchasing firearms.

“We’re thrilled to be able to partner with NSSF to offer Spanish First Shots classes to our customers. We plan to roll out these new resources to improve our customer experience in the coming months,” said Tracy Fornwalt, owner of Morr Indoor Range & Training Center in Lancaster, Pa., and Shoot Indoors in King of Prussia, Pa.

NSSF provides First Shots hosts with all the program materials and promotional resources needed to help offset overall event expenses. Shooting ranges and firearm instructors can learn how to become a First Shots host by contacting Ann Gamauf at (203) 426-1320, ext. 247.

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

FN BREAKS GROUND ON PRODUCTION FACILITY

Oct. 19, FN America broke ground on what will be the site of the company's second production facility in South Carolina. This second facility, built upon FN's solid foundation and history within the state, will be located within the Pickens County Commerce Park in Liberty, S.C.

Mark Cherpes, president and CEO of FN America, commemorated the event alongside Julien Compère, CEO of the Herstal Group and FN Herstal, Gov. Henry McMaster, Chairman Chris Bowers of the Pickens County Council and Ray Farley of Alliance Pickens Economic Development.

"More than 40 years ago, FN opened operations in Columbia to fulfill a government contract for the U.S. Army. Since that day, FN's business has grown tremendously, and we have forged unbreakable bonds within the



FN's second facility will expand its manufacturing footprint and allow it to meet the demand of its military, L.E. and consumer customers. (Pictured, from left: Ray Farley, Chris Bowers, Julien Compère, Gov. Henry McMaster, Mark Cherpes.)

state of South Carolina," said Cherpes. "Pickens County is a great ally to the manufacturing community and one we have had ties to for many years through our ongoing partnership with their Career and Technology Center's Machine Tool students. That partnership has helped to develop our future workforce in the community and will be of great importance as we embark upon this expansion to better meet the needs of our customers."

In attendance at the groundbreaking were several of the students and instructors from the Pickens County

Career and Technology Center. For many years, FN America has worked closely with the school through a work-based learning partnership that engages the school's highly skilled machine and tool students to give them real-world experience as they pursue a career path in manufacturing.

The company will invest \$33 million to construct the future 100,000-square-foot facility over two phases beginning in April 2024 and will create 176 new jobs for the Pickens community.

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BARREL LENGTH	22"	22"
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DEALER PRICE	\$469.00	\$469.00

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KOR TECHNIK, ZARGES USA ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP

KOR Technik, known for inventing and patenting the revolutionary Vacuum Rigidizing Structure (VRS) protection solution, announced a technology partnership with Zarges USA. The two companies will produce an innovative line of aluminum transit cases utilizing the strengths of each.

“We are thrilled to collaborate with the iconic Zarges brand and develop a system that is infinitely customizable. Zarges USA represents the epitome of shipping and storage perfection, and knowing our partnership will deliver even more benefits to end-users is truly rewarding,” said G.P. Searle, founder of KOR Technik and inventor of VRS technology.

“One case for countless missions is a reality with the KOR VRS system. Thanks to this innovative technology, we immediately recognized our customers would benefit from the ability to reconfigure their Zarges case for virtually anything they need to transport. Plus, VRS safeguards cargo better than foam by keeping your contents secure from



turbulence during transportation,” said Olaf Klutke, VP and GM of Zarges USA.

“Combining our KOR VRS interior with the outer protection of Zarges aluminum cases delivers a reliable and repeatable protection solution that lasts a lifetime, and is significantly more environmentally sustainable than traditional synthetic cases with foam inserts. Ready for new cargo in mere minutes, our VRS panels

replace traditional foam, making Zarges cases universally reusable, lighter-weight and more cost-effective for end-users,” Searle added.

The strategic collaboration between KOR Technik and Zarges USA is launching with three Zarges K470 flagship cases equipped with KOR VRS panels.

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

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

SHOOT UNITED DEBUTS “STRAIGHT SHOOTER” VIDEO SERIES

Shoot United announced its continued mission to promote the benefits of shooting sports through its “Straight Shooter” video series. The content features stories of people and organizations that are welcoming new firearm owners into the inclusive shooting sports community.

Launched in August, the first “Straight Shooter” story features Callie Farill, owner of The Valkyrie Tribe, a training program focused on providing women with proficient firearms skills. Farill’s passion for instructing and helping her students gain confidence is a prime example of how shooting sports enrich people’s lives.

Shoot United also captured instructional content of Farrill in the latest “Take Your Shot” video series, aimed at helping new handgun owners get started.



Callie Farill, owner of The Valkyrie Tribe, developed a training program to focus on providing women with firearms handling skills.

The “Take Your Shot” series is ideal for those who are interested in getting professional instruction, but aren’t sure where to start.

Shoot United’s mission is to drive awareness and draw new participants to shooting sports and hunting through

engaging, educational content and other resources. Shoot United is committed to safe, legal and responsible firearm use, and supports NSSF resources and initiatives such as Project ChildSafe and Gun Owners Care.

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

SSSF RECEIVES SHOOTING VENUE DONATION

The Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation (SSSF) announced Ralph and Mary Ann Gates, former owners of Prairie Grove Shotgun Sports in Columbia, Mo., recently donated their facility to the foundation in support of the next generation of youth shooting sports athletes.

The venue now is known as Prairie Grove Shooting Sports Complex. The SSSF is focused on honoring and maintaining the club's 30-year history, while expanding the venue with major planned upgrades.

As one of the premier shooting sports venues in Missouri, Prairie Grove has hosted large tournaments, including National Sporting Clays Association and



Prairie Grove Shooting Sports Complex offers a wide variety of experiences on 140+ acres. This facility was recently donated to SSSF by previous owners Ralph and Mary Ann Gates.

International 5-Stand events. The SSSF will build on that, starting with the Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) and Scholastic Action Shooting Program (SASP).

Recognized as the largest American skeet tournament in the world and the largest action shooting event in the world, the SCTP and SASP National Championships host over 3,000 competitors, all junior athletes.

Prairie Grove Shooting Sports Complex offers shooters a wide variety of experiences on over 140 acres. Included are pistol and rifle berms, American skeet, American trap, trap doubles, modified international trap, bunker trap, two 5-stand facilities, flurry shoot and three sporting clays courses.

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



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GLOCK PRESENTS \$50,000 TO CMP PROGRAMS

In September, GLOCK presented a check of \$50,000 to the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) at the CMP Talladega Marksmanship Park in Alabama during the GLOCK Sport Shooting Foundation (GSSF) Annual Match.

GLOCK has been a sponsor and supporter of the CMP and Talladega Marksmanship Park throughout its existence, dedicating thousands of dollars to the organization each year to be used toward programs and initiatives.

This year, GLOCK VP Josh Dorsey and National Sales Manager Bob Radecki presented the check to CMP's Acting Park Manager Bret Lankford and Business Development Executive Stefanie Teaford.

"We're always so grateful to GSSF and GLOCK for supporting the CMP," said Teaford. "We've been able to use their substantial contributions to enhance our



From left: Bob Radecki, Bret Lankford, Stefanie Teaford, Josh Dorsey.

impact in the marksmanship community through organized opportunities and through the distribution of fundamental and safety instruction to countless individuals across the country."

Since 2015, Talladega Marksmanship Park has been a destination for firearm supporters and guests looking for practice, competition and mindful learning opportunities. Featuring CMP electronic targets and scoring monitors that can only be found at the 500-acre facility, the park

regularly hosts rifle, pistol, shotgun and archery events. The public is welcome, all year long, to test out their firearms or to simply take a tour of the grounds.

The Civilian Marksmanship Program is a federally chartered 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. It's dedicated to firearm safety and marksmanship training and to the promotion of marksmanship competition in the U.S.

[/ thecmp.org](http://thecmp.org)
[/ us.glock.com](http://us.glock.com)

SAF CHALLENGES RED FLAG LAWS

Shortly after filing a federal lawsuit challenging a Red Flag law in Maryland, the Second Amendment Foundation (SAF) announced the launch of a new initiative to take subsequent legal actions against similar laws in several states.

Called Capture the Flag, the new initiative will focus on abuses and misapplications of Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) statutes, which have been adopted by 21 states and the District of Columbia.

"SAF's Capture the Flag initiative looks to challenge these laws that deprive individuals of their right to keep and bear arms, where appropriate, based on evidentiary standards that are constitutionally impermissible," said SAF Executive Director Adam Kraut, who is also a practicing civil rights attorney.

Kraut said the project will initially focus on Red Flag laws in six states: California, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Washington.

"We have already taken legal action against officials in Maryland for an egregious abuse of the law against a citizen in Dorchester County. But all of these laws should raise alarms because they prioritize citizen disarmament ahead of due process, and that can easily lead to deprivation of rights under color of law," said SAF Founder and Executive VP Alan M. Gottlieb.

Kraut said the fundamental flaw in all of these laws is that they essentially consider people guilty until they prove themselves innocent, a concept diametrically opposed to the way our criminal justice system is supposed to work, where the burden of proof is on the state, not the individual.

"When any citizen is unjustly deprived



of his or her rights, it is an affront to all of us, and we must do whatever we can to prevent it, including challenging such laws in federal court. Capture the Flag provides the means for us to seek out such cases and take appropriate action," Kraut added.

The SAF encourages any individual residing in California, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey or Washington who has been subject to a baseless, groundless and unsubstantiated ERPO to contact the organization. They may send an email to info@saf.org with information regarding the circumstances surrounding the petition, order and outcome.

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



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REMINGTON HOSTS SECOND SHOOT TO CURE FUNDRAISER

Remington Ammunition held its second annual sporting clays Shoot to Cure fundraiser at the Remington Gun Club in Lonoke, Ark., on Sept. 22. The event raises funds for childhood cancer and other diseases.

Participants and sponsors raised over \$15,000 for the Arkansas Children's Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing children's hospitals and disease research.

"Big Green is deeply committed to giving back to our local community and nationwide. Thanks to the support of our attendees and sponsors, this sporting clays fundraiser helped those in need. Expect

an even more impactful event next year," said Joel Hodgdon, Remington director of marketing.

Each Shoot to Cure fundraiser plays a pivotal role in making a difference in the lives of families and children in Arkansas and beyond. Remington officials expressed their gratitude to industry sponsors Nighthawk Custom, Starline

Brass, Benelli, Hornady, Fort Thompson Sporting Goods and Rob Roberts Custom Gun Works.

Remington's Gun Club, featuring facilities for trap, skeet, five-stand and its all-new sporting clays course, was a signature location for the Shoot to Cure event.

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



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NEW “PARTNER WITH A PAYER” FILM SHOWCASES OSPREY POPULATION RESTORATION

The latest installment in the “Partner with a Payer” video series comes through the efforts of the NSSF, Henry Repeating Arms and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Division of Fish & Wildlife (NJFW).

“Osprey Restoration: An American Success Story” depicts what is being done to revitalize and improve wildlife habitat and resources for osprey in the U.S.

Each “Partner With A Payer” video highlights the importance of wildlife conservation and management. Companies that include firearm and ammunition manufacturers and importers fund these conservation efforts through excise taxes established by the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (known as the Pittman-Robertson Act).

More than \$16.4 billion (over \$25 billion when adjusted for inflation) has been contributed and distributed to individual states to allocate funds toward wildlife conservation, hunter-education programs and target-shooting programs.

“Forty to 50 years ago, ospreys were a rare species in New Jersey. The help and funding of the Pittman-Robertson Act, along with this U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) initiative, has made the work of wildlife conservation, habitat management and public resources possible,” said Kathy Clark, acting chief of



NSSF's Zach Snow (left) was on hand to help restore osprey population in New Jersey.

the endangered species program at NJFW.

Representatives from Henry Repeating Arms, NJFW and USFWS came together to survey and band the current osprey population in the Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area. This gathering allowed everyone in attendance to witness firsthand what the revenue from the excise taxes is used for, and to celebrate the long-standing partnership of industry and agencies. Due to the steady funding received, osprey nests in New Jersey have increased from only 50 to over 700.

“It’s been a wonderful experience, and provides a deep sense of satisfaction knowing that our company not only helps fund projects like these, but our team was able to see the excise tax dollars at work. If we aren’t active participants or supporting these initiatives, current and future generations won’t have access to all the wonderful aspects of the outdoors. Being able to get involved with the New Jersey Fish & Wildlife’s Osprey

project is just one of the many ways we, as manufacturers, are able to truly make a difference in the world around us,” said Dan Clayton-Luce, VP of communications for Henry Repeating Arms.

“Because of the funds received, everyone is benefiting — not only the targeted, once-endangered species like the osprey, but people using public land for hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities, and the companies who pay the excise taxes. Everyone is contributing to preserving access to the outdoors, along with wildlife and their habitats, for many years to come,” Clark added.

The video project was funded by the Multistate Conservation Grant Program. The latest video, like the others in the series, was produced by Shine United LLC/Kingdom Filmworks.

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

SIG SAUER CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT CONTINUES HAVA SUPPORT

SIG SAUER Inc. announced the seventh annual SIG SAUER Charity Golf Tournament raised over \$120,000 for Honored American Veterans Afield (HAVA). The tournament was held in August at Pease Golf Course in Newington, N.H.

“This signature HAVA event is made possible through the overwhelming generosity of individuals, organizations,

supporters and industry partners. Since the event’s founding, the SIG organizing committee has raised close to \$500,000 and countless volunteer hours,” said Tom Taylor, CMO and executive VP of SIG SAUER.

Founded in 2007, HAVA is a 501(c)(3) organization that helps disabled veterans and injured active-duty service members returning from combat to heal and reintegrate back into everyday life through participation in outdoor activities. HAVA sponsors guided hunts, shooting events and outdoor activities across the country, hosting hundreds of veterans annually.

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

Aimpoint®

AIMPOINT SECURES RED DOT CONTRACT

Aimpoint has been chosen to deliver mini red dot sights to the Alternative Individual Weapon System (AIW), designated L403A1 to UK MOD, via its exclusive UK distributor, Edgar Brothers.

The AIW will consist of three elements including the rifle system L403A1, the optic system L900A1 and the training system. As part of the optic system, Aimpoint will supply the ACRO P-2 red dot sight.

Built to exceed the requirements of the users, the ACRO series sights have been tested and proven to withstand the extreme shock, vibration, temperatures and material stresses generated by firing over 20,000 rounds of .40 S&W ammunition. Primarily designed for use on handguns, the ACRO next generation can also be mounted on carbines, shotguns and hunting rifles or utilized as a backup sight on magnified scopes and thermal imagers. These versatile optics are night vision compatible and are the ultimate solution for extremely rugged, low-profile, compact sighting needs.

As the prime contractor and UK distributor, Edgar Brothers will supply the equipment to UK MOD.

"We at Aimpoint are extremely proud to be part of this Hunter project that pushes the limits of innovation for the modern personal weapon system. We trust our distributor Edgar Brothers to bring the system into service alongside DE&S in a very professional way, and that our product will contribute to the success of the AIW by enhancing soldiers' capabilities to effectively perform their mission," said Erik Jeppsson, Aimpoint sales and marketing.

[/aimpoint.us](http://aimpoint.us)



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CELERANT TECHNOLOGY, MGE WHOLESALE RESUME INTEGRATION

Celerant Technology announced Oct. 10 retailers can begin using MGE Wholesale's dealer services through Celerant's retail software to increase both store and online sales. These services, which include automated ordering and product feeds, were paused since the start of the pandemic and are now reactivated.

To streamline inventory, dealers can integrate their Celerant point of sale software with MGE Wholesale. This enables dealers to import MGE's catalog and order electronically, helping them build their product database without manual data entry, drastically reducing errors and saving time.

"After pausing our integrated services at the start of the pandemic, everyone at MGE is excited to once again offer these services to our dealers, and doing it through Celerant's software makes it easy," said Brad Rupert, MGE Wholesale general manager.

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MGE Wholesale dealers can offer their customers more products both online and in-store. This is accomplished by pulling product data feeds, and displaying them on Celerant's eCommerce platform and store kiosks with images, MAP pricing, inventory counts and more.

Dealers can set pricing rules to automatically change the price of online products by a percentage or dollar amount, and set data level rules to ensure products are displayed only if MGE has enough on-hand quantities. Orders placed online or on the kiosk can then be routed to MGE for store replenishment. [/celerant.com/partner/mge-wholesale](http://celerant.com/partner/mge-wholesale)



D. SIEGLER

Zanders Sporting Goods Enhances Leadership

Dan Siegler was promoted to president and COO of Zanders Sporting Goods, and Luke Poston advanced to director of procurement.



L. POSTON

Stefanie Zanders, CEO,

said, "The dedication and loyalty displayed by Dan and Luke are unparalleled and further solidifies that these two are the right choice for the job. We are confident that these changes to the executive team will enhance and lead our business operations strategically forward in new and innovative ways and ultimately elevate our business to new heights."

Siegler joined Zanders nearly 10 years ago. He was the sales manager for four years, promoted to director of marketing and then took over marketing and purchasing just over a year ago.

Prior to joining Zanders in 2017 as sales manager, Poston held various sales and marketing positions.



J. MEYERS

Alien Gear Holsters Retains Specialist

Jim Meyers has joined Alien Gear as the L.E./military product training specialist where he

will work with staff, distributors and dealers. He will attend trade shows and fulfill a range of duties related to training, product introductions and new product launches.

"We've been looking for a key component to add to our team, and in Jim Meyers, we found exactly what we needed: a top-notch shooter and trainer with a solid L.E. background and a passion for training our first

responders," said Joe Lienemann, director of L.E. sales with Tedder Industries.

Meyers is a widely recognized master-level firearms instructor and armorer. For decades, Meyers has conducted extensive training domestically and internationally with military and law enforcement units, private security details and civilian students. He also has more than two decades of L.E. experience and is a graduate of the F.B.I. National Academy.



J. BAAR

Buck Knives Advances Managers

Buck Knives announced the promotions of Justin Baar to the role of senior e-commerce and digital marketing manager, and Katie Swanson to marketing communications



K. SWANSON

manager.

Baar will provide strategic oversight of the company's e-commerce objectives and digital marketing projects to expand Bucks' market share, enhance product visibility, drive brand preferences and increase online sales.

Baar joined Buck Knives seven years ago and earned a bachelor's in painting and printmaking from San Diego State University, where he has also been an adjunct professor.

Swanson will provide the strategic oversight and tactical execution of the company's marketing plans and deliverables regarding all B2B trade channels by creating and managing a consistent brand experience.

She joined Buck Knives nearly three years ago and earned a bachelor's degree in graphic design from Northwest Nazarene University. Previously, she worked for Block 22 Hotels and

the ECHL Idaho Steelheads.



A. SCHOONOVER

Orchid Advisors Expands Team

Orchid recently welcomed three firearm industry professionals to its growing team: Aimee Schoonover, Kelly Lahti and Toni Hendrickson.



K. LAHTI

Leland Nichols, Orchid chief strategy and business development officer, said, "Their exceptional backgrounds and dedication to the firearms



T. HENDRICKSON

industry align perfectly with our commitment to delivering top-tier solutions and service to our clients."

As a business development executive, Schoonover will introduce innovative solutions to meet the evolving needs of customers and contribute to their growth and success in the firearms industry.

Lahti, an implementation and support consultant, combines her knowledge and experience with retail operations, POS systems and ATF regulations in her new role to act as a reliable resource for Orchid customers.

As a key member of Orchid's implementation and support team, Hendrickson will collaborate closely with new clients and address their specific needs, further strengthening the company's commitment to providing premier customer support for FFLs.



L. BART

Leupold & Stevens Inc. Taps Marketing Director

Lucas Bart was recently named director of marketing at

Leupold, where he has served as the company's brand creative director since 2017.

"Lucas has been an important part of our marketing team since he joined the Leupold family," said Tim Lesser, Leupold VP of product development and marketing. "His passion and relentless drive benefit the entire team and make him an ideal leader as we continue to grow and evolve our brand marketing efforts."

Prior to joining Leupold, Bart worked as a content director and communications manager at Nike.



M. ESPINOSA

Langdon Tactical Technology Selects Marketing Manager

Maria Espinosa has joined the Langdon Tactical Technology (LTT) team as its sales and marketing manager. Espinosa will be responsible for implementing and managing LTT's marketing efforts and strategies, as well as coordinating its social media presence and event management.

Espinosa joins Langdon Tactical with a diverse history in the shooting sports industry, including previous stints at Norma Precision Inc., Dunkin-Lewis Inc. and Taurus Holdings. She has an associate's degree in criminal justice/police science and psychology from Miami Dade College.



J. DURHAM

Christensen Arms Hires Director

Christensen Arms has welcomed Jimmy Durham as director of customer experience, representing years of strategic leadership of customer service teams, a forward-focused mindset and an unwavering commitment to customer advocacy all underscored by a personal passion for precision shooting.

Durham stated, "The relationship between exceptional products and remarkable customer service is inextricable. As a brand synonymous

with top-tier quality, Christensen Arms has taken that promise a step further. Our service must be a mirror reflection of the quality that defines our products, standing head and shoulders above all others."



B. MCCOUBREY

Yankee Hill Machine Co. Names Marketing Manager

The management team at Yankee Hill Machine Co. (YHM) welcomed Brenna McCoubrey as the new marketing manager.

Bill Lis, GM for YHM, stated, "[McCoubrey] will play an instrumental role in communicating and promoting YHM firearms, suppressors and accessories through compelling and strategic multi-channel marketing to drive consumer demand while assisting sales to achieve growth objectives."

McCoubrey joins the team after developing marketing plans and brand strategy for White Birch Armory, an NSSF 5-star rated range. She has also served as subject matter expert at SHOT University and Range-Retailer Expo on brand strategies, event planning and social media.

McCoubrey earned a B.S. in marketing from Suffolk University.



T. PIVER

Kryptek Outdoor Group Welcomes COO

Kryptek Outdoor Group announced the hiring of Tim Piver as the new chief operations officer. Piver is

tasked with devising and executing new business strategies to enhance global brand recognition.

"In the years to come, I am confident that we will be able to look back and say, 'That is a result of Piver!' He is an exceptional cultural fit with real-world credibility and has a vast amount of success in adjacent outdoor brands," said Kryptek CEO and co-founder, Butch Whiting.

Piver's experience stems from the hunting and fishing sector as a guide, outfitter, TV show producer and product developer. At Western Power Sports, he held leadership positions across numerous business segments.



D. NAVICKAS

Rock Ridge Outdoors Appoints Sales Manager

Dani Navickas is now serving as the regional sales manager for Rock Ridge Outdoors.

"With an exceptional depth of experience within the outdoor industry, an exclusive network of contacts and a well-earned reputation for excellence, Dani is going to lead our team to new and exciting opportunities and growth," remarked Janette Palmer, VP of sales at Rock Ridge Outdoors.

Navickas brings more than 25 years of experience working in sales, marketing and product development within the shooting and outdoor industries, including tenures at Velocity Outdoor, SIG SAUER and Remington. **SI**



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BY MASSAD AYOUB

SPECIAL PRICES FOR “SPECIAL CUSTOMERS?”

In any retail business, it's not uncommon for regular customers who repeatedly buy from you to get a break on retail price. It's also commonplace for retail businesses to show their appreciation for those people who put their lives on the line for the safety of the community, or indeed for the safety of the entire nation, to receive a discount as a “thank you.”

Some manufacturers support your decision to do so. Let us examine a classic example of this policy: GLOCK's Blue Label program.

The history of the company shows us GLOCK originally developed its pistol line for military contracts, and then quickly recognized the potential for law enforcement markets and, particularly in the U.S., the vast market of law-abiding armed citizens. From the beginning, the company recognized it wasn't just governmental agencies that purchased their products.

Circa 1986, GLOCK began offering discounts for individual “protectors” who needed guns that weren't bought and issued by their institutional employers. The result was their now-famous GLOCK Blue Label program for retail gun dealers.

GLOCK's National Sales Manager Bob Radecki explained to *Shooting Industry*, “Our Blue Label Dealer program goes back virtually to the company's beginnings in the U.S. We determine if there is a need in the applicant dealer's area. For example, if the area is underserved by current dealers or distributors due to population density or distance. What we call ‘sub-distributors’ are retail shops that sell Blue Label pistols to eligible buyers. Sub-D criteria includes participation in the GLOCK Stocking Dealer Program at the 20-gun level and the needs of our customers.”

These sub-distributors — called “sub-Ds” in *GLOCK-speak* — get their Blue Label guns from specified GLOCK Law Enforcement distributors, and not Commercial distributors.

WHICH CUSTOMERS GET WHAT DISCOUNT?

GLOCK wants these discounts going to individuals who risk their lives to serve their communities. Military personnel. Also, police. Firefighters. Paramedics and emergency medical technicians ... basically the armed services and society's designated first responders to life-threatening emergencies are eligible to purchase two GLOCK pistols per calendar year.

◀ GLOCK's Bob Radecki, pictured here at an event held at Gunsite Academy, explained what factors go into naming Blue Label dealers.

The prospective purchaser must show the Blue Label dealer their ID to receive the discount. The Blue Label dealer must record this, and make and keep a photocopy of the ID. An honorably discharged military veteran or retiree can show a DD214. Since it's against the law for anyone to photocopy the ID of federal law enforcement or currently serving military personnel, GLOCK created a military-LE verification form for the dealer to sign, certifying they have in fact seen the purchaser's ID and confirmed the purchaser is eligible for the program.

Amounts of discount vary. As a rule, says Radecki, “It would be around \$100, give or take. For example, a Gen5 GLOCK 17 pistol that would sell for \$539 retail would go for about \$425 Blue Label.”



Supporting armed services personnel and first responders is always good business, especially in the gun world where political persuasions so often run more to red than blue.

THE PRIVATE CITIZEN CONNECTION

What of your customers who aren't past or present public safety personnel or military? GLOCK makes allowances for them, too. They can qualify for Blue Label by joining GSSF, the GLOCK Sport Shooting Foundation (www.gssf.pro). If someone is a new, current or renewing GSSF member, they are eligible to purchase one GLOCK pistol at discounted pricing per calendar year.

A bit of history is in order here. Founded in 1991, GSSF offers categories for each type of GLOCK pistol and for “Amateur Civilian,” “Master,” “Guardian” (the ones who would be eligible for the

regular Blue Label program), “GLOCK Girls,” “Senior” and “Junior.” Each of the dozens of GSSF matches all over the country draws hundreds of entries on the weekends they are held.

Sales Tip: Go to the gssf.pro website and see if there are any GLOCK matches anywhere near your business location. This means you have a pool of folks within striking distance of your shop who are shooters. While they can buy GLOCKS from any gun dealer, they’ll obviously have a preference for the Blue Label dealer who can save them a C-note or so every year. If you have a range, GSSF Indoor League matches are an additional way to bring GSSF members into your shop/range.

Related Sales Tip: As one who frequently competes in GLOCK matches, I can tell you I often see a sales table set up at these events by local dealers. They sell a lot of ammo, better ear and eye protection, etc., at those matches. Magazines, too — though at some GSSF matches GLOCK

will also have a limited number of magazines, and of course GLOCK-logo wear for sale.

RETAILER ADVANTAGES

Supporting Armed Services personnel and first responders is always good business, especially in the gun world where political persuasions so often run more to red than blue. For military families, police families, etc., this loyalty to supporters runs particularly strong.

Police themselves like to joke the only thing cheaper than a cop is two cops, but the fact is, more than ever in today’s strongly anti-police climate, peace officers and their families tend to be loyal to businesses that openly support them. While it’s true many (if not most) police aren’t “gun guys and gals,” a significant percentage of them *are* gun people and they buy a lot of guns and related gear.

Reader surveys of our sister magazines, *GUNS* and *American Handgunner*, show a percentage of law

officers that is disproportionately high compared to the general public.

Moreover, the Blue Label dealers are thin on the ground. There are only about 1,100 of them in the whole country. The draw of a \$100 discount reaches across town and even county lines, bringing people into your shop who might otherwise have never crossed your doorway. Every dealer in the country sells the nation’s most popular pistol; Blue Label dealers are the only ones in their area who can sell them for a hundred bucks less.

It’s a principle of retailing that once a major discount brings a new customer into your shop, it’s likely there will be ancillary sales. Holsters and such, and of course, ammo. And other guns besides GLOCKS. **SI**

For information on how to become a GLOCK Blue Label dealer, contact your local GLOCK commercial or L.E. sales manager or email LE.sales@glock.us.



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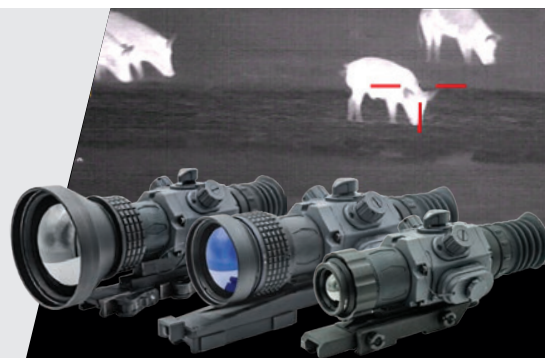
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BY ASHLEY MCGEE

LADIES HUNTING CAMP: INSPIRE, MOTIVATE & EMPOWER

The percentage of female hunters almost doubled between 1980 and 1990 and has continued to increase steadily since. Today, 10–15% of all hunters are women. Helping to cultivate this growth and empower women to connect with nature and build confidence through hunting is Candy Yow, founder of Ladies Hunting Camp.

The Oregon-based Ladies Hunting Camp, a unique initiative founded with the vision of promoting women's participation in hunting and outdoor activities, has thrived for over a decade due to the dedication of Yow and her husband, Randy, who host the annual camps on their ranch in Fort Rock, Ore.

The volunteer-managed and donation-driven organization provides expert instruction on a variety of techniques that include archery and rifle shooting; tracking, stalking and calling game; field dressing and processing meat; outdoor cooking; and more. Women (and girls) must have their hunter-ed card, but all ages and skill levels are welcome to attend.

"Over the years, we've had women from almost every state travel to attend

our camps," said Yow. "In the beginning, around 90% of participants were from the Northwest, but in recent years, we've had women fly in from as far as Florida and New Jersey. One year, we even had a whole group come from Alaska."

The nonprofit organization has grown to host multiple camps in several states with the support of corporate sponsors and in-kind product donations. In April, they brought the Ladies Hunting Camp to the expansive Ben Avery Shooting Facility in Arizona.

They also host several advanced courses each year, including a long-range rifle course taught by Nicholas Kytlica from Leupold at Weatherby Ranch in Sheridan, Wyo., and a two-day concealed carry boot camp. Their newest offering is a three-day youth camp for boys and girls ages 9 to 18.

A HELPING HAND

Nosler, also based in Oregon, began partnering with the organization two years ago.

"When we sat down to define our five-year goals and took into account all the new hunters and shooters entering

◀ Candy Yow, founder of Ladies Hunting Camp, with a bighorn sheep harvested in New Mexico.

the market, we knew we specifically wanted to reach more women," said Madi Woodward, brand marketing manager for Nosler. "Providing ammo is really small for us, but hugely impactful for the women participants and for Ladies Hunting Camp as an organization."

Throughout the camp's duration, attendees are able to use and engage with Nosler's ammunition, receiving hands-on training and personalized guidance from the Ladies Hunting Camp team. Nosler's ammunition is used to not only elevate participants' shooting proficiency, but also to provide them with an understanding of the critical role ammunition plays in hunting performance.

“

Our supporters have realized that even if all they do is provide a giveaway item or discount code, not only do the women become loyal customers, but so do their husbands, fathers, children and other family and friends.”

Candy Yow, Founder
Ladies Hunting Camp

"For many of the participants, we're the first ammunition manufacturer they're getting to have hands-on experience with," Woodward added. "And when you consider how loyal women are as consumers, the partnership is a no-brainer for us."

More importantly, a press release from Nosler stated, "The ripple effect of this sponsorship is expected to inspire more women to explore hunting as a rewarding and empowering pursuit."

As the campers return to their respective communities, they carry with them newfound skills and lasting memories.

EXPANSION INTO NEW MARKETS

Citing growing interest from those in Wyoming and Montana, Yow's goal



Participants were able to learn the fundamentals of archery using bows provided by BowTech and Diamond Archery at the 2023 Oregon Ladies Hunting Camp.

is to continue expanding Ladies Hunting Camp into new markets and teach as many women and youth the basic skills they need to be safe and successful in the outdoors, but they

can't do it alone.

"Our supporters have realized that even if all they do is provide a giveaway item or discount code, not only do the women become loyal

customers, but so do their husbands, fathers, children and other family and friends," shared Yow. "One company even said they've had 100% return on investment from their partnership with Ladies Hunting Camp."

The increase in female hunting participation over the years can't simply be attributed to the notion women are suddenly growing more interested in the outdoors. It's also the result of an increase in educational opportunities and a slowly but surely growing list of manufacturers that are creating gear and apparel intentionally and thoughtfully designed for women.

Supporting organizations like Ladies Hunting Camp is just one way those in the industry can continue cultivating that growth. **SI**

For more information Ladies Hunting Camp and how you can get involved, visit LadiesHunting.com.

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BY HANK YACEK

DON'T COP OUT FROM CO-OP CHALLENGES

Let's start off with a bit of trivia here: "Co-op" derives from the term "cooperative." In the world of marketing, it's when two entities work together to create and/or fund a marketing effort.

All too often, however, it doesn't feel very cooperative. Firms can make the process tricky, arduous, fraught with roadblocks and downright frustrating. Don't let it dissuade you from chasing down these dollars. Here's why ...

IT'S YOUR MONEY, AFTER ALL

First — and this is what motivated me back when I ran a shop — this is *your* money! You earned it by paying for and helping the manufacturer turn their manufactured goods back into cash.

Without you, the entire cycle breaks down and manufacturers would end up with warehouses full of products and no cash. Think of it as a savings account the manufacturer is holding onto on your behalf. What should put a fire in your belly, however, is this savings account vaporizes at the end of the year.

That's right, the money you worked so hard to earn — risking cash, hiring the best staff, keeping the store open, selling online and everything else you face as a retailer — will just be surrendered to the pockets of the

manufacturer at the end of the year as a very gracious Christmas present. If this is what you want to do with your money, so be it, but I wager you would rather use it for your own benefit. If I'm right, read on. Let's explore further why co-op dollars can make a massive difference in your business.

BREAKING IT DOWN

For those who have not explored the world of co-op marketing dollars, here it is in a nutshell. Many manufacturers set aside monies a retailer can use to pay for marketing efforts for their store. These marketing pieces must be co-branded with the manufacturer to get access to these dollars, but it's still a focused marketing effort for each store.

Manufacturers that participate in programs like this will often credit a retailer anywhere from 1% to 4% of their total purchases for the year. This may not sound like much, but at the end of the day, it's a pile of cash waiting to be used. If you stepped out the back door of the shop and saw a pile of cash lying on the ground to the tune of 1% of your sales, would you just leave it there? Of course not!

Let's look at it through a different lens to get you up off the couch and start aggressively using these co-op funds.

Imagine if your business were to run exactly the same, day to day, month after month, and produce the same volume of sales at the same profit levels — totaling \$500,000 in annual sales. If the total co-op funding for your entire store added up to only 0.2% of the total revenue, this would add an extra \$1,000 of spendable cash to your store at the end of the year (i.e., pure profit).

The truth is, by playing your cards right and maximizing the co-op opportunities, there could be a four-, five- or even six-fold increase in this. This co-op could mean the difference between going to Outback Steakhouse for "vacation" or heading to a tropical island. The choice is yours, but I know which one I'd shoot for.

“

Know your sales volume over the past 12 months, be able to show the shop's horsepower to push products across the counter and have a marketing plan prepared and ready to go.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

In canvassing numerous retailers around the country, I couldn't find a single retailer who is asking their manufacturers for financial assistance in marketing their store and the brand's products.

I received answers ranging from "It's too difficult," to "I didn't know that was an option" or "There aren't any programs out there now other than 'Stocking Dealer Programs.'" My advice: Even if the manufacturer you want to work with doesn't have a published co-op program, it doesn't hurt to ask.

Manufacturers right now are struggling to clear their shelves, and putting out a hand to work with them

to help solve this problem should be welcomed with open arms. If not, it might bring to question whether or not you should be selling this brand's products in the future. It takes the entire supply chain working together to truly succeed in market conditions like we're experiencing.

Before asking, however, make sure to have your ducks in a row. Know your sales volume over the past 12 months, be able to show the shop's horsepower to push products across the counter and have a marketing plan prepared and ready to go. Rehearse your pitch before the call and know exactly how much you're asking for. By being prepared, you're far more likely to get a "yes" and if it is a "no," keep asking!

SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT YOU

Here are a few tips to help maximize the return on co-op dollars and add a few days onto that island getaway. Start by looking for the manufacturers with the most generous co-op programs and focusing inventory on these items. Look for ones north of 2% of your prior 12-month sales. If this brand is one you feel can be sold over an even more popular one, why not focus your team's efforts on advocating for a brand that not only makes great products but also takes care of its retailers at the same time?

In challenging markets like we're in right now, why not support the manufacturers that respect and reward what you do for their bottom line? Next, let's examine creating a marketing plan that generates focused sales or events around the more generous brands.

Having an "XYZ brand" event on a weekend not only can create buzz for your shop but also increase the volume of products being sold that qualify for co-op dollars. As a bonus, having these branded events can help tap into "Co-op Dollars" lesser-known sibling, "TDF" or Territorial Development Funds. TDFs are discretionary dollars used by manufacturers to help boost sales and/or awareness of their products in a local market. They're not directly calculated based on sales volume but

based more on the relationship with the brand and its representative. If you are having a sales event focused on brand marketing, absolutely ask for some TDF money, because it can sing to the tune of thousands of dollars depending on the event, market and size of your business. (This may generate enough extra funds to take *two* tropical island vacations!)

WORTH THE EFFORT?


Lastly, take away some of the burden in collating all this information and centralize your inventory buys around fewer vendors and distributors.


When doing this, ask your rep to do the legwork and consolidate invoicing for each brand so you can get back to the more important day-to-day tasks of running a business. By delegating this task, your rep turns into a productive part of the team beyond just "selling me stuff."



Even if the manufacturer you want to work with doesn't have a published co-op program, it doesn't hurt to ask.

Yes, managing co-op dollars can be a challenge, and that's the point. If it wasn't worth it, it wouldn't be hard. At the end of the day, every dollar secured will contribute nearly one-to-one to the bottom-line profits, hold you accountable for marketing your business and get an unfair share of the local (and challenging) market.

The choice is yours — and I hope to see you on an island somewhere. 




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How do you add more to the bottom line without spending a bunch of capital? Start with going back to the basics — greet every guest who comes in the door and try to get one of your products in their hands.

Getting your product in your guests' hands is a key selling tactic. (Not to mention, free!) I worked a booth at a consumer show years ago. Across the aisle from my booth was someone selling literal pooper scoopers —

By Doug VanderWoude

5 WAYS TO BOOST YEAR-END PROFITS

definitely not a sexy item. Worse than trying to sell them at a trade show, the buyer had to carry the stupid thing with its long handle around the rest of the show.

During the show, the salesperson would hand the scooper to people as they walked down the aisle. Almost everyone he

reached out to took one, stopped and listened to his sales pitch — which wasn't great. (His "lead" was Steve Yzerman, the old Detroit Red Wings captain, and he had one of the scoopers, too. Granted, the show was in Michigan so maybe it wasn't the worst lead.) I was amazed at how many he sold — it seemed

everyone was walking around the show with one of his pooper scoopers. I'm not sure all who bought one even owned a dog.

The number-one way to add more dollars to your bottom line: *Do not allow* staff to ask, "May I help you?" when a guest enters your store. Read on to see what they *should* do.

1. BETTER GREETINGS

The best way to greet guests as they enter your store, in my opinion, is the method taught by Bob Phibbs, the Retail Doctor. He suggests your staff greet the guest at a 45-degree angle *with* some type of merchandise in their hand by saying, "Welcome to XYZ Shooting Center, I will be right with you."

Having some type of merchandise in their hand gives the staff member a reason to let the customer look around while he or she steps aside to handle the merchandise they were holding during the greeting. It allows guests to go to a section of the store that interests them.



One reason shoppers are in your store is to touch and hold what they're interested in — teach your sales staff to help them do just that.

Your staff can then catch up with them and start asking questions. For example, if a guest is looking at earmuffs, staff can ask if they've tried the new gel-filled models from Pro Ears while opening the package and handing them a pair to examine or try on. As our friendly pooper-scooper salesperson has shown, getting your product in a customer's hands produces results.

Clothing stores know this as well; one study showed the odds of a sale increased from 10% to 69% just by getting a customer to try on products. Instead of

just buying the products with a click of the mouse, one reason shoppers are in your store is to touch and hold what they're interested in — teach your sales staff to help them do just that.

2. GO THE EXTRA MILE

What better way to show you're there to help guests (and make a profit) than by going the extra mile and getting them product you don't have in stock?

I know a lot of you pooh-pooh special orders as not worth the hassle, but think this through. You're buying a product that's presold so there's no need to worry about turn rates — it's even sold before you have to pay for it. Plus, you already received a deposit paying for at least part of the item before it's ordered.

Another big bonus is it gets the guest to come back into your store a second time to pick up the item. Many chain stores don't like to make special orders for guests, so turn this to your advantage. You probably have a lot of distributors you're already dealing with on a daily basis anyway — use them to your advantage and turn special orders into a positive sales opportunity.

Get a large sign promoting special orders. Brothers Will and Evan Reynolds operate Leadfeather Guns & Ammo, a nearly 7,000 sq. ft. range and



Taking "nuggets" of information *and* putting them to practice in your store will elevate sales — even during slower periods.



Greeting a customer with merchandise in hand gives you an opportunity to showcase inventory, while also affording the customer time to get their bearings and visit a section of the store that interests them.

retail facility, and they use special orders to regularly land additional sales. (They have an impossible-to-miss sign that reads “Don’t See What You’re Looking For? We Do Special Orders!” above the gun wall.)

3. ASK: ARE WE MISSING SOMETHING?

Here’s a novel idea: Ask your guests what they want that you’re not currently providing.

The great baseball promoter Bill Veeck stood outside his ballpark after a game and asked fans what they liked about coming to his stadium and what they were missing. Fans told him they missed the instant replay of television. Since this was before the days of super HD jumbotrons in stadiums, he went outside the envelope and hired mimes to act out the previous play by standing on

top of the dugouts. Fans loved it.

Is there something your store is missing that guests would share if you just asked the question?

4. OFFER “BUYING” CARTS ...

Jay Wallace, patriarch of the Wallace family — owners of the

self-proclaimed “Greatest Store on Earth,” Adventure Outdoors in Smyrna, Ga. — offered his advice on increasing sales during lean periods. (With over 16,000 guns in stock, who’s to argue it isn’t the greatest store on earth?)

Wallace lends, “First, what we’re going through is nothing new. I’ve seen it time and time again. Overly easy times bring undesirable slow times. It’s a wave we ride and then the tide recedes. My advice is to take advantage of opportunity — all the time. When it’s slow, get those things done you couldn’t do while it was busy. Let employees take pride in your store by making changes the customers will notice. Start at the entrance and work your way back.”

Another nugget from Jay: “Our strategy is to have something of size on sale at the front that requires a ‘buying cart’ — not a shopping cart. Your store may be too small for a ‘buying cart’ so make it a ‘buying basket.’ Get the customer started off right pushing a cart (or carrying a basket) in your store.”

Jay is on to something cheap and easy to implement. One of



Our strategy is to have something of size on sale at the front that requires a ‘buying cart’ — not a shopping cart. Your store may be too small for a ‘buying cart’ so make it a ‘buying basket.’”

**JAY WALLACE • OWNER
ADVENTURE OUTDOORS • SMYRNA, GA.**

the large hardware store chains claimed a 20%+ sales increase when a guest uses a basket. Know why Costco has larger-than-average buying carts? They did studies and found the bigger the buying cart, the more people bought during their visit.

Think about your own shopping experience. Once your hands are full, don't you usually cash out? Sure, at times you'll make a pile — but why take the chance? Make it a priority: When your staff sees someone with an item in their hand, get them a basket. Get your buying baskets off the floor and put them in more locations in the store.

Firstly, no one will see them on the floor, and secondly, many shoppers aren't planning on buying multiple items as they

walk in. It's only after looking around and being enticed by your great merchandise selection they buy more than planned, so have buying baskets in multiple locations in your store.

(Look for more money-making ideas from Jay Wallace in some of my future articles. When the legend gives advice, I take notes.)

5. HANDLE REFUNDS DIFFERENTLY

Here's a free-to-implement idea: when you must give a guest a refund, instead of giving back cash or refunding the amount on their credit card, offer a gift card. Not only will this keep money in your hands longer, but you'll also recoup some of the money in the form of margin when the customer buys an item or service with the gift card.

WHAT IT ALL COMES DOWN TO

The last tip from almost all business coaches is to take action. I know after I went to an industry show, seminar or read an article, I would pick up a great nugget that could help my sales, go back to my store with great intentions to implement the idea and watch the cash register ring — only to get bogged down with day-to-day business and not get the nugget implemented.

We must execute. This old joke provides a good overview: Three birds were sitting on a fence. One decides to fly away. How many are left? Well, three — one *decided* to fly away, but didn't do anything about it.

Decisions don't make changes, executing does. **SI**



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HIGH-END GUNS — WORTH THE RISK?

BY TIM BARKER

Ever wondered how many GLOCKS you need to sell to match the return on a \$5,000 Nighthawk Custom 1911 or even a \$20,000 Caesar Guerini

shotgun? Or more importantly: What does it take to put your store in a position to make those kinds of sales?

Bringing higher-end inventory into your shop is the easy part. The challenge is finding customers for those pricey pistols, shotguns and rifles after they land on your shelves.

It's certainly not something

you can jump into without a lot of planning and research. Do you have customers willing to spend several thousand dollars on a gun? And if not, can you find new customers?

It takes a slow, methodical approach, said Scott Ready, owner of Country Attic Treasures in South Lebanon, Ohio, where upper-tier brands include

◀ **Country Attic Treasures' Scott Ready, with a Caesar Guerini 20 GA Revenant shotgun (MSRP: \$15,825) in-hand to present to an intrigued customer.**

Nighthawk Custom, Staccato, Caesar Guerini, Ed Brown and Rizzini.

"It's definitely a building process," Ready remarked. "It's difficult to carry a lot of expensive products when you're not quite sure where the market is."

Ready recalls his own process of becoming a dealer for both Nighthawk and Staccato. He started by bringing in a couple of guns at a time, only adding more as those sold. Customer demand grew as word got around that he was stocking the brands, giving him the comfort level needed to double or triple his inventory.

You also have to be willing to invest a large chunk of money in inventory (more on that later). A high-end 1911, alone, is likely to take the place of a half-dozen or more GLOCKS or Rugers.

"It's definitely intimidating for a lot of people," suggested Eddy Rodriguez, general manager of The Vault at Pistol Parlour in Mesa, Ariz., where exclusive brands include Wilson Combat, LWRCI, Taran Tactical and Nighthawk Custom.

"I don't know that everyone should try to sell this kind of stuff," he said. "I've seen it happen with some shops, where they end up selling it at a loss or barely breaking even because they don't know what to do."

RELATIONSHIPS

When a store is full of the kinds of guns people expect to find in the typical gun store, it has a certain marketing advantage. A customer looking for a new SIG SAUER P320 or a

GLOCK 19 expects to see it on the shelf of any store in their area. It's a different story if you decide to start carrying custom 1911s from Cabot Guns or Alchemy Custom Weaponry.

“

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Nobody expects to see guns like those in stock — unless the time and effort have been put into building your reputation and relationships with the right customers. It's been key for Jess Hancock, owner of The Wichita Gun Club in Wichita, Kan., where high-end brands also include Nighthawk, Korth, Staccato and Wilson Combat.

"We're matched up with these people," Hancock confirmed. "I think we have a really good reputation in the industry and online for sure."

This has been accomplished by reaching out to collectors

and cultivating a social media presence on sites like TikTok and Facebook, which he sees as critical — even if the sites' anti-gun content rules make it a challenge.

"We sell a ton of guns off Facebook. We just have to play by the rules," Hancock relayed. "You can't have a price tag showing, but we can use words like 'available' or 'just arrived' in the store today."

It requires more than just a social media presence. The Wichita Gun Club is constantly managing relationships with specific customers. They keep a book with notes on which customers are looking for hard-to-find and custom guns. Then when they get a line on something, they can make a quick sale.

"I've got a guy right now who is looking for a complete set of Colt snake guns from the '60s and '70s. He's looking for original boxes, original paperwork and unfired guns," he said.

When telling someone you'll keep an eye out for something, you need to mean it, contends Rodriguez, from Arizona. Making that connection later with the customer — even if they've changed their mind — forms an important impression that can pay dividends down the line.

"The gun industry is the biggest smallest industry," Rodriguez observed. "Word of mouth is very important. So, if you treat people well, they'll tell their friends, their friends will tell their friends and so on."

KEEPING INVENTORY FRESH

One of the most significant challenges with high-end inventory is the lead time for many of these pistols, rifles and shotguns. Depending on which company you are ordering from, it could take months, or even years, before the order is filled. It takes planning, commitment and

a willingness to invest a lot of capital to maintain your position as a dealer in premium firearms.

The Wichita Gun Club, a longtime Nighthawk dealer, has a constant flow of orders with the Arkansas-based gunmaker.

"In the last five or six weeks, I've been getting guns I ordered in May of 2021," Hancock explained.

This makes it critical to understand what your customers will buy, said Rodriguez, from Pistol Parlour: "There are some brands we've gotten into that we've found aren't going to be the best movers. So, it becomes a question of whether you keep reordering, or do you just kind of tone it down a little more?"

Another option is to encourage customers to place custom orders directly through you with the premium gunmakers. This can be advantageous for those high-end shoppers looking for a gun with extremely specific features.

"Most of the time the guys who are looking for these products know what they're looking for," noted Ready in Ohio. "They want a specific model."

His shop does a lot of pre-orders for those customers, with a small deposit. They pair this with a layaway program that can be used if the gun arrives sooner than expected.

"These are guns someone may be really stretching to buy. It might be the only \$5,000 gun they ever buy," Ready reasoned. "They may be caught off guard and surprised if it arrives early."

WHAT IF THEY DON'T SELL?

There's also the question of how long you can afford to hold onto these premium guns if they don't sell quickly. This could depend on a couple of factors, including how you paid for the inventory.



Wichita Gun Club stocks a robust Nighthawk Custom line. Recently, Nighthawk Custom owners Mark and Leah Stone stopped by for a visit with Jess and Christy Hancock. (Pictured, from left: Leah, Christy, Jess and Mark.)

I don't know that everyone should try to sell this kind of stuff. I've seen it happen with some shops, where they end up selling it at a loss or barely breaking even because they don't know what to do."

Eddy Rodriguez, General Manager
The Vault at Pistol Parlour
Mesa, Ariz.

The Wichita Gun Club, operating partially off lines of credit, prefers not to hold anything longer than 90 days. Anything longer risks having interest payments eat too deeply into profit margins. It's particularly true these days with borrowing rates on the rise.

Once that 90-day mark approaches, Hancock is often ready to offer incentives. One of those is a \$50 store gift card that becomes available the day after the purchase.

"The point behind this is getting them back into the store a second time," he explained. "We've learned over the years you can't just do \$50 off because they'll just come in and do the \$50 offer and not come back."

The equation is different if purchases are self-capitalized.

"If you can do that, you can afford to hang onto inventory for years if you have to, especially if your margins are strong," said Ready in Ohio.

The high-end guns also tend to appreciate in value over time. So, if you find yourself holding onto a Caesar Guerini shotgun for a year or longer, it's eventually going to look like a bargain for

customers — or you can raise the selling price.

In the end, what's important is carrying the type of firearms that match your reputation as a premium dealer.

"There's certainly a risk in tying up your money," Ready noted, "but there's also a risk in not having the inventory."

THE USED MARKET

There's no reason to rely only on manufacturers for higher-end offerings. Consider tapping into the used market, particularly if you are willing to deal with large collections.

This has long been a strategy for the Wichita Gun Club. Hancock has traveled around the country to buy from collectors or their spouses and children. On the plus side, this has given his store access to rare guns (from custom makers and historical

pieces). On the downside, those collections often include some less desirable guns.

"You get the good, the bad, the ugly," Hancock admitted. "If you look on my GunBroker.com, I think there's four or five selling right now that are penny auctions. You get some crap that comes in. You just throw them up for a penny and sell them 'as is' and gunsmith specials and you just get them out of there."

While the store has often purchased entire collections, changes in the economy have prompted a shift to more consignment deals. Unless the seller is eager to be rid of the collection, consignment offers them a chance to make more money from their guns and keeps your store from having to commit financial resources.

"It's a big opportunity to control your inventory," said

Ready, with Country Attic Antiques, where virtually all used guns are taken in through consignment.

The store has taken in collections as large as 80 or 90 guns through its consignment program. The shop takes a set sales commission, which means the sellers can get substantially more money compared to a direct sale to the store.

"I think it works better for us. And I think it works better for the customer," Ready proposed. "It's very transparent. The seller knows exactly what he's going to make and he knows exactly what I'm going to make."

All in all, the risks of expanding your offerings of high-end, collectible guns are well worth it if you can get the inventory mix right. **S1**



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◀ Thermal optics have become must-have accessories to accompany predator hunters. (Pictured: Burris BTC50 [left], Burris BTH [below])



By Carolee Anita Boyles

MAKE THE MOST OF PREDATOR HUNTING SALES

In some areas, predator hunting can be a year-round activity. For retailers in these locales, this segment can translate to continued sales throughout the year.

At Rocky Mountain Discount Sports in Gillette, Wyo., Manager Kevin Nickisch said the electronics industry is changing predator-hunting sales in his store.

"The electronics industry is constantly advancing, with

higher-end and higher-functioning electronic calls," he stated.

Most of the predator hunters who come into the store are going after coyotes, Nickisch shared. The state of Wyoming doesn't have any license or stamp requirements for hunting coyotes, and there are no bag limits. The only restriction on taking coyotes is they can't be hunted from any public road. Hunters can use electronic calls, but using a light at night is illegal, except in a few special cases.

To be sure he's reaching predator hunters all year, Nickisch maintains a healthy inventory of calls and other predator hunting equipment throughout the seasons.

"We stock quite a few different vendors," he said. "We bring them in during the peak of the predator season. There's always a falloff after the winter, but we try to keep the most current products for all the lines we carry in stock."

Keeping a diverse inventory in the store consistently is a large part of what brings hunters in, according to Nickisch.

"They come in because of the selection and quality of product we're carrying," he explained.

Many of his new customers come in because of word of mouth. The store also has a presence on social media informing customers of what's in stock.

The most popular calls with his predator hunters have remained fairly steady over the past couple of years, Nickisch noted.

"They're mostly buying Foxpro and Lucky Duck digital calls," he provided. "With ammunition, we do really well with .22-250; we sell Hornady and Nosler quite well. We've got it back in stock where we struggled with it in years past. We always have good sales with that caliber of gun, and — like always — 5.56/.223 is a big-selling caliber as well."

Thermal imaging is a growing category for Rocky Mountain Discount Sports.

"We're just kind of dabbling in it at the moment," Nickisch reported. "But we do stock some Burris and a little bit of Pulsar. Burris has been performing really well."

THERMAL OPTICS: THE HOT TICKET

Steve Carter, owner of Outdoor Junction in Cookeville, Tenn., said predator hunting in his area has changed somewhat over the past few years.

"Thermal imaging has become much more popular," he acknowledged. "It's the biggest change I see, plus technology changes in calls."

Predator hunting is mostly a fall and winter activity near Outdoor Junction's Cookeville location.

"Especially in those months, we try to have everything predator hunters need," Carter said. "We keep calls in stock year-round, and thermal imaging stays in the store all year as well. We just step up our inventory during the fall and winter."

According to Carter, the hot sellers this year are in thermal imaging.

"Thermal comes in all price ranges," he remarked. "It's all about how much the customer can afford. The ones who can afford good thermal imaging equipment buy it. We sell a lot in the \$4,000 to \$5,000 range, but we also have to have inventory stair-stepped up, starting at about \$1,500. Everybody wants it; a lot of people just can't afford it."

Carter believes there are some nuances to hunting predators in Tennessee.

"It's legal for depredation reasons," he disclosed. "It's legal to hunt coyotes at night, but you have to say you're hunting them because they're destroying your rabbit population or otherwise causing depredation. It doesn't matter what population they're affecting, you've just got to have that terminology. Otherwise, nighttime hunting is illegal; you can't just say you're going coyote hunting at night."

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CARRY IN STOCK
ALL THE TIME.”

Kevin Nickisch, Manager
Rocky Mountain Discount Sports
Gillette, Wyo.

Carter contends the law regarding coyote hunting at night is confusing, and hunters hope the state legislature will address it and clarify the whole wording of the law regarding nighttime hunting.

"It was put in this way several years ago and nobody has ever addressed the confusion," he stated. "We keep hoping they'll clarify it."

When it comes to predator calls, the ones Carter sells the most are Foxpro; across all the brands, the style most popular is electronic calls.

"We sell more of those than any other brand," he confirmed. "Coyote and fox calls are the main two species we sell calls for. But when you buy an electronic call, you can select a lot of

different species on one caller."

According to Carter, what manufacturers spend on advertising for their products is crucial to bringing customers in to buy predator hunting equipment, whether it's print ads or broadcast efforts.

"We know it helps us a lot," he shared. "When a new company comes out, the first thing I ask them is how many dollars they're going to spend introducing their product, and what kind of advertising they're going to have to support it."

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024

It's no secret: Getting the glass ball out to forecast sales trends is becoming increasingly challenging. When it comes to predator hunting sales, both retailers had contrasting perspectives.

Nickisch, of Rocky Mountain Discount Sports, doesn't foresee any particular changes in this category in the near term.

"I think sales will be steady through the rest of the year and into next year," he proposed. "I wouldn't predict any increases or decreases."

On the other hand, Outdoor Junction's Carter said predicting what the rest of 2023 and 2024 will bring is difficult.

"I could have answered this better last year," he stated. "The reason I say that is sporting goods seem to have come out of a slump we were in all spring and summer. Things have picked back up to 'normal' now, and we're hoping things stay this way for the rest of the year."

The economy continues to be a factor in sporting good sales, Carter said.

"We see the cost of goods versus people's salaries is a little out of balance compared to where it was before," he observed. "We're hoping it doesn't affect us throughout the rest of the year."

As the number of states allowing predator hunting increases, this category should continue to grow in most areas. And, with technology further enhancing offerings, this is a potentially significant category for many retailers. **SI**

BY BRYAN HENDRICKS

GUNSMITHING: A PROVEN MONEYSMAKER

Image: Wilson Combat

**the first two
installments of
this series, we
explained the
strategic aspects
of employing a
gunsmith in a
firearms store.**

This final segment answers the only question that really matters: Is it profitable to employ a gunsmith?

Jim McQueen, owner of On Target in Kalamazoo, Mich., declared the answer is a resounding yes.

“Yeah, it is profitable,” McQueen confirmed. “As a stand-alone service, I’m not sure it’s worth it, but if you consider second- and third-order effects, I think it is.”

If an owner uses a gunsmith strategically and incorporates gunsmith services into an overall marketing and branding paradigm, a gunsmith will help a gun store grow and thrive, according to John Kelly, owner of the American Gunsmithing Institute. The

proof lies in the sheer amount of product in circulation that will need elective or interventionist gunsmith service.

"If there are 400 million firearms in the U.S. at any given time and only 10% need professional cleaning and customizing, that's 40 million guns," Kelly stated. "Distill it down to the local level, to an individual. If 10% of my guns need customization or professional cleaning, or if it needs something else done to it, the store owner who provides this service is positioned to profit from it."

LOSS LEADER OR OPPORTUNITY GENERATOR?

Essentially, employing a gunsmith entails two strategies. A passive approach offers a gunsmith as a form of buried treasure. Customers with a pressing need will find a gunsmith. Hopefully, they'll lead more customers to the store.

While this strategy can work very well over a long period of time, a gunsmith in this situation is not an integral part of the business's operating strategy. The gunsmith serves a "loss leader" role — an

“

If an owner uses a gunsmith strategically and incorporates gunsmith services into an overall marketing and branding paradigm, a gunsmith will help a gun store grow and thrive.

auxiliary service to attract people to the store in hopes they'll buy other things.

McQueen said his gunsmith certainly satisfies a loss leader role from a retail standpoint, but he also

serves a vital in-house function to service guns he buys for resale or takes in trade. Those guns must be inspected and serviced, if necessary, before they are resold. McQueen needs his gunsmith even if his customers don't.

"I think a gunsmith definitely has value from a loss leader perspective in terms of between getting people in the door and doing all things other staff can't do," he shared. "I can't put a value on having an expert who really knows guns and can fix something quick because we buy so many guns off the street."

ANOTHER "TOUCH POINT"

Kendall Knapik, owner of Pioneer Valley Arms of East Longmeadow, Mass., contends the demand for basic gunsmith services justifies employing a gunsmith in his shop. He said years of experience in the industry prove it's a necessary service.

"It brings in more customers for trigger jobs and sight jobs — and it definitely does get more 'touches,'" Knapik explained. "I've always been in a business that has a gunsmith on staff. I'm not familiar with an environment without one, but I do hear customers complain about stores that don't have one on staff. It's one reason why they come here."

It's not enough to have the gunsmith tucked away, unapproachable and inaccessible, Knapik added. Everyone on staff at Pioneer Valley Arms is a gunsmith or an armorer, but the master gunsmith is the most knowledgeable person in the house. Being able to visit with the master gunsmith instills confidence in customers, and it also makes them feel valued.

"100%, yes," Knapik asserted. "When they come in and they request speak to him, he comes right out."

AN AGGRESSIVE APPROACH

An aggressive strategy promotes the gunsmith as a marquee service — anchoring and defining the business. In this scenario, a gunsmith reinforces buyer confidence in the



Every store has gun owners who bring in bags of parts from botched do-it-yourself repair jobs. A store with a gunsmith who can bring the gun back into operation will create a lifetime customer for other products and services.



Real gunsmithing is more than swapping parts. Some jobs require millwork to fabricate new parts that are no longer available or to make other repairs beyond the abilities of armorers.

firearms they purchase.

But he or she also adds an additional dimension to the retailer's presence that attracts and holds a more dedicated type of customer. These are not occasional customers who buy one gun every two years or two boxes of ammo per year. These customers inhabit the store frequently. They have their guns serviced, but they also talk up the business to the casual customers.

This can (and does) convert a casual customer into a frequent

customer with an ever-deepening interest in the retailer's products and services.

Retailers who spurn the aggressive approach, according to Kelly, limit the potential of their business by shackling the economic power of their gunsmiths.

"I see no reason why it needs to be a loss leader," he said. "Your choice is, 'I'm going to sell this gun and make 10-20%, or I'm going to sell this gun and make another \$200 gunsmithing it.' This can radically change your economics."

“

It's definitely profitable, it just goes back to advertising correctly, and also about educating salespeople to be able to steer people in that direction."

John Kelly, Owner
American Gunsmithing Institute.

The first exposure to the gunsmith might certainly be in the loss leader category. For example, a gunsmith can mount a scope on a newly purchased rifle at no charge or install at no charge an aftermarket recoil pad on a newly purchased shotgun. Many store owners do this anyway, but those loss leader services can lead to more involved gunsmith projects a customer might not have otherwise pursued if a gunsmith were not on staff.

"People will pay more for gunsmithing than they paid for their firearms," Kelly stated emphatically. "Take a Ruger 10/22. Most of us probably bought them when they were \$100. If you want

to make it a competition .22 or a varmint or a backpacking gun, there's all kinds of stuff a gunsmith can do to that gun."

A built-in advantage to this approach, Kelly contends, is gun buyers are largely resistant to sticker shock. Guns and accessories are expensive, and while customers certainly seek the best deals, they expect to drop heavy coin on anything firearm-related. They understand the value of a good gunsmith and the value a gunsmith represents to their investments, so they don't hesitate to pay a premium for a gunsmith's services.

"Some of the shops I see are rivaling automotive shops in their fees," Kelly observed. "They don't have the same equipment and overhead as an automotive shop, but I'm seeing them breaking a hundred-dollar bill on an hour of service. I know one place that averages \$168 per hour in gunsmithing services."

"There's a process to it," he

added. "It's all about maximizing the highest and best use of time, batching your work and operating in the most efficient manner."

SENTIMENTAL CEILING

Unquestionably, a gunsmith is a worthy asset to a staff, Kelly said. Customers will tell you if the gunsmith is bolstering the business, and they will tell you if your marketing efforts are effective or ineffective.

"It's definitely profitable," he noted. "Again, it just goes back to advertising correctly, and also about educating salespeople to be able to steer people in that direction."

If a retailer integrates maintenance into firearms sales the way car dealers do with their service departments, loyal customers will bring new customers with them, lends Knapik of Pioneer Valley Arms.

"We always talk about sentimental value with customers,"

Knapik said. "A gun has sentimental value, and we'll spend more because it has perceived value. At the end of the day, it's really their decision how much money want to spend. It doesn't involve high-pressure sales. Give them all the information they need to make an educated decision."

If your store is positioned to accommodate those customers, you're in a better position to control a greater percentage of an area's market share. **SI**

Editor's Note: This concludes our three-part look at the gunsmithing segment. Parts one and two are available online at shootingindustry.com. Have a comment on this or any of the other gunsmithing features? Do you want to see more?

Let us know: editor@shootingindustry.com.

PRESTIGE NEVER GOES OUT OF STYLE.



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NEW PRODUCTS

TO VIEW HUNDREDS OF PRODUCTS
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SHOOTINGINDUSTRY.COM/CATEGORY/FIRST-LOOK

By Jenna Buckley



MUZLSTIK

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The Muzlstik **CHAMBER FLAG** is used by placing the stem into the chamber of a firearm, making it virtually impossible to discharge. Its unique feature is the ability to have a loaded magazine inserted into the firearm while the flag is also inserted ("Loaded" indicator flags [not pictured] are sold separately). The Chamber Flag is made in the U.S. from durable ABS plastic and can be used in firearms from .22 caliber and beyond. Chamber flags are offered in single, three-flag or six-flag packs and a color choice of orange, orange with raised lettering or yellow. Dimensions are: 1.5" W x 3.25" H x 1.25" D.



HOLOSUN

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The **SCRS** (Solar Charging Rifle Sight) advances Holosun's SCS technology, creating an all-new, ultra-compact 20mm tube sight designed for rifle applications. The SCRS features multi-directional light sensors, an advanced auto mode for automatic reticle intensity settings and a manual mode for manual dot intensity control. The 20,000-hour power reserve is stored in an internal solar charging battery, providing ample power to charge three different reticle styles: 65 MOA circle and 2 MOA dot, 2 MOA dot, or 65 MOA circle. The reticle intensity has eight daylight and four night-vision settings. The SCRS utilizes Holosun's 509T footprint for compatibility with third-party offset RDS mounts.

TAURUS USA

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From Taurus, the **JUDGE HOME DEFENDER** allows users to seamlessly switch between the .45 Colt and .410 Bore, and the 13" barrel delivers pinpoint accuracy. The Judge Home Defender incorporates a forend accessory rail, ideal for mounting lights, lasers and other essential accessories. Its steel blast shield protects the shooter's support arm, and the Taurus rubber grip maximizes recoil absorption.



CRKT

(800) 891-3100
crkt.com

Developed in collaboration with Hogue Knives, the **REDEMPTION** is the first knife from CRKT to utilize premium CPM MagnaCut steel. The knife is based on knifemaker Ken Onion's Deadman's Hand custom design that took its name from the aces-and-eights hand Wild Bill Hickok purportedly held at the time of his death. The Redemption is the first Onion design to feature the ambidextrous Crossbar Lock. The mechanism operates smoothly with either hand and is used to both deploy and disengage the stonewashed, spear-point blade. The 4.06" blade is sharp on a single edge and disappears completely into the handle when closed, adding to the knife's sleek, elegant appearance. Additional features include a low-profile deep carry, reversible pocket clip and a G10 handle with stainless steel bolster.



XB30 2-7X32MM SR

HAWKE OPTICS

(877) 429-5347
us.hawkeoptics.com

Hawke Optics' **XB30** line of crossbow scopes is offered in four models. The XB30 2-7x32mm SR scope is built on a 30mm chassis and calibrated from 280-440fps using the XB30SR reticle with red/green illuminated aim points that represent 1.5 inches across at their respective distances out to 60 yards when on 425 fps (5X magnification) only. It has a field of view of 53.8-17.4' at 100 yards. Other modes in the series include the XB30 Compact 1.5-6X36 SR, XB30 Compact 2-8X36 SR and XB30 Pro 1-5X24 SR. Each is nitrogen-purged, shockproof, waterproof and fog proof and carries a lifetime warranty.



EVO 2.0 8" AR 670-1

5.11 TACTICAL

(866) 451-1726
511tactical.com

5.11's first two AR 670-1 compliant boots are the **EVO 2.0 8" AR 670-1** (pictured) and the **SPEED 4.0 8" AR 670-1**. The EVO 2.0 8" AR 670-1 is equipped with Force Foam cushioning and an Ortholite footbed for enduring comfort and support. The Speed 4.0 8" AR 670-1 lightweight boots are crafted with suede leather and 1200D nylon, Force Foam heel cushioning and an Ortholite footbed. The ASTM slip- and oil-resistant outsole is stitched for hard use and the brand's heat deflect material helps shield feet from radiant heat from the ground. Both boots are compliant for U.S. Army Wear with MultiCam and OCP uniforms.



STREAMLIGHT INC.

(800) 523-7488
streamlight.com

The **SPEEDLOCKER** from Streamlight is a portable storage container with a secure, non-electronic keypad locking system that provides fast, one-handed direct access to valuable items without the need for batteries or a power source. The lightweight container has a foam insert to help protect and secure stored items. The SpeedLocker's patented mechanical keypad provides for 31 lock combinations and comes with an Allen key to change the combination. The container is air-travel suitable when used with the supplied padlock, and its rugged hard shell is made of high-impact polymer. Its internal dimensions are 8"L x 7.1"W and it weighs 2.6 lbs. (empty).



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Davidson's collaboration with Ruger produced a series of exclusive **AMERICAN PREDATOR RIFLES WITH A BUSHNELL 4-12X40 AO SHARPSHOOTER SCOPE** (rings included). These exclusive rifles have a Kryptek Obskura Nox camo dip finish, and the receiver, bolt knob and threaded barrel are finished in gray Cerakote. A matching gray Cerakoted muzzle brake is included, as well as a standard (also matching) thread protector. The American Predator rifle features Power Bedding to positively locate the receiver and free-float the barrel for accuracy. The installed Ruger Marksman Adjustable trigger offers a crisp release with a user-adjustable pull weight between 3 and 5 lbs. The exclusives are offered in .22-250 Rem., .308 Win. and 6.5 Creedmoor.



HOBIE EYEWEAR

(866) 625-1280
hobieeyewear.com

Hobie **DUO COLLECTION** frames snap onto eyeglasses through advanced technology, and the conversion to a polarized lens is automatic. The DUO Collection includes three frame designs varying in shape and size, and are ideal for those who wear prescription glasses and spend a lot of time outdoors. The glasses use strong magnetic clips to attach premium polarized lenses to comfortable and stylish matching frames, with a connection that makes the two layers virtually undetectable and includes an integrated hook for added security. The Hobie DUO Collection includes the Bells, Crescent and Lennox. Satin black frames are flexible, durable and constructed from Aerospace injection Ultem material, which auto-conforms to different face sizes.

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ADVERTISER	PAGE	ADVERTISER	PAGE
American Gunsmithing Institute	9	Kinsey's Inc.	2
Armasight	23	MGE Wholesale Inc.	47
Avient	5	National Shooting Sports Foundation	48
Camfour	15	Rapid Gun Systems	8
Davidson's Inc.	17	Ruger	7
Electronic Transfer Inc.	21	SDS Imports	25, 31, 35, 41
Falco SK s.r.o.	27	SIG SAUER	3
Great Southern Agency LLC	19	Sports South	11
IWI US	1	Zanders Sporting Goods	13
Joseph Chiarello & Co. Inc.	43		



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NEW PRODUCTS

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The **RAPID SAFE SHOTGUN WALL LOCK** revolutionizes access with fast and dependable touch-free entry. Utilizing RFID technology, a wide variety of items can activate the wall lock such as a watchband, key fob or sticker, allowing authorized individuals to retrieve their shotguns quickly. The system supports programming up to five RFID tags. A keypad access option acts as a secondary entry method to allow access to a firearm even when an RFID tag is unavailable. Additional features include easy installation, child-resistant certification, heavy-duty tamper-proof construction and vertical/horizontal mount. Exterior dimensions are 8.5" x 9.2" x 2.7". Two circular barrel keys are included in case of a power failure.

FIREARMS GUIDE
firearmsguide.com

Impressum Media Inc. announced the release of the **14TH EDITION OF THE FIREARMS GUIDE** by Chris Mijic. For the year 2023/2024, it introduces new firearm makes and models, alongside the inclusion of 3,000 newly added gun schematics, blueprints, manuals and old guns and ammo catalogs. Notably, this edition features original printable catalogs and brochures from manufacturers such as Colt, Smith & Wesson, Savage Arms, Browning, Beretta, Winchester, Charles Daly, SIG SAUER, CZ, FN and more. The guide is published as a cloud-based, searchable online edition for a desktop, laptop or tablets or a flash-drive edition for Windows users.



WALTHER PRESENTS “BEYOND THE COUNTER” VIDEO SERIES

Walther Arms has launched “Beyond the Counter” — a video series focusing on the “human side” of some of the nation’s most renowned firearms retailers. In the first video of this series, Walther featured Green Top Outdoors CEO Blaine Altaffer, along with Pat Hopkins, who has been with Green Top Outdoors for 54 years.

Green Top Outdoors first opened in 1947 selling gas, basic groceries, fireworks and live bait for anglers. Over the years the business saw many changes, but one constant remained: their dedication to great customer service and providing a positive experience for everyone who walked through their doors.

“The magic at Green Top Outdoors is a combined 1,250 years of experience, focus and a passion for the outdoors. Our team makes sure we are consistently doing things the right way, which is with the consumer in mind first and foremost,” said Altaffer. “By building lasting relationships with our consumers and retail partners, like Walther, we are able to provide an

exceptional experience every single time.” “Beyond the Counter” is not just a series about firearms and gear; it’s about the people who make these stores special.

“The stores in this series are more than just retail spaces. They’re hubs of knowledge and expertise. Customers come not only to make purchases but also to seek advice, share stories and be a part of a community of like-minded individuals,” said Nick Gutierrez, dealer/buy group channel manager at Walther Arms.

“We don’t always know the stories and experiences that have shaped the people behind the counter, but every one of them plays a vital role in helping our industry grow and to be a resource for those who might not know anything other than they want to try something new. Our goal with this series is to showcase the men and women who deserve to be recognized and celebrated for their efforts and initiatives on behalf of our company.”

The second and third videos in this series, released in October, highlighted Vance Outdoors and Van’s Deer Processing — with more arriving in the coming months.

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

CMP TO PRESENT UP TO \$335,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

To continue its efforts in supporting young marksmen and women across the nation in their future endeavors, the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) announced it will award up to \$335,000 for the 2024–2025 school year.

Through this year’s Scholarship Program, the CMP will be providing \$300,000 toward graduating senior athletes, with the Garand Collectors Association providing a \$30,000 donation and the Talladega Superspeedway in Alabama contributing an additional \$5,000 to be distributed amongst recipients.

Since 2005, the CMP Scholarship

Program has presented \$1,000 one-year scholarships to high school seniors based on merit, humanitarian efforts, extracurricular activities and marksmanship participation. In 2020, the CMP added one \$5,000 scholarship, the Carolyn Hines Memorial Scholarship, awarded to the top applicant who best embodied the values of Dr. Hines, who was instrumental in shaping the program.

Last year, the CMP added four \$20,000 scholarships awarded to the top applicants (\$5,000 over four years to each recipient). These scholarships honor past notable CMP Board members Judith Legerski, Jon Bengston, Harry Sieben and the late Dr. Carolyn Hines. Winners will be decided by the Scholarship Committee after carefully reviewing each application.

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16. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: **September 2023**

17. Extent and Nature of Circulation

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BY JADE MOLDAE

A CASE FOR GIVING BACK

For even Average Joes and Janes, the end of the year is plain *busy*. Add in being an FFL dealer, it's akin to competing in a high-octane Formula 1 race through Christmas. Upcoming "pit stops" include: Black Friday, year-end analyses, 2024 planning and more — all with the end goal of maximizing profits.

Amidst the busyness of this season, there's a strong case to be made to shift gears and add in a focus on generosity during this season.

GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

There are two facets of "giving back" we'll explore here — giving back to the community, as well as employees.

There are numerous ways to give back to the community. A fundraiser to benefit a local charity or those in need is an excellent starting point.

Jacquelyn Clark, co-owner of Bristlecone Shooting, Training & Retail Center in Lakewood, Colo., previously shared in *SI* her team has been actively involved in fundraising events for local non-profits — as well as for those who were victims of a destructive wildfire in a neighboring locale.

"People want to do business with and be loyal to organizations they 'like' and feel are good community citizens," she contended.

At Generational Guns in Bondurant, Iowa, Co-Owner Heather Carpenter stated how giving back to the community also boosts branding.

"Being active in our community shows we care, it gets our name out there and keeps reminding people we're here," she noted.

Carpenter added her team looks at causes that will further the reach of the shooting sports in Generational Guns' area.

"The things we look at are is it industry-related? Is it local? Is it something that has meaning to us — like a good cause? If it's any of those, then we look at if it is in the budget and/or if we can donate the time to it," she said.

The holiday season also serves as a poignant reminder for those facing food insecurity (estimated to be more than 34 million, according to the USDA). With hunting season in full swing, consider letting hunters know they can donate excess meat to those in need through meat processors who have partnered with local and national food banks. According to Farmers & Hunters Feeding The Hungry, one deer can provide 160 meals for a family in need.

Other ways to give back to the community would be setting up a donation box for an organization like Toys For Tots, promoting a "round-up" program at the point of sale or volunteering at a local event.

While you may be hesitant to "toot your own horn" in charitable endeavors, Clark advises: don't.

"If you're using social media and email to market these events on the front end, then communicate how successful they were and how much was raised on the back end," she said. "It can go a long way toward building brand loyalty and, in turn, customer/member retention."

GIVING BACK TO EMPLOYEES

Take some time to focus on your team during this festive period — doing

so will foster "engaged employees," those who love what they do and strive to make their organization better every day. According to Gallup's "State of the American Workplace" report (2017), companies with highly engaged employees are 21% more profitable and outperform the competition by 147%. This says something: if you take care of your employees, they'll take care of your customers.

During a stressful time of year, things like team parties — from basic pizza lunches up to an expansive event — will boost morale and team bonding. While you likely can't afford to give extensive time off in this season, a sales incentive with a cash reward or extra vacation hours would further fuel employee engagement.

“

It can go a long way toward building brand loyalty and, in turn, customer/member retention."

Jacquelyn Clark, Co-Owner
Bristlecone Shooting, Training & Retail Center

Earlier this year, I spoke with a dealer who shared during the peak COVID buying spree he gave his employees double-pay since sales were so brisk. When things slowed down, considerably, at his store, no one from the sales team left.

BOTTOM LINE

By doing the above, your store will be seen as an organization that cares about the local community and people will view you in a positive light. Whether it's current or prospective customers, team members or other businesses, they'll value your efforts to help others — which can help further separate your team from the other stores you're competing against.

Dealers, what are you doing to give back to your community or employees? How do they respond? Let us know: editor@shootingindustry.com.

Continued on p. 45

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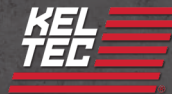
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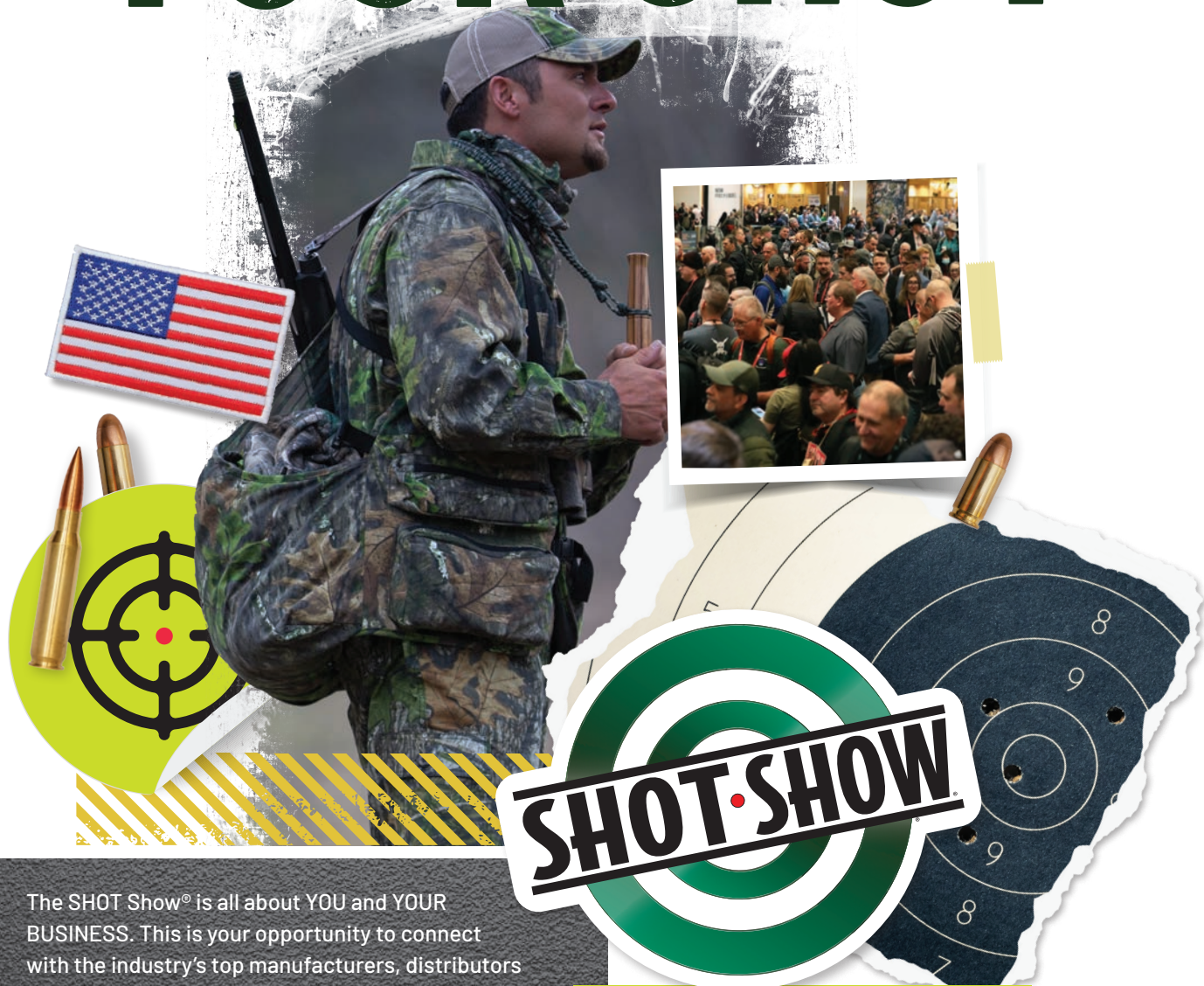
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