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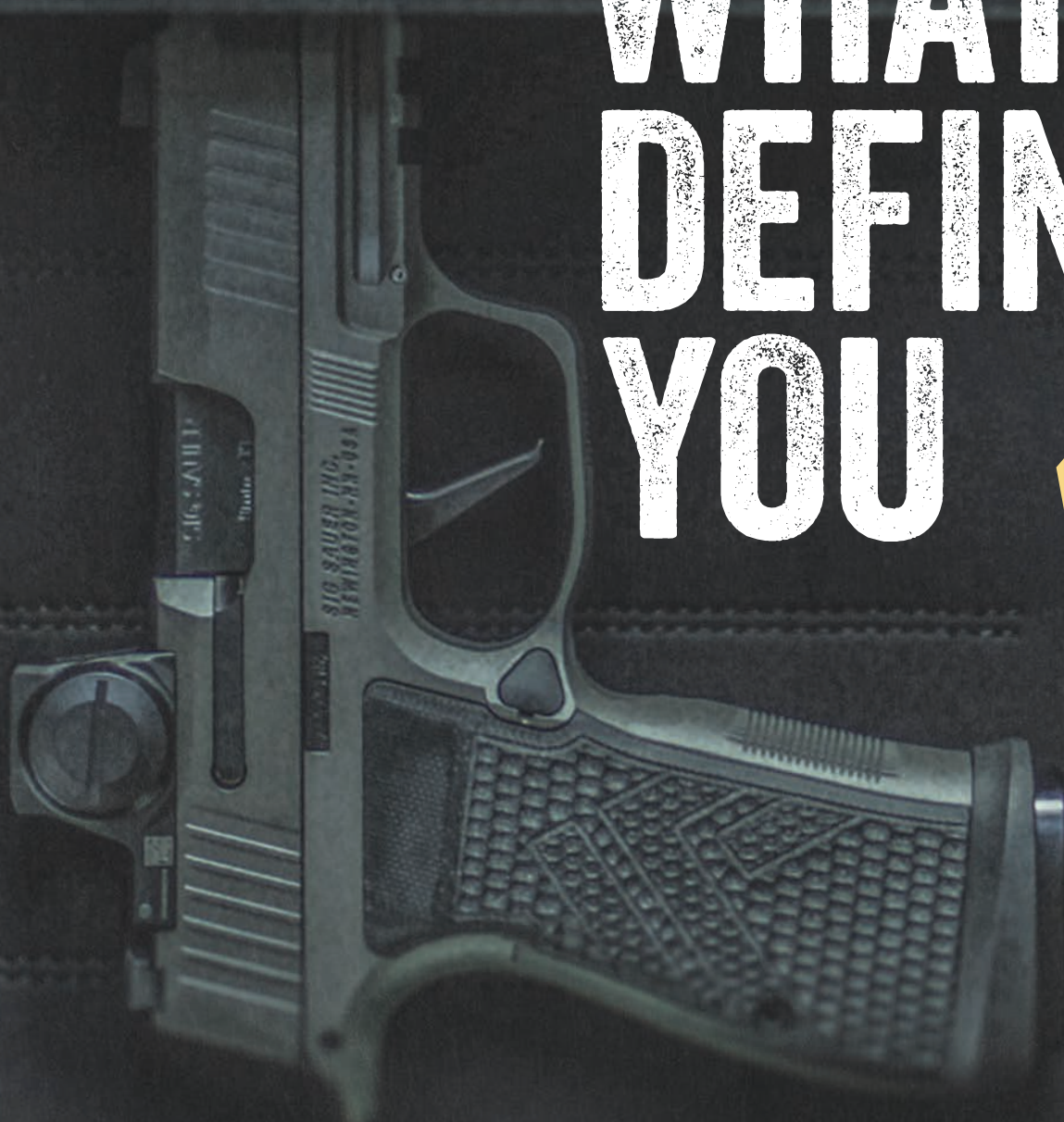
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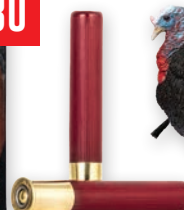
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Carry Guns & More

For most gun stores, there's no more important sales category than self-defense. Beginning with this issue, *Shooting Industry* will be publishing a three-part series focused on self-defense sales trends — starting with handguns this month. (In case you're curious, the March and April issues will highlight long guns and non-lethal options, respectively.)

In what will probably mirror the trends in your store, Mike Sfakianos, senior manager at Bill Jackson's in Florida, shares what his customers are looking for in a carry gun in part one of this series (pp. 26–28).

"Everybody's always looking for a few things when choosing a carry gun," he said. "Weight and size are big factors. People want to have a full grip. And then for any kind of handgun, they always look to get as much capacity as possible."

Have a comment after reading this issue? Contact the SI team anytime: editor@shootingindustry.com, or connect with us on LinkedIn or Facebook.

THE VALUE OF DISPLAYS

In his *Personal Defense Marketplace* column, Massad Ayoob highlights your store's "other" salesperson — that is, displays. Effective displays — such as one showcasing Nighthawk Custom's drop-in trigger — can be a sales generator without disrupting sales staff.

He explains, "A seldom-touted but very real advantage of a display is ... the customer can be alone with it without tying up staff who are making sales elsewhere in the shop. The customer can try it on their own and only then catch a salesperson's attention and say, 'Tell me more about this!'"

See p. 18.

SPRING TURKEY HUNTING SALES

With the first major hunting season of 2024 on approach, Bryan Hendricks



FEBRUARY 2024

tasks retailers to share what it takes to have a successful retail operation before and during spring turkey season.

Nathan Dunn, owner of Dunn's Sporting Goods in Pevely, Mo., shared how customer preferences have changed in recent history.

"The past few years we've sold a lot more sub-gauge guns, a lot of 20 gauges and a lot of .410," he said. "A lot of hunters are getting older. They're tired of packing around a big 12 gauge."

Dunn's top sellers include the Stevens 301 and Mossberg International Series.

For more, see pp. 30–32.

NEXT MONTH: MORE SELF-DEFENSE

Anchoring the March 2024 issue will be part two in the three-part self-defense series, with a focus on long guns. If past election cycles are anything to go by, there will be elevated interest in long guns — especially ARs — this year. Tim Barker interviews a panel of dealers who share what models are attracting attention, as well as how they elevate sales in this category.

Next month's issue will also highlight how the industry can continue expanding diversity, as well as a look at retro firearms — which are far from dead. In addition, Massad Ayoob examines how a movie theatre-turned-shooting range became a resounding success in Nashville, Tenn., while Carolee Anita Boyles interviews women-owned brands (Otis Technology and MKS Supply). **SI**

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USING AI EFFECTIVELY

I just read January's "Trigger Tech" article; our store is in the midst of using AI for our SEO.

Of course, with all AI, I think it's extremely important to still edit and put any copywriting in your own words — or else you may lose the voice of your brand you have spent time building. For our website, we're using AI to assist in writing original content for product descriptions. This is a huge assist when you have 9,500 live SKUs!

We're also currently working on a project training AI to be used as a customer service chatbot on our website, as well as enhancing the search feature. With AI, it can quickly learn what your customer is looking for and help them in finding it faster and suggest other products to purchase that go alongside their main purchase. Yes, the website

already has this feature, but AI enhances it — really dialing it in for the customer and making it easy to find the right products quickly.

In the marketing world, we hear a lot on both sides of the fence about why AI is good or bad. When used correctly, I believe it can improve productivity — especially for a small marketing or e-commerce team!

— **Erin Crooks • Marketing Director**
Freedom Outdoors
Virginia Beach, Va.

AGI MEA CULPA

Dear *Shooting Industry* Editor, I enjoyed your series on gunsmithing. Providing that information will help FFL dealers benefit from offering these services, and I hope you continue with the series.

We're using AI to assist in writing original content for product descriptions. This is a huge assist when you have 9,500 live SKUs!

I also appreciated being quoted several times throughout the series of articles.

However, in the November issue (the last one in the series) you got my name wrong. It is "Gene Kelly," not "John Kelly" and my title is president of the American Gunsmithing Institute. But again, I appreciate being quoted. **SI**

— **Gene Kelly • President**
American Gunsmithing Institute
Napa, Calif.

Gene, thank you for feedback and valuable insights that were featured in last year's gunsmithing series. I sincerely apologize for the oversight with the misspelling. (We'll keep out those pesky gremlins and continue to aim for 100% accuracy moving forward.) I can confirm we will be publishing another three-part series here in 2024, with the Sept., Oct. and Nov. issues. Dealers and gunsmiths, stay tuned!

— **Jade Moldae, Editor**

HAVE A THOUGHT WHILE READING THE ISSUE?

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COLT CZ GROUP ANNOUNCES ACQUISITIONS

Colt CZ Group SE announced an agreement with CBC Europe S.à r.l. to purchase Czech small arms ammunition manufacturer Sellier & Bellot a.s. The acquisition will be financed through a combination of the company's existing cash resources and debt financing.

Colt CZ will acquire 100% of shares in Sellier & Bellot for the cash consideration of \$350 million and a new issue of Colt CZ common stock leading to 27–28% of CBC's stake in the share capital of Colt CZ Group post-transaction. The final amount of CBC shareholding will be determined

after financial audits of both companies for 2023.

The transaction is subject to regulatory approval in various countries, and is expected to close in the first half of 2024.

"We look forward to working with the management of Sellier & Bellot, its employees, partners and customers, as well as the new opportunities that the connection with Sellier & Bellot will undoubtedly bring to our entire group," said Jan Drahota, CEO and chairman of the board of directors of Colt CZ Group.

"We are convinced of Colt CZ management's long-term vision, and believe the transaction will lead to remarkable value creation between the ammunition and firearms segments. Our subsidiary, Magtech Ammunition, will continue to serve as the dedicated sales entity for Sellier & Bellot products in the U.S.," said Fabio Mazzaro, CFO of CBC Global Ammunition LLC.

Magtech USA has established itself as a global leader in producing ammunition known for quality, consistency and reliability. Magtech offers a comprehensive range of ammunition for sport shooting, self-defense, tactical and law enforcement applications.

"We anticipate no disruption in our standard operations," said Troy Duerr, president of Magtech USA.

Sellier & Bellot is a traditional Czech ammunition manufacturer that ranks among the oldest engineering companies in the Czech Republic and worldwide, dating back to 1825. The company's product portfolio includes a wide range of hunting and sporting ammunition and components for pistols and revolvers, rifles, shotguns and rimfire cartridges.

Sellier & Bellot is also a major supplier of small-caliber ammunition to military and law enforcement customers worldwide. The company

Continued on p. 12

FREEDOM OUTDOORS ACQUIRES STODDARD'S RANGE

Freedom Outdoors announced its acquisition of Stoddard's Range and Guns, a respected business in the shooting and outdoor sporting industry.

This strategic move provides two storefronts to serve Freedom's customers and their communities. Stoddard's operates in Douglasville, Ga., and Midtown Atlanta.

"We [express] our deepest gratitude to Ken Baye and the Stoddard's team. Their dedication, innovation and passion have established Stoddard's as a beacon of excellence in the industry.

The achievements and reputation built by the Stoddard's team are admirable and a testament to their commitment to quality and customer service," said Freedom's press announcement.

The integration of Stoddard's into the Freedom family will enhance its value and service in the shooting and outdoor sporting markets. Freedom's core values — dedication to its customers, a passion for excellence and a relentless pursuit of innovation for its guest experiences — underpin this new company benchmark.

"This exciting new chapter would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our members and guests. Your trust and patronage have been the cornerstone of our



collective success. This acquisition is also a reflection of the extraordinary performance of the Freedom team. Their hard work, strategic vision and relentless pursuit of excellence have enabled us to reach this pivotal moment," the announcement added.

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

NOSLER RAISES OVER \$148,000 FOR VETERANS

Nosler Inc. announced the proceeds from its limited edition rifles raised a total of \$148,935 for Boot Campaign, a national nonprofit that serves the veteran and military community. All 22 purchasers of the rifle packages made a charitable donation to Boot Campaign.

Each package included a specially serialized Model 48 Long Range Carbon rifle chambered in 28 Nosler that featured a PROOF Research barrel and Timney trigger. The stock was a custom Manners Carbon Fiber stock with a special Kryptek Obskura Nox pattern that highlights the carbon fiber construction. The Boot Campaign logo was laser engraved on the bottom metal to further highlight the



Nosler Custom 48 Long Range

significance of this project. Leupold also donated 22 VX-5HD 3-15x44 scopes and mounts.

The rifle packages sold out in minutes, with one very gracious customer donating the rifle back to Boot Campaign to utilize for future fundraising. South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem auctioned off that rifle at a charity event.

"Because of this collaboration, more veterans and military families will experience life-changing treatment for often hidden wounds of war," said Shelly

Kirkland, Boot Campaign CEO.

"As a family company that manufactures our products right here in the U.S., we couldn't think of a more important way to help those who have given so much for our security and our freedoms. Boot Campaign works very hard at getting our returning soldiers the help they need, and in turn they need our help to accomplish that mission," said John Nosler, president of Nosler.

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

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



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Continued from p. 10

operates its main production facility in Vlašim, Czech Republic.

"I am delighted that Sellier & Bellot, after many successful years in the CBC Group, will become part of Colt CZ Group, which has Czech roots and, at the same time, an international presence. We will continue to build our traditional brand and work closely with the Colt CZ Group team in developing our products to deliver the best solutions to our customers," said Radek Musil, CEO of Sellier & Bellot.

COLT CZ GROUP SE ACQUIRES MK 47 GRENADE LAUNCHER SYSTEM

Through its subsidiary Colt, Colt CZ Group SE has acquired ownership of the Mk 47 40mm Advanced Lightweight Grenade Launcher system, including the Fire Control, from General Dynamics Ordnance and Tactical Systems (GD-OTS). The Mk 47 is a reliable, portable 40mm

grenade launcher suited for light infantry vehicle and tripod applications.

"This acquisition expands Colt CZ Group's offerings into the segment of larger and more-sophisticated weapon systems and crew-served platforms. The acquisition of this highly capable weapon system is fully in line with our group's mission to provide innovative and high-quality products that our customers can rely on in any situation. Also, it will nicely complement the efforts our subsidiary swissAA has in the production of 40mm grenades," said Drahota said.

"Colt's Manufacturing Company is one of the world's leading manufacturers of firearms used by militaries around the world. Colt has a history of producing crew-served weapons and 40mm shoulder-fired grenade launchers. Bringing the Mk 47 and Fire Control into the Colt CZ Group will allow our experienced engineering and operations team to expand its capabilities for the

future soldier's requirements," said Dennis Veilleux, CEO of Colt CZ Group North America, and member of the board of directors of Colt CZ Group.

The lightweight Mk 47 can be tripod-, vehicle-, air- or watercraft-mounted. The Mk 47 can launch smart, programmable, 40mm air-burst grenades through in-bore or radio frequency (RF) programming in addition to various unguided point impact rounds. The Mk 47 fires all NATO standard high-velocity 40mm rounds, providing firepower against soft and light-armored targets.

Colt CZ Group, headquartered in the Czech Republic, markets and sells its products mainly under the Colt, CZ (Česká zbrojovka), Colt Canada, CZ-USA, Dan Wesson, Spuhr, swissAA and 4M Systems brands. Colt CZ Group has production facilities in the Czech Republic, the U.S., Canada, Sweden, Switzerland and Hungary.

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

DAVIDSON'S GROWS CUTLERY CATEGORY

Davidson's Inc., a leading firearms, ammunition, optics and accessories wholesaler, announced the significant growth of one of its newest product categories — cutlery.

Beginning in early 2022, Davidson's expanded into the cutlery category of products, offering dealer partners knives and tools from a handful of manufacturing vendors. Along the way, the company offered its dealers product training on this new category through the Davidson's LIVE streaming service that utilizes experts from these manufacturing partners.

Beginning modestly with products from manufacturers such as American Outdoor Brands, Kershaw, Columbia River Knife & Tool, Templar Knives, Hogue, Cold Steel and SOG, Davidson's continued to strategically grow the category.

Davidson's has sought to offer a selection of knives and tools to span consumers' budgets and demands. From counter offerings at less than \$20 retail all the way to full-custom knives priced at several hundred dollars, Davidson's goal



has been to provide its dealer partners with products to match their respective markets, while providing healthy profit margins.

Davidson's currently carries knives from nearly 30 brands, and offers upward of 1,200 individual cutlery SKUs, earning the category a spot on Davidson's "Master Dealer Program" list. Becoming a Davidson's Knife Master Dealer

offers further benefits and discounts to Davidson's dealers, enabling dealers to serve their customers more efficiently.

Davidson's is known for its service-oriented programs such as Gallery of Guns and the Davidson's Guaranteed Lifetime Replacement program, which extends to both the dealer and the consumer.

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

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

OPTIMUS ARMS ACQUIRES HEXMAG, SENTRY SOLUTIONS

Optimus Arms USA (OA) announced it has acquired Hexmag and Sentry Solutions from SENTRY Products Group, forming Hexmag USA LLC. The new entity will manufacture and sell the entire line of Hexmag-branded products, including Sentry Solutions dry lubricants for firearms and knives.

Providing custom weapons for private and government customers as well as an entire line of firearms accessories and optics, OA is a commercial entity of defense contractor Point One USA.

Hexmag produces a full line of specialized magazines and grips for use in a variety of firearm platforms using a proprietary advanced composite (PolyHex2) and an advanced carbon fiber polymer.

“We have had a relationship with Point One for several years supplying sewn goods, and have seen their expansion with Optimus Arms USA. They have excellent reach across a much broader audience globally, including military, law enforcement and other government agencies. I believe establishing HEXMAG USA in this structure will provide the resources and relationships necessary to help grow the Hexmag product lines within the shooting, hunting and outdoor sporting segments,” said Terry Naughton,



president of SENTRY Products Group.

“This partnership is an opportunity for Point One and one of our commercial divisions to expand the Hexmag brand within the commercial firearms industry, as well as expand our ability to provide the best possible products, training and equipment to the warfighter and law enforcement personnel who put their lives on the line daily. We will continue to grow the Hexmag product line and ensure the finest-quality materials and workmanship

persist across the Hexmag brands, just as we have for Point One and OA over the past decade,” said Bob Brush, founder/CEO of Point One and president of OA.

Hexmag plans to continue fulfilling orders without interruption as the company transitions manufacturing and warehouse operations from Boise, Idaho to Virginia Beach, Va. Completion of the transition is anticipated by the end of the first quarter of 2024.

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

FOTAFLO, OTTER WAIVER FORM STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Fotaflo and Otter Technologies are joining forces to redefine adventure experiences, blending cutting-edge photo-marketing with digital waivers. The two companies aim to transform precision into an art in axe-throwing and shooting range experiences.

Fotaflo and Otter Waiver offer an effortless solution for adventure businesses. From activity waivers to thrilling photos, this collaboration ensures businesses can focus on delivering exceptional adventures, leaving the hassle of data management to integrated solutions. Participants become both

storytellers and brand advocates.

“At Fotaflo, we believe every experience is a story waiting to be told. Our partnership with Otter Waiver integrates our passion for helping operators capture unforgettable moments with a seamless delivery through digital waiver contact data. We’re not just capturing memories, we’re facilitating lifelong relationships between our clients and their customers,” said Meghan Forbes, director at Fotaflo.

“Our integration with Fotaflo is a commitment to elevating the adventure experience. Together, we empower businesses to seamlessly capture, share and preserve the essence of every adventure. It’s about creating enduring connections through shared



experiences,” said Ben Nelson, CEO of Otter Technologies.

From personalized photo links to social media-worthy snapshots, participants can amplify the adventure experience, extending its reach far beyond the immediate thrill.

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

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

FN ANNOUNCES NEW 509 MRD-LE PISTOL CONTRACT

FN America LLC announced the Indian River County Sheriff's Office (IRCSO) of Vero Beach, Fla., selected the FN 509 MRD-LE 9mm striker-fired pistol as its new sidearm for its 370-plus deputies. The order was fulfilled through FN's law enforcement distributor, Dana Safety.

"As they began their selection process, IRCSO sought a new pistol that was safe and reliable for their officers to carry in the line of duty, along with a brand partner they could rely on. FN met those needs with our commitment to service and with a duty pistol designed for law enforcement, by law enforcement," said Doug Grier, LE business development director for FN America.

"We are dedicated to ensuring the safety of our deputies and providing them with durable equipment to keep our community safe. Our oath to public safety remains our top priority, and these new firearms are a testament to that commitment," said IRCSO Sheriff Eric Flowers.



Deputies of the Indian River County Sheriff's Office now carry the FN 509 MRD-LE 9mm striker-fired pistol. Sheriff Eric Flowers (middle, in white) said the pistol has already "demonstrated improved accuracy and sighting versatility" for the department.

Topped with a 4" slide housing the FN-signature cold hammer-forged barrel, the FN 509 MRD-LE is designed for accuracy. It features the company's patented optics-mounting system that enables the direct mounting of several miniature red-dot optics along with adjustable three-dot night sights.

The pistol design features four passive safety systems, including a trigger safety incorporated into the flat-faced trigger. The contoured frame design delivers superior ergonomics and effective recoil

management that accommodates nearly all hand sizes through the interchangeable backstraps, while maintaining a natural point of aim.

"FN's 509 MRD-LE has demonstrated improved accuracy and sighting versatility that coincides with the needs of our agency. We have already received our first shipment of pistols and have qualified all of our staff," Sheriff Flowers added.

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

NSSF'S FIRST SHOTS ADDS INCENTIVES FOR HOST RANGES, PARTNERS

The NSSF is expanding incentives to target-shooting ranges, firearms-training instructors and other partners offering its First Shots program.

The NSSF funding for First Shots partners, previously limited to marketing co-op efforts, is now available to qualifying NSSF member ranges, instructors and shooting sports organizations to help cover a variety of expenses related to First Shots hosting efforts.

First Shots is a long-running NSSF program designed to increase participation in the shooting sports by providing introductory and refresher target-shooting experiences in a safe, supportive environment. First Shots classes provide the perfect opportunity for first-timers, new gun owners and others to

confidently enjoy target shooting.

The ability to recover startup costs and build program momentum are among the many benefits the new, comprehensive support system offers to First Shots hosts. Qualifying NSSF member hosts are eligible to receive \$15 per First Shots participant, up to a maximum of \$1,500, with the amount awarded at the discretion of NSSF.

To take advantage of this customer-building program, NSSF member First Shots hosts must hold at least three First Shots events between Dec. 1, 2023 and March 17, 2024, or incorporate the First Shots-branded experience into the business's customary offerings, even if by appointment. Additionally, they must provide NSSF with a post-First Shots report after each event, including how many people participated.

To enroll as a First Shots host and sign up for the new First Shots incentives program, contact Ann Gamauf at agamauf@nssf.org or Zach Snow at zsnow@nssf.org.

In addition to these new incentives,

FIRST SHOTS
AN INTRODUCTION
TO SHOOTING

First Shots hosts can still expect to receive the program's traditional no-cost support materials. These include eye and ear protection, Birchwood Casey Shoot-N-C targets, Rimfire ammunition, up to \$500 annually in monetary support for clay target and shotgun ammunition expenses, First Shots handbooks and other firearm safety literature for each student, \$25 rewards coupon for each student for completing a survey to use at the host range and up to \$3,000 in annual co-op advertising funds to promote your First Shots event offerings.

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

SIG SAUER CELEBRATES P226 40TH ANNIVERSARY

SIG SAUER's yearlong 40th anniversary celebration of the iconic P226 pistol is underway. The company is commemorating the milestone with a special-edition pistol, and plans to release a historical video series detailing the development and service of the P226. Further, Feb. 26, 2024 will be known as P226 Day.

Developed to compete in the U.S. military's XM9 service pistol trials, the P226 captured the attention of the U.S. Navy SEALs. The Navy officially adopted

the P226 in 1989 to become the MK25, and it would serve in the Global War on Terror as official service pistol.

"With a legacy of accuracy and reliability, and millions upon millions of rounds of proven performance, the P226 has earned its reputation as the premiere service pistol and is the standard by which all other combat pistols are measured," said Tom Taylor, CMO and executive VP of SIG SAUER Inc.

The selection of the P226 by the SEALs marked the beginning of a decades-long history between SIG SAUER and U.S. armed forces. The P226's adoption by the SEALs became the cornerstone of several subsequent partnerships to include the



SIG SAUER P226-XFIVE LEGION

M17, M18 and the Next Generation Squad Weapons (NGSW) program.

Today, the P226 boasts many refinements, and is highly regarded for its superior quality, reliability and accuracy among law enforcement professionals, military units, collectors and shooting enthusiasts. **SI**

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A. KASPER

Savage Arms Names CEO

Following longtime CEO Al Kasper's retirement, Savage Arms' President Chris Bezzina has added CEO to his title. Kasper will remain on the board of directors.



C. BEZZINA

"Al's impact is evident in every aspect of our company," said Bezzina. "His knowledge in operations, finance and product development helped fuel our growth as a company. As the new leader of this organization, I look forward to continuing the momentum Al helped create, driving Savage to be an industry leader in innovative technologies, and expanding upon our best-in-class manufacturing capabilities."

Bezzina joined Savage in 2007, where he led the engineering team. He then spent over 10 years in operations where he led the company's new product development and manufacturing initiatives.



B. SACK

Second Amendment Foundation Appoints Legal Operations Director

The Second Amendment Foundation (SAF) has named attorney Bill Sack as its director of legal operations. Sack is responsible for oversight of SAF's legal program to include litigation inception and management, tracking active cases, educating the public and cultivating SAF's attorney referral network.

SAF Executive Director Adam Kraut stated, "His background in the Second Amendment space is key to ensuring our right to keep and bear arms continues to be defended at all costs."

Sack is a practicing attorney

and graduate of The George Washington University and Widener Law School. He brings five years of experience in the 2A advocacy space to this role, which includes serving as director of legal operations for a liberty-based advocacy non-profit as well as a decade of experience in management, marketing and public relations.



C. HALLA

Iron Valley Supply Co. Welcomes President/CEO

Iron Valley Supply Co. welcomed Clay Halla as its new president and CEO where he is focused on further expanding the company's market presence, enhancing product offerings and ensuring Iron Valley remains at the forefront of industry advancements.

Halla brings experience and strategic leadership to Iron Valley Supply, having demonstrated remarkable success in distribution and supply chain logistics across multiple companies and sectors.



E. DALLDORF

Streamlight Inc. Hires Regional Manager

Evan Dalldorf joined Streamlight Inc. as the regional sales manager for the company's Industrial/Fire division in the Midwest region. Dalldorf will work with independent sales representatives and distributors to drive sales and increase the market share of Streamlight lighting products designed for industrial and fire professionals.

Mike Dineen, Streamlight CRO, stated, "We are certain that [Dalldorf's] sales and account management experience will be a great asset to Streamlight's Industrial and Fire division."

Prior to joining Streamlight,

Dalldorf was a sales agronomist/operations manager for Nutrien Ag Solutions.

He earned a bachelor's from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.



S. MCKELVEY

Hornady Taps Manufacturing Director

Hornady announced the appointment of Scott McKelvey as director of manufacturing where he oversees manufacturing processes throughout all production divisions.

President Steve Hornady said, "[McKelvey's] proven capabilities in manufacturing management will undoubtedly increase our efficiency, productivity and quality; we're excited for him to join our team."

McKelvey has over 20 years of manufacturing and engineering management experience and most recently served as the plant manager at Unverferth (formerly Orthman Manufacturing).

He earned a B.S. in industrial engineering from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



Dead Air Silencers Promotes Director

Tony Tarantino was promoted to the position of senior director of channel development for Dead Air Silencers. Tarantino will execute effective strategies and newly formed programs at the dealer, and consumer levels to increase exposure for the company's brand and products. He will work closely with rep groups Rocky Mountain Rubicon, Simpson Sales and Dunkin Lewis to support needs in the field.

Ernie Beckwith, president and CEO of Dead Air Silencers, shared, "Tony's expert management of our media

channels aligns well with our goal to expand Dead Air's sales footprint for 2024 and beyond. His experience in many roles in the industry will allow him to be precise and effective in his efforts."

Tarantino, who has a lengthy career in the industry, previously served as the company's director of marketing.



Riton Optics Retains Marketing Director

Trent Marsh has joined Riton Optics as its marketing director.

Marsh has 15 years of experience in the industry and held roles within the UTV, trail camera and optics categories. He is the current president of the Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers and a board member of the Professional Outdoor Media Association.



A. GRAHAM

NSSF Adds Compliance Consultant

The NSSF has welcomed Andrew Graham, recently retired ATF deputy assistant director and expert in federal regulatory compliance, to its compliance consultants team.

"We recognize our members' desire to have a comprehensive team of experts available to assist them with their federal regulatory concerns ... Andrew can help with this process," said John McNamara, NSSF managing director, member services.

Graham held a variety of positions within the ATF during his 37 years of service. He established Graham Industry Advisor LLC in 2023, and is committed to upholding industry member firearm rights and compliance with the Gun Control Act and Safe Explosives Act.



M. COOK

Alpha Silencer Taps Brand Marketing Director

Miranda Cook is now serving as Alpha Silencer's director of brand marketing and strategy. She will oversee creative services, brand marketing, multimedia, social media initiatives, content creation, event marketing and strategic marketing initiatives.

Buck Steele, president of Alpha Silencer, stated, "As Alpha Silencer disrupts the suppressor industry, Miranda's talent will be crucial in spotlighting our premium brand, products and customer benefits."

Cook joins Alpha Silencer with many years of experience in the industry, including serving as director of marketing at Primary Arms. [SI](#)

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BY MASSAD AYOOB

YOUR “OTHER” SALESPERSON — DISPLAYS

“When they feel it, they own it.” In adult education theory, I’ve heard it said what we see has more impact than what we hear — and what we feel and experience has more impact still. When we teach hand-to-hand self-defense and verbally describe something like escaping a chokehold, we can see skepticism or puzzlement in students new to the game.

When the instructor demonstrates the technique on an assistant instructor, we can see the light bulb starting to turn on for the students. But when we put them out on the floor and let them try it themselves, the transfer of the skill is completed.

Something similar happens in merchandising and sales. You wouldn’t buy a suit at the Men’s Wearhouse without trying it on, stretching and flexing, to make sure it fits and you’re going to be comfortable in it. You wouldn’t buy a new car without a test

drive. The test drive tells you if it’s going to handle the way you want and if it really fits your needs.

It can be the same with guns. How many times have you heard a customer tell you he could have bought a gun cheaper at the Monster Mart, but he bought it from you because the big-box store insisted on keeping trigger locks on display guns, and they damn sure weren’t going to buy a gun if they didn’t know the feel of the trigger pull?

Let’s look at a couple of examples.

NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM 1911 DROP-IN TRIGGER DISPLAY

Located in Berryville, Ark., Nighthawk Custom maintains a squad of pistolsmiths who build high-end 1911s that sell for thousands of dollars apiece. In general form and function, they might look the same to a gun newbie as a clone gun made in Turkey and designed to carry a three-figure retail price tag. What makes them worth several times this price is Nighthawk’s

◀ Retired Army Special Forces Sergeant Major Ray Millican demonstrates the Nighthawk Custom drop-in trigger display at Pro Arms in Live Oak, Fla.

accuracy, reliability, smoothness of action and sweetness of trigger.

Now, with new guns a customer can’t experience accuracy or reliability in your shop. That will come when they own and shoot them. But they wouldn’t be looking at a gun like a Nighthawk Custom if they didn’t already know these guns had a reputation for those attributes.

What they *can* determine in your shop is the *feel*. The glassy smoothness of the slide running on the frame, and the crisp and easy trigger pull.

When Nighthawk realized not every customer could afford one of their premium-priced guns, they decided to market their drop-in trigger. But how could a customer “test drive” that?

“

What they *can* determine in your shop is the *feel*. The glassy smoothness of the slide running on the frame, and the crisp and easy trigger pull.

Nighthawk has answered the question with the ingenious display shown here. It includes a Ring’s dummy gun fitted with the drop-in trigger. This allows the customer to, in essence, dry-fire it. He or she can feel then and there what it’s going to feel like in their own less-expensive 1911 at home.

A seldom-touted but very real advantage of such a display is if it’s mounted on the counter, the customer can be alone with it without tying up staff who are making sales elsewhere in the shop. The customer can try it on their own and only then catch a salesperson’s attention and say, “Tell me more about this!”

Nighthawk Custom’s Landon Stone tells *Shooting Industry*, “The drop-in trigger display is \$592 and it includes the display, blue gun [with a stainless trigger in it] and a black DTS in the window.”

Stone added, “The retail price of the

drop-in trigger is \$299 apiece and the discount to preferred dealers is 20% off, unless you buy five or more triggers and then you get 30% off. The dealer can buy 10 triggers at 30% discount and get the display for free.”

For more information reach out to Stone at nighthawkcustom.com.

CRIMSON TRACE LASERGRIPS DISPLAY

Probably the most popular brand of laser sight is Crimson Trace. For many years now, they have offered a display package that has sold boatloads of the products for dealers all over the country.

The displays include, for example, their LaserGrips — which easily attach to various pistols and revolvers, the “demo guns” being Ring’s blue dummy guns. As mentioned above, these display units can be left on top of counters like the Nighthawk display for customers to try by themselves without having to distract sales staff from other patrons.

A customer instantly *feels*

the experience of their finger automatically activating the forward-projected laser dot. They see a red dot appear on whatever they’re pointing at (or, with my favorite version of the Crimson Trace LaserGrip, the stronger and longer-ranged green dot).

When the customer shows interest, *now* is the time for your salesperson to step in and point out the product’s added advantages. If the customer has imperfect vision, they are reminded if they can see the target, they can see the dot and don’t have to worry about finding front sights that look fuzzy to their particular eyes. (Sales tip: show the customer even in a situation where they can’t bring the handgun to line of sight, the laser unit still allows precise aim.)

If the customer thinks point-shooting is a good idea, remind them a laser sight like this one will greatly improve their hit potential.

For your customers who teach

others to shoot (which is almost all of them with friends and family, even if they’re not designated instructors!) having the student hold the dot on target and smoothly bring the trigger back is a “quick fix” for jerking the trigger.

Crimson Trace now offers “carry optic” sights, which are available, as well as the laser units, for these displays. The customer can see how if the battery goes out, the iron sights are co-witness with where the dot should be visible and can get the job done without the dot.

To see about getting one of these displays for your shop, go to crimsontrace.com.

Hands-on displays like these sell product. In effect, they put another salesperson in your shop.

Remember the opening principle, “If they feel it and experience it, they own it?” In retail, this can translate to “If they feel it and experience it, they want to buy it.” **SI**

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BY ASHLEY MCGEE

STEP ASIDE: IT'S HER TURN

In the October 2023 issue, I wrote about the role of women in gun rights advocacy¹ — a topic that seems to have resonated with our audience enough to warrant a follow-up. With the presidential and congressional primaries set to begin next month, now seemed like an ideal time to revisit the subject.

A quick search on BillTrack50 returned more than 900 results for bills pertaining to firearms in some way that have either been introduced or are currently in committee. In 2023, New York, Illinois and Texas introduced the majority of the bills restricting gun access, while Colorado, Maryland and Washington passed the most firearm control laws.

"If you don't live in these states, you may be less inclined to pay attention, but it's important to make sure we have all our rights across states, not just the one you live in," said Heather Victor, founder and president of Victor Company USA.

Those in support of anti-gun legislation do a good job of harnessing the legislative power of women by citing statistics like "Women in the United States are 21 times more likely to be killed with a gun than women in other high-income countries."

Molly Troy, principal consultant with Troy Group Consulting, argues the above stat is not only untrue but "absolutely irrelevant."

"It's past time for women to take control of the conversation and share their truths," she stated.

"Honestly, I find the notion quite offensive to our caliber of intellect," added Victor. "This is the reality: being uneducated about safe and responsible gun ownership is the true danger to women. The more we say 'guns are unsafe for women,' the more women are at risk."

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

On the surface, a widely reported study on "Homicide Deaths Among Adult Cohabitants of Handgun Owners in California, 2004 to 2016, published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* seems credible.² The study followed 17.6 million adult residents of California for up to 12 years, 2 months (Oct. 18, 2004–Dec. 31, 2016). The cohort members did not own handguns themselves, but some started residing with lawful handgun owners during follow-up.

A *Time* article summarizing the study stated, "We studied 18 million adults living in California. Nearly 2,300 of them died by homicide over the 12 years of the study."³ What it didn't state is this equates to 0.01%.

To gain further perspective, according to the 2022 California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) Annual Report, 3,847 California residents died in traffic incidents in 2020 alone — a 3.5% increase over 2019 despite statewide COVID-19 lockdowns.⁴

The same article continued, "People living with handgun owners died by homicide at twice the rate of their neighbors in gun-free homes ... An especially troubling finding was the vast majority of victims in these intimate partner shootings — 84% in all — were female. It stands to reason women bear the brunt of any second-hand risks that flow from firearm ownership. That's because most people who live with gun owners and don't themselves own guns are women."

The last line underscores Victor's point. The focus shouldn't be on "control" but rather education, and who better to advocate for education than women?

"As parents, particularly moms, it's our job to educate our kids on a variety of issues," she said. "Just as with things like alcohol, credit cards or even purchasing a home, the goal is to educate your kids before they reach the age to purchase. It shouldn't be any different for firearms."

It's not just the right to own firearms women should be concerned with being infringed upon, but the right to decide on how best to protect one's family.

"Even if someone isn't a gun owner now, it's about preserving the right should they choose to become one at any point," added Victor.

UNDERESTIMATED POWER

As I stated previously, women are often an undervalued and overlooked consumer segment within the shooting industry. Similarly underestimated is our legislative power.

It's not that women don't turn out to vote; it's quite the opposite actually. The number of female voters has exceeded the number of male voters in every presidential election since 1964. But women are still less likely to have a seat at the tables where decisions are made.

According to the Center for American Women and Politics, financial challenges, including the cost of campaigns, unequal access to monied networks and gender disparities in political giving are frequently cited hurdles to women running for public office and waging a successful campaign.

Recent research from the CAWP illustrates while men and women candidates ultimately raise similar amounts of money in comparable state legislative and statewide executive

contests, men give a disproportionate amount of all campaign contributions.⁵ Additionally, women candidates are often more likely than men to rely on small-dollar contributions and less likely than men to fund their own campaigns.

“I would be lying if I told you there probably isn’t some slight bias with women [candidates] among [the donor class]. If the donor class is 80% male, then it’s not surprising we keep ending up with male candidates,” said Ray Zaborney (R-PA), a Republican political consultant. “I don’t want to set anything backward or make it sound bad, but women aren’t going to solve this problem by themselves. They need all the folks who are in the establishment who are kind of the old white men; [they] have to welcome them in and bring them in and find opportunities. Because if not, it’s hard to do yourself if you’re on the outside. It’s hard to get on the inside.”

“

It’s past time for women to take control of the conversation and share their truths.”

Molly Troy • Principal Consultant
Troy Group Consulting

Financial challenges aren’t the only barrier deterring women from taking on political leadership roles. Gender stereotypes play a role, too.

In discussing her personal experience, former Nevada state assemblywoman Jill Tolles (R-NV) said, “I was asked a lot of questions men weren’t asked [as a political candidate]. Like who’s going to take care of your kids? And aren’t you worried about your safety when you knock on doors? And how does your family feel about this? How does your husband feel about this? And I tried

to picture if my husband was running ... I don’t know if he would ever be asked about worrying about his safety [while] knocking on doors or who’s going to take care of the kids. Those are questions that would never be asked.”

Another key deterrent may not have anything to do with gender at all.

“This wouldn’t be specific to women, but I would say the divisiveness of politics today and the social media, how hateful politics has become, I think is turning off more good people [from] wanting to get involved — male and female both,” said Lt. Governor Matt Pinnel (R-OK). “And that is a very disturbing trend because ... it can get to a point where it’s just not worth it. And if it’s already hard for a woman to run, then that could be the deal-breaker for them.”

2A’S BEST-SUITED ADVOCATES

While there’s certainly work to be done to break down these barriers to entry for women, elected positions aren’t the end-all be-all.

It’s important to remember individuals and groups outside of elected positions — such as political donors, corporate political action committees, industry leaders, unions, and grassroots advocates — also have significant influence in marshaling resources, whether financial or human (e.g. volunteers, voters, protestors), that shape both electoral and policy outcomes.

Women, no matter the role in which they serve, are the 2A community’s best-suited advocates for countering the well-organized and targeted disinformation campaigns. However, the only way they’ll be successful is with the support of the entire community. And in a year where there’s so much at stake, the time get behind “her” is now. **SI**

Footnotes:

1. www.shootingindustry.com/discover/the-role-of-women-in-gun-rights-advocacy
2. www.acpjournals.org/doi/full/10.7326/M21-3762
3. www.time.com/6183881/gun-ownership-risks-at-home
4. www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2023-05/CA_FY2022HSPAR-v2_tag.pdf
5. www.cawp.rutgers.edu/research/cawp-women-money-and-politics-series/donor-gap

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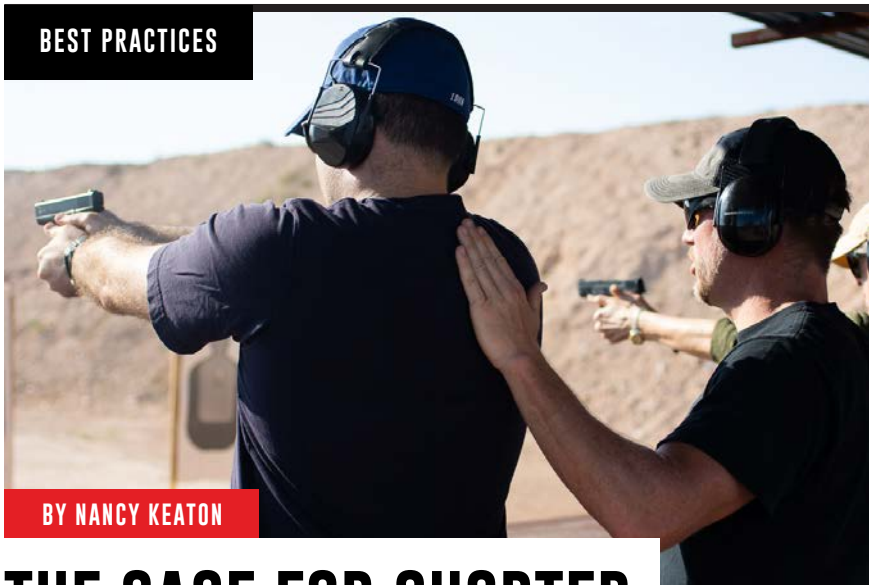
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BY NANCY KEATON

THE CASE FOR SHORTER TRAINING COURSES

Here's a scenario that probably happens more than we realize: a prospective student researching training classes comes across wonderful courses being offered by amazing instructors. She's taken several in the past and would like to take more. Then she sees they run for six to eight hours a day, for two, three or even five days. She knows they're fantastic, empowering experiences but then she sees the cost. Between the time commitment and the price (and quite frankly, the stamina) required, she talks herself out of enrolling.

FINDING SHORTER CLASSES

To help alleviate this potential scenario, I started looking around to see if there were any alternatives to these very long, expensive classes.

The first thing I saw was USCCA classes being offered at my local gun club. And I noticed they are anywhere from one-hour modules to three hours, and the cost is affordable, about \$25 per hour.

It's a lot easier for a person to commit to \$25 than \$200. They can commit to one, two or three hours easier than eight hours or 10 hours for four or five days straight.

So, I spoke with USCCA Regional Training Manager Jennie Cruz to find out what led the organization to offer shorter training options.

LESS TIME COMMITMENT

According to Cruz, USCCA started offering these classes in 2021 — in the anticipation of the industry trending toward shorter classes. She pointed out people generally don't have time for eight-hour classes unless the class is mandatory.

"Our official partners saw the need for shorter classes, as well," she shared. "It was right after Covid. People were still working at home and they weren't going out as often; they didn't want to be out in public as much. They would make it happen if they had to for a licensed carry class, but people just didn't have that kind of time. USCCA was brilliant in taking the curriculum we have and turning it into what we call our mini-courses."

The best part about these mini-courses is they don't have to be taken in order, Cruz noted.

"It makes it so customizable to the student while still maintaining a comprehensive training experience," she smiled.

When asked about student feedback, Cruz was ecstatic.

"Oh, the feedback has been phenomenal! Students really appreciate the fact they can come into a 55-minute to two-hour class. It's usually not a problem at all for most people," she said.

Next, in searching for other classes nearby, I found KR Training outside

of Austin, Texas. While they do offer some longer classes, KR Training also has several classes about three hours in length. I contacted Karl Rehn, owner of KR Training, and he told me he figured out the issue of class length and cost several years ago.

He and John Daub wrote a book covering this particular topic, and just updated it for 2023 — *Strategies and Standards for Defensive Handgun Training*.

In Rehn's chapter on strategies to get more people to take classes, he wrote, "Course length and cost can also affect the willingness of students to acquire training past required minimums."

Rehn explained, "More than a decade ago, KR Training converted most of the courses it offers into three- and four-hour blocks designed as a series. Teaching everything someone needs to know in a four-hour class is an impossible task. Consequently, the burden is on the instructor to prioritize skills in their course design. The competition for course time is comprised of family and job responsibilities, other interests and, of course, dollars. The reality is more people can spend four hours, \$100 and 200 rounds on a Saturday training class than there are people who can spend \$500, 20 hours and 1,000 rounds on an all-weekend course."

INFORMATION RETENTION

Cruz talks about the ability of students to retain information better in shorter classes.

"There is so much information to provide. You bring a new student into a class and they're excited and anxious to get this information. But you throw them in an eight-hour class and they're only going to retain a very small portion of what they learned because they're overwhelmed," she explained. "The need for a smaller bite of information is so important because it helps the student's ability to absorb it. Then they come back for a follow-up class to build on what they've already learned, and it really improves student retention."

Rehn added, "Those who study adult education understand deeper learning takes place if it is spread out in smaller chunks over a longer period. Students who come to a four-hour course pick up some new skills or corrections on old skills, spend the next month working on

“

The need for a smaller bite of information is so important because it helps the student's ability to absorb it. Then they come back for a follow-up class to build on what they've already learned, and it really improves student retention of the training.”

Jennie Cruz • Regional Training Manager
USCCA

those specific things and then return for another four-hour block tend to progress better and maintain their improvement better than the student who spends his or her entire training budget for the year on a five-day class and then there's no practice for months afterward.”

Rehn references an article by Craig Lambert, “Learning by Degrees” in *Harvard Magazine's* Nov./Dec. 2009 issue. Lambert discusses what he calls “binge and purge” learning, a concept we're all familiar with — cramming for a test to pass it, but then quickly forgetting the material.

“This mode of study doesn't seem to produce durable learning,” Lambert assessed.

He then explains a concept called “spaced education.”

“More than 10 rigorous studies on medical students and residents using randomized trials have shown its efficacy: it can increase knowledge by up to 50%, and strengthen retention for up to two years,” he noted.

BOTTOM LINE: WHAT DO WE WANT FOR FIREARMS STUDENTS?

We complain most gun owners never get any training beyond the basics of whatever is required in their state. We blame it on a lack of priorities or thinking they know more than they do.

It's not to say sometimes those reasons might not be true, but there are also many other factors like those mentioned above of cost, time and the ability to properly retain information and build on it.

So, what do we *really* want for firearms training? Do we want more gun owners to be able to afford the time to take classes? Do we want more gun owners to be able to afford the cost of training? Do we want long-term retention that will stay with students long after they leave the classroom?

Consider altering your approach to offering training courses here in the new year. **\$I**






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BY DOUG VANDERWOUDE

GAINING TRACTION IN THE NEW YEAR

IS your store in need of an early-year

boost to get business going? Here are several ideas that could be beneficial to you.

In my last article (“5 Ways To Boost Year-End Profits,” Nov. 2023), I promised additional words of wisdom from Jay Wallace — family patriarch of Adventure Outdoors, “The Greatest Store on Earth” in Smyrna, Ga. Jay has spent his life in retail; he started selling used paperback books and now owns a store stocking over 16,000 firearms.

To achieve real results, he reminds us who is in the driver’s seat.

“You, as the owner of your business, are the one person who can most change the bottom line,” he said. “So, use your time doing what will most affect the bottom line. Delegate the small stuff, spend some time thinking.”

When I was a store owner, it took me a long time to learn this one. I was too busy playing Whac-A-Mole — trying to solve the latest problem that popped up, rather than spending time to

think about my business. The old saying, “Spend time steering the ship instead of shoveling the coal” certainly applies.

TRUST YOUR TEAM

Toward the end of my store-owning days, I settled with being on the floor around 10% of the time. This gave me a feel for what was going on with employees and guests; plus, it allowed enough time for me to work on the “big picture” items. It’s not easy, especially if you’ve been running the business as a micromanager for years.

This is kind of embarrassing to admit, but at one point in my own business venture, if I wanted to think about the big picture I had to go to a local restaurant and sit down with my work computer. Why this was the case was totally my fault.

At the time, I was trying to manage employees, marketing, purchasing — everything right down to how each guest was handled. In a word, I was micromanaging. Regular guests knew what car I drove, and so they’d know if I was at the store and would want to talk with me about things my staff could have

handled easily (and most likely better than I would have). So, by escaping to a restaurant, they couldn’t find me — which allowed me to get work done without being interrupted and have some thinking time.

In this case, not only was I *not* spending time working on what I should have been (thinking about the big picture), but I also was *not* getting the full benefit of input from employees. Instead of allowing them to help me grow the business, I stifled them.

This relates to Jay’s words about what most affects the bottom line and trusting your staff. In order to trust your staff, you have to continually give them more leeway. They will let you down in some instances, but that’s life. It’s not like we don’t make bad decisions as well, so consider it a learning experience and move on.

KEEP DECISIONS IN PERSPECTIVE

To empower your staff, consider using a tiered system with different amounts of responsibility you’re willing to allow staff members to exercise. It works like this: a floor lead can decide an issue for a guest up to \$100 without needing

a manager, a manager can make decisions up to \$999 without approval and your general manager handles things from \$1,000 to a threshold of your choice.

Besides freeing up more of your time and not having to manage all of this, it really creates a strong staff — not just a staff that can read and follow a manual. This method will save you a lot of time evaluating used firearms for trade. If you have a few staff members handling this part of the business, it can certainly free up your time to devote to other tasks to improve the bottom line.

Think of it like this: If you don't have staff that can make decisions without you, how will you ever get away to go on that trophy hunt? Next time you're thinking of stepping in to make a small decision, imagine sitting on the side of a beautiful mountain as the sun comes up waiting for the trophy elk/deer/bear, etc., to come into view. Is it worth giving it up to make a small decision?

Jay also recommends having morning meetings with staff. One thing Jay and his son Eric look for during these meetings is staff with a negative attitude. Most likely a bad attitude is being passed to customers and other staff members, which can turn a store sour in a hurry. Speaking of staff, during slow times is the best time to reset schedules to reward your best employees and reduce or eliminate negative employees' hours.

Last words of wisdom from the Wallace family: watch for generic sales transactions. These transactions are those

where a staff member sells one item and doesn't work for the add-on sale (where you make your money), and instead hurries to get the guest out the door. It's a habit that was formed when guests were lined up to buy during peak periods and you needed to make a quick sale and get to the next. (In case you haven't noticed, it's not this way currently.)

In these times we need to go back to retail basics and brush up on our sales skills.



Watch for generic sales transactions. These transactions are those where a staff member sells one item and doesn't work for the add-on sale (where you make your money), and instead hurries to get the guest out the door.

GOT GELLETS?

Have you heard of gellets? I have been in over 560 ranges and work with retailers every day, and never even heard of a gellet before walking into Alabama Firearms Academy in Boaz, Ala., this past October.

What is a gellet, you ask? It's a colorful, absorbent bead that disintegrates on impact when shot out of a gel blaster gun — leaving almost no residue. At first glance they look exactly like airsoft pellets. The difference is they're made

mostly of water with a gel coating to hold the round shape until they *splat* (at which point they start to evaporate). Since they evaporate, there isn't the massive slip-and-fall safety issue you have with airsoft pellets on hard surfaces, nor the never-ending job of vacuuming every last pellet.

Jared Meeks and Devin Campbell, Alabama Firearms Academy co-owners, were using gellets on one bay of their indoor shooting range for a youngsters' Halloween shoot the day I visited. They had balloons, foam skulls, cemetery markers and my favorite moving target retrievers with blankets on them to look like ghosts as they came toward the shooters.

The fee for youngsters to shoot the targets with full-auto gellet blasters was \$12 for 500 gellets. They had over 80 kids shoot the course and most purchased extra gellets, bringing in little over \$1,000 and under \$400 in hard costs. The event was a big success not just by bringing in a little extra profits — especially when you factor in labor cost — but because it brought 80-some kids and parents into the store/range to become future customers.

While this whole gellet thing is pretty new in the U.S., it has really caught on in Australia. A search online showed some AR-15-style gellet blasters, as well as many versions of popular handguns. Could your store use them as a training aid for concealed carry classes, hosting youth birthday parties or other events? It may take off here

or it may not, but I think it's something to keep an eye on — even if it's just entertainment for yourself or kids.

GIVEAWAY SUCCESS STORY

Here I've saved the best tip for last — from Joel Swisher, owner of Uncoiled Firearms in Livonia, Mich. Joel and his GM Kenny Dang needed to get creative this past fall as their store/range is in the Detroit area, which is heavily tied to the auto market. When the Big Three (General Motors, Ford and Chrysler) are on strike, it makes for an extremely tough business climate.

Rather than feel sorry for themselves, Joel and Kenny brainstormed to come up with a way to sell more high-margin accessories. They held a drawing to win a sought-after firearm. The program they came up with has been a great success.

"We gave one ticket for every \$100 (before tax) spent in the store for a chance to win a Daniel Defense rifle," Joel said. "This was very helpful for selling the higher-profit accessories. Many times, a customer would add in a few extra dollars on an accessory to get one more ticket toward the giveaway."

Any program that sells more accessories is a winner in my book.

Are there any ideas floating around in your head you're scared to try? Now is the time to step outside of your comfort zone and go for it. Remember the old saying, "When you follow the herd, you step in what they leave behind." **SI**

By Tim Barker

IN FOCUS: SELF-DEFENSE HANDGUNS

For most gun stores, there is no more important sales category than self-defense. Whether it's handguns, rifles, shotguns or non-lethal options, these are the things that draw the largest and most diverse group of customers through the front door.

We are reminded of this every time a shockwave hits our communities. Political upheaval, social unrest, mass shootings and even seemingly unrelated world conflicts have the power to send nervous people flocking to their closest gun store.

This is the first of a three-part series exploring these self-defense sales. Later, we'll examine long guns and non-lethal options. But any attempt to look at self-defense trends has to start with handguns.

Smaller carry guns and larger options for home defense — along with ammo and other accessories — are the bread and butter for retail gun stores like Black Wing Shooting Center in Delaware, Ohio. More often than not, the new and intermediate shooter is looking for a self-defense handgun of some sort.

"It helps drive our business," said co-owner Mark Gore. "Those are also the people who make up a large portion of our member base. A lot of our ammo purchasers are people who are practicing for defensive reasons."

The importance of the

segment is amplified for shops near urban areas — particularly those with higher crime rates. Such is the case for Dunn's Sporting Goods in Pevely, Mo., just south of St. Louis.

"Everything from concealed carry to guns for the home; it's turned into a huge part of our business," remarked Nathan Dunn, manager. "We're 30 minutes from one of the worst cities in the United States, and most of our clients or customers work up there."

There's little reason to think this dynamic is changing anytime soon, if ever.

Mike Sfakianos, senior manager at Bill Jackson's in Pinellas Park, Fla., sees it as a natural extension of a landscape where politics and turmoil fuel never-ending demand.

"It's sad to say, but it's

what drives our business,” Sfakianos stated. “If the politics weren’t against guns, and if there wasn’t anything crazy going on in the world, we’d be dead. I mean, completely dead.”

WHAT’S SELLING?

It doesn’t take much imagination to guess which guns are favorites of self-defense customers. There’s a natural inclination toward smaller guns with above-average capacity. This means any of several micro compact 9mm options by SIG SAUER, Springfield Armory, Smith & Wesson and Ruger are quite popular. Each of these companies offer a model that effectively nullifies most of the size and capacity advantages .380 once offered for people looking for a smaller gun.

“Everybody’s always looking for a few things when choosing a carry gun,” Sfakianos relayed. “Weight and size are big factors. People want to have a full grip. And then for any kind of handgun, they always look to get as much capacity as possible.”

The popular Springfield Hellcat and other smaller guns have their fans, but the current leader in this race is the SIG P365 in its various configurations.

“It’s been a really hot seller and kind of hard to keep in stock,” confirmed Gore, in Ohio.

Smaller options are particularly attractive for people who only want to buy a single handgun. These guns might not be the preferred option for more experienced shooters, but they are

appealing to someone who wants something for both the house and for easy carrying.

“A good chunk of people — even if they’re pretty confident they’re not going to carry often — still want the ability to do so,” Gore said. “We’re seeing a decent amount of people who will pick something that works for both.”

Smaller, however, is not always better.



Everybody’s always looking for a few things when choosing a carry gun. Weight and size are big factors. People want to have a full grip. And then for any kind of handgun, they always look to get as much capacity as possible.”

MIKE SFKIANOS

Senior Manager

Bill Jackson’s • Pinellas Park, Fla.

Sfakianos has noticed the growing popularity of double-stack 1911s from companies like Staccato and Springfield Armory.

“Because they’re bigger and heavier, they’re more often used for the house, for vehicles and stuff where you’re not going to be carrying concealed,” he explained. “They’re wonderful to shoot at the range. The bigger and

heavier the gun, the more comfortable it is to shoot.”

WHAT ABOUT THE EXTRAS?

It’s tough to run a successful gun business just selling guns. Ammo and accessories represent an important potential revenue stream — and there are lots of opportunities when it comes to self-defense sales. This is particularly true when the customer is new to guns. They walk in the door without a single gun-related item to their name.

This creates opportunities for sales of ammunition (both range and defensive), spare magazines, holsters, speed loaders, weapon lights, bags, cleaning kits and ear/eye protection.

There’s also the surging popularity of red dots and guns that come from the

factory ready to mount one. If customers don’t buy one with their new gun, they’ll at least consider it down the road.

For some of them, the added expense can be daunting, but there are things you can do to encourage sales, suggests Dunn, in Missouri. Help them see how the dot might look and work on their gun.

“We have them set up in the showcase, already on the gun,” Dunn noted. “People can see how they work. It’s the way they move.”

In Florida, Sfakianos also sees a growing number of customers interested in pistol upgrades. He sees it often with various GLOCKS and the SIG P320.

“We carry all sorts of different triggers, slides



Mark Gore has done brisk business with SIG SAUER’s P365 and the company’s red dot sights.

and barrels and all that kind of stuff,” he said.

Still, with the self-defense customers, those sales often come with a word of caution about the potential impact on the gun.

“These companies are guaranteeing their reliability,” Sfakianos informed. “But once you start changing stuff, you may have to tweak it and play with it in order to get it to run, right.”

“GENTLE” CUSTOMER SERVICE

In recent years, the industry has witnessed a massive influx of first-timers who know little about guns. Most of them are looking for something they can use for protection.

Guiding them through the process can be a challenge for salespeople who prefer working with more experienced

customers with a solid understanding of guns. And many of these newer customers act and think differently from what might be considered the traditional gun store customer.

“People from all backgrounds and beliefs are coming in. We’re welcoming, friendly and not condescending,” said Gore in Ohio. “It’s not always easy. You can feel like you’re in a good place, and then something might happen, and you realize someone wasn’t on the same page in some area.”

Among the sales challenges are the novice customers with strong (and bad) ideas about self-defense strategies. An example might be someone who plans to put a cable lock on a self-defense gun and then store it in a safe until needed.

“Obviously, if it’s

for defense, it’s not a great way to do it,” Gore reasoned. “We don’t say it’s a terrible idea. We’ll talk about how a lot of people handle that situation. In a gentle way, we’ll give them other options.”



A lot of our ammo purchasers are people who are practicing for defensive reasons.”

MARK GORE

Co-Owner

Black Wing Shooting Center
Delaware, Ohio

It also helps when salespeople speak from experience about any gun a customer is considering.

“You get asked all the time if you’ve shot one,” shared Dunn, in Missouri. “A lot of times, it really sways the customer’s decision on which firearm he goes with.”

Sfakianos, in Florida, agrees.

“Whenever a new gun is launched, all of my reps usually come in to shoot it,” he said. “We’re blessed to have a range on the premises. So, they’ll go in and see how it feels in their hands and all that stuff.”

MARKETING FOR SELF-DEFENSE

Interestingly, there doesn’t appear to be a significant need to market self-defense guns and products. This may be a

case where they tend to sell themselves. Or it may be more accurate to say state, national and world events are all that’s needed to spur sales. Even Israel’s late-October invasion of the Gaza Strip made an impact.

“It gave us a little shot in the arm for a few weeks, but it’s back to normal now,” recalled Dunn, in Missouri.

There’s also the fact gun makers are busy promoting this line of business in popular gun magazines and elsewhere.

“We don’t market anything to a specific area, because the manufacturers can do it for us,” said Sfakianos.

Still, the sector does offer opportunities.

Ohio’s Black Wing takes into account customer interest through its series of training classes. They offer nearly a dozen different courses, including some geared toward concealed carry and others that focus on different skill levels.

“They’re not super expensive, but it’s a good way for average people who want to get some reps in a safe manner,” Gore specified. “They get to try some new and different things, versus what you can typically try in a static indoor range.” **SI**



Dunn’s Sporting Goods was recognized as a Smith & Wesson Ambassador Dealer in 2020. Nathan Dunn’s sales team makes sure to get range time with new handguns that come in. “It really sways the customer’s decision on which firearm he goes with,” he shared.

Editor’s Note: This is the first installment in what will be a three-part series. Continuing in the March issue, Tim Barker interviews a panel of dealers who share tips for expanding self-defense long-gun sales. In April, this series will conclude with a look at non-lethal products.

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**SHOOTING
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SPRING TURKEY TRENDS

BY BRYAN HENDRICKS

Hunters Opt For Lighter Guns, Loads & Electronic Optics

Willy Johnston of Hamburg, Ark., doesn't like change, but he has embraced

the .410-bore shotgun for turkey hunting.

Johnston, 70, represents an evolution in the turkey hunting retail market. It's

an older demographic who has embraced technologies that enable hunters to shoot smaller, lighter guns with less recoil more accurately.

Johnston is impressed with the tight patterns his Stevens 301 prints at ethical turkey hunting distances. The red dot sight that came with the package assures him his shot will be true.

"Wherever you put the dot is where it's going to hit," he observed. "You don't have to worry about pulling off or your sights not being aligned just right. Just put the dot on his head and shoot."

Nathan Dunn, owner of Dunn's Sporting Goods in Pevely, Mo., acknowledged the trend in the Midwest.

"The past few years we've sold a lot more sub-gauge

guns, a lot of 20 gauges and a lot of .410," Dunn said. "A lot of hunters are getting older. They're tired of packing around a big 12 gauge."

The Stevens 301 and the Mossberg International Series are popular among his turkey hunting customers, he added. The Mossberg International is a semi-auto available in 20 and 28 gauge, as well as .410 bore.



**Primos Lil' Gobbstopper —
Hen & Jake Decoys**

It has a fiber optic ghost ring sight and a rail mount for an optic. According to Dunn, the Burris FastFire is his most popular red dot. But he also sells a fair amount of Holosun and Vortex.

Even though Missouri is a premier turkey hunting state, Dunn shared it is a limited market in his area. Turkey hunters don't buy large amounts of ammunition, and they don't change shotguns frequently. Nevertheless, it is a market that must be tended.

"It's all in the spring, and it doesn't show a huge spike," he said. "Fall turkey hunting doesn't really do anything for us. We sell decoys and guns, but it's nothing like deer hunting. A lot of guys already have their gun. They might need a box of shells or a call. It helps, don't get me wrong, but there's not enough there to give us a big shot in the arm."

TSS has rendered all other pellet materials obsolete among avid turkey hunters, but Dunn contends there is still a demand for lead shot loads. Federal TSS and Rogue TSS are the most popular, but he also sells a lot of Winchester Longbeard, a lead load.

A noticeable trend is the increasing popularity of decoys, Dunn said. Manufacturers are making more realistic, easier-to-pack decoys — and hunters buy them.

"There are some really realistic gobbler decoys," Dunn noted. "That's a big deal."

AFFLUENT CUSTOMER PREFERENCES

Mack's Prairie Wings in Stuttgart, Ark., is a premier waterfowl hunting outfitter, but it also serves an avid, high-rolling turkey hunting clientele.

Zach Wheeler, gun department manager for the store, said there is big demand for high-end sub-gauge shotguns, TSS, electronic optics and aftermarket choke tubes.

"We serve guys going to multiple states," he stated. "They'll try 15 choke

tubes to get the pattern they want, and it also means they go through a lot of shells, but it's the least expensive part of their hunt."

Jeb's and Indian Creek are Mack's most prominent brand of turkey choke, Wheeler shared.

In shotguns, he noted there is a lot of demand for the Benelli Super Black Eagle III in 28 gauge. A price tag starting at \$2,299, compared to about \$249 for a .410 Stevens 301, does not seem to be a deterrent.

"We're seeing a big boom in 28

**"THE PAST FEW YEARS
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OF PACKING AROUND A
BIG 12 GAUGE."**

NATHAN DUNN • Manager
Dunn's Sporting Goods • Pevely, Mo.



**Federal Premium .410
Bore Heavyweight TSS**



**Benelli Super Black Eagle
— 28 GA (Optifade Camo)**

gauge," Wheeler said. "We sold close to 200 28 gauge last year for both waterfowl and turkey. Other than that, most have gone to the .410. The allure is to make turkey hunting more challenging. A lot of turkey hunting takes place over rough, steep terrain, so people want a light gun that's easy to carry and is light on the shoulder."

Among .410 enthusiasts, the TriStar Viper G2 is the store's top seller. It's a semi-auto with a pistol grip and adorned in TrueTimber Strata camo. (It's also available in 20 gauge.)

A notable departure from trend is the amount of TSS turkey loads Mack's sells. At more than \$10 per shell, turkey hunters who don't travel probably don't buy more than one box a year. Wheeler's customers buy TSS in volume, but again, they hunt a lot in multiple states.

"The guys who are really, really bad into it buy more than that," he explained. "I sell cases of it for guys doing grand slams and things like that. I've seen guys doing things like trying to 'grand slam' in a day. They fly to a location to another location. Those guys are buying multiple boxes or even cases of TSS."

Mack's also sells a lot of turkey decoys and callers. Its turkey department stocks multiple brands of any turkey hunting accessory available, and the selection of callers is prodigious.

"They'll spend more money on calls than on guns and ammo," Wheeler pointed out.

Turkey hunters buy other accessories like trophy boards to display turkey fans and beards.

PRICE-CONSCIOUS HUNTERS

At Clark's All-Sports in Colville, Wash., Sales Associate Daniel Harina said the store's customers have a more functional philosophy about turkey hunting. They want meat-and-potatoes gear to do the job.

"It's a fairly low-income area here," Harina observed. "A lot of them buy standard Mossberg 500s and Remington 870s. The Stevens 301 and many of the imported Turkish guns are popular."



Left: Aside from guns and ammo, retailers can boost sales by selling turkey hunting accessories like calls, vests and portable chairs. **Right:** Turkey hunters can't have enough calls — many buy several a year. If you keep the products on hand to make a hunter's spring turkey pursuits a success, you better believe he or she will be back for the next season! (Images: Bryan Hendricks)

“THEY’LL SPEND MORE MONEY ON CALLS THAN ON GUNS AND AMMO.”

ZACH WHEELER • Gun Department Manager
Mack's Prairie Wings • Stuttgart, Ark.



Apex Ammunition 28 GA

He acknowledges red dot sights are great for turkey hunting, but his turkey hunters don't buy them.

“In our neck of the woods, optics on a shotgun haven't really caught on here,” Harina said. “The TruGlo TRU•BEAD is one of the most popular sights up here for shooting turkey.”

As with other places, turkey hunters in northeastern Washington will spring for callers, decoys, and other accessories, but only at the right price.

“We do decent on decoys,” Harina affirmed. “We definitely sell more hen decoys than jakes or toms. Primos is probably the bestselling decoy. A \$200 decoy

looks nicer and it's easier to pack, but a lot of people in this area don't want to spend that kind of money on one.”

Additionally, turkey hunters in northeastern Washington resist the trend toward .410 for turkeys.

“I know a lot people are going to .410, but up here there's still the stigma a .410 can't kill a turkey,” he stated. “It can and will, but 20 gauge is our biggest market for turkey loads.”

As at other areas, turkey hunters spend more freely on ammo and callers. Turkey chokes don't move fast, but Harina says they have to be available when hunters want them.

“We go through a lot shells during turkey season and go through a fair amount of calls,” Harina said. “Chokes are a have-them-on-hand thing. We sell maybe 15 to 20 a season. Our profit margin on a choke is 25–30%, and they take up a fair amount of space.”

Regardless of your customers' economic status, die-hard turkey hunters will come in droves if you have the right product assortment — in stock. **\$1**



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THE YEAR OF *TECHNOLOGY*

By Hank Yacek

The undisputed catch term of early 2024 is “AI” (Artificial Intelligence). I’m sure some of you have spent some time going down a rabbit hole with ChatGPT or other online AI bots just to see what the buzz is all about. While tech like this is a novelty to most, the idea of technology making our businesses more efficient and profitable is nothing new — though it’s often overlooked.

With profit margins continuing to shrink and compress in the first quarter of 2024, we need to lean on technology more than ever to squeeze out those extra profits we so desperately need.

GET YOUR POS UP TO DATE

One thing the proper use of technology can do better than anything else is to make us more time efficient. The costs of payroll have continued to increase, and it’s becoming more difficult to find quality

employees. Technology can absolutely help us “do more with less” and make our teams more productive.

Let us focus on a point-of-sale system (POS), for starters. Many stores out there in my travels are still utilizing simple (read: low-tech) means of inputting their inventory into their POS System. The old way of finding the invoice — counting the products in the box to make sure you received the right items and quantities, hand-entering them into the

POS, finding the pricing gun and slapping a price on each and every box ... *lather, rinse, repeat* — can be a massively time-consuming process. It might also cause your shop to miss a sale because you didn't get the product out into the showroom when a customer was looking for it.

By leveraging the technology already baked into most POS systems, you could have had your vendor create a purchase order (PO), download the PO into your system and, after the shipment arrives, simply reconcile what you were supposed to get matches what you *did* get. It's as simple as hitting a few keys, and boom — all the new items are in your POS System.

Take it to the next level and have shelf tags for pricing of product and you won't even need to print out pricing labels. What used to take hours can now be accomplished in minutes — freeing up your shipping clerk to do other productive things to benefit your business.

GO PAPERLESS!

Paperwork, in general, can be a massively time-consuming facet of every business. The firearms industry is additionally burdened with compliance paperwork that increases the workload of managing critical data to a level most other forms of retail do not have to manage.

In today's operations there is zero justification for *not* processing 4473

paperwork electronically. By doing so, you can streamline the process, minimize errors and take a huge chunk of the headache out of managing firearm compliance paperwork.

I remember the days of having two, three, even four employees double-check physical 4473s just to be sure we didn't forget to cross a "t" or dot an "i." Sad to say even then there were errors missed or mistakes that squeezed past the most scrutinous eyes. By using technology, we not only make the process easier and faster but *far* more accurate.

**Technology
can
absolutely
help us 'do
more with
less' and
make our
teams more
productive.**

With the current focus on data accuracy by the ATF, leveraging technology to minimize errors can go a long way toward helping retailers sleep better at night

knowing their business is less at risk.

On top of this, not only does an electronic system improve our data accuracy, it also allows an operation to manage data in a far more time-efficient manner. And we all know the simple equation of time equals money.

DATA INSIGHTS

Another area in which technology can help us become better retailers is through data insights. Leveraging data to make critical business decisions is more important than ever for retail businesses.

There are untold numbers of ways to collect and process retail data today, be it via store level data derived from POS systems, customer data collected through range waivers, industry level sales data from sources like Gearfire's RetailBI or NASGW SCOPE and even proprietary data from services like Southwick Associates.

Information such as market price, hot products, customer segmentation, economic data, seasonality and more not only can help us be timelier in our business decisions but can help us leverage our business dollars in more efficient and profitable ways.

There are six key pillars to running a successful retail business:

1. Your customer must be able to find you.
2. Your customer must know what you sell.
3. Your customer must

be able to find where the product is in your store.

4. The product must be presented in a logical and presentable way.

5. You must have the product in stock at the right time.

6. You must have the product for sale at the right price.

Without leveraging quality data to make concise decisions on *all six pillars*, you may fail to succeed at one or more of these facets and lose out on critical sales. Data can make those decisions more accurate and make your business more profitable.

EVERY POINT MATTERS

Just think for a moment: if we leverage the technology we already have operating in our store today to its greatest extent, the following can happen: we can reduce payroll by 2% after improving staff productivity and improve retail margins by an additional 2% — which would add four points of margin to our bottom line!

For many shops reading this, an extra four points of bottom-line profit percentage may improve your profits by 30–50%. And this is without doing a single dollar more of business in 2024.

Make 2024 the year you use technology to determine the level of success your business achieves this year — because, as we all know, election years are highly unpredictable! **SI**

2024**NEW**

PRODUCT SHOWCASE

By Jenna Buckley & Jade Moldae

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The **BRADDOCK DP MINI** from 5.11 Tactical features a 3" drop-point blade constructed with edge-retaining D2 steel that includes a swedge for reduced point thickness. Its 2.7-mm thickness provides blade durability and the G10 handle ensures solid grip for years of daily use. The liner-locking folder measures 7" inches when open but folds to a pocket-friendly 4". It also offers a reversible deep-carry pocket clip.

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Chambered in 9mm, the **SD9 2.0** from S&W features the enhanced Self Defense Trigger to provide better tactile feedback during the pull, break and reset for more controlled and accurate shots. It weighs 22.7 oz., and its overall length of 7.2" allows for ease of handling without compromising performance. Additional features include a satin-finished slide with aggressive front serrations, texture on the front, sides, and back of the grip for improved control, a 4" stainless steel barrel, Picatinny-style rail and white-dot front and rear sights. The SD9 2.0 platform is available in 16+1 and 10+1 capacities.

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Taurus launches its first 10mm handgun with the **TH10**. Key features of the TH10 include a unique combination safety/de-cocker lever, providing users with the flexibility to carry in either hammer-down or cocked-and-locked positions; a 4.25" stainless steel barrel; tailored recoil spring and guide rod; 15-round capacity; and industry-standard sight dovetails. The full-size TH10 is 1.43" wide, 5.8" tall and 7.8" long overall. It weighs 28.5 oz. (unloaded), and arrives with two magazines.





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(888) 440-0244
burrisoptics.com

The **FASTFIRE C** red dot from Burris delivers a durable and reliable aiming option for deep-concealment, micro compact pistols. It utilizes "Always On" technology with a 25,000-hour run time, and is always ready to engage after initial power up. It is powered by a Burris Intelligent Auto-Bright system, which automatically adjusts reticle brightness levels for optimal visibility in any ambient light condition. The FastFire C's low profile allows for absolute or 1/3 co-witness with most standard-height factory open sights and includes a removable rear fixed site that can be used as a co-witnessing backup or reference point. It uses an RMsC footprint, has a no-flicker 6 MOA red dot reticle and is shockproof and fogproof and encased in a water-resistant housing.



DOMED MATCH
GRADE PELLETS

BENJAMIN AIRGUNS

(877) 426-3423
benjaminairguns.com

The **M600 AIRBOW** from Benjamin Airguns launches special, proprietary arrows at 600 fps, and its 375-grain arrows deliver up to 300 foot-pounds of energy. The pre-charged pneumatic cylinder delivers several consecutive full power cycles and is simple to load and cock for quick follow-up shots. The hollow-core arrows allow the compressed air to pull them from the front, instead of pushing from behind with a string, eliminating the flex and wobble in the first part of a traditional arrow's flight. The M600 Airbow comes with a quiver and three arrows.

DOMED MATCH GRADE PELLETS are manufactured on a single die out of a single source of proprietary lead alloy wire for the ultimate consistency and repeatability which are key factors in delivering the utmost precision shot after shot. The pellets deliver an improved ballistic coefficient resulting in higher energy, a flatter trajectory and less wind drift, helping shooters make accurate shots farther down range. Ideal for Field Target and other airgun competitions, the pellets come in .22 and .177 calibers; a .25-caliber version arrives before spring 2024.

BERETTA USA

(800) 237-3882
beretta.com

The Beretta **1301 TACTICAL MOD.2** shotgun boasts an upgraded forend with aggressive knurling for a firm grip and three sections of M-LOK for attachments. A semi-flat tactical-style trigger offers a crisp break with minimal reset and a Pro-Lifter allows for effortless reloading. The power of the B-LINK gas-system combined with the precision of the rotating bolt ensures fast, reliable and smart cycling. The 1301 Tactical Mod.2 has an OAL of 37.8", 18.5" barrel, weighs 6.8 lbs. (pistol grip) and eight-round capacity. Color choices include black, gray, Flat Dark Earth and OD Green.

The **BERETTA 30X TOMCAT** is an ultra-concealable pistol designed with the Effortless Loading System (ELS) featuring a push-button mechanism that eliminates the need to rack the slide. Enhanced features include increased magazine capacity, repositioned controls for optimal accessibility, a skeletonized trigger and hammer for a 35% lighter trigger pull weight, interchangeable sights for versatility and proprietary "Helica" textured grips.

Featuring a frame-mounted Type G de-cocker lever to ensure smooth transitions from action to safe mode, while maintaining performance, the DA/SA **92 GTS** is engineered for precision performance. It comes equipped with the X-treme S trigger profile with DLC trigger components and a lightweight skeletonized hammer for a smooth, responsive pull. An optic-ready slide accommodates a sight, and a fiber optic front sight and fully serrated rear sight anchors a user's aim.



1301 TACTICAL MOD.2



HIVIZ SHOOTING SYSTEMS

(800) 589-4315
hivizights.com

The **FASTDOT H3** from HIVIZ offers easy sight alignment, fast sight acquisition, improved visibility around the sight picture, 24-hour illumination and a low-profile design. Fiber optic front and rear sights provide bright sights for easy acquisition out of the holster. Once the sights are aligned, the rear sight becomes a brighter green circle; no red from the front sight should be visible. The FastDot H3's single raised dot delivers a high level of visibility around the sight. As ambient light fades tritium illuminates the sights, eliminating the need for batteries or light.



MYSTERY RANCH

(833) 548-1999
mysteryranch.com

Mystery Ranch announces the **METCALF SERIES** of mission-specific packs available in three options correlating to volume capacity: 50, 75 and 100. Resting on the new ULTRA LIGHT MT frame, the METCALF packs sport a roll-top closure with one side zipper to allow easy access to large items. Zippered pockets on the lid are strategically located, creating secure and simple access to smaller accessories. METCALF packs range in weight from 5 lbs. to 6.06 lbs. Color choices include Foliage and Subalpine, with updated options of Buckskin and Ponderosa. Men's and women's sizes are offered as well as frame options.



APEX AMMUNITION

(662) 441-2739
smith-wesson.com

APEX Ammunition introduces **28-GA MOSSY OAK GREEN LEAF TURKEY TSS BLEND** to its line of turkey shotshells. Available in 2.75" 1.5 oz. loads, these premium "duplex" stacked loads feature a combination of No. 9 and No. 10 Tungsten Super Shot delivering a payload of 665 ultra-dense 18.1 g/cc pellets in a 28-GA shell. Each shell features clean-burning powder and APEX's Tungsten Propulsion Wad System engineered to deliver the tightest patterns possible and maximum barrel protection. APEX Turkey TSS loads are currently available in multiple gauges and a variety of shot sizes, shell lengths and blends.



LEUPOLD & STEVENS INC.

(800) 538-7653
leupold.com

Leupold's **MARK 4HD** family of riflescopes feature a 4:1 zoom ratio and five magnification ranges: 1-4.5x24, 2.5-10x42, 4.5-18x52, 6-24x52 and 8-32x56. The 1-4.5x24 and 2.5-10x42 models feature 30mm maintubes. All 1-4.5x24 models are second focal plane, while the 2.5-10x42 model is available in first (FFP) or second focal plane (SFP). The three higher magnification options have 34mm maintubes and are all FFP optics. MIL or MOA adjustments and reticles are available throughout the line. The entire series features Leupold's Professional-Grade Optical System and illuminated reticle options are available. New with the Mark 4HD is the PR3-MIL reticle that provides a clutter-free image for fast, accurate precision aiming. Select models feature a ZeroLock windage turret. The Mark 4HD is waterproof, fogproof and shockproof.



UBERTI 1873 HUNTER LEVER-ACTION RIFLE

BENELLI USA

(800) 264-4962
benelliusa.com

Benelli adds to its Lupo family of rifles with the **LUPO HP**, a factory-guaranteed sub-MOA (0.75", five-shot) long-range shooting and hunting bolt-action rifle. Based on the Benelli Lupo chassis system, the HPR is chambered for 6.5 PRC, 6.5 CRD, .338 LM, .300 PRC, .300 WM. and .308 Win.

Franchi's semi-auto **AFFINITY 3 SPORT-TRAP** model was developed as an entry-level shotgun for competitive sport and trap shooting. It hosts Franchi's Evolved Ergonom-X stock system that includes adjustable drop, cast and LOP along with a 30" barrel chambered in 3" 12 GA, barrel porting for reduced muzzle flip and oversized bolt controls with a beveled loading port for smooth and efficient operation.

Stoeger expands its STR Series of polymer striker-fired pistols with the **STR-9 COMBAT X**, a mid-size handgun chambered in 9mm with a straight grip front strap, ambidextrous slide release. It comes with all the features of the Stoeger STR-9 Combat, including an enlarged magwell, fiber-optic sights, optic-ready slide and a threaded muzzle.

Old West meets the modern hunting woods with **1873 HUNTER LEVER-ACTION RIFLES** and **HUNTER 6-SHOT REVOLVERS** from Uberti. Based on the classically styled Uberti 1873 series models, these firearms — available in .45 LC and .44 Mag. — add top-mounted Picatinny rails for easy scope or electronic optic integration.



3622

CROSMAN CORPORATION

(800) 724-7486
crosman.com

Crosman debuts two bolt-action, single-shot, pre-charged pneumatic rifles, the **3622** and **3677**. The 3622 fires .22-caliber pellets up to 700 fps and the 3677 fires .177-caliber pellets up to 900 fps. Both run on a 2,000 psi under-barrel reservoir that delivers up to 25 shots per fill. The air cylinder can also be charged with a hand pump.



940 JM PRO OPTIC READY 5-SHOT TUNGSTEN GRAY/BLACK

O.F. MOSSBERG & SONS INC.

(203) 230-5300
mossberg.com

Mossberg adds optic-ready versions of its 940 JM Pro Competition Shotgun with the **940 JM PRO OPTIC READY 10-SHOT TUNGSTEN GRAY/BLACK**, **940 JM PRO OPTIC READY 5-SHOT TUNGSTEN GRAY/BLACK** and **940 JM PRO OPTIC READY 10-SHOT MULTICAM BLACK**. The 12-GA, 3" autoloaders have a 24" matte blue vent rib barrel topped with a Hiviz TriComp front fiber optic sight with interchangeable LitePipes and include a set of Briley extended choke tubes.

The **940 PRO WATERFOWL OPTIC READY** 12-GA, 3" autoloader features a 28" AccuChoke-compatible vent rib barrel with a Hiviz CompSight front fiber optic sight. An extended X-Factor Modified choke tube and flush Full and Improved Cylinder chokes are included.

The compact, 12-GA **940 PRO TURKEY HOLOSUN MICRO DOT COMBO** has an 18.5" vent rib barrel, features a Hiviz CompSight front fiber optic sight, and comes equipped with a ported X-Factor XX-Full choke tube (fully compatible with other AccuChoke tubes [sold separately]). The Holosun HS407K micro dot sight is mounted directly to the optic in the receiver.

Mossberg International adds the **SILVER RESERVE EVENTIDE**, a 20-GA synthetic field over/under shotgun, to its line of Silver Reserve break actions ideal for bird hunting, clay shooting and small game hunting. The Eventide O/U has a black synthetic stock with cut checkering on the grip and forend, 14" LOP, complementing matte blue metal finish and 26" vent rib barrel topped with a front fiber optic sight.

MOSSBERG PATRIOT SINGLE SHOT SLED is for use with all short-action calibers in Mossberg's current lineup of Patriot bolt-action rifles. The sled is designed to limit the capacity of short-action Patriot rifles to a single shot when used in place of the standard box magazine.



CRKT

(800) 891-3100
crkt.com

Crafted in partnership with Hogue Knives, the **MINNOW** from CRKT is an EDC knife that's swift, sturdy and small. Its automatic button release deploys the blade with lightning speed, while its MagnaCut steel offers strength and edge retention. Fully opened, it measures under 4.5", with a small, sub-2" blade designed for legal carry in states like California. The green linen Micarta handle gives it an elegant finish, while a low-profile pocket clip provides a safe and secure carry.



N8 TACTICAL

(888) 732-5011
n8tactical.com

Customizable to fit over 275 full-size and compact handguns and easily converted to IWB or OWB carry, the N8 Tactical **MULTIFLEX** holster is suited for a day at the range or daily carry. It is crafted from high-quality polypropylene and features a multi-point adjustment system that applies custom tension to the slide and individual tension adjustment to the bottom of the frame and the trigger guard. A suppressor height sight channel and an optic cut to accommodate red dot sights allow the MultiFlex to secure full-size and compact handguns. The back of the MultiFlex can be fitted with any 1.5" paddle for those who prefer a paddle holster design.

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VORTEX OPTICS

(800) 486-7839
vortexoptics.com

From Vortex Optics, **VENOM 1-6X24 SFP** and **VENOM 3-15X44 FFP** riflescopes deliver versatile, feature-rich options for a range of uses. Features of the Venom 1-6x24 SFP include true 1x-6x magnification, an illuminated AR-BDC3 reticle for fast, accurate target acquisition at short- to mid-range and a throw level for precise magnification adjustments. The Venom 3-15x44 FFP delivers great glass quality, impressive magnification, an EBR-7C reticle available in MOA or MRAD and throw-lever zoom control and wide field of view for rapidly engaging targets up close.



VENOM 1-6X24 SFP



YANKEE HILL MACHINE CO. INC.

(877) 892-6533
yhm.net

Chambered in .338, the **BAD LARRY** suppressor from Yankee Hill Machine is designed for big-bore, long-distance shooting. It is compatible with a range of accepted calibers including (but not limited to) 8.6 BLK, .338 Lapua Magnum, .223 Rem., 6.5mm Creedmoor and .300 Win. Mag. Its robust construction of heat-treated 17-4 PH stainless steel and a Stellite blast baffle ensures longevity.

MILITARY ARMAMENT CORP.

(865) 604-6894
milarmamentcorp.com

Military Armament Corp (MAC) introduces the 9mm **MAC 1911-9 DS**. It features a factory RMR pattern optic cut on the slide and M1913 light rail on the frame. It also boasts a polymer grip module with a subtle yet firm grip texture. The MAC 1911-9 DS utilizes a 4.25" bull barrel that is QPQ Tenifer-finished with an 11° target crown. Additional features include a skeleton hammer, skeleton trigger, competition removable aluminum magwell, fiber optic front sight and black serrated rear sight. Two Checkmate 17-round magazines are included.





HYDRA WEAPONRY

(855) 493-7221
hydraweaponry.com

The Hydra Weaponry **MARCK-15** is a modular 9mm SMG-9c rifle platform that boasts features such as a Hydra quick-change barrel upper receiver, Hydra modular lower receiver, transforming handguard, 9mm SMG-9c magwell, Hydra 9mm 16" blowback barrel, Hydra 9mm blowback bolt and a B5 system stock and pistol grip.



MISSION FIRST TACTICAL

(267) 704-0001
missionfirsttactical.com

Mission First Tactical has added **SLICK BAGS** to its Achro line. The SLICK Bags offer an ultra-low visibility option by removing the exposed MOLLE system used on the standard Achro bag line. The Achro SLICK Bag line includes the 10L EDC Sling Bag — SLICK, the 22L EDC Backpack — SLICK and the 30L EDC Backpack — SLICK. Features include low-visibility (Gray Man) design, a dedicated and discreet firearm pocket, MFT Multi-Mount platform, water-resistant ripstop liner, weather- and abrasion-resistant construction, secure storage compartment for electronics, padded shoulder straps and harness, internal zippered storage pockets and cable storage.



SAVAGE ARMS

(800) 370-0708
savagearms.com

Savage Arms' **110 ULTRALITE ELITE** features a PROOF Research carbon fiber wrapped stainless steel barrel and an MDT HNT 26 folding carbon fiber stock. Additional specifications include a threaded muzzle, three-position tang safety, 1.5–4-lb. user-adjustable AccuTrigger, LOP and comb height adjustment, threaded bolt handle (5/16x24) with carbon fiber bolt knob, includes a one-piece, 20 MOA Picatinny scope rail, low profile AICS detachable box magazine and omniport muzzle brake. The 110 Ultralite Elite is offered in 6.5 Creedmoor, .308 Win., 6.5 PRC, 7mm PRC, .300 Win. Mag. and .300 WSM.

The **A22 TAKEDOWN** is now available in a Flat Dark Earth color. The semi-auto rifle boasts a takedown configuration, synthetic stock with storage compartment in pistol grip and magazine compartment in cheek riser, 18" carbon steel, matte black barrel, low-profile sights 0 MOA Picatinny rail, tang safety, 10-round rotary magazine and user-adjustable AccuTrigger (3–5 lbs.).

Several new colors are now available in the **MODEL 64 COLOR SERIES** of .22 LR semi-auto rifles that include a 10-round detachable box magazine, open sights, 21" carbon steel barrel, matte black synthetic stock and grooved receiver.

KOR TECHNIK

(480) 549-0044
korteknik.com

ZARGES X KOR KITS from KOR Technik unite the robust exterior of Zarges' aluminum cases with KOR VRS technology for reliable, repeatable and reusable protection for firearms, optics, equipment and gear. The VRS protection solution molds and conforms to the shape of any cargo, is completely sealed and easily cleanable and provides an ideal alternative to traditional foam inserts.



BUSHNELL

(800) 423-3537
bushnell.com

Bushnell has released an MOA version of its Match Pro ED 5-30X56 riflescope. The **MATCH PRO ED MOA 5-30X56** has a 34mm main tube which gives room for 100 MOA in elevation adjustments and 50 MOA in windage adjustments. The glass-etched Deploy MOA 2 reticle is always visible and has 11 brightness settings. The riflescope also features a six-hour auto-off illumination timer to increase battery life. Additional features include an Easy Set zero stop and two-stage pop-up rev-indicator, a removable three-position power change lever and a removable sunshade.



NEXTORCH INDUSTRIES

nextorch.com

The **SAINT TORCH 30C** from Nextorch produces an ultra-bright 15,000-lumen output thanks to three high-output LEDs. The battery pack provides up to 52 hours of run time in economy mode, and it also works as a high-capacity power bank to recharge electronic devices. To prevent safety issues, the Saint Torch 30C features a photodetector and temperature sensor to automatically regulate the output when the temperature rises or if it detects an object within 1 meter, allowing it to remain at a safe operating temperature. The light has four brightness modes, is waterproof to 3.5' and includes a nylon carrying case, USB-C charging cable and 3.0 fast charger, waterproof storage case, carrying handle with tripod socket and shoulder strap.



L9A1

SDS IMPORTS

(865) 604-6894
sdsimports.com

Through an exclusive partnership, Military Armament Company (MAC) and its parent company, SDS Imports, is offering several models of the Inglis Hi Power, starting with the **L9A1**. Three additional models are commercial variants: black with walnut grips, satin nickel with black G-10 grips and a color case-hardened model (GP-35). The single-action 9mm L9A1 has a 4.7" barrel, black chromate finish, 15-round capacity and weighs 31 oz. (empty). An electroless nickel "MKIII" version and limited edition case-hardened model in a wood presentation case will also be available in 2024.

Based on a 1943 Remington Rand issued during WWII, the Tisas USA **ARMED SERVICES M1911 A1** chambered in .45 ACP duplicates the original Type-E hammer, correct arched mainspring housing, small window ejection port and other features specific to the sub-contracted pistols of the era. The Armed Services sports a 5" barrel and features the correct United States Property roll marks, and ships with the correct brown plastic grips. A set of walnut, double-diamond checkered grips is also included.



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AMERICAN RIFLE GENERATION II

STURM, RUGER & CO.

(336) 949-5200
ruger.com

The Ruger **AMERICAN RIFLE GENERATION II** boasts a three-position tang safety and a more rigid and ergonomic stock. The stock has a removable comb riser and LOP spacer to improve sight alignment and fit. Standard Generation II models have a Gun Metal Gray Cerakote barreled action and a dark gray stock. The 20" cold hammer-forged barrel with deep spiral fluting on most models improves the balance of the rifle without sacrificing rigidity or accuracy. Generation II Ranch models sport 16" barrels, a Cobalt Cerakote finish and are fitted to a Flat Dark Earth stock with black splatter texture. A Picatinny scope base is installed, and the full diameter three-lug bolt reliably feeds from a variety of magazines and offers a short, 70° bolt throw.

In commemoration of Ruger's 75th anniversary in 2024, a **DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY SR1911** is being offered in a limited edition model featuring a finely detailed laser-engraved slide. The custom grip panels feature detailed scrollwork to match the engraved slide. The SR1911 boasts a titanium firing pin, extended thumb safety, extended magazine release, oversized beavertail grip safety and a visual inspection port. Only 750 of the Anniversary SR1911's will be produced during 2024 and will be identifiable by a special "R75" serial number prefix. Each pistol ships in a specially marked 75th anniversary lockable case with one seven-round and one eight-round stainless steel magazine.



BIG HORN ARMORY

(307) 586-3700
bighornarmory.com

From Big Horn Armory, the **WHITE LIGHTNING** in .500 S&W has a 16" threaded barrel with 1:24" twist. Features include a Picatinny-style Scout scope mount, tank-style muzzle brake and three 2.5" Picatinny rails mounted to the M-LOK forend tip. The White Lightning weighs 7 lbs., 12 oz., has an OAL of 36" and six-round capacity.



STRION 2020

STREAMLIGHT INC.

(800) 523-7488
streamlight.com

The **STRION 2020** is the latest in Streamlight's line of dual switch, rechargeable duty-ready work lights. The long-range handheld is designed with a mode select switch. The light delivers up to 1,200 lumens and 28,000 candela, featuring independently operating push-button head and tail switches. The thumb accessible, three-position mode selector switch eliminates the need to cycle between lighting intensities. Powered by a li-ion battery, the Strion 2020 delivers up to 12 hours of run time. The light charges in Strion chargers and is also available in PiggyBack charging models that include a spare battery.

The **TLR-7 X USB** compact weapon light boasts multi-fuel capability with USB or disposable battery options, while delivering 500 lumens. The light, designed to fit full-size and compact handguns with rails, also offers customizable rear paddle switches with a low or high position to match users' shooting styles. It features a white power LED, and offers two lighting modes, LED only or LED strobe. Also available is a **TLR-7 X** model that ships with a CR123 battery and can also accept the SL-B9 battery pack.

The **TLR-6 HL** is a high-lumen (HL) rechargeable gun-mounted tactical light with an integrated red aiming laser. It delivers 300 lumens and securely attaches to the rail and trigger guard of the GLOCK 42/43, GLOCK rail mount models, the Smith & Wesson M&P Shield and SIG SAUER P365 handguns. The light is powered by Streamlight's proprietary SL-B2 rechargeable battery. Its white LED delivers 4,250 candela and 300 lumens over a beam distance of 130 meters. The TLR-6 HL includes a red laser to maximize long-range targeting capability. A **TLR-6 HL G** model, featuring a green laser, is also available.

BEAR & SON CUTLERY

(256) 435-2227
bearandsoncutlery.com

The Bear & Son **778SR** sideline knife boasts a 3.25" 440 stainless steel drop-point blade with a serrated edge for versatile cutting chores. Using either the flipper or thumb stud, access to the blade is quick and hassle-free. Its Zytel handle offers comfort and a superior grip in wet or challenging environments. The liner-lock mechanism guarantees safety during use, while the stainless-steel pocket clip provides convenient carry options. OAL is 7.25" and it weighs 2.9 oz.



FALCO HOLSTERS

(800) 490-7147
falcoholsters.com

The **CX85 CARBON FIBER HOLSTER** from FALCO is currently available for the GLOCK 19 and is designed to be worn at the 3 o'clock position. It features a slightly curved rear side, ensuring comfortable wrapping around the hip while pulling the grip toward the body for seamless concealment. The slim-profile, pancake-style holster has an open-top, open-muzzle configuration and no cant. Two 1.5" belt loops on the sides ensure secure attachment, while the holster's weight is kept to 3.5 oz.

FEDERAL AMMUNITION

(800) 379-1732
federalpremium.com

Designed for competition use, Federal **ACTION SHOTGUN** loads have a roll crimp for added rigidity, improving cycling through both tube- and magazine-fed shotguns. The 1.125-oz. payload of high-quality No. 7.5 lead pellets is pushed out the muzzle at 1,235 fps. Action Shotgun is available in 200-round cases.

Federal Premium **TERMINAL ASCENT** rounds' bonded construction penetrates deep on close targets, while the patented Slipstream polymer tip initiates expansion at velocities 200 fps lower than comparable designs. The bullet's long, sleek profile offers an extremely high ballistic coefficient, and its AccuChannel groove technology improves accuracy and minimizes drag. Terminal Ascent is available in a range of options including 6.5 Creedmoor (130-gr.), .280 Ackley Improved (155-gr.), 7mm PRC (170-gr.), .300 Win. Mag. (200-gr.) and more.

BALLISTICLEAN RHT HANDGUN non-toxic 9mm loads feature frangible, non-lead RHT bullets that break-up immediately on contact with metal targets, significantly reducing ricochet and backslash danger. Felt recoil and accuracy are all comparable to self-defense and duty ammunition, and the Catalyst lead-free primer eliminates airborne lead.

CCi **PEST CONTROL** handgun shotshells, suitable for close-range pest control, are now available in 10mm Auto in boxes of 10.

Now offered in 9mm Luger, **BLAZER BRASS** handgun ammunition features reloadable brass cases, quality primers and clean-burning propellants. It offers consistent, accurate performance for target shooting.



BALLISTICLEAN RHT HANDGUN



TRIJICON INC.

(800) 338-0563
trijicon.com

The **CREDO 1-10X28** and **CREDO HX 1-10X28** riflescopes from Trijicon deliver fully multi-coated, broadband, anti-reflective glass, a 34mm tube and 28mm objective lens for excellent light transmission, true detail and color with zero distortion. The Credo model's Segmented Circle Enhanced cross-dot reticle features dual red/green user-selectable LED illumination with an "off" in between each setting for fast adjustment to any environment. Its durable matte finish and easy-grip controls facilitate fast, intuitive adjustments, while a repositionable magnification lever accommodates different shooting positions and rifle configurations. The Credo HX has an MOA-based Segmented Circle Enhanced illuminated reticle.

TENPOINT CROSSBOW TECHNOLOGIES

(330) 628-9245

tenpointcrossbows.com

TenPoint Crossbow's **TRX 515** boasts Twin Riser Technology that reduces rider flex for greater downrange accuracy. The TRX shoots 515 fps, and measures 29" long and 6" wide. Features include TriggerTech Trigger with HPX snap-in nock, ACULock scope bridge, ZERO-Trac barrel, GUIDELock arrow rest system, AR-style thumb safety, ACUSlide MAXX system and more. The TRX 515, available in Vektra Camo or Moss Green colors, includes an Evo-X Marksman Elite Scope 3.0, three-pack of EVO-X CenterPunch HPX premium carbon crossbow arrows, integrated string stop system, quiver, bow hook and bubble level.



SILENCER CENTRAL

(866) 891-4494

silencercentral.com

Designed and optimized in partnership with Federal Ammunition, the **BANISH SPEED K** from Silencer Central is a 5.56 suppressor that features an industry-standard hub allowing for direct thread or muzzle brake mounts along with any compatible QD mounting system. Highlights include an internal design that supports higher efficiency and improved sound reduction, Controlled Flow Technology to mitigate back pressure, straight venting that allows for ease of cleaning, 4" length for increased maneuverability and Duty Temperature Control technology to maintain lower internal temperatures. The BANISH Speed K has a 2" diameter and weighs 14.1 oz.



EOTECH

(888) 368-4656

eotechinc.com

EOTECH launches the **VUDU X SERIES** of riflescopes built from a solid piece of aircraft-grade aluminum and finished with high-quality AR-coated glass. Introductory models feature a second focal plane optic design, allowing for quick and accurate targeting at all magnification levels. Vudu X models currently include 1-6x24 and 2-12x40 models. Both have a 30mm tube diameter, illuminated reticles powered by a CR2032 battery and a removable throw lever for quick transitions across the magnification range. Available in MOA adjustments, the DP1 reticle provides the duplex crosshair while the BD1 provides additional circular ballistic holds at 2 MOA increments for longer distances.



BERGARA USA

(877) 892-7544

bergara.online/us

The **MGMICRO LITE** from Bergara features an 18" CURE barrel with a center wrap carbon weave designed for directional accuracy and is threaded for use with a suppressor. Bergara's premier action two-lug system has a separate floating bolt head to ensure contact with the lug abutments in the action. The buttstock has an adjustable cheek rest, limb-saver recoil pad and M-LOK slots. The lightweight XLR Atom magnesium chassis has a built-in bubble level and 1.5" dovetail in the forend. A TriggerTech trigger with Frictionless Release Technology increases performance and accuracy by eliminating creep and heavy pull weights. Finished in Graphite Black Cerakote and starting at 5.8 lbs., the MgMicro Lite has a five-round capacity and is available in .308 Win., 6.5 Creedmoor and 6.5 PRC.



WICKED RIDGE CROSSBOWS

(330) 628-9245

wickedridgecrossbows.com

Weighing 5.8 lbs., the sleek 9.5"-narrow, **INVADER M1** from Wicked Crossbows shoots a quick 390 fps. The compact, 32" long crossbow features the ACUDraw built-in crank-cocking device for effortless cocking and new Pro-View 400 lighted optic. The 190-lb. bow assembly is powered by VX-5 reverse cams that elongate the power stroke and increase rotation to produce and same-hole accuracy. The cast aluminum riser is fitted with 11" TPX Limbs, DynaFLIGHT 97 string and cables, and sleek, lightweight, aluminum limb pockets. The Tactical X stock, with optimal comb height and LOP, has tactical cutouts to reduce weight and improve balance. The package includes three Match 400 Alpha-Nock carbon arrows and a quiver.



HERITAGE MANUFACTURING CO.

(800) 845-3776

heritagemfg.com

Based on the legendary Western side-by-side, the Heritage **BADLANDER** sports two 18.5" barrels with a modern, corrosion-resistant black oxide coating. Between the barrels is a sturdy brass bead sight, and the tang-mounted two-position safety sits within easy reach of most shooters' thumbs. The cylinder bore preserves the authentic intent of the shotgun, making it perfect for home defense, Cowboy Action Shooting and many other 12-GA applications.

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(956) 723-6893
kirkpatrickleather.com

Now available for the Henry Big Boy Revolver, the **MODEL 2020** OWB holster from Kirkpatrick Leather Co. features fine American leather, a contour to the hip and FBI cant to maximize concealment and minimize the overall profile.

MUZLSTIK

(513) 939-8891
muzlstik.com

Muzlstik announced the latest addition to its family of safety products for firearms owners: a **BARREL FLAG WITH "LOADED" PRINTED IN RAISED LETTERS** to indicate a firearm is loaded and ready for use.



KELTEC

(800) 515-9983
keltecweapons.com



KelTec's 9mm **SUB2000 GEN3** carbine features a twist-and-fold rotating forend for seamless and quick deployment and storage. Other GEN3 updates include an aluminum trigger, redesigned trigger mechanics for a lightened 5-lb. trigger pull and visible chamber indicator. The Gen3's modularity is extended by M-LOK accessory compatibility and Picatinny rail space on top and bottom. It weighs 4.2 lbs. (unloaded), is 30.45" long (16.15" folded) and available in a variety of magazine configurations.

PNUMA OUTDOORS

(800) 983-1956
pnumaoutdoors.com

Pnuma Outdoors introduces the **CAZA OV** camouflage pattern, designed with a focus on treestand and elevated hunting. CAZA OV utilizes a unique blend of colors that mimic the sky peeking through tree branches and lichen on tree trunks. This innovation creates macro shape and micro texture disruption, offering an unprecedented level of concealment for hunters in elevated positions.



EARLY SHOT SHOW IMPRESSIONS

Writing this after Day One of SHOT Show 2024, one thing is abundantly clear — the industry has turned out in droves to uncover new products, make fresh connections and support one another. Even with its largest exhibit footprint ever, SHOT Show's miles of aisles still felt a little *crowded* at times.

If I could use one word to describe a common theme on the first day of the show it would be “diversification” — category leaders are branching out into new categories. Smith & Wesson released its first-ever lever gun. Daniel Defense launched its first handgun. 2011 manufacturer Staccato unveiled two ammunition lines. After more than



With more than 816,000 net sq. ft. of exhibit space and 2,500+ exhibitors, packed booths were still a common sight at SHOT Show 2024.

75 years of taking countless four-legged game for rifle hunters, Remington Core-Lokt Handgun is now available. And I could keep going ...

After years of trying to keep up with

rampant demand, it looks as though an emphasis on R&D is back — and will be a big factor as we move deeper into 2024. Long may it continue!

GUNBROKER.COM NAMES TOP-SELLING GUNS OF 2023

GunBroker.com has released its top-selling guns of 2023 — breaking them down by brand and category.

According to GunBroker.com, the 10 top-selling guns of 2023 were the SIG SAUER P365, SIG SAUER P320, Mossberg 590, Ruger 10/22, Henry Big Boy, GLOCK G19, CZ-USA CZ 75, Henry Side Gate Lever Action and Ruger American Rifle.

The top-selling brands in the GunBroker.com online marketplace in

2023 were Ruger, SIG SAUER, Smith & Wesson, GLOCK, Henry, Colt, Springfield Armory, Mossberg, Taurus and Beretta.

This is the second year in a row the top-three companies came in first, second and third, respectively. Ruger's most popular products were its American and 10/22 rifles, as well as the Mark IV pistol and LCR revolver. The popularity of the P365 and P320 pistol families powered SIG SAUER to its second-place position, while sales of the M&P9 family drove Smith & Wesson to third.

“As the largest online marketplace

for firearms and shooting equipment, GunBroker.com puts buyers and sellers of firearms together for a mutually beneficial agreement,” said Jay Zwitter, GunBroker.com VP of sales and customer service. “We also work with manufacturers through brand stores, rebates and much more. The manufacturers that partner with us show higher sales throughout the year.”

To see the lists in their entirety, visit: gungenius.com/top-selling/guns/top-selling-gun-manufacturers-of-2023.

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

EASYEXPORT RELEASES 2023 INT'L MARKET DATA

Complete firearms, stocks and chassis led the list of products that generated international revenues for the American manufacturers and resellers of firearms, parts, and accessories who use EasyExport's international sales platform.

Measured by units sold, the seven best-selling products in 2023 for EasyExport sellers included screws, springs, muzzle devices, extractors, trigger assemblies, iron sights and accessory rails. This information was included in the 2023 year-end

international market data released by EasyExport in mid-Jan. 2024.

More than 6,000 firearm owners and 200+ dealers and other commercial buyers around the world have registered with EasyExport to buy American products they can't obtain in their own countries. Over 95% of registered EasyExport buyers are in Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Brazil.

Consumer purchases by firearm owners accounted for more than 90% of the orders EasyExport processed in 2023. Purchases by dealers and other importers accounted for over 70% of the international sales revenue generated.

The top export market for

EasyExport®

EasyExport sellers was Canada, by a wide margin. Australia was number two, followed by Germany, France, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Most consumers will buy locally if they can. Knowing which of their products are selling to consumers in each market enables sellers to tell their dealers exactly which SKUs to stock. When you want to grow revenues and build an international dealer network quickly, that market information is priceless.” [9](https://easyexport.net)

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

BY JADE MOLDAE

SHAPING BUSINESS — THROUGH DATA

One of the challenges facing the firearms industry today (and, perhaps all businesses these days) is consistent unpredictability.

Depending on your niche in the market, 2023 was most likely “flat” compared to the early years of the pandemic — but still elevated over previous demand surges.

Here in the early weeks of 2024, there is still an air of uncertainty — especially with the election looming and potential increasing instability in the Middle East, as well as the continuing war in Ukraine. As such, having access to and harnessing data has never been more important.

NASGW President Kenyon Gleason, in a July 2021 article published here in *Shooting Industry*, likened running a business without using data to flying a plane in the clouds without the proper instruments.

“As a relatively new pilot, I’ve learned quickly your aircraft instruments are your best friends. They can get you out of a jam and they can alert you to an issue so you have more time to react and adjust,” he wrote. “As the old saying goes, ‘Every takeoff is optional, every landing is mandatory.’ And when you’re in flight, your instruments and the data and feedback they give you can help to ensure that when that landing comes due, you’ll be ready, and you can make it with confidence.”

This analogy translates well to the shooting sports business.

“If you’re just flying by the seat of your pants and aren’t using sales data

and information to help guide your business decisions, then you’re probably — more often than not — flying through the clouds with no instruments,” Gleason reasoned.

Thankfully, there’s a treasure trove of information available (many are *gratis* for macro-level data) out there in the industry. NSSF, NASGW SCOPE, Southwick Associates, GunBroker.com, EasyExport and Gearfire RetailBI represent a handful of the many trusted resources available. NSSF recently released some key findings from a survey that point to opportunities for further growth.

FIREARM OWNERSHIP & SPORTS SHOOTING PARTICIPATION SURVEY

In mid-January, NSSF released its “Firearm Ownership & Sport Shooting Participation in the U.S. in 2022” report (which is free to NSSF members). The report highlights 24.1% growth of adult participation in sport shooting in America from 2009 to 2022. Surveys indicate during that time, sport shooting participation grew from 34 million adult participants to more than 63.5 million.

According to the results of the survey, recreational sports shooting with a handgun saw the highest levels of adult participation. Though recreational target shooting at indoor ranges endured a downturn during the lockdown phase of the pandemic, the survey revealed participation levels at indoor ranges have since recovered to pre-COVID levels — an encouraging sign.

Additionally, in 2022, 17% of all adults participating in the shooting sports were newcomers. This represented 42% growth since 2020.

In a statement analyzing these results, NSSF said, “Today’s recreational marksmen and women are more representative of a broader scope of American demographic groups, increasingly urban and represented by women.”

If our industry can continue diversifying participation here in 2024, it will surely benefit us in the long run.

ROUNDING OUT 2023 NICS FIGURES

The Dec. 2023 NSSF-adjusted National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) figure of 1,775,834 is an increase of 1.6% compared to the December 2022 figure of 1,747,506 (NSSF-adjusted).

It’s now been more than four years — 53 months running — since there has been a single month with less than 1 million adjusted background checks.

The Q4 2023 NSSF-adjusted NICS figure of 4,742,029 reflects an increase of 4.6% compared to the 4,532,341 figure for Q4 2022. All three months of Q4 2023 exceeded the corresponding 2022 months (NSSF-adjusted).

The annual 2023 NSSF-adjusted NICS figure of 15,848,055 reflects a decrease of 3.5% compared to the 16,425,484 figure for annual 2022. 2023 represented the fourth-highest year on record, exceeded by years 2020–2022.

As we’re well aware, NICS figures don’t tell the whole story — but they do provide good insight into consumer behavior. For more than four years now, consumers have continued to demonstrate an elevated interest in firearms ownership. Relating to the previous section, the onus is on us to continue welcoming them in and capturing additional sales.

Throughout this year in *Shooting Industry*, we will be featuring articles on how to further diversify, as well as using data to inform decision-making. We welcome your feedback on what works best at your store or range.

Send me an email at editor@shootingindustry.com anytime, or connect with us on LinkedIn or Facebook.

Continued on p. 45

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Forged Lightweight Aluminum Frame

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