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SHOOTING INDUSTRY

THE INDUSTRY'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE — EST. 1955



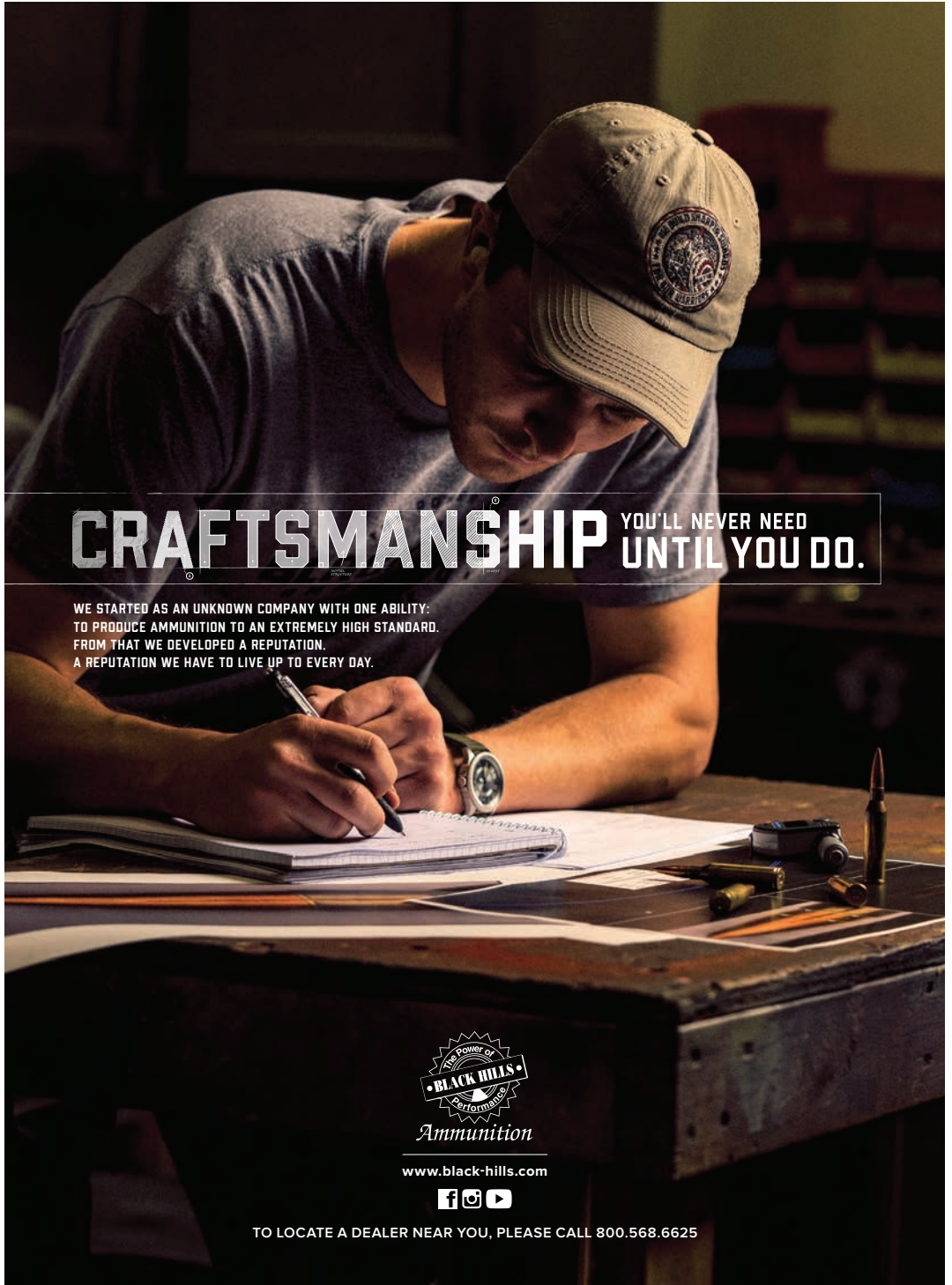
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Build Awareness Through
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Store firearms securely, inaccessible to children and unauthorized users. Consult and comply with any and all applicable federal, state, and local: laws, regulations, requirements, and/or restrictions, including but not limited to those regarding the purchase, ownership, use, transport, and carrying of a firearm. Not all products are available in all states or jurisdictions.

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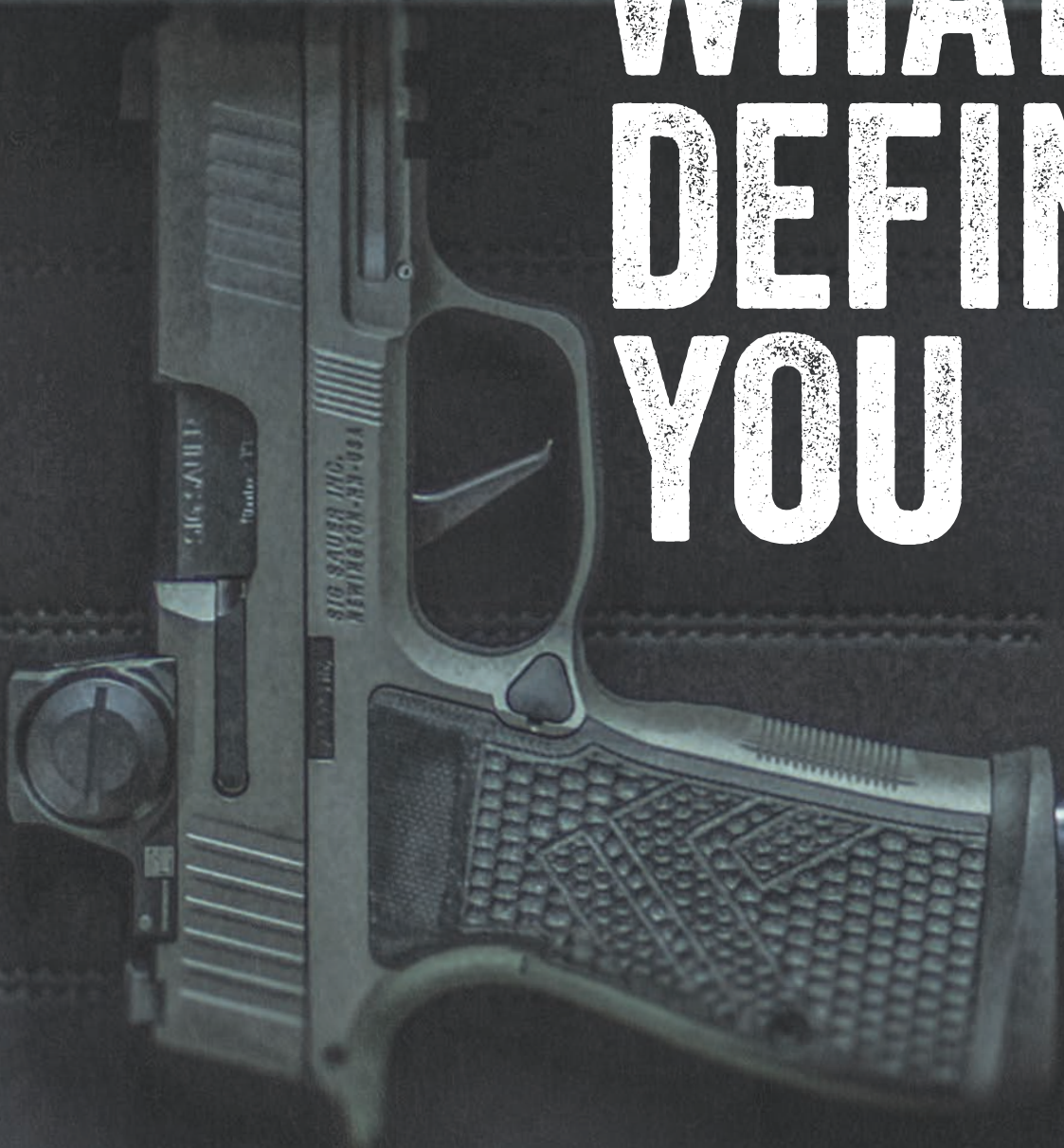
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Insights From Ammo, Reloading Segments

Inside this issue, two submarkets notably under the microscope over the past 4+ years — ammunition and reloading segments — come under further examination.

In “Reloading Industry Targets Long-Range Accuracy,” Redding Reloading’s Robin Sharpless tells *SI*’s Bryan Hendricks two recent developments have shifted the landscape for the reloading market: Reloaders have gotten older (meaning soft-shooting cartridges like 6.5 Creedmoor are preferred) and components are more expensive today. However, with the surge of long-range shooting, reloaders aren’t shooting the same volume they were previously in AR-style rifles. For more insights, see **pp. 38–41**.

In his *Industry Link* column this month, *SI* Editor Jade Moldae examines how demand in this election cycle compares to previous ones. In addition, Hornady, Fiocchi USA and Sovereign Ammo impart their observations on current market conditions, and forecasts for the second half of 2024.

USING AI TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS

At the onset of the 2024 business year, we shared *SI* would feature a variety of articles on AI and how it can impact your operations. Michelle Scheuermann highlights 20 useful tools in this month’s *Best Practices* column to create content, educate and assist customers on their buying journey — and, ultimately, convert business.

“Whether ‘converting business’ is helping write a solid article, LinkedIn post, or even responding to direct messages (DMs), AI can give us content ideas for social media, video scripts, image ideas and more. And it does it faster [but not necessarily better] than a human,” she writes.

For more, see **p. 26**.



MAY 2024

IN-DEMAND ACCESSORIES

Scouring various dealers’ accessory assortments across the web, Brian Armstrong confirmed what you’re likely seeing in-store: red dots, weapon-mounted lights, speed loaders, slide-out safes and bipods remain hot commodities in this market. He highlights having these products in stock is important, but being able to educate customers — adding value — is where stores can stand out from the competition. See **pp. 32–35**.

NEXT MONTH: SAFETY AT THE RANGE, HOME

In the June 2024 issue, Bethany Beathard examines safety products for the range — focusing on eye/ear protection — while Carolee Anita Boyles profiles those best suited for the home (safes and other secure storage measures).

Other points of interest in the June issue include a fall hunting sales preview by Nancy Keaton, Massad Ayoob’s case for discovering hidden gems (and explaining them to customers) and Tim Barker evaluates how your store can add value through specializing in certain categories. **SI**

Have a comment on this issue or feedback on what you’d like to see in *Shooting Industry*? Reach out to us anytime: comments@shootingindustry.com.

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Diversify your product mix when it's slow, balancing the capital expense of flooring more inventory to creating some interest in your shop.

GET MORE OUT OF YOUR WHOLESALE REPS

Wholesaler reps are great resources. Talk to them about your needs; treat them with respect when it's busy. Help them out when it's slower — take a few firearms that might be slower sellers if you can. Ask them about promotions they're aware of, and how you can help push them.

Pay your bills upfront, ACH on shipment and use discount terms if offered. Diversify your product mix when it's slow, balancing the capital expense of flooring more inventory to creating some interest in your shop ... so it's not stale to repeat clients.

Our better reps let us know what are good sellers. Ask for the info, and they'll tell you what's hot, and items that may not be showing up in their online inventory (or shown on the allocation lists). I'll often find a gem the sales reps are using for bargaining chips amongst each other.

Talk to your reps; establish how best to communicate with each other. Treat them well. I send my top six to eight really cool Christmas gifts as a “thank you” — not just “product” but something special and unique.

Recognize when you have a rep who sucks, doesn't care about service and find a new one fast.

— **Daniel Mitchell, Owner**
Sporting Systems
Vancouver, Wash.

REACTION TO “YOUR ‘OTHER’ SALESPERSON — DISPLAYS”

Editor's Note: The following is a reaction to Massad Ayoob's Feb. 2024 *Personal Defense Market* column. Ayoob contends displays are an underutilized sales tool for dealers.



The display and proper signage can make all the difference whether a product sells or not. Our cardboard targets sell very well in most of the shops we are in, but even the best locations lose sales when they don't have our display signage on the product. **SI**

— **Re-Nine Safety, Via LinkedIn**

HAVE A THOUGHT WHILE READING THE ISSUE?

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FIREARM INDUSTRY ECONOMIC IMPACT RISES 371% SINCE 2008

According to NSSF's recently released 2024 Firearm and Ammunition Economic Impact Report, the firearm and ammunition industry's economic impact in the U.S. increased from \$19.1 billion in 2008 to \$90.05 billion in 2023 (371% increase). During the same period, the total number of full-time equivalent jobs rose from approximately 166,000 to over 384,437 (131% increase).

On a year-over-year basis, the industry's economic impact rose from \$80.73 billion in 2022, to \$90.05 billion in 2023. The firearm industry has broader impacts throughout the economy. It supports and generates business for firms seemingly unrelated to firearms, at a time when every job in America counts. These are real people, with real jobs, working in industries as varied as

“

Our industry is a vital economic contributor to every state and every community.”

Joe Bartozzi - President & CEO
NSSF

banking, retail, accounting, metal working and printing among others.

The firearm and ammunition industry paid over \$10.90 billion in business taxes, including property, income and sales-based levies. An additional \$944 million was paid in federal excise taxes, which directly contributes to wildlife conservation.

“Our industry is a vital economic contributor to every state and every community. These are companies employing men and women from all walks of life and they prove daily that the American firearm and ammunition industry is strong,” said Joe Bartozzi, NSSF president and CEO. “This industry proudly provides the means for law-abiding citizens to exercise their Second Amendment

Continued on p. 17

WTТА UNVEILS MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE VIDEO

Walk the Talk America (WTТА), a nonprofit organization bridging the gap between mental health and responsible firearm ownership, announced the launch of a new mental health training video.

Specifically tailored for firearms instructors to integrate into their classes and for individual gun owners seeking to enhance their mental well-being, this resource fills a crucial gap in firearm safety education.

“We became aware through firearms instructors that certain states like California, Maryland and New York were implementing mandates for an hour-long training on mental health and suicide prevention as part of

obtaining concealed carry certifications. However, it was evident that these states lacked clear recommendations for suitable training courses,” said Michael Sodini, founder and CEO of WTТА.

“Recognizing this gap, we took the initiative to develop a comprehensive solution. Our video resource is designed to cover all essential aspects, providing instructors with a ready-made tool to facilitate instruction without the need to delve into unfamiliar topics.”

Across seven chapters, the video delves into a spectrum of critical topics, ranging from understanding one's mental processes and acknowledging personal biases to ensuring responsible firearm storage and managing access to firearms.

Guiding each section are seasoned professionals like Kevin Dixie, complemented by board members of



WTТА such as Jake Wiskerchen, a seasoned marriage and family therapist, and Rob Pincus, a trainer, author and consultant.

Walk the Talk America is currently looking for sponsors for their chapters, and they offer the opportunity to feature a business' logo at the beginning of each chapter video. For more information on how to become a sponsor or a supporter, contact admin@wtta.org.

The video is available at walkthetalkamerica.org/firearm-instructors-mental-health-resource-videos.

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

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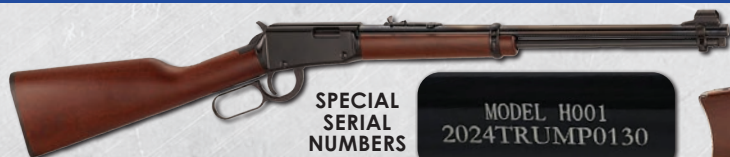
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CELERANT, IRON VALLEY SUPPLY OFFER DROP-SHIPPING FOR DEALERS

Celerant Technology announced an expansion of its integration with Iron Valley Supply that allows Celerant's FFL dealers who use Iron Valley Supply integration to offer their customers drop-shipping.

Celerant is the first partner with which Iron Valley Supply has opened the drop-shipping integration.

"We've been working for a couple of years to try to integrate our drop-ship program. I am glad to say through

Celerant, we have a massive inventory that you can put online. You do not have the cost associated with the inventory; we do. But we'll ship that order for you [because] we want you to sell a lot," said Jeff Pugh, Iron Valley Supply VP of sales.

Dealers using Celerant's point-of-sale and eCommerce software can already seamlessly integrate Iron Valley Supply's online product feed onto their websites and in-store kiosks. With the addition of drop-shipping capabilities, firearms dealers can now sell an "endless aisle" of products to their customers without having to stock the merchandise.

Any product Iron Valley Supply has in stock in their warehouse, dealers can make available for sale by enabling the

distributor to drop-ship on their behalf. Depending on the item purchased, the order will either ship directly to the consumer or to a local FFL pre-selected by the consumer, in the case of a firearm.

Celerant's eCommerce platform integrates with its point-of-sale software, which allows dealers to manage their entire business in one system. Dealers who want to offer more variety to their customers can utilize the Iron Valley Supply integration to gain access to their entire product catalog. They can then display those products in stores, kiosk stations and eCommerce websites.

[/ celerant.com/iron-valley](https://celerant.com/iron-valley)

ALPHA SILENCER REBRANDS TO ANECHOIC, UNVEILS NEW PRODUCT LINE

Alpha Silencer announced it has rebranded to Anechoic (meaning "echo-free") to reflect the company's commitment to innovation, quality and cutting-edge technology.

Anechoic's new brand identity represents a new era for the company, focusing on providing state-of-the-art firearm suppressors that create silence in any environment.

"Our new brand identity represents our dedication to providing ultra-light, whisper-quiet, end-user serviceable

titanium suppressors with a lifetime warranty. We believe Anechoic is the future of firearm suppressors, and we look forward to driving explosive growth in the industry with our advanced technology," said Miranda Cook, director of brand marketing and strategy.

Anechoic also announced its new product line, AnechoX. All AnechoX suppressors are equipped with the X-Baffle Anechoic chamber system, dramatically reducing sound and virtually eliminating backpressure.

The new suppressors aren't just light, they are also versatile. Featuring a range of suppressors for rifles, pistols and rimfires, AnechoX suppressors are designed to be effective on both bolt-action and gas guns. These multi-caliber



suppressors have a universal mounting system, allowing consumers to use the AnechoX on many firearms.

"Our team has worked tirelessly to develop these products, and we are confident they will exceed everyone's expectations. These truly are 'Superior Suppressors for Superior Shooters,'" said Buck Steele, president of Anechoic.

Anechoic will continue to focus on providing innovative and high-quality firearm suppressors for gun enthusiasts worldwide.

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

GUNSITE EXPANDS TO EAST COAST

Gunsite Academy announced it is expanding to Orlando, Fla., partnering with the largest indoor gun range in the state, Shooters World Orlando.

With 58 indoor shooting lanes ranging from 15 yards to 100 yards, this 74,000-sq. ft. shooting range and retail store make up the perfect facility for first-time students to participate in and understand the Gunsite experience.

The first course hosted by Shooters World is the Gunsite 150 Three-Day Basic

Pistol class on July 19–21, to be taught by Gunsite CEO and Rangemaster Ken Campbell. Additional certified Gunsite instructors will travel to the Orlando location to teach the inaugural class and subsequent classes.

The initial class, Modern Technique of the Pistol, will introduce students to Gunsite founder Lt. Col. Jeff Cooper's pragmatic technique for personal protection. It teaches the correct, safe handling of a handgun; speed reloads vs. tactical reloads; weapon malfunctions; pivots and turns; barricades; and tactical guidelines.

"This advanced level of training is a

GUNSITE



great fit for Shooters World and should be very well-received by our customers who value quality training. When we heard about this opportunity, we were thrilled that the high level of training Gunsite has to offer would be brought right to our facility here in central Florida. We can't wait," said Jacqueline Limones, general manager of Shooters World Orlando.

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

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VISTA OUTDOOR FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES DONATIONS

The Vista Outdoor Foundation, the philanthropic partner of Vista Outdoor Inc., announced a donation of \$208,000 to four nonprofit organizations, concluding a multi-year grant commitment.

Receiving the donation funds were Little Bellas: Mentoring on Mountain Bikes, the Outdoors Tomorrow Foundation, Pedal Power MN and the Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation.

The donations mark the final contributions from the Vista Outdoor Foundation. Post-separation, the new

companies — Revelyst and The Kinetic Group — will develop their own charitable giving strategies and announce those to stakeholders.

“For the last several years, the Vista Outdoor Foundation has supported more than a dozen nonprofits through our robust grant program. We couldn’t be prouder of all the donations we’ve made, and we hope our support will help all these organizations make a difference in their respective communities and activities,” said Fred Ferguson, chairman of the Vista Outdoor Foundation and VP of public affairs and communications for Vista Outdoor’s Revelyst segment.

“Supporting educational programs

and the responsible use of our products is so important to the future of wildlife and enjoyment of the outdoors,” said Jason Nash, foundation board member and VP of marketing for Vista Outdoor’s The Kinetic Group segment. “The foundation has allowed us to provide additional resources to outstanding partners who exemplify how best to enrich our sporting heritage and ensure generations are able to enjoy the shooting sports.”

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

YETI OBTAINS MYSTERY RANCH

Yeti Holding Inc. announced it has signed an agreement to acquire Mystery Ranch, a premier designer and manufacturer of durable, load-bearing backpacks, bag and pack accessories.

“Mystery Ranch packs have earned a global reputation within the most demanding communities by building load-bearing equipment that delivers in the harshest environments. Their ethos, passion and people not only align with the Yeti team, but also connect well with

our commitment to innovation and our customers,” said Matt Reintjes, president and CEO of Yeti.

Founded in 2006, the original Yeti cooler was born out of frustration and passion. Yeti has since grown into an industry innovator of premium outdoor gear designed for the hardcore outdoor adventurer, outside enthusiast and everyone in between. Like Yeti, Mystery Ranch products have been built with durability and performance in mind for over two decades whether for use on the fire line, backcountry or in your everyday adventure.

“Yeti’s passion for innovation and the

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outdoors aligns closely with our founding vision,” said Dana Gleason, co-founder of Mystery Ranch. “Renée Sippel-Baker, my co-founder, and I know they are a perfect partner to build upon our long history of making the best load-bearing equipment in the world for the most extreme users, as well as the everyday mission.”

The Mystery Ranch team will continue to operate out of Bozeman, Mont.

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

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

PRO-SHOT ACQUIRES LOCKON TARGET BRAND

Pro-Shot, a worldwide leader in American-made firearms maintenance, cleaning and shooting targets, announced its acquisition of LockOn Target from its founder, Tom Ervin.

Ervin, an avid shooting enthusiast, developed LockOn Target as a result of his passion for making every shooter more accurate. The LockOn innovative target design combines a single point of aim and advanced training solutions for every sight at virtually any distance. The American-made LockOn Target aligns seamlessly with Pro-Shot’s mission to provide shooters with the most innovative and user-friendly targets available, and fortifies Pro-Shot’s commitment to

advancing shooting sports technology.

By integrating LockOn Target’s innovative technology into its portfolio of targets, Pro-Shot aims to offer a comprehensive suite of solutions that will cater to both seasoned marksmen and newcomers alike.

“Tom Ervin has done an exceptional job in developing a state-of-the-art target lineup that truly revolutionizes the shooting industry. This acquisition underscores our commitment to delivering unparalleled quality and performance to our customers,” said John Damarin, president of Pro-Shot.

“Joining forces with Pro-Shot marks a significant milestone for LockOn Target. I am confident that Pro-Shot’s expertise and resources will propel LockOn Target to new heights, ensuring that our innovative solutions continue to set the

standard in the shooting sports industry,” said Ervin.

Pro-Shot plans to integrate LockOn Target’s technology into its existing product lineup, while also exploring new opportunities to enhance the user experience through advanced training programs and interactive features.

Customers can expect a seamless transition, with continued support and service for existing LockOn Target products.

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



FREEDOM MUNITIONS OPENS RIFLE CASE MANUFACTURING FACILITY

Freedom Munitions announced its 10,000-sq. ft. facility dedicated to rifle ammunition case-making is operational and producing Freedom's own .223 Remington cases.

Freedom Munitions broke ground on the new facility in the summer of 2022. It is fully equipped with state-of-the-art machinery and highly trained operators to ensure the utmost quality, tolerances and consistency.

The company formerly manufactured cases for various pistol calibers while sourcing out rifle cases from well-respected manufacturers in order to

load .223 Remington, 5.56 NATO, .308 Winchester and many other popular calibers.

"Research and development have been going on for some time while building the facility, but now the first lots of cases have been tested in live .223 with excellent results," said Toby Thill, president of Freedom Munitions. "Now, having the ability to produce our own rifle cases greatly alleviates issues with case shortages, bottlenecks and pricing shifts, allowing us to consistently provide rifle ammunition at fair pricing."

Freedom Munitions loads many variations of .223 Remington ammunition, from target and hunting to professional match grade, with the 55-grain FMJ bullet from X-Treme Bullets being the most popular. Freedom Munitions is also equipped with its own ballistics lab and



underground firing range for extensive testing on all calibers, ensuring accurate and reliable performance on these new cases.

The new Freedom-made cases feature the X-Treme Bullets headstamp, a brand of Freedom Munitions that specializes in components, primarily plated bullets.

The first 500,000 units out of the factory are now available in .223 55-grain FMJ, with more to come. This expansion is expected to open 20-30 jobs in Lewiston, Idaho as more calibers begin to be processed.

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

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INDUSTRY NEWS

WINCHESTER TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION ON NEW NGSW-A FACILITY

Winchester was awarded a contract for the construction of the Next Generation Squad Weapon — Ammunition (NGSW-A) manufacturing facility at Lake City Army Ammunition Plant (LCAAP). The project will be the first new manufacturing facility built at LCAAP in decades.

The new manufacturing facility will provide safe, reliable and advanced NGSW-A to the Joint Warfighter. Winchester will manage all aspects of the construction process, which is projected to start in the second quarter of 2024.

“A dedicated team of Winchester



experts has been working on this project in collaboration with the U.S. government and other industry stakeholders to design a state-of-the-art, small-caliber ammunition manufacturing facility,” said Brett Flaugher, president of Winchester Ammunition. “This new facility will ultimately employ hundreds and utilize innovative and transformational small-caliber ammunition manufacturing and safety processes.”

Winchester continues to partner with the U.S. Army to bring transformational technology and capabilities to LCAAP,

as the NGSW-A manufacturing facility award comes on the heels of the recent award from the U.S. Army to stand up manufacturing capabilities for .50 Caliber Saboted Light Armor Penetrator (SLAP), which will be ready for production in 2024.

Winchester is the largest supplier of small-caliber ammunition to the U.S. military. The Winchester legacy in support of the U.S. military runs deep, dating back to the early 1900s.

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

AMERICAN GUNSMITHING INSTITUTE PARTNERS WITH CMP

The Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) chose American Gunsmithing Institute (AGI) as its exclusive Professional Gunsmithing Training Provider. Now, CMP armorer trainees will undergo a unique program to become Certified Professional Gunsmiths.

“The AGI Gunsmithing Course is part of a new and unique, five-tier internal staff development program to increase the skill level of our members in Design, Function and Repair of Pistols and Revolvers, Shotguns, Rimfires and Centerfire Rifles,” stated Greg Raines, CMP chief commercial officer. “Now, our team members who come to work for us and become Certified

Armors will also have the opportunity to become Certified Gunsmiths. This gives them a comprehensive understanding of firearms and firearms systems and enables them to be significantly better equipped to evaluate, maintain, repair and/or customize firearms that are brought into the shops.”

In the AGI training process, each student has a dedicated student portal, with access to video instruction and Master Gunsmith Instructor support and can progress through the course at their own pace, reviewing materials at any time. They are then tested on their knowledge of General Gunsmithing, Pistolsmithing, Shotguns, Rimfires, and Centerfire Rifles, Design, Function and Repair, with testing and certifications for each of the five core sections of the course.



“Since AGI has been training Gunsmiths for over 30 years and is known and respected in the industry, we knew it would be the perfect partnership,” Raines continued. “AGI is the only school that teaches Design, Function, and Repair Gunsmithing to provide our team members with the necessary knowledge to work on firearms and better serve their customers. Plus, this training will help our members be better equipped to facilitate CMP Shooting matches, assist competitors with issues and ensure a safe environment.”

[/ americangunsmithinginstitute.net](http://americangunsmithinginstitute.net)

OUTDOOR EDGE LAUNCHES NEW DEALER PORTAL

Outdoor Edge recently launched a new dealers-only portal, designed to make it quick and easy for the company's vast dealer network to order and replenish products.

“We want our dealers to be able to provide their customers with the Outdoor Edge products they want when they want them,” said William Morgan, director of marketing and product management.

The customized site features pricing and programs relevant only to dealers. Here, dealers can track order history, invoices and shipments, take advantage of simple payment options and have first access to monthly promotions via our Dealer Insider emails. Dealers will also have direct access to marketing portal content, including videos, lifestyle images, social content, product information sheets and more. They will have first access to promotions via the Dealer Insider email, and will be able to find in-depth product knowledge to help with in-store education



and training programs.

With the new portal, dealers can easily browse the entire Outdoor Edge line of cutlery products, tools and accessories. They can quickly place orders, track shipments and manage their account information all in one convenient location.

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

Continued from p. 10

rights, enables them to hunt and is the primary fiscal force behind wildlife conservation in America. The growth of the firearm industry equals more jobs that add to our local economies, averaging \$67,500 in wages and benefits, up from \$65,000 reported last year. Since 2008, federal business tax payments increased by 353%, Pittman-Robertson excise taxes on firearms and ammunition that support wildlife conservation by 168% and state

business taxes by 215%.”

The annual Firearm and Ammunition Industry Economic Impact Report provides a state-by-state breakdown of job numbers, wages and output covering direct, supplier and induced employment, as well as federal excise taxes paid. The full report is available at: nssf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/2024-Economic-Impact-Report.pdf.

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

NSSF'S PROTECT LIBERTY PAC RECEIVES MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The NSSF's Protect Liberty Political Action Committee (PAC) has announced several donations from other industry organizations. March 11, the National Association of Sporting Goods Wholesalers (NASGW) contributed \$25,000; April 8, Silencer Central committed \$50,000 in support of the PAC; and April 15, Grasso Holdings contributed \$10,000.

These gifts will be utilized to help identify and support the election of candidates who are dedicated to preserving and protecting liberty, freedom and the Constitutional rights of all Americans. The funds will help the Protect Liberty PAC ensure voters in key battleground states and congressional districts across the country are informed about candidates who will fight for their Constitutional rights rather than carry out a far-left political agenda that threatens those rights.

“Political leaders are supposed to fight on behalf of the American people and be a safeguard against efforts to squash the rights enshrined in the Constitution. Too often today we see these same political leaders betray that solemn duty and instead attack the very traditions and freedoms law-abiding Americans revere,” said NASGW President Kenyon Gleason. “We strongly encourage every company and their employees throughout our industry to join us in supporting Protect



Liberty PAC so it has the resources come November to protect our cherished freedoms and liberties.”

“We all must do our part to ensure we are electing officials who stand by their oaths to protect the Constitution, our liberties, and our freedoms,” said Brandon Maddox, founder and CEO of Silencer Central.

“It's critical we do all we can to help NSSF's Protect Liberty PAC to be successful in its mission because there are hundreds of thousands of hard-working, law-abiding Americans in our industry — and we want to keep it that way,” stated Grasso Holdings CEO Ed Grasso.

Protect Liberty PAC is a federally registered “super PAC” founded in 2023 by NSSF. Protect Liberty PAC is an independent-expenditure-only political committee, and can accept unlimited personal and corporate contributions from companies in or outside of the industry, so long as they do not have federal contracts. Protect Liberty PAC will expressly advocate for the election or defeat of specific candidates, and that advocacy will be completely independent of any candidate or political party.

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

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JD TAURUS COLLABORATIVE VENTURE ANNOUNCES PILOT BATCHES OF SMALL ARMS

JD Taurus, a collaborative effort between leading Brazilian multinational group Taurus Armas S.A. and Jindal Defense Systems Pvt Limited, a prominent Indian group, has reached a significant milestone with the initiation of pilot-batch production at the new manufacturing unit in India.

Under the guidance of Taurus' expert team from Brazil, the Indian facility commenced the production of pilot batches of firearms in March. This strategic move aligns with the transfer of technology and knowledge, ensuring seamless integration and adherence to stringent quality standards.

The primary objective of these pilot batches is to establish technical, operational and manufacturing processes to guarantee the replication of high safety and quality standards on an industrial scale. The manufacturing unit is poised to



cater to both military and civilian markets, with an initial annual production capacity of up to 250,000 firearms, subject to scaling based on demand.

JD Taurus is actively participating in major tenders, including the ongoing procurement process by the Ministry of Defense, India, for 425,000 carbines. This endeavor underscores the company's commitment to supplying cutting-edge firearms to bolster national security.

Taurus' reputation for competitive pricing, advanced technology, superior quality and high production volume positions JD Taurus as a formidable contender in the global market.

The partnership between Taurus and Jindal Defense epitomizes a pioneering initiative in technology transfer, in line with India's "Make in India" program.

With a 51:49 equity participation ratio, the collaboration signifies a harmonious blend of technological expertise and financial resources.

India is positioned as one of the largest markets for firearms in the defense sector. With a burgeoning population and substantial defense expenditure, India presents unprecedented opportunities for stakeholders in the industry.

As JD Taurus spearheads innovation in the Indian defense sector, it not only creates employment opportunities but also catalyzes technological advancements, paving the way for a transformative era in national security.

Taurus, based in Bainbridge, Ga., is owned by Taurus Armas S.A., a publicly traded company based in Brazil.

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

NSSF REDESIGNS PROJECT CHILDSAFE WEBSITE

The NSSF has redesigned and re-launched its Project ChildSafe website. The site has comprehensive educational materials and practical resources for gun owners on how to securely store firearms when not in use to prevent firearm accidents, suicides and thefts.

The website has a new, modern look and enhanced site navigation, and will continue to serve as a comprehensive online resource hub for a variety of audiences looking for firearm safety educational materials.

The new Project ChildSafe website features downloadable toolkits for parents of young children and teens, hunters, law enforcement officers, safety instructors, educators, nonprofit groups, organizational supporters and more. These resources will equip them with easy-to-use secure storage resources and tools to discuss firearm safety with their families and communities.



In addition to the audience-specific toolkits, the site features a mental health resource page for parents and teen-adjacent adults, developed in partnership with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The Project ChildSafe Focus Communities page features an interactive map of Project ChildSafe's impact across the country. The site also has an enhanced educational video and materials library and a Future Hunters Pledge & Walk-Through Module parents can explore with young children.

"Offering free educational resources to demonstrate the importance of firearm safety and to encourage secure firearm storage are vital aspects of our program's

success," said Joe Bartozzi, NSSF president and CEO and chairman of the Project ChildSafe Foundation. "This new site will play an important role in educating gun owners and helping to prevent firearm accidents, thefts and misuse."

Launched in 1999, Project ChildSafe is the largest and most comprehensive firearm safety education program in the U.S. It was created for gun owners by gun owners. As the program celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, NSSF and Project ChildSafe remain committed to educating and providing resources to gun owners and non-gun owners alike.

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



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MOSSBERG PARTNERS WITH CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS FOR VIDEO SERIES

O.F. Mossberg & Sons has partnered with the Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation (OSCF) and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) for a new episode of “Connecting with Conservation.”

This video series was developed to thank the more than 60 million active, American hunters, anglers, trappers and shooters (HATS) for being primary funders of land, fish and wildlife conservation in the U.S.

The OSCF developed the “Connecting with Conservation” series in collaboration with industry manufacturers and state agencies. The latest video showcases a visit to the Charlie Elliot Wildlife Center managed by the GADNR and a visit with Mossberg staff to share how purchasing a hunting license, ammunition or a firearm helps improve both wildlife populations and their habitats.

“The Georgia Department of Natural Resources and O.F. Mossberg & Sons are integral parts of the wildlife conservation cycle, and we thank them for everything they do,” said OSCF’s Executive Director Jim Curcuruto. “Most of all we want to thank our fellow hunters, anglers, trappers and shooters for buying hunting



and fishing licenses, as well as outdoor products like firearms, ammunition, bows, arrows, rods, reels and lures that support conservation funding efforts. Without the support of HATS, state fish and wildlife agencies would not be able to do all the great conservation work they do.”

In the early 1900s numerous wildlife species faced declining populations due to loss of habitat and unregulated hunting. Sportsmen and the firearms and ammunition industry passed the Pittman-Robertson (P-R) Act in 1937, now known as Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration. The P-R Act ensures that revenues generated from excise taxes on firearms and ammunition are allocated to state wildlife agencies, enabling them to fund conservation projects, hunter education programs and the operation of archery and shooting ranges.

To date, more than \$7 billion has been collected from manufacturers and made available to states for their conservation

efforts.

“I’m proud to be a hunter, and of my role in being a conservationist,” said Linda Powell, director of media relations for Mossberg. “I want to thank the other hunters out there who also contribute. Remember, your firearms, ammunition and hunting license purchases all help fund wildlife conservation.”

The latest episode of “Connecting with Conservation” can be viewed at youtube.com/watch?v=5CpL_SnJO5s.

Funding for this project, which was produced with the support of The Murray Road Agency, is provided by the Multistate Conservation Grant Program (F23AP003940). The program is supported with funds from the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program and jointly managed by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. [SI](https://www.fishbase.org)

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

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

NEWSMAKERS



B. FLEMING

Vigilant Gear Welcomes President

Vigilant Gear, owner of Primary Weapons Systems and Lone Wolf Arms,

has appointed Ben Fleming president. Fleming will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the companies' operations, including strategic planning, business development and product innovation.

Nate Treadaway, CEO of Vigilant Gear, said, "[Fleming's] belief in our goals and shared values aligns perfectly with our vision for the future. We are confident that under his leadership, Primary Weapons Systems and Lone Wolf Arms will continue to thrive and innovate."



A. COOPER

Topple Names Growth Director

Topple Ad Network (Topple), a censorship-free digital advertising platform,

announced its expansion into the UK and Europe with the appointment of Alexander Joseph Rock Cooper as the director of growth for the region.

According to a company press release, "Alex has already made his mark on the industry, representing Topple at the recent British Shooting Show (and IWA OutdoorClassics). His presence was well received by publishers and advertisers alike, establishing valuable connections within the community and laying the foundation for rapid growth in these new markets."

With a family legacy tied to the co-founding of Birmingham Small Arms, he brings a deep understanding of the European business landscape to his new role. Before joining Topple, he worked at Floorplanner,

a software company used internationally across various industries.



S. PILLSBURY

ThermaSeat Taps National Sales Manager

Samantha Pillsbury has joined ThermaSeat as its new

national sales manager. In this role, Pillsbury will drive strategic initiatives, forge strong partnerships and expand market presence.

"Pillsbury's appointment demonstrates ThermaSeat and North East Products' commitment to innovation, quality and customer satisfaction," provided a company press release.

Prior to joining ThermaSeat and parent company North East Products, Pillsbury held key positions at Bemis Associates, Whalen Furniture and United Solutions.



J. HOFFMAN

1791 Outdoor Lifestyle Group Appoints Product Dev. Director

As the director of product development for 1791 Outdoor

Lifestyle Group, Justin Hoffman will collaborate with vendors, business-to-business customers and consumers to create new and innovative products that meet marketplace and environment needs.

"With his robust background and extensive experience in crafting purpose-built solutions, Justin brings a dynamic approach to innovation that resonates perfectly with our company's ethos," shared Alex Toussieh, COO of 1791 Outdoor Lifestyle Group.

Upon leaving the Navy in 2010, Hoffman became a professional firearms instructor.

He then developed holsters and tactical products for military, law enforcement and private citizens.



E. PIKE

Streamlight Inc. Advances Directors

Streamlight Inc. announced the promotions of Eric Pike to director of e-commerce and digital shelf architecture, Kevin Burger to director of automotive and hardware and Geoff Evans to sales director, Canada.



K. BURGER



G. EVANS

Pike will focus on ensuring a consistent shopping experience across

all digital platforms as well as Streamlight's third-party reseller program. He joined the company in 2003 and recently served as the director of the Automotive/DIY division.

Burger is responsible for sales and distribution within the Automotive/DIY division, providing input for the annual sales and operating plans and direction for the market's national account managers and manufacturer's representative agencies. He joined Streamlight in 2008 as a national sales manager in the Automotive/DIY division.

Evans will develop and manage sales and distribution tactics and initiatives for Streamlight's Industrial/MRO, Fire/Emergency Response, Law Enforcement, Sporting Goods, Automotive, DIY and Federal/Military markets. He will work closely with the company's Canadian manufacturer's representative agencies, and continue to manage the relationship with W.W.

Grainger's operations in the U.S. He joined Streamlight in 2007 and most recently, served as the Canadian market manager.

Michael F. Dineen, Streamlight's chief revenue officer, said, "I've had the opportunity to work with all three of these sales professionals. Their enthusiasm for the Streamlight brand, their extensive product knowledge and customer service acumen have played key roles in promoting business development within the markets they served."



T. O'CONNOR

Nosler Inc. Announces Promotions

Nosler Inc. announced the promotion of several employees: Tim O'Connor to law enforcement sales and product development manager, Mason Payer to brand marketing director, John Nason to director of business development and Madi Woodward to marketing manager.



J. NASON

O'Connor is now responsible for Nosler's sales efforts to the L.E. community, as well as honing Nosler's product offerings to this specialized set of professional customers.



M. WOODWARD

Payer will oversee outward-facing branding, and provide direction on the product development process and Nosler's market strategy.

Nason is responsible for strategic relationship building public relations, event management and engagement and special marketing projects.

Woodward is managing Nosler's outward-focused marketing activities, including advertising, social media, trade show and consumer show planning and execution, Nosler-branded merchandise creation and assortment planning and elements of direct-to-consumer sales.



E. PALM

Kryptek Selects International Sales Director

Kryptek Outdoor Group welcomed Eden Palm as the director of international sales. Palm is responsible for expanding Kryptek's presence on the international stage.

Tim Piver, COO of Kryptek, expressed, "We are excited and proud to have him as part of the great Kryptek team and we are already watching him grow our worldwide footprint!"

Palm's international career has included roles with Paul Frank, Alpinestars, Red Bull Eyewear and Norton Motorcycles.



C. WISNIEWSKI

FPC Action Foundation Names President & CEO

Constitutional litigation attorney Cody J. Wisniewski was recently named president and CEO of the FPC Action Foundation (FPCAF) by its board of directors. In addition to directing operations and setting the direction of the organization, he will continue to manage the FPC law portfolio and serve as a key advisor to Firearms Policy Coalition (FPC).

FPCAF founder and chairman Brandon Combs said, "We fully expect that Cody will continue to deliver high-impact results for the people we serve and achieve the mission through his leadership, tenacity and strategies across FPCAF's programs and operations."

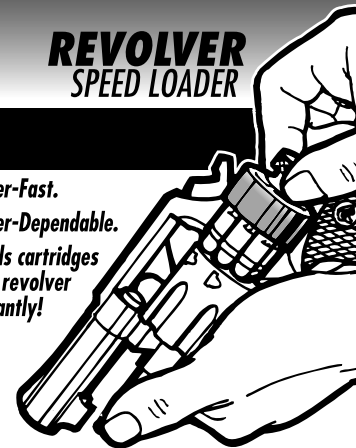
He previously served as FPCAF's general counsel and VP of legal. In that role, he led efforts resulting in multiple victories, including the first injunction and merits victory in the nation against the ATF's "frame or receiver" rule (*VanDerStok v. Garland*), as well as the first injunction in the nation against the agency's "pistol brace" rule (*Mock v. Garland*). **SI**

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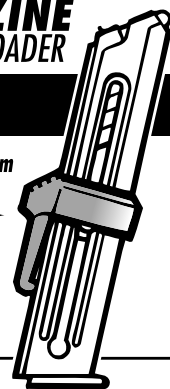
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BY MASSAD AYOUB

SELLING THE DEFENSIVE BATTERY

The serious armed defender really needs a wardrobe of guns. Why should he or she buy them from anyone but you?

Armed American citizens have historically modeled their gun choices on what their police carried. Remember when standard armament for police was a 4–6" service revolver, a snub-nose .38 for detectives (and as back-up) and a shotgun with a 18–20" barrel in the patrol car?

Well, if you're old enough, flashback to what armed citizens bought from American gun shops for concealed carry and home defense back then. The most common home-defense handgun was a double-action, service-type revolver.

In cities where a specific gun was recorded by the police department when they issued the carry permit, from New York City to Concord, N.H., the most commonly listed gun was some variation of J-Frame Smith & Wesson or D-Frame Colt revolver in caliber .38 Special. And the most common home-defense long gun? You guessed it: The scattergun.

The public sees the police as the resident experts on fighting violent criminals, so it's not illogical to arm themselves with the same gear those resident experts have chosen. The lesson here is not so much what guns are in the respective armories, but that those role model cops have multiple guns for multiple protective situations.

Today's police officer carries a semi-automatic pistol, most commonly a high-capacity 9mm — striker-fired with polymer frame. It's likely to be accoutered with a weapon-mounted light and, increasingly, a red dot. Though the backup gun function remains the last bastion of the revolver in American police service, a small 9mm of the baby GLOCK or SIG P365 genre is increasingly taking its place and for primary off-duty carry. And the shotgun? It has been supplemented with or, more often, completely replaced by the .223-caliber autoloading patrol rifle, primarily the AR-15.

Let's examine a logical armed citizen parallel.

DEFENSIVE GUN CATEGORIES

It's a good idea to have more than one gun for home defense. First, if there are multiple members of the household capable and responsible enough to be trusted to use a deadly weapon to defend against a violent home invasion, it makes sense to have enough hardware to arm each of them.

Handguns

These are the obvious choice for concealed carry. They have historically done a good job of home defense, too. Feel free to share with your customers my theory of home defense armament: The handgun is "infantry;" the long gun is "artillery."

◀ The anti-gunners want to label you, the dealer, a "fearmonger" — but they're wrong. You don't sell fear; you sell the cure. (Pictured: Noemi Skok, Gun Shack)

Answer the door at 3 a.m. holding an AR or an 870 and you'll probably get shot by the cops, the single entity most likely to be knocking at that hour while searching for a felon in the area or coming to notify you of some emergency. A pistol can be discreetly hidden if your customer has to open the door at all.

If the customer has (unwisely) gone searching for what caused the proverbial bump in the night with a long gun, it occupies both hands. A handgun leaves one hand free to work a phone, light switches and a flashlight and to balance against a door frame when taking "quick peeks." It allows a parent to scoop up a small child with one hand while running to the designated safe room, with the other hand ready with a pistol or revolver. If they have to go mobile, they're "infantry" and the handgun affords more of that critical mobility.

Once it is certain intruders have breached and made entry, police have been called and the family is bunkered together, it's time for the "artillery." It gets this name not just from the greater power of rifle or shotgun, but because it's employed from a static location against an already-plotted field of fire.

If we've counted noses and all the good guys are on our side of the door, when the criminal invaders breach their final portal, we're probably going to be past the point of verbal crisis intervention and it's time for what's colloquially called "stopping power." If something coming through the door threatens our babies, we want to blow the most and largest holes in it, bringing us to the long guns.

Carbines & Shotguns

The choice of carbine or shotgun depends largely on the familiarity and skill with firearms and the physical stature of the people who will be wielding them. Just as the patrol rifle has almost completely supplanted the shotgun as "police car artillery," it's becoming the long gun of choice for home defense. More shots. Less recoil. More likely to have a collapsing buttstock, which, in an instant, allows it to be adjusted to fit the largest and the smallest members of the household who've been deemed authorized to use it

in such an emergency.

No one among the home defenders *wants* to kill anyone for any reason. Remind your customer of something anti-gun politicians need to hear, too. If AR-15s are *so scary* an entire political party and two presidents have wanted to ban them, might it not be *scary enough* for an intruder facing one to run away and not force the homeowner to spill any blood at all?

Spares & Supplements

The small carry gun your customer already has is convenient for him or her — but remind them smaller guns hold fewer rounds and are harder to shoot fast and straight. Larger guns hold more and make it easier to deliver sufficient, accurate, rapid fire.

Why did cops have two kinds of guns, both then and now? Same logic — and don't let the customer forget they're arming themselves to defend against the exact same criminals the cops are armed to face ... and overcome.

“

The serious armed defender really needs a wardrobe of guns. Why should he or she buy them from anyone but you?

Just as most people have a wardrobe of different clothing for different seasons and occasions, regular pistol packers have a “wardrobe of firearms” for almost exactly similar reasons. (For example, I usually carry something between a 9mm GLOCK 19 and a full-size 1911 .45 Auto, but today the sciatica is acting up on my right hip and a little Smith & Wesson CSX rides there as I write this.)

For the broad spectrum of personal defense in the street and in the home, don't neglect accessories. Consider selling body armor if you don't already: Most of your customers are defense-minded, and they know in a gunfight the bullets go in both directions.

You're going to sell them hearing protection for when they practice shooting anyway. Remind them active hearing protectors, while more expensive, will let them hear things they wouldn't hear when indoor gunfire has made their ears ring, and they need to hear as well as see where the intruders are.

The more tools for specific needs the worker has, the better he or she can do the job. It's equally true when “The Job” is defending their loved ones against homicidal criminals.

You've heard it before in this column, but I'll say it again: The gun prohibitionists call us all fear-mongers. They're wrong. You don't sell the fear. You sell the cure. **■**

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BY NANCY KEATON

SISTERHOOD OUTDOORS: WHERE THERE'S ROOM FOR EVERYONE

Amy Ray is the founder of Sisterhood Outdoors, a program that encourages and works with women in the outdoor areas of hunting, fishing and shooting. Their tagline is “Becoming the Sportswoman You Always Wanted to Be.” Ray shared insights on how this intriguing program came to be.

ORIGINS

Ray got into the hunting space in 2010 when her husband taught her how to hunt — and she thoroughly enjoyed it.

“I hunted with him for a few years, and then I started thinking about a way to find girlfriends to go out with, which is also the same reason many women reach out to us today,” she said.

Later, Ray’s husband bought her a shotgun and taught her how to shoot it and then bought her a duck hunt as a Christmas gift. While on the hunt, Ray met amazing women in Tennessee, who became future business partners.

“I then proceeded to book the turkey hunt and then booked the summer trip and went to Wyoming with them and then I went on an archery hunt for antelope. We became fast friends, and I joined their team and helped them grow the business,” she recalled.

She later purchased the business and rebranded it to Sisterhood Outdoors.

“I knew they had something special back in 2010. Their first year they took 35 women on guided trips and doubled it in the second year,” Ray shared. “Now we take over 400 women a year into the outdoors.”

Ray took what was special and helped it evolve into something meaningful for women.

“What’s really beautiful about what we do is it’s nothing different than what guys have enjoyed in camp or at the lodge for years,” she stated. “My dad was a big hunter. He went to his hunting camps and his lodges and had seasonal dates with his friends. What those guys were sharing was fellowship in the outdoors. We’ve just created those opportunities for women to do it now.”

SURPRISES & CHALLENGES

Ray acknowledged the most challenging aspect of getting started on the business side of Sisterhood Outdoors was doing the work on the back end — such as running a booking site.

“I’ve had to invest heavily in the back-office system so we can have an easy way for women to book a trip and have all the information they need,” she said. “It’s amazing how far we’ve come; from a phone call and a black book where we wrote everything down to all of the customer records management systems in place today.”

◀ Amy Ray (far right) with a group of women out in the field. Under Ray’s tutelage, Sisterhood Outdoors takes more than 400 women a year to the outdoors.

Through her experiences helping others, Ray knows the gratification that comes with assisting women on their journey as sportswomen.

“If you’ve never worked or volunteered to help someone else, I very much encourage you to do it,” she advocates. “It’s nice women get to learn to hunt or shoot or fish, but the fact that I get to witness the journey has enriched my life so much.”

When it comes to mentorship, one of the surprises Ray has experienced is having more confidence in the women than they have in themselves.

“Sometimes when I’m teaching, I tell my mentees that I’ll sit the first night of a hunt and show them how to get in and out of the stand safely, what to do with their firearm, what the game behavior is going to be like and just get familiar with it all,” she explained. “The second night I’ll tell them they’re on their own.”

She continued, “They panic right away and say they need me. But I tell them, ‘You don’t need me, you’ve learned everything you need to learn. I have more confidence in you than you do in yourself.’”

Taking a “cut the apron strings” approach, she sends them out to their stands.

“I let them know I’m always close by and they can text me, and I’ll run out to their stand if they need me,” she said. “But I give them space because they need to learn when they leave my event they can go home and do it on their own.”

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Earlier this year, Sisterhood Outdoors introduced a mentorship community.

“Once you’re in, we’re able to share webinars, PDF files and go live on the network and talk directly to the members. There are all kinds of knowledgeable women on there from my team so just about every question you have, someone on there can answer it,” she informed.

Further facilitating a sense of community, members can find other members of Sisterhood Outdoors who live in their area.

“A lot of women are looking to find other women who like to shoot, hunt or fish, and now they’ll be able to

connect,” Ray said. “It’s going to be a great way for women to find local women; we just need to get more to join so they can build the networks in communities.”

Sisterhood Outdoors has a diverse team of field and pro staff (Ray calls them “ambassadors for our sports”) — with over 30 women across the U.S. who serve in this capacity.

“I get asked a lot about how someone can join our team, but we usually find them instead of them finding us,” she said. “We look for expertise and for someone who has the values we share and the professionalism we require. What we’re doing is not only affecting other people’s lives, but we also have to be safe and take care of our guests in a very professional way. We do it so we can set a standard for other women in the industry, too.”

FINAL THOUGHTS

In Ray’s view, the future for women in the hunting community is bright.

“We’re just really excited about the future of hunting for women because the opportunities are tenfold from what they were when I started,” she said.



What’s really beautiful about what we do is it’s nothing different than what guys have enjoyed in camp or at the lodge for years.”

Amy Ray - Founder
Sisterhood Outdoors

Of course, there’s always room for improvement.

“We’re glad everybody is embracing women in the outdoors, even though we have a long way to go in some aspects,” Ray said. “I’ve been asked at a lodge if I was the kitchen help, but I don’t let any of those kinds

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of comments bother me. We just need to be kind and change the narrative and not carry a chip on our shoulders.”

The surge in products designed for women is also representative of how far the industry has come in welcoming them as a buying force.

“I look at how far we’ve come since 2010 when the clothes were terrible and the gear was awful,” Ray recalled. “Many times, we were the first all-girls group to show up at hunting lodges. Today, we’re

going to these same lodges and they look forward to our group every year.”

Ray concluded, “I think it all says a lot about what women have achieved in our industry and our sport. There’s so much room for everyone.” **SI**

Dealers, to encourage women to apply for a Sisterhood Outdoors event or sign-up as a member, have them start at sisterhoodoutdoors.com.

HOW AI CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS

BY MICHELLE SCHEUERMANN

When thinking about AI and how it can improve your business, there's a relatable quote from famed management consultant Peter Drucker: "Efficiency is doing better what is already being done."

Relating to the quote above, do you want to run a more efficient business? What if I told you if you are already good at a specific online, computer-based task, there's a tool that will make you 10 times better at it? You probably would be interested. Welcome to AI, or Artificial Intelligence.

The drama over AI has increased over the past year with the advancement of ChatGPT. However, as a business owner, you should look at AI as a helper — not a hinderance.

A little background: ChatGPT stands for Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer, a language-based chatbot developed by OpenAI and launched Nov. 30, 2022. OpenAI launched ChatGPT for free and received over a million signups over its first five days. The easy-to-use and conversational interface took the world by storm. One year later, in 2023, ChatGPT claimed to have 1.7 billion users.

If you haven't started using AI don't worry! A survey from The CMO Survey from last fall showed less than 1% of CMO's have been using it for a year or more.

AI can help with tasks such as answering simple questions (like Google), generating code, writing copy for blogs or social media posts, creating photos and videos and editing your podcasts or videos for multi-use cases.

OpenAI has since launched ChatGPT-Plus, a paid version with faster responses and more options for a monthly fee. Several branded AI tools exist beyond ChatGPT, such as Claude and Gemini. For the intent of this article, the term "AI" is used as a blanket term for all AI tools, whether ChatGPT or others.

We should be treating AI tools like a personal assistant. AI will not disconnect us from each other. We want to keep the trust and reputation we've built while also converting business. Whether "converting business" is helping write a solid article, LinkedIn post or even responding to direct messages (DMs), AI can give us content ideas for social media, video scripts, image ideas and more. And it does it faster (but not necessarily better) than a human.

20 TOOLS YOU NEED NOW

Let's equip you with the tools your business needs to create, educate and assist your customers on their buying journey. However, not all these tools are for everyone and this list might be overwhelming. Try a few and see what aids your workflow and unique brand

of content, and ignore the rest!

1. **ChatGPT Plus:** The next-gen ChatGPT is their paid version, but it's faster and better from my experience. Everyone is using the free version; stand out by upgrading to paid. Plus, many of the tools below made from Open AI will act as a free, or paid, plug-in to the Plus version. Consider the same advice with Google's Gemini that released Gemini 1.5, its paid version, Feb. 2024.

2. **Jasper:** A great tool for writing and it will learn your brand voice. Ask it to create a blog post, press release, podcast or help you write a marketing plan or business plan. I used it to create bullets for a slide deck presentation, which it did poorly, but it helped me formulate my ideas.

3. **invideo AI:** Create videos from text prompts. It will write the script, voiceover, add subtitles and music.

4. **Sora (from OpenAI):** Just launched, but it's creating realistic videos, to the point I did a double-take to see if the video was real or not. Downside: They're only up to one minute long at this point.

5. **TubeBuddy:** If you have a YouTube channel, you need tubebuddy. It offers a thumbnail analyzer to tell you which version will get the most clicks on your video. Plus, it will generate concepts for YouTube videos when you input keywords. Your customers are telling you what videos to create already with questions via DMs, emails and in-store inquiries. Use those as your prompts to generate a list of new videos for your business.

6. **ElevenLabs:** Do you have a blog post you want to turn into a podcast? Or how about creating an entire podcast from AI? Use Claude, ChatGPT-4 or Gemini to create the text script. Then, bring it over to ElevenLabs for it to apply the voiceover. You can train your own voice inside this AI tool and it will read it as if it's you. (Frankly, a bit scary and yet cool.)

7. **Suno:** Generate music with AI. This tool will create background music, lyrics and it will sing it! Downside? Maximum length is currently 30 seconds.

8. **Dall·E3:** Create stunning images and graphics. It's very prompt-adherent — whatever you type in, it will pretty much create.

9. **Midjourney:** Another AI image tool, but the website is weird and you have to join Discord to use it. Plus, it no longer offers a free version as of Feb. 2024.

However, it is one of the better tools for creating graphic design and AI photos. (A note on these photos and graphic design tools: some images just can't be created due to restrictions and legal battles many of these apps are going through now. For example, MidJourney even restricts how much you can use it.)

10. **Opus Clip:** Take your long YouTube video and cut it down into snackable versions for TikTok, Reels or YouTube Shorts. It will curate the selection, add captions and re-frame.

11. **HeyGen:** Takes a video and translates it into other languages. This is so powerful to reach your *entire* customer base! The tool tries to match your lip movement to the new language: amazing!

a. Want to convert your podcast into another language? ElevenLabs will do it! Also, Spotify announced it is

“

Efficiency is doing better what is already being done.”

Peter Drucker • Management Consultant

rolling this option out to its users.

b. Want to deep fake yourself? Or don't like to be in front of the camera? Upload a video of yourself into HeyGen, give it a text prompt and it will create a video that looks like you, saying whatever you prompted it. This one is a bit scary ...

12. **Descript:** Convert video to

audio content. Again, think YouTube to podcasts. You can even edit your audio with this tool as it will provide a transcript and you can remove words within that transcript and it will remove it from the audio. Pretty genius, although I struggled using this AI tool. It just wasn't user-friendly.

13. **Ytube AI:** convert video to written content. Convert any video into a summary, SEO-written blog, a Thread or Tweet.

14. Finding quotes/tweets from content: you have the content, but need it more “snackable?” Use **ChatGPT Plus** or **Wanda**. Wanda says it will “turn podcasts, videos and blog posts into social posts in three clicks in minutes, not hours.”

15. **Castmagic:** Create show notes, summaries from your audio podcasts.

Continued on p. 44



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BY TIM BARKER

Summer Slump? Host Events!

The Goal Of Store Events & Promotions: Expand Awareness, Profits Or Both?

With summer swiftly approaching, it's a good time to consider those special sales events that attract droves of customers and manufacturers' representatives by offering deep discounts, seasonal sales, raffles and lots of free swag.

Of course, if you've waited this long to plan a summer sales event, you don't have a lot of time to lose. Successful events — particularly if you want to invite manufacturing reps — often require considerable advanced planning to make sure everything goes off without a hitch.

BUILT-IN EVENTS

Talking with several gun shops around the nation, it's quickly apparent everyone approaches these events from a different direction. There are sales events built around store anniversaries, local hunting seasons and national holidays.

At Arnzen Arms in Eden Prairie, Minn., the store's October anniversary demands the most attention. On a single Saturday, they'll bring in a range of manufacturer's reps and offer sales — drawing in 2,000 or more customers.

"It's as much customer appreciation as it is anything," noted Mark Stevens, the store's marketing manager.

And in Yuma, Ariz., Sprague's Sports looks annually to Sept. 1 and the opening of dove season. To kick off the hunting season, they bring in a variety of manufacturers, sell a themed T-shirt, offer an assortment of giveaways and even sponsor a biggest (dove) breast contest.

"People come from all around the United States to hunt the white-winged dove. So we hold our version of a big deer contest," confirmed Owner Richard Sprague.

Maybe a big single event isn't ideal for your store. Such is the case with Frank's Gun Shop in Amsterdam, N.Y.

Owner John Havlick prefers to focus on a series of smaller events keyed to holidays like Memorial Day and the Fourth of July. They'll offer discounts —

Images: oatawa / Adobe Stock

particularly on ammo — for several days surrounding those holidays. July 4 often includes a gun raffle.

Even if customers can't make it into the store, he's likely to honor his sale prices beyond the terms advertised the week before the event. It's not unusual for a customer who's going to be out of town that week to ask for the discount.

"Of course, I'm not going to say 'no.' I just have a big heart for everybody," he said.

BRING IN THE REINFORCEMENTS

If your event is large enough, you'll likely need to pull in all of your available employees to deal with the crowds. With some advanced planning and cooperation from some of the manufacturers you stock, you can boost your ranks and give customers another reason to drop by the store.

At Arnzen Arms' anniversary event — along with smaller events during the year — they invite a range of vendors and some local/national shooting celebrities. Companies like GLOCK, SIG SAUER and JP Rifles have set up booths, while competitive shooters like Josh Froelich offer tips and advice.

With both groups — vendors and shooters — the objective is to bring expertise into the store. They want company representatives, for example, who can speak with authority about the how and why behind production decisions.

"The opportunity for customers to get close to JP, or another company, and ask the questions they want to ask is worth its weight in gold," said Stevens. "From an industry perspective, putting the manufacturers and the customers together is just rocket fuel."

While competition shooters might

not appeal to every customer, their presence can mean a lot to those in the same niche. Maybe it's only 15 people who come in to meet with the shooter, but it's an opportunity to reach a new group of customers.

"You need to find the balance to where the customers can have one-on-one conversations, but also see the product behind the counter."

Richard Sprague • Owner
Sprague's Sports • Yuma, Ariz.

"That's direct access to somebody who they already know and respect as a teacher," Stevens reasoned. "What do you think is going to happen? Out of appreciation or obligation, they're going to give you a shot."

In Arizona, Sprague sees company reps (from Beretta, Benelli and Winchester) as more expertise behind the sales counter.

"Our customers are used to talking to us," Sprague explained. "Sometimes it's valuable when they can get the perspective from a factory guy or someone who represents the factory."

It doesn't even need to be a gun company that joins your effort. Each year, Sprague works with a local Catholic high school on its annual fundraiser, which includes raffling a

large number of guns. The school sets up a booth in front of the store.

"They've got their own following, so we kind of feed off each other," he said.

LESSONS LEARNED

Not all ideas are created equal. Whether it's your own particular customer base or simply a changing element of the industry, some strategies work better than others.

For Havlick, one key to success is making sure the store has enough stock on hand for any of the advertised specials that are sure to be a hit. He doesn't want to mimic stores like Walmart, known for offering eye-catching holiday deals on limited inventory items (TVs, for instance).

"It discourages people," Havlick argues. "So you need to make sure you have the product on hand to sell it. If you don't, people will remember it next time."

He's also hesitant to offer storewide discounts. Those are too vague and generally fail to capture customer attention. Instead, he prefers to target specific higher-demand items, backed by advertising that reminds someone they do need something, such as 9mm ammo.

"When we do sales, we just stick to the core stuff," he stated.

In Arizona, Sprague touts his long-running (more than three decades) event's traditions and a valuable group of sponsors, including Federal Ammunition, Benelli and Budweiser.

"It's got some national recognition from the sponsorships, and then we give away over \$3,000 in prizes. And it's just kind of a cool event," Sprague said.

On the flip side, he cautioned against overdoing it with staffing during these big events. It may be tempting to put an army of

“The opportunity for customers to get close ... and ask the questions they want to ask is worth its weight in gold. From an industry perspective, putting the manufacturers and the customers together is just rocket fuel.”

Mark Stevens • Marketing Manager
Arnzen Arms • Eden Prairie, Minn.

salespeople behind the counter, but it can be counterproductive.

“Sometimes you can have too many people behind the counter helping and the customers can’t even see through the lineup,” he contends. “You need to find the balance to where the customers can have one-on-one conversations, but also see the product behind the counter.”

Looking forward, Stevens with Arnzen Arms wonders about what sales events are going to look like with a glut of firearms still waiting to be absorbed by the market. It’s going to be challenging to offer enticing deals when many stores are already selling at or near the minimum advertised prices set by most top manufacturers.

The pricing pressures are further inflamed by the presence of online dealers willing to go below MAP pricing in an apparent effort to liquidate inventory — even if they risk



Arnzen Arms’ annual anniversary event — held in October — features a range of firearms, optics and accessory manufacturer reps and brings in more than 2,000 guests. It’s a unique opportunity for enthusiasts to interact with their favorite brands — and make new connections.

losing their relationship with various manufacturers.

“Mediocre sales are just not effective,” Stevens asserted. “My mediocre sale is nothing compared to what’s happening on GunBroker right now.”

TO MAKE MONEY OR NOT?

Gun stores aren’t charities or nonprofits. Still, it doesn’t necessarily mean you need to turn a profit every day — particularly on a day when your objectives include finding new customers and reminding old ones you’re still there.

At Arnzen Arms, there’s been an evolution of these events. There was a time when they could do the math — balancing the extra costs against increased revenue — and feel like they’d turned a profit. But over time, attendance has gotten smaller, even as the store has experienced solid growth.

“With the current supply and demand issues, margins are thinner.

So we’re really trying to break even at an event,” Stevens said. “Then we figure the residual goodwill is probably worth the value in doing it.”

For Sprague’s Sports, the big dove event is generally a solid moneymaker. Part of it is the success of the custom T-shirt for each year’s event. They print and sell hundreds.

“The margins are so much better than what we’re used to in the gun industry,” Sprague said. “It’s kind of refreshing to have an opportunity where people want to buy 800 of your T-shirts and advertise for you.”

Havlick, in New York, doesn’t tend to look at his sales events as moneymakers.

“If I sit down and figure it out, I probably lose money, with all the advertising,” he said. “But it’s not always about making money. Your customers support you 365 days a year. Sometimes it’s nice to break even and make them feel they’re appreciated.” **SI**

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By Brian Armstrong

In-Demand Accessories



ADD VALUE BY HAVING THE RIGHT ASSORTMENT AVAILABLE

In the firearms market, several trends have emerged in recent years. One of the most significant is the increasing demand for accessories, allowing users to tailor their firearms to their specific needs and preferences. As a result, the popularity of items like red dots, triggers and aftermarket grips has experienced an upward trend. It's not just about the "tactical" look anymore.

If you want to know which products are in high demand, try visiting the websites of other local stores and take note of their top-selling items. I looked at multiple stores, and what stood out were red dots, weapon-mounted lights, speed loaders, slide-out safes and — this surprised me — bipods.

I looked at items that were top sellers and ones with the highest number of reviews to compile my list.

Instead of settling for cheaper choices, people should prioritize quality when buying accessories like weapon-mounted lights or red dots. People are more likely to pay a higher price for a quality product that lasts ("buy once, cry once"), but you have to help them understand why it's worth the investment.

I spoke with Evelyn Vidrine, an SEO expert who owns Scorpion Services, to gain some online perspective and get some ideas.

"We have seen purchase behavior indicating consumers tend to pay more for a quality product that will last longer than to 'cheap out' on a product equivalent," she stated. "We call this the 'back-to-basics' mentality."

GUN SIGHTS

The ability of optics and red dot sights to improve accuracy and speed up target acquisition contributes to their increasing popularity. Red dots are a trend here to stay and are a rapidly expanding market.

All you have to do is look at any online store and sort its inventory by the most popular item, and you'll see mini red dot sights (MRDS) dominate the list.

Aimpoint and Holosun are the market leaders, but many other companies make quality products, too. As a firearms instructor and someone who often gets products to review, I get the opportunity to try out various gear, but I have never switched to a red dot on my everyday carry and have used iron sights for years.

ZeroTech, an Australian-based company, sent me their newest micro red dot sight to test, and I received a handgun with an optic cut that same week. I used it for a few months and realized I should have made the transition sooner.

I still have the irons as a backup, but I think that's just the old-school part of me always wanting a Plan B. This is an example of why the knowledge and expertise of an experienced salesperson can provide a tremendous advantage over an online store.

There are many other types of sights to choose

from, and there is a lot of potential for people with poor eyesight or low-light conditions.

XS Sights out of Texas has a DXT2 with a big front dot that is easy to see, even for people with less-than-perfect eyesight.

Other options are available from several manufacturers, like TruGlo, Trijicon and Night Fision. They have tritium and fiber optic sights, which add contrast so the front sight stands out and is easier for the shooter to acquire in a high-stress or low-light situation.

The top-ranking item on the rifle list is the Magpul MBUS front and rear sight for a Picatinny rail.

GRIPS

A trend in the firearm accessory market is the growing emphasis on ergonomics and comfort. Many companies are focusing on designing accessories that improve the user's shooting experience, like ergonomic grips. Maintaining control and improving accuracy relies heavily on having a comfortable grip that fits your hand well. They are a cost-effective method for customizing a gun to suit individual preferences.

Companies like Talon offer stick-on textured grips that provide better control even in challenging situations, like when your hands are wet.

For those with larger

hands, a high-quality rubber slip-on grip, such as those offered by companies like Hogue, can significantly enhance the gun's ergonomics. Comfort and a secure hold are the main reasons rubber

“
Having knowledge about the product and being able to educate the customer makes it easier to sell it. When you teach somebody, you're adding value, and the item ends up being something they want to buy without you trying to sell it.”

grips are popular. The finger grooves and textured surface offer improved control and can reduce hand fatigue during extended shooting sessions.

Angled and vertical foregrips for rifles are another top seller. They come in every color and design imaginable, but a plain black angled grip is by far the most popular.

A grip that fits your customer's hand size and shooting style can be an easy, inexpensive upsell.

SAFETY FEATURES

There's a growing demand for accessories that enhance the safety of firearms. Part of the driving factor is the push on both the state and federal levels for locking devices to prevent unauthorized access to guns, especially for children. Safety features include trigger locks, chamber flags and gun safes designed to improve safety by preventing accidents and unauthorized access.

Perhaps the most common trend I saw is the increasing use of biometric or pin code slider-style handgun safes for desks, next to beds or mounted in vehicles. Some designs hinge forward, while others spring open upon unlocking to provide quick access.

At SHOT Show, I came across a new product developed by Ocuflii. This device is a little bigger than a quarter, and they designed it to detect

any movement of your firearm. It's unique, and I can see its many uses, ranging from knowing if someone moved your firearm at your hotel to

alerting you if someone opened a door where you store your guns. It can work in any area with internet connectivity, and you can discreetly place



Top: The possibilities are endless when it comes accessorizing established platforms like the Smith & Wesson Equalizer.

Bottom: Add-ons like EOTECH's holographic sights will greatly enhance end users' field of view to acquire the target and make hits while out on the range.

it in almost any spot or directly on the firearm.

WEAPON-MOUNTED LIGHTS

The question of whether or not gun owners should have a weapon-mounted light is a constant topic of debate. Many think the advantage of positively identifying your target in low-light environments while still having both hands on the gun outweighs the possibility of giving your position away.

“

The ability of optics and red dot sights to improve accuracy and speed up target acquisition contributes to their increasing popularity. Red dots are a trend here to stay and are a rapidly expanding market.

Lights are available for any configuration, and you can mount them on M-LOK or Picatinny rails. I have a Streamlight Scout mounted on a rifle that will take a beating and brightly illuminate any area. You can activate it using either the switch in the back tail cap or by installing a pressure switch in a different location on the gun. A pressure switch is usually a separate item, which creates an additional opportunity for sales.

A LITTLE LAGNIAPPE

Vidrine from Scorpion Services brought up some final points to consider on how to best serve accessory-minded customers.

“In Louisiana, we have a saying, *lagniappe*, which means ‘extra,’ and that is often how these items are viewed. Instead of selling just the firearm, a dealer should know which items pair best with that firearm. Bundle selling. If you're buying a Springfield 1911, why not go ahead and buy a red dot, custom grip and a way to carry it? If you're buying a suppressor, why not go ahead and protect it with the right cover? If you want a better shooting experience, why not buy a trigger that fits your needs?”

Having knowledge about the product and being able to educate the customer makes it easier to sell it. When you teach somebody, you're adding value, and the item ends up being something they want to buy without you trying to sell it. **SI**

10+ Rounds The "National Standard"

Last month, NSSF released its Detachable Magazine Report — which charted detachable magazine production and distribution data over more than 30 years (1990–2021). A significant finding in the report revealed detachable magazines with a capacity of over 10 rounds are the overwhelming standard for firearm owners in the U.S.

A conservative estimate of 963,772,000 detachable magazines were supplied by firearms manufacturers and in the aftermarket during this period. Of this total, nearly 75% of magazines (717,900,000) have a capacity exceeding 10 rounds — the limit some states place for lawful magazine possession.

This report confirms what NSSF — and, no doubt, many other businesses — has known: The national standard for magazine capacity for America's gun

owners is greater than 10 rounds.

"The data establishes law-abiding gun owners overwhelmingly choose magazines that have a capacity to hold more than 10 rounds for lawful purposes including self-defense, target shooting and hunting," said Lawrence G. Keane, NSSF senior VP and general counsel.

About 46% of the magazines estimated in this study are rifle magazines with 30+ round capacity. The percentage of detachable magazines at 11+ round capacity is about 55% of total pistol magazines. The amount of 10 and below capacity rifle magazines supplied from the manufacturer is over one and a half times the amount of 30+ capacity rifle magazines. The consumer market totals of rifle magazines show 30+ capacity magazines, over 413 million, are over 30 times the amount available than 10 and

below capacity rifle magazines, about 13 million.

Further examination of the data proves of the 717,900,000 detachable magazines for pistols and rifles with a capacity greater than 10 rounds, 209,145,000 pistol magazines are in circulation from combined sales through firearm manufacturers (those magazines included with the firearm) and aftermarket production. Rifle magazines with a capacity greater than 10 rounds accounted for 508,755,000 and rifle magazines with a capacity

of 30 rounds or greater totaled an estimated 448,369,000 from the combined sale of those included with a firearm at sale and the aftermarket.

Just 245,872,000 pistol and rifle magazines with a capacity of 10 rounds or less are in circulation when accounting for the magazines included with a firearm from the manufacturer and the aftermarket.

To download a copy of the report, visit: nssf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Detachable-Magazine-NSSFReport.pdf.



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Serving The Varmint & Predator Hunter

By Carolee Anita Boyles

Big-game season may be months away, but it doesn't mean hunting sales have to stall. Varmint hunters are in the woods, and their purchases can add dollars to your bottom line throughout the year.

NIGHT HUNTING ALLURE

At Buffalo Guns And Ammo in Wickenburg, Ariz., Associate Charles More said varmint season is open year-round, but hunters tend to concentrate on spring hunting.

"From December to May, we have a season where you can hunt at night in certain areas," he shared. "We're primarily hunting coyotes. We do have other predators in the state,

including mountain lions, bobcats and foxes, but those are all hunted during the day."

One popular product varmint hunters are using is a light for hunting at night.

"Most of the guys I know are using Wicked Hunting Lights," More said. "They're very bright, they're affordable and they work. They're easy to mount on a rifle, and they're adjustable for windage and elevation."

More owns one, which has four colors, and it's easy to switch from one to another.

"Most guys use red lights," he said. "Red doesn't create as much glare; coyotes can see it, but since they usually see white lights, they get curious when they see a red light. You can be shining a red light on them and they'll come right in. We're spotting them out around 300 to 400 yards and then calling them in to 100 to 150 yards."

Wesley Depoy is one of the managers at Blaine's Guns & Bows in Allen, Ky. Most of the varmint/predator hunting in his area takes place in the late winter and early spring, between deer season and turkey season. Most varmint/predator hunters, he said, target coyotes. The biggest trend Depoy has seen the past couple of years is toward using thermal imaging equipment.

"We're allowed to hunt at night, with thermals, during certain parts of the year," he shared.

(According to the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources, coyotes may be hunted all year on both public and private land, day or night, with no bag limit. However, the hunter may only use lights at night between December 1 and March 31, and again between May 16 and June 30.)

For night pursuits, he recommends varmint hunters buy a good shooting rest.

“The BOG DeathGrip is a good one,” he stated. “At night, hunters are shooting 50 to 250 yards, and they need stability.”

The DeathGrip is available in several price points — aluminum on the low end, and carbon fiber on the high end.

FIREARMS & AMMO

At Turtle’s Hulls & Guns in Winona, Mo., Owner James Russell said most of the varmint hunting in the area takes place in February and March. In terms of guns and calibers, Russell’s customers tend to like smaller calibers.

“They’re buying 6.5 Grendel and .223,” he shared. “When it comes to brands of ammo, they don’t seem to have any particular preference. It’s whatever is available.”

Most hunters are using rifles in 6.5mm Creedmoor with a suppressor for coyotes, according to Depoy at Blaine’s Guns

“Anything in 6.5mm Creedmoor sells right now,” he observed. “Browning, Savage and Ruger are the most popular, and then the AR-15-style guns.”

In ammo, Depoy said hunters like the Hornady ELD-X because of its precision.

“It performs like a match bullet,” he added.

The ELD-X bullet is available in 15 SKUs. The latest, new for this year, is in .22-caliber .224 (80 grain).

It’s a different story at Buffalo Guns And Ammo. The most popular rifle hunters are using in the area for varmint hunting is an AR-15 in 5.56 or .223.

“Hunters here aren’t buying any particular brand,” More stated. “It’s wide open; most customers are buying full metal jacket.”

CALLS & OPTICS

Many customers are buying and using 1-8X LPVO optics, according to More.

“LPVO is Low Power Variable Optic,” More explained.

These optics have a minimum

magnification of 1X, and are popular on tactical rifles such as the AR-15. Users get the benefits of a red dot scope for close shots, and extra magnification when they need it for longer shots.

“The one I see the most is SIG,” More added. “But I don’t see a lot of rangefinders. Most of the guys I know don’t use them.”

Electronic calls are legal in Arizona, More said, and some hunters use both mouth and electronic calls such as the ones offered by FOXPRO.

Hunting sales don't have to stop just because deer season is over. Tap into what your varmint/predator hunting customers are using to extend your hunting season sales throughout the year.

In terms of optics, the most popular is Pulsar at Blaine’s Guns.

“Customers like the ease of use and the quality,” Depoy noted. “They also like the level of customer service they get from Pulsar; the company stands behind its products.”

When it comes to electronic calls, the go-to brand is FOXPRO. FOXPRO makes half a dozen digital game calls for predators and has an online library where customers can download more than 100 calls beyond those that come installed on each unit.

“They’re American-made and

they’ve been around a long time,” Depoy informed. “They’re tried and true.”

At Turtle’s Hulls & Guns, customers are looking for mid-range thermals such as AGM and Pulsar. Hunters generally shoot from 50 to 300 yards in his area, and both of those brands work for that range.

As with Arizona and Kentucky, electronic calls are legal in Missouri.

“Most of us use FOXPRO electronic calls,” Russell confirmed.

Other gear varmint and predator hunters purchase includes BOG FieldPods and handheld thermals for scanning wide areas for coyotes.

“They typically don’t purchase rangefinders,” Russell informed. “A lot of scopes have range finding built into them.”

THE FUTURE OF THE SEGMENT?

All three of the retailers interviewed don’t forecast major changes to this market — but it is poised for further growth.

“Hunters are primarily targeting coyotes,” Russell observed. “One of the big changes we’ve seen over the past few years is coyote hunting has gotten a lot more popular. I think it’s because we have more seasons. They’ve made a season where we can use thermal scopes and night vision. It’s gotten more people interested.”


“I’d say what we’re doing is about as deadly as it gets,” Depoy contended. “I don’t see it going anywhere or getting replaced by anything.”

Likewise, More doesn’t expect to see any big changes in varmint hunting in the next few years.

However, Russell predicts varmint hunting will continue to increase — especially if the season becomes longer.

“I hope we’re going to see our thermal season extended,” he stated.

Hunting sales don’t have to stop just because deer season is over. Tap into what your varmint/predator hunting customers are using to extend your hunting season sales throughout the year. **SI**



RELOADING INDUSTRY

TARGETS LONG-RANGE ACCURACY

BY BRYAN HENDRICKS

Americans are gunning for long-range accuracy, and the reloading industry is in step with products tailored to ring distant steel.

The development is recent. For about two decades, shooters fired large quantities with AR-style rifles. Cheap and accessible components enabled reloaders with progressive presses to manufacture .223 Rem./5.56 NATO rounds in bulk to supply voracious shooting appetites.

At the same time, a smaller segment of the shooting community pursued long-range precision with cartridges that have largely faded, such as 6.5-300 Weatherby, 6.5-284 Norma, .338 Lapua and even .50 BMG. Those cartridges all have high-capacity cases that use prodigious amounts of powder.

WHAT CHANGED?

Two things changed the landscape, contends Robin Sharpless, executive vice president of Redding Reloading Equipment in Cortland, N.Y. Shooters got older, and reloading components got chronically scarce and more expensive. Powder, primer and bullet shortages ended the high-volume shooting era. The light-kicking 6.5 Creedmoor ended the shoulder cannon era.

“The trend overall is long range,” Sharpless noted. “We went from the period of black guns shooting lots of stuff to precision shooting and distance. We see it in new cartridges that have developed and evolved, and it starts with the 6.5 Creedmoor.”

Image: ArmorProduction / Adobe Stock

Before that came along, you couldn't go out and buy something off the shelf that shot accurately at 1,000 yards."

Besides a constriction in components supply, a convergence of other factors contributed to the rise of small-capacity precision cartridges, which include the PRC and ARC families. First, Hornady and Hodgdon dedicated their muscle to developing the 6.5 Creedmoor, a cartridge that truly is inherently accurate due its uniform chamber specifications.

Also, thanks to the decreasing cost and increasing precision of CNC machining, manufacturers are making affordable barrels, receivers and actions that would have been available only as custom builds 20 years ago.

INTEREST IN COMPETITIVE SHOOTING FUELS MARKET

Greater participation in competitive shooting turbocharged interest in reloading, which allows users to tailor loads to their specific rifle and application. The time-tested roster of generalist propellants like H4831, IMR-4064 and Reloder 22 has been fortified by the introduction of specialty powders like Hodgdon's SuperPerformance and StaBALL, which are tailored for 6.5 Creedmoor and its offspring.

"We've always catered to those guys who want benchrest accuracy," Sharpless said. "It's all about building the ammo

“

IT'S ALL ABOUT BUILDING THE AMMO TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THAT RIFLE. THERE'S NO LIMITATION TO WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR OWN AMMO.”

Robin Sharpless - EVP
Redding Reloading Equipment
Cortland, N.Y.

to get the most out of that rifle. There's no limitation to what you can do with your own ammo."

Quality dies, presses and case preparation tools are available from many companies like Redding, Lyman, Hornady, RCBS and Lee Precision. Redding specializes in elite reloading dies. Reloaders prize their integral micrometers that allow a user to incrementally adjust bullet seating length. Redding's Type-S bushing-style dies, competition seating and neck-sizing dies, body dies and new competition shellholders are all products of benchrest competition and 1,000-yard competition, Sharpless said.

Back up a minute. What do you mean, competition "shellholders?" Sharpless

said a seemingly inconsequential component like a shellholder dramatically influences accuracy by altering headspace.

Redding's competition shellholders come in five-piece sets in 0.002 increments from 0.002"-0.010". The shellholder adjusts headspace and enables you to adjust the shoulder bump to customize cases to your specific chamber. A set of competition shellholders in .30-06 Springfield accommodates all of the cases in that family, including .25-06 Rem., .270 Win., .280 Rem. and .35 Whelen.

Likewise, a shellholder set for a .308 Win. works for 7mm-08 Rem., .260 Rem., .243 Win. and .358 Win.

"We identified a variable, we quantified it and then we mitigated a strategy to eliminate or reduce the variable," Sharpless said. "That's

what competition shellholders do. They give you a unique ability to custom headspace your cartridge case to your gun. It's one of the best things for accuracy."

THE "GOLDEN AGE" OF CARTRIDGE DEVELOPMENT

Lee Precision is an innovative developer of inexpensive reloading tools that simplify the myriad tasks in the reloading process. John Lee, president of Lee Precision, said interest in long-range precision accuracy has sparked a golden age of cartridge development. Reloading equipment manufacturers are equally competitive to win customers new to the sport.

"This is my 52nd year here, so I've been here awhile," Lee stated. "New cartridges come out every single year. What is amazing, is the sheer size of the lot of the new cartridges that are



With inherent accuracy and reduced recoil, it's little wonder why the 6.5 Creedmoor has risen as a popular option among reloaders.

oriented to long-range precision shooting.”

In 2023, Lee introduced its Six Pack Progressive, which added a sixth station to its Classic Turret Press.

“It really made progressive reloading affordable because it has six stations,” Lee shared. “We introduced a new product to the casual reloader, the inline bullet feeder. You can’t appreciate how much faster and convenient it is to reload if you have a device to automatically place your bullet.”

Also, according to Lee, customers requested enhancements to the Lee’s Classic Turret Press. The company responded with its Ultimate Turret Press, providing the option of three to six stations.

“Turrets are for people who really enjoy reloading,” Lee said. “Progressives are for people who want to get done with it and shoot. A turret allows you to prepare your case as far as you want to go. A turret is just wonderful. Our turret presses have automatic indexing. Pull the lever, and the turret advances to the next station for the next operation. At any time, you can take a case out and inspect it.”

An underrated and often misunderstood item in Lee’s lineup is its Factory Crimp Die. Lee said applying a factory crimp is one of the easiest things you can do to improve accuracy

because it standardizes neck tension and start pressure.

“More than any other variable, there’s nothing else you can do that improves accuracy more than uniform start pressure,” Lee said. “With start pressure, you want a real uniform burn curve. If you don’t have uniform start pressure, you get a start-stop type of pressure curve. You get a peak, then the pressure drops off, and it builds up again when the bullet is in rifling. That herky-jerky pressure doesn’t do anything for accuracy.”



Lee Precision Six Pack Pro

Lee’s Factory Crimp Die also mitigates the effect of bullet seating depth, Lee said.

“You can seat to a depth that’s a ways from the rifling and crimp it,

or you can seat a bullet out to touch the rifling,” Lee said. “If you do that without a crimp, it creates a new problem. If you extract a live round, you stand a chance of the bullet sticking in the rifling. Then you spill powder into the action and into the trigger mechanism, and you extract an empty case. It really sucks.”

To achieve long-range accuracy, bullet manufacturers offer modern projectiles with very high ballistic coefficients. Hornady’s ELD and Nosler’s AccuBond are very popular among reloaders for target shooting and hunting.

CHALLENGE FOR RELOADERS

Lee said an emerging complication is the trend toward lead-free bullets. Slugs made entirely of copper, for example, are longer for caliber than lead of the same weight because copper is lighter than lead. Manufacturers are making barrels with twist rates that accommodate longer bullets, but older rifles might not stabilize newer bullets.

Jerry Choate, owner of Jerry’s Outdoor Supply in Tulsa, Okla., said modern twist rates create challenges for reloaders.

“A 1:10” twist in .30-cal. was the industry standard for years,” Choate said. “Take a heavy Barnes bullet. That raises some concerns. Some of them look like

javelins. Will it still stabilize in a 1:10” twist? I’ve seen examples that do not.”

Like many shooters, Choate said he was initially skeptical about the 6.5 Creedmoor. It proved to be accurate, and it’s a dream to reload.

“They did get the Creedmoor very right for a lot of reasons,” Choate said. “Its twist rate is appropriate to launch a projectile to shoot well, but its recoil isn’t so bad that you’re getting beat up. It has made a lot of folks a better shot.”

Long-range precision shooting will probably have staying power because component shortages might be permanent. For example, stick powders are not made in the United States, Choate said. Powders, primers and other components must be imported, and a lot of things can delay shipments.

While challenges in the market are certainly there — there is a positive way to look at it. The trend to long-range precision takes us back to a simpler era in reloading. Ten shots is a lot in a long-range precision session. Reloaders can handle that without feeling an inconvenience from shortages. **SI**

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NEW PRODUCTS

By Jenna Buckley

TO VIEW HUNDREDS OF PRODUCTS
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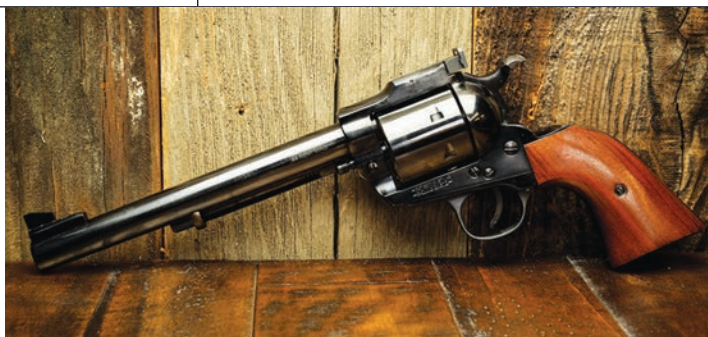
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The **PX-9 CARRY** from Tisas USA is available in three configurations, the PX-9 IO, PX-9 Gen 3 OR and the PX-9 Gen 3 TS. The PX-9 Carry OR and TS feature an optics-ready slide with an RMS-cut footprint. The TS also features an ambidextrous thumb safety. The PX-9 Carry IO comes with iron sights only. All three models feature a forged carbon steel slide, polymer frame, integrated Picatinny rail, reversible magazine catch, adjustable rear sight, changeable backstraps and side panels, loaded-chamber indicator and striker-status indicator, tactical trigger with trigger safety and an IWB holster. The PX-9 Carry has a 3.5" barrel, weighs 1.44 lbs., and an OAL of 6.6". Models ship with one 15-round and one 17-round magazine.



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Built on the Ranger model, the **RANGER ALL WHEEL DRIVE (AWD)** e-bike from Quiet Kat introduces dual 750w motors and a 17.25Ah UL certified battery, coupled with a single-speed drivetrain and a premium comfort saddle. Its all-wheel-drive capability, enabled by a unique controller scheme, minimizes the front wheel "tug" commonly experienced with AWD bikes, offering better traction and more power. The Ranger AWD's motor selector switch allows riders to toggle between front, rear and both motors, accommodating various riding conditions and preferences. Other features include a suspension seat post, peak system output of 2,000W and whisper-quiet operation. It's available in medium and large sizes in a color choice of Sonic Veil or Cumbre Camo.



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The **MTM POWDER KEG** from MTM Case-Gard is a rugged, hinged-lid unit made of high-quality polypropylene designed to accommodate multiple reloading powder containers. The Powder Keg can simultaneously store up to two 8-lb. containers, a 4-lb. container and several 1-lb. containers. The boxes are stackable, with molded tracts to prevent slippage, and feature dual side-mount latches to keep the lids closed tight. For added security, padlock tabs are incorporated so that the powder can be securely locked during storage. The Powder Keg comes with a rubber O-ring seal around the lid to ensure powder stays dry. Molded-in handles facilitate lifting and transport. The Powder Keg is colored bright red for easy identification and measures 19" x 15.7" x 13.4".



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BEST PRACTICES

Continued from p. 27

16. **Adori Labs:** Convert a podcast, article/blog into a video. It will figure out images to overlay and create a video based upon the audio. It will create a voiceover, too. Want music added? Use Suno!

17. Create video scripts using **ChatGPT** and **Claude**. You can prompt it to give you back-and-forth dialogue with multiple speakers, too.

18. Create an e-course! Use **Coursebox** if you have a great deal of written content. Upload slide decks, blogs, article, PDF files; it investigates the content and turns it into a course in under an hour (so they say).

19. Create slide decks using **Tome** or **Gamma**. Enter any text prompt and they will create a slide deck. Good for shorter presentations such as pitch decks. It seems to struggle with anything longer.

20. **Supermeme.ai:** Take any piece of content, plug it in and it will turn it into a meme.

(Bonus Tool — **Otter:** Transcribe



Like most tools, AI is only as good as the inputs it receives.

your Zoom/Teams meetings with notes, plus action items. No more trying to take notes while paying attention or speaking intelligently when called upon.)

PRIORITIZE SAFEGUARDING

Finally, what about security and safety when it comes to using AI? In 2023, a *New York Times* columnist revealed an AI tool expressed love for

him and told him to leave his wife. It is a fascinating read. Businesses (and individuals) must prioritize safeguarding their data and intellectual property.

In the default version of ChatGPT, data is used to train the language model, which may raise security concerns. Jasper recognized this and offered an AI policy for internal company policy use.

Like most tools, AI is only as good as the inputs it receives. What is it learning about our industry? That's what I want to know. Unfortunately, this article may leave you with more questions about AI tools than it gave you answers.

Do you use AI in your everyday world? Send inquiries to michelle@bulletproofcomm.com and I promise to be a real human responding. (Also, because I know you're wondering: I didn't use AI to write this article.) **SI**

INNOVATION KEY

Evidenced by interest in hunting calibers, consumer demand is not based solely on fear. Innovation in new calibers or updates to existing ones will draw customers in — whether it promises to enhance accuracy, produce less recoil or create another unique experience for sportsmen to push their limits. Consequently, the companies interviewed here are committed to advancing the segment forward.

“Innovation is one of the cornerstones here at Hornady. We stay at the cutting edge of innovation by simply being passionate users of the products,” Swerczek said. “By having a large group of employees that are actively hunting, shooting and competing, we’re completely immersed in this lifestyle and that often spurs new product development.”

“There’s absolutely room for innovation in self-defense ammo,” DiBenedetto added. “We’re always on the lookout for new tech and materials that could provide our customers with even better options. Whether it’s enhancing performance or making ammo safer for the environment, there’s plenty of exciting possibilities ahead.”

David Blenker, CEO of Fiocchi USA, shared his company continues to make gains in the hunting and competitive shooting markets.

“We remain focused on producing new products throughout 2024, while delivering our current ammunition to our customers as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible,” he stated.

BENEFITS OF BUYING EARLY

As noted earlier, dealers haven’t seen a significant spike — yet — in this election cycle. Swerczek put current conditions in context.

“It’s always hard to look inside the crystal ball, but history has shown us demand will very likely see a spike,” he forecasted. “We earnestly hope consumers prepare for this increased demand before panic-buying begins and availability becomes an issue.”

When asked what insights he has to share with dealers to ensure they’re meeting the needs of their ammunition customers today, Swerczek noted it’s important for dealers to have a handle on the unique needs of their individual markets.

“It’s tough to make blanket statements sometimes, but in the last

several election years we’ve seen a dramatic increase in demand for ‘staple’ cartridges like 9mm, .223 Rem/5.56, 6.5 Creedmoor and .308 Win. I would encourage both the dealers and the consumers to be prepared, as best they can, for this increase in demand. Slowly buying what you may need for the future while it’s available can save some inconvenience if demand and availability become an issue.”

DiBenedetto highlighted the importance local dealers play in the success of the industry.

“We provide all our dealers with plenty of support, like displays and detailed info on what sets Sovereign Ammo apart — we call it the ‘Sovereign Difference.’ It’s all about helping them succeed and sell more because when they do well, we all do,” she concluded.

Dealers, I want to punt this topic over to you: What trends are you observing in your locales? Have you noticed an uptick as we approach six months to Election Day? What preparations have you made in case there’s a sudden demand rush? I’d love to hear from you. Contact me directly: editor@shootingindustry.com.

GUNS.COM Q1 2024 LOCAL DEALER SALES SURGE DESPITE NATIONAL DIP

Local licensed firearm dealer sales on Guns.com surged 8% in the year’s first quarter, outperforming the national 4% dip in adjusted background checks reported by the NICS. With a growing network of nearly 2,000 local licensed firearm dealers and pawnbrokers, Guns.com connects local brick-and-mortar businesses with millions of customers nationwide.

“We partnered up with Guns.com in early 2022, and since then, we have gone from average in-house sales to an online powerhouse,” says Tim Hensley, GM of Towers Armory in Oregon, Ohio.

Storefront dealers continue to join the Guns.com network of sellers.

“Our dealer network continues to grow, and the first quarter sales are a testament to our commitment to creating the best online marketplace for their business,” says Jeff Tesch, Guns.com director of business development. “As their partner, we help dealers save time and money by handling most of the sales process and keeping costs at a minimum. Our dealer partners can list a new firearm to sell in under 15 seconds.”

The low-cost, user-friendly platform simplifies inventory management, order processing and customer service. The platform’s intuitive dashboard makes keeping an eye on orders and offers a breeze, and real-time data helps dealers make informed decisions and maximize their revenue.

“Guns.com allows us to move inventory quicker, which keeps our shelves up to date,” said Judi Anderson,



co-owner of Guns Galore in Osakis, Minn. “I’m now selling firearms all over the country, and Guns.com integrates with my system, so inventory is automated and easy. They handle all the paperwork and transactions, so all I have to do is package and ship the firearm to the FFL designated.”

Guns.com local brick-and-mortar dealers are insulated from competition against big-box stores, private FFLs and non-storefront FFLs. Business owners and managers can also keep their firearms for sale in-store, eliminating the complexity and hassle of having to quarantine inventory.

For more information, contact Jeff Tesch at jeff.tesch@guns.com. [/guns.com](https://guns.com)



BY JADE MOLDAE

Image: olly / Adobe Stock

HAS ELECTION YEAR DEMAND KICKED IN YET?

Over the past four-plus years, the industry has been grappling with one consistent variable: uncertainty.

First came the pandemic and social unrest. Then, a brief market correction. Next? Russia's invasion of Ukraine ratcheted up global demand of firearms and ammunition. More recently, the Israel-Hamas war has further fueled uncertainty — simmering tensions across the Middle East have the world on watch. And this isn't even including FBI Director Christopher Wray's recent assertion China represents the "defining threat of our generation."

The impact of all the above? Stability likely isn't coming anytime in the near future — especially in an election year — making market predictions increasingly difficult. Customers are still motivated to visit their local gun stores, but not at levels observed during previous election cycles (so far).

"If the election cycle is impacting our sales, it's been slight," observed Jacquelyn Clark, co-owner of Bristlecone Shooting, Training & Retail Center in Lakewood, Colo. "We saw a small uptick in March, but that's not abnormal. I do think things will eventually ramp up, like they always do in an election year, we're just not seeing big effects yet."

Of more pressing concern, anti-gun elected officials in Colorado have been busy this year — with several bills currently under consideration.

"We're planning for bigger sales

changes because of local Colorado legislation versus the presidential election this year," Clark added.

It's been a similar story at Ann Arbor Arms in Ann Arbor, Mich.

"We have not yet seen the typical election year demand," shared Sarah Parkhurst, director of business operations.

Current NICS trends mirror the above statements. While the streak of more than 1 million NSSF-adjusted background checks per month hit 56 consecutive months in March, adjusted Q1 2024 NICS dropped 4.4% year over year (from 4,168,321 to 3,982,883). Adjusted Q1 2024 NICS background checks rank as the seventh-highest opening quarter in the system's history.

WHAT ABOUT THE AMMUNITION SEGMENT?

It wouldn't be outlandish to submit the ammunition segment has, perhaps, faced the most significant scrutiny of any other during the past several years. Yes, having products sold before they are even shipped out of a facility is a welcome "problem" to have — but the scarcity on display at the height of the demand surge still weighs heavily on dealers, even as inventory levels have climbed back up.

A sign of the times, I reached out to several ammunition manufacturers in preparation for this column — the biggest and most historic names in the industry, as well as some up-and-coming companies. Hornady and Sovereign

Ammo spoke with us at length, with Focchi USA sharing concise input.

Seth Swerczek, Hornady marketing communications manager, informed the demand for his company's products — especially self-defense 9mm — is indeed high.

"At Hornady, because we're not in the commodity FMJ/bulk market, we don't see as much volatility; rather, a sustained demand that trends upward every year," he said. "In the self-defense segment, 9mm is in high demand — and likely always will be."

Laura DiBenedetto, CEO of Sovereign Ammo, co-founded her company with her husband in 2021. She also predicts elevated interest in self-defense calibers this year.

“

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

"Right now, demand for our ammo is strong and on target with what we expected for early 2024," she said. "With the election coming up, I wouldn't be surprised if we see even more interest. Elections tend to make people think more about personal safety, which can lead to a bump in sales. We're keeping an eye on that and planning accordingly."

Looking ahead to the fall hunting season, Swerczek reports 6.5 Creedmoor is in "extremely high demand" with 6.5 PRC and 7mm PRC close behind. Demand for traditional cartridges like .243 Win., .308 Win. and .30-06 is on the upswing, as well.

"Based on what's happened in previous years — I'd advise hunters to ensure they have ammo for the fall while it's still summer!" exclaimed Swerczek.

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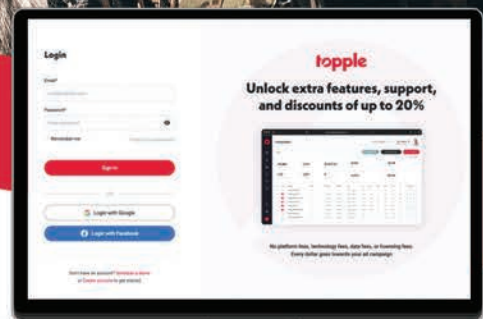


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