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"REVOLVER REVOLUTION"**38**SELLING TO DIY CUSTOMERS?
KNOW YOUR MARKET!**46**AFTER Q3 2025:
WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

SHOOTING INDUSTRY[®]

THE INDUSTRY'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE — EST. 1955

\$5 | SEPTEMBER 2025

NAVIGATING THE USED GUN MARKET

"SILENCE" IS GOLDEN

- Suppressor "Boom"
- Plus: Defensive Uses

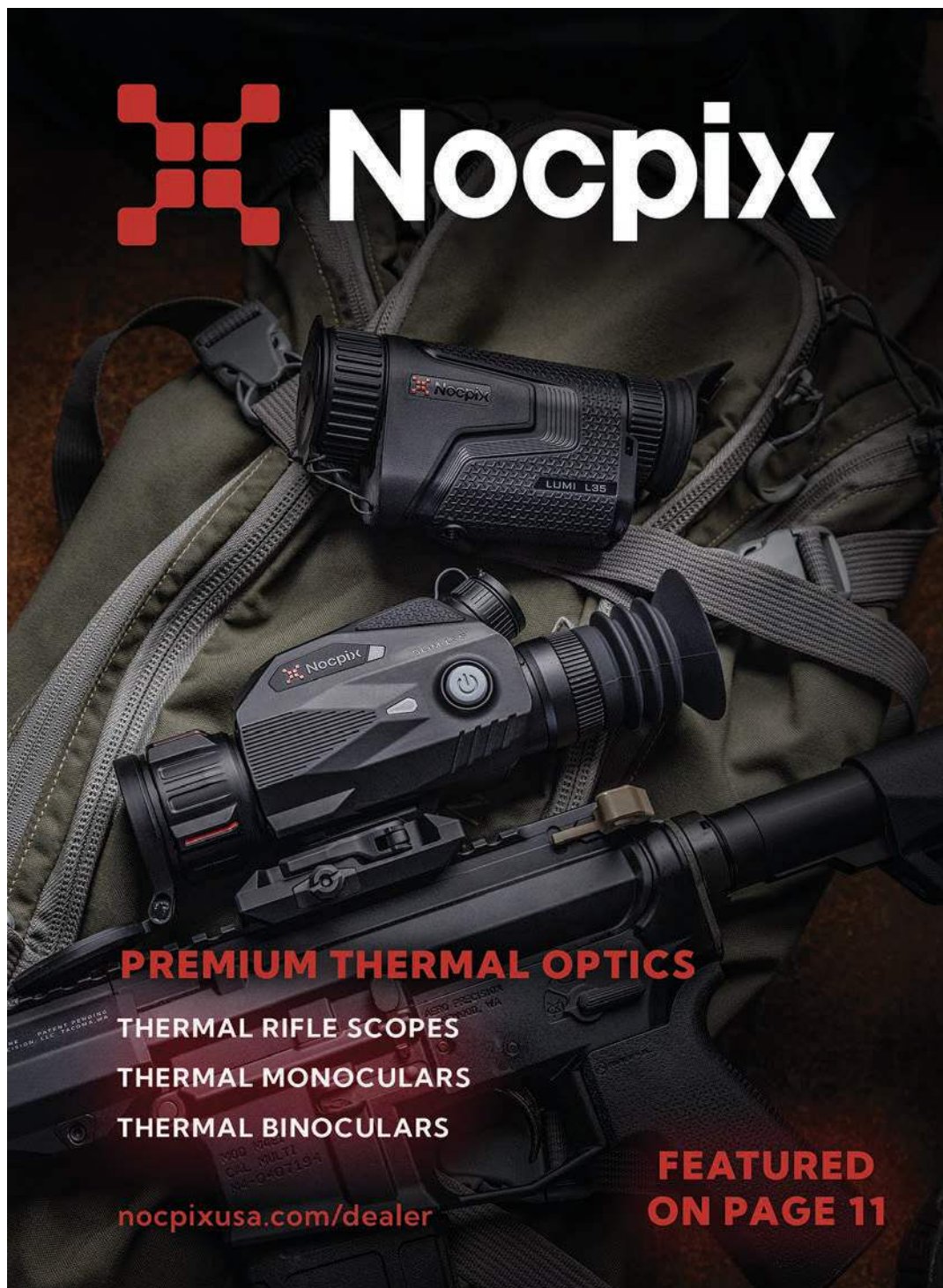
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Boost Profits With
Knife Sales! **p. 36**

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PREMIUM THERMAL OPTICS

THERMAL RIFLE SCOPES

THERMAL MONOCULARS

THERMAL BINOCULARS

nocpixusa.com/dealer**FEATURED
ON PAGE 11**



92XI GARA
J92XFMSA21CAV
9mm Luger • 22+1 • BBL: 5.1"

92XI CORSA
J92XFMSA21LAM
9mm Luger • 22+1 • BBL: 5.1"

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92XI



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ICONIC FIREARM BUSINESS FOR SALE

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Sharps Rifle Company, founded in 1848 by Christian Sharps, is known for firearms innovation, long-range accuracy, and high-quality products. After 11+ years at the helm, we are contemplating transitioning to retirement and offering the company for sale. Consider the possibilities of owning this historic and profitable rifle company, which has a well-known presence in media and history.

Sharps today focuses on the AR/MSR rifle platform, which has a loyal following in the military, LE, and civilian markets. Segments include hunting/outdoor enthusiasts, sports shooters, competitive shooters, and manufacturers/gunsmiths of AR platform products. We have a subscriber base of over 20,000 discrete contacts and over 8,000 active customers. Please see our online store @ www.srcarms.com for a better overview of Sharps offerings.

Constantly innovating, the new owner will assume three in-force patents for AR bolt carrier group systems and six trademarks. Two of these patents are for controlling the flow of gas through the bolt carrier group, a key advantage for shooters using suppressors. This proprietary technology and Intellectual property can position the right buyer with significant competitive market advantages.

Sharps Rifle's loyal following, innovative engineering and patents make it a great fit for the right buyer. Our CEO, Jay Johnston, can provide full details and patent information at jjohnston@sharpsriflecompany.com.



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SHOOTING INDUSTRY (ISSN 0037-4148) Copyright © 2025 by Publishers' Development Corp., is published monthly by Shooting Industry, P.O. Box 1926 Escondido, CA 92033. Periodicals postage is paid at Escondido, CA and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Shooting Industry, P.O. Box 462315, Escondido, CA 92046. SUBSCRIPTIONS: Annual subscription price is \$50 in U.S. funds. \$5 for single copies. For questions related to your magazine subscription, or to change your address (four weeks' notice required) call (866) 820-4045 or write Shooting Industry, P.O. Box 462315, Escondido, CA 92046. CONTRIBUTORS submitting manuscripts, photographs or drawings do so at their own risk. Materials cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage. Payment will be made at rates current at time of publication and will cover reproductions in any or all Shooting Industry editions. ADVERTISING RATES furnished on request. REPRODUCTION or use of any portion of this magazine in any manner, without written permissions is prohibited. All rights reserved. Title to this publication passes to subscriber only on delivery to his/her address. The opinions and recommendations expressed by individual authors within this magazine are not necessarily those of Publishers' Development Corporation.



Rapid Gun Systems Helps You Get Hunters “Field Ready”

Hunting season is here, and every successful dealer will need two things to serve their contingent of hunters: 1) a selection of must-have firearms, bows, optics, camo, ammunition and safety equipment in inventory, and 2) a seamless customer experience. Rapid Gun Systems stands ready to help you better assist customers through its powerful point-of-sale (POS) solution and customized support to ensure your operation runs smoothly during peak periods.

With its turnkey operation, Rapid Gun Systems works behind the scenes to ensure you and your sales associates can focus on delivering exceptional customer service to hunters ready to take to the field. Larry Corbin, sales manager for the Buffalo Trading Company in Findlay, Ohio, highlighted how Rapid Gun Systems’ personalized service enabled his store to quickly resume business and better serve customers.

“We chose Rapid Gun Systems because these guys are really focused on customer service,” he stated. “We got a lot of one-on-one attention when we first installed the system, and this allowed us to get up and running quickly. We are sure we have the right system for our store. There isn’t a better gun store POS with all the features they offer.”

Here are three ways you can use Rapid Gun Systems’ capabilities to get hunting customers “field ready” this fall.

1. SUGGESTED PRODUCT BUNDLING

One of the ways Rapid Gun Systems can help you add to your bottom line, and add value to the customer experience, is through touchscreen customization on its POS displays.

As a Rapid Gun Systems customer, you have the ability to advertise on your customer display to highlight impulse buys during the sale.

Products like mosquito repellent, neck gaiters, field wipes, scent dispensers, game calls and more can be featured as popular add-ons for sales associates to recommend during interactions with customers. Better yet, some products can be bundled together to increase value. For example, a knife can be paired with a sharpening kit and weatherproof case — taking the guesswork out of the equation for the customer.

Not only will these suggestions potentially increase the sales ticket to complement a firearm, bow, optics or other large purchase, it will also assist in getting your customer more prepared for his or her adventure out in the field. When asked by fellow hunters where they bought their gear, they can share how you and your team met their needs.

2. LOYALTY PROGRAMS

As you well know, the start of hunting season represents a profitable time of year

for the firearms business. Following deer season, there’s the allure of thermal hunting for predators and hog (where legal) and the start of the Christmas buying season with Black Friday, Cyber Monday and year-end sales events.

If your store doesn’t have a way to capture customer data throughout this period, you’re missing out on a treasure trove of information. Launching a customer loyalty program in tandem with hunting or year-end sales will enable your store to capture customer data to serve as a communication tool and build customer loyalty.

To help you turn first-time customers into repeat ones, the Rapid Gun Systems solution includes an integrated customer relationship management (CRM) feature — giving you the ability to send targeted emails to customers to offer coupons, VIP event invites, special offers and more. Rapid Gun Systems has integrations with Mailchimp, Constant Contact and Klaviyo, making it even easier to communicate with customers on a large scale. (If you have a range, why not develop a membership program and promote an introductory offer to your guests who visited this fall?)

Additionally, you will have the ability to see the effectiveness of email campaigns with margin analysis for the entire customer basket.

3. GIFT CARDS

Providing year-round benefits, gift cards are especially popular as the end of the year comes into view. Promoting store-branded gift cards to friends and families of established hunters can result in a gift card purchase, which can provide further opportunities to enhance loyalty from customers.

Not only do gift cards generate instant revenue, they can also encourage additional spending — as customers are likely to spend more than the value of a gift card while making their purchase. Further, a gift card can be redeemed at any time, so if a hunter has all he or she needs for the season already, the gift card can be used for the next season — giving your team every opportunity to expand the sale to include additional must-have accessories.

Rapid Gun Systems is in the “solutions” business — ready to offer comprehensive and customizable services to help you streamline your business operations. Call (619) 754-4100 or visit rapidgunsystems.com to learn more about how Rapid Gun Systems can develop personalized solutions to help you achieve your business goals.

Shh! Silence Is Golden

Suppressors have been one of the hottest categories of 2025, and have garnered significant coverage in *Shooting Industry* as a result. The May issue highlighted the category's surge, while last month's issue featured an interview with Brandon Maddox of Silencer Central.

Suppressors have found their way into other features throughout this year, too.

Inside this issue, two articles focus on this market. In his monthly *Personal Defense Market* column, Massad Ayoob evaluates suppressors for defensive purposes, concluding, "Our industry can make a compelling argument suppressors can indeed improve survival odds for the embattled law-abiding citizen."

In "'Silence' Is Golden," Bryan Hendricks looks at this booming market. Ease of buying and innovations mean there are more opportunities to "expand the sale" than ever before — with Danny Anderson of SK Arms in Midland, Texas, noting many of his customers buy multiple SKUs.

"A lot of people buy multiple suppressors," he shared. "Back in the day, because of the paperwork, people wanted to buy one silencer and make it work for as many guns as possible. Now we try to educate people when you do that, you get a jack of all trades and master of none: A silencer not able to work optimally on any of your platforms."

For additional insights on suppressors, visit **pages 22 and 28**.

RESHAPING WOMEN'S SHOOTING EXPERIENCE

If you've read *SI* for any length of time, you've probably noticed frequent praise for how our industry has grown in its efforts to welcome women. Organizations like A Girl & A Gun (AG & AG) have led the way in the



SEPTEMBER 2025

recruitment and retention of women in our ranks.

Nancy Keaton interviews members of AG & AG's leadership team — Robyn Sandoval, Tatiana Whitlock and Sandra Woodruff — who share their vision for further growth among women. See this month's *Arms & The Woman* installment for more (**p. 24**).

KNIVES KEY TO BOOST PROFITS

Representatives from Bear & Son Cutlery and CRKT share why knives are key to elevating profits. Even amidst all the uncertainty surrounding tariffs, there are growth opportunities in this segment.

"The long-term outlook for the knife market remains strong," forecasts Ken Griffey, president of Bear & Son Cutlery. "Demand for quality knives — whether for EDC, outdoor use or collection — is steady, and we expect to see growth among smaller U.S. companies."

Make sure your store has "the edge" when it comes to profiting in this segment. (And now would be a good time to invest in those brands with a stable U.S. supply chain.) For additional insights, see **p. 36**. **SI**

Thank you for reading this issue! Have a comment or suggestion on anything you see (or wish to see) in *Shooting Industry*? Let me know anytime.

— Jade Moldae, *SI* Publisher & Editor
editor@shootingindustry.com

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STILL VALUABLE AFTER 30 YEARS

Editor's Note: In the July 2025 issue, the *Arms & The Woman* column featured a classic article from April 1995. In "Barriers That Keep Women From Shooting," Lisa Parsons-Wraith lamented the lack of women-specific brands at SHOT Show 1995 — a far cry from where we are today — and shared insights on a SHOT Show seminar that focused on selling to women. She expounded on five common barriers that deter women from joining the shooting sports: clothing, equipment, tradition, childhood conditioning and media. Two of these (tradition and childhood conditioning) are difficult barriers for dealers to address.

Here, Ed and Raquel Stephenson share their impressions of the article — and how dealers can help customers overcome these barriers.

We do find throwback articles like this still valuable, even as the market has changed considerably since 1995. Women are quickly becoming a force in the industry across the board and active participants in the shooting sports.

While as dealers we can't change tradition and childhood conditioning, we feel it should be brought up to further change the mindset. As hunter ed instructors, hunting is where we see that mindset the most and we really enjoy seeing girls and women in classes breaking the mold.

At the very least we, as dealers, need to present the opportunity. So, while a customer is in our store buying for himself, if he brings his wife, daughter or significant other, after addressing him, one of us will then turn to her and ask what we can do for them.

— **Ed & Raquel Stephenson, Owners**
Squad 7 Firearms & Sporting Goods
Frederick, Colo.

HAVE A THOUGHT WHILE READING THE ISSUE?

Let us know at comments@shootingindustry.com, facebook.com/shootingindustry or linkedin.com/company/fmg-publications

WHAT S/I READERS

ARE SAYING ABOUT ...

... "SUPPRESSORS: CAPITALIZE ON A MARKET 'BOOM!'"

(*Best Practices*, May 2025)

I buy lots of "stuff" from Black Wing. Great place and they really know the industry and the pros and cons of all of the products on their shelves. The suppressor industry is changing with the advent of 3D printing and the faster turnaround for the approval process.

— **Dave Yothers, President**
Redline Manufacturing Consultants
Via LinkedIn

The suppressor industry is changing with the advent of 3D printing and the faster turnaround for the approval process.

... "THE RISE OF WOMEN IN THE HUNTING WORLD"

Arms & The Woman, June 2025

Love this! Great seeing more of this!
— **Travis Montross, Technical Recruiter**
Via LinkedIn

... "THE U.S. FIREARMS INDUSTRY TODAY REPORT – 2025"

July 2025

Comprehensive review of recent production numbers and industry indicators. Nicely done as usual, Jade Moldae!

— **John McNamara, Managing Director Member Services**
NSSF
Via LinkedIn

IT'S ALL ABOUT CONNECTION

Editor's Note: The following is a LinkedIn post published by Michelle Scheuermann, who penned "Shaping The Future Of Bowhunting" in the July 2025 issue of *SI*.

This article featured an insightful interview with National Bowhunting Education Foundation Executive Director Marilyn Bentz, who encouraged dealers to use their storefronts to strengthen their connection with customers. Little touches, like a coffee pot or a popcorn stand, can create a welcoming environment. "It's like the old potbelly stove of olden days," Bentz noted. "It encourages gathering and conversation."

Agree/disagree? Let us know: comments@shootingindustry.com.

I enjoy talking with folks who've been in the industry long enough to pinpoint trends and can tell me which ones I should dig into, and which ones to toss. That's why I always enjoy talking to Marilyn Bentz, the executive director of the National Bowhunting Education Foundation.

Marilyn knows things — and has seen things — and everyone reading this can learn a thing (or three) from her. Plus, she *does not* allow the grass to grow under her feet. She's constantly traveling to this event or that reception or running board meetings and attending conferences. She literally has her finger on the pulse of the bowhunting industry.

Special thanks to Jade Moldae of *Shooting Industry* for allowing me to give more ink to Marilyn's voice. **SI**
— Michelle Scheuermann, President/Owner
BulletProof Communications
St. Paul, Minn.

I enjoy talking with folks who've been in the industry long enough to pinpoint trends and can tell me which ones I should dig into, and which ones to toss.



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CHARLOTTE "DON'T LIE" CAMPAIGN TARGETS ILLEGAL GUN PURCHASES

NSSF, together with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Department of Justice (DOJ), announced a month-long public education campaign reminding the Charlotte, N.C., area public about stiff penalties facing individuals convicted of unlawful firearm purchases.

The "Don't Lie for the Other Guy" campaign is in its 25th year and drives home the message that anyone making an illegal firearm purchase faces a federal felony penalty of up to 15 years in prison and up to \$250,000 in fines.

The program is funded in full by the firearm industry and is now also complemented by federal funding allocated to ATF by Congress. Charlotte was chosen for this campaign by ATF.

"The firearm industry has always been fully committed to keeping firearms out of the hands of those who should not possess them. In its 25th year, we are especially proud to launch this 'Don't Lie for the Other Guy' public awareness campaign in Charlotte as part of our cooperative relationship with the ATF, the DOJ and the entire law enforcement community to assist them in their efforts to reduce criminal acquisition of firearms and to keep communities safe," said NSSF President and CEO Joe Bartozzi.

The Charlotte-area "Don't Lie" campaign will total more than 35.5 million gross media impressions. This includes an outdoor campaign running on 20 high-impact billboards along all major roadways, as well as 30 roadside

◀ NSSF President and CEO Joe Bartozzi fields questions during a news conference announcing the Charlotte-area's "Don't Lie" campaign.

display posters throughout the region with the message: "Buy a gun for someone who can't and buy yourself 15 years in jail. Don't Lie for the Other Guy."

In addition, the campaign will include more than 850 radio spots on four of the top FM stations in the market, as well as 4.313 million targeted impressions across Facebook, Instagram and mobile display.

To legally purchase a firearm, a person must pass an FBI National Instant Criminal Background Check System verification, or NICS background check, and fully comply with all state and local laws. When a criminal is illegally trafficking in firearms or knows they cannot pass this check, they may try to induce a friend or acquaintance to make the purchase for them. This is a straw purchase and is a felony.

The "Don't Lie for the Other Guy" program also involves educating firearm retailers to better detect and prevent straw purchases by providing "Don't Lie for the Other Guy" retailer kits containing a training video and information for store owners and staff, as well as point-of-purchase displays aimed to deter illegal straw purchasers.

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

CELERANT & AMERICAN FEEDER HELP RETAILERS EXPAND PRODUCT LINES

Celerant Technology announced a new partnership with American Feeder, a supplier of outdoor feeding equipment for deer, fish and game management. This new integration enables Celerant's clients, especially those in the hunting and fishing markets, to offer large, in-demand feeders through both their store and e-commerce channels without

having to keep inventory on hand.

"This partnership with Celerant streamlines our ordering process and allows retailers to offer our feeding equipment to customers more efficiently," stated Matt Swainbank, sales manager at American Feeder. "By integrating our product line directly into retailers' systems, we're helping them serve more customers while eliminating the hassle of managing additional inventory."

"We look for partnerships that make it easier for our retailers to say 'yes' to customer requests without



adding operational burden," said Michele Salerno, CGO of Celerant. "The American Feeder integration does just that — whether a customer walks into the store or shops online, our retailers can fulfill the order on the spot, without stocking the item. It's a win-win for retailers and their customers."

[/ celerant.com/americanfeeder](http://celerant.com/americanfeeder)

THE KINETIC GROUP ADDS FIOCCHI OF AMERICA

The Kinetic Group (TKG) officially added Fiocchi of America to its lineup of top ammunition brands. Fiocchi — and exclusive rights to Baschieri & Pellagri (B&P) in the U.S. — will join CCI, Federal, HEVI-Shot, Remington and Speer as part of TKG and consolidate its operation just outside of Springfield, Mo. The company will also move its HEVI-Shot operation to Ozark from its current location in Sweet Home, Ore., beginning this summer.

“We’re excited to have Fiocchi of America officially join our group of world-leading ammunition brands. The Ozark, Mo., facility, where Fiocchi shotshells are currently loaded, will become a center of excellence for shotshell products,” according to Jason Vanderbrink, chairman and CEO of TKG. “Ozark is just outside of



Springfield, Mo., a fantastic location for ammunition manufacturing, the outdoors, conservation and support of the Second Amendment. HEVI-Shot will have a great new home here and will continue its 25-year legacy of loading the best steel, tungsten and bismuth shot for waterfowl and upland hunters.”

This strategy will bring more materials and manufacturing to America. The Kinetic Group is dedicated to U.S. manufacturing and global reach.

HEVI-Shot will begin moving immediately and the company expects to have the operation fully migrated to Ozark by the end of 2025.

“The community of Sweet Home, Oregon, is where HEVI-Shot was born in 2000. We want to thank them for being an excellent location for one of our best brands,” said Vanderbrink. “HEVI-Shot products will be made to the same exacting specifications as hunters have come to know and trust. There will be no difference in look, feel and quality.”

The Kinetic Group was purchased by CSG at the end of 2024, which joined them with the nearly 150-year-old Fiocchi Ammunition brand as part of CSG’s Ammo+ division.

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

Content sponsored by Nocpix

Nocpix: Delivering Quality, While Valuing Retail Partners

Launched in 2024, Nocpix (Nocturnal Pixels) is a new brand in the thermal optics arena — built on the expertise of the world’s most prolific thermal sensor manufacturer and the American hunting market expertise of iRayUSA.

Developed through years of research, development and experience in building thermal optics for hunters and outdoorsmen, Nocpix

boasts a comprehensive line of premium thermal imaging monoculars, riflescopes and binoculars to equip predator and hog hunters, and support first responders in surveillance and search-and-rescue operations.

“Experienced thermal users choose Nocpix for two main reasons: superior quality and the best warranty in the industry,” stated Pliny Gale, Nocpix marketing and communications manager. “New features like Ocular Zoom, integrated laser

rangefinders, ballistics calculation and wireless ‘N-link’ device pairing are also attracting a lot of hunters who want cutting-edge tech.”

In addition to producing high-quality thermal imaging products, Nocpix also emphasizes robust support for its dealers. While most Nocpix models are available through wholesalers, direct dealers have significant advantages, including better margins, priority product allocation, a dedicated sales rep, in-store displays and access to marketing content. Additionally, every Nocpix product carries a Minimum Advertised Price (MAP) policy to protect the margins of dealers who keep inventory in stock.

Don’t miss out on the opportunity to carry products on the cutting edge of the shooting and hunting industry! Maintaining Nocpix thermal imaging products in stock, and sharing availability with customers on social media, will lead to more online engagement and in-person visits. With prime predator and hog hunting season near, now is the time to stock up and be prepared to serve your customers — or lose business to another store that does.

To learn more about becoming a Nocpix stocking dealer, visit: nocpixusa.com.

KELTEC EXPANDS CAPACITY, OPENS WYOMING PLANT

KelTec has expanded production capacity with the acquisition of a 33,000 sq. ft. facility in Rock Springs, Wyo., augmenting its 125,000 sq. ft. industrial space in Cocoa, Florida.

"I am thrilled to be a part of this new adventure in our story," stated Adrian Kellgren, KelTec director of industrial production. "Wyoming has a rich history as part of the American frontier and it's fitting for our brand, being that we constantly explore the limits of performance and design, to expand out here."

KelTec firearms are known for innovation and performance, so the new facility will focus on cutting-edge manufacturing technology, next-generation research and development and of course, production of the newest trendsetting firearms available.

"While steady expansion isn't anything new to us, this is our first expansion into another state and we couldn't be more excited about advancing our innovative designs and production processes in Wyoming," said Derek Kellgren, KelTec director of sales and marketing.

While the company's initial start-up



Screengrab of KelTec's ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the opening of its Rock Springs, Wyo., facility, which comprises 33,000 sq. ft.

will be small, the facility is designed to grow up to 250+ employees across multiple industrial disciplines.

"In Wyoming, we value our open spaces, recreation and hunting and proudly defend our 2nd Amendment rights," stated Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon. "Because of those values and our business-friendly environment I am pleased to welcome KelTec firearms to Wyoming."

Rock Springs Mayor Timothy A. Kaumo, echoing support from Sweetwater County officials and the Wyoming Business Council, added "The City of Rock Springs is beyond excited and proud to have KelTec firearms locating here."

"Our company's future is tied to American liberty," said George Kellgren, KelTec founder, chairman and CEO. "And there's no better place to honor that than right here in Wyoming."

Although the Rock Springs facility has been producing the PR-5.7 for some time, the company hosted an official ribbon-cutting ceremony July 23.

The event drew NRA CEO and EVP Doug Hamlin, along with Gov. Gordon and Rock Springs Mayor Max Mickelson, both of whom praised KelTec's investment in local workforce development and its alignment with Wyoming's values of independence and self-reliance.

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

LASER AMMO HIGHLIGHTS PARTNERSHIP WITH USDSA

Laser Ammo USA Inc. is proud to continue its partnership with the United States Deputy Sheriff's Association (USDSA) in a shared commitment to enhance officer safety across the country.

Through this ongoing collaboration, Laser Ammo and USDSA are able to combine their expertise and resources to support law enforcement with effective training services.

USDSA, a national nonprofit organization, is committed to supporting law enforcement, their families and the communities they serve. Through various initiatives, USDSA provides law enforcement with critical resources and skills. USDSA's training program is offered nationally in collaboration with agencies,

serving city, county, state and federal law enforcement.

"I would only recommend products that we truly believe in and significantly enhance the quality of our training, and Laser Ammo's products have absolutely done that at USDSA," said USDSA Law Enforcement National Training and Program Director Mike Willis. "We use their products in all of our training classes because they provide law enforcement with highly realistic, yet completely safe and efficient training. The feedback we receive on Laser Ammo's training solutions is always great, and we value their impact in advancing our mission to improve law enforcement training."

"Laser Ammo is proud to support and partner with the USDSA to provide advanced training and tools for law enforcement all over the country," said Laser Ammo's Lead Law Enforcement &



Military Specialist, Sgt. Colin P. Gallagher (Ret). "This partnership supports USDSA's mission to enhance officer safety and readiness through realistic, free training. Through this collaboration, we can help departments nationwide access premium training with state-of-the-art training technologies."

To further support law enforcement, Laser Ammo provides special law enforcement department pricing and has a team of specialist veterans who travel across the U.S. to demonstrate innovative products and advise departments on the best solutions for their needs.

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

NDA PARTNERS WITH GUNBROKER TO RAISE \$50,000+

The National Deer Association (NDA) raised more than \$50,000 through its fundraising auction on GunBroker.com.

By partnering with GunBroker.com, the NDA was able to tap into a national audience of passionate hunters, sportsmen and collectors. The auction featured more than 70 items, including firearms, accessories, hunting trips and one-of-a-kind experiences.

"We're incredibly grateful to GunBroker and their engaged community for helping make this auction a resounding success," said Lauren Varner, chief development officer of the National

Deer Association. "Not only did it generate critical funding for our mission, but it also showed how passionate the hunting and shooting community is about supporting wildlife conservation. Partnerships like this are key to helping us ensure the future of wild deer, wildlife habitat and hunting."

GunBroker.com has long supported conservation, veterans, shooting sports and Second Amendment advocacy organizations by providing a no-fee platform for their fundraising efforts. Dedicated pages allow these non-profit groups to host fundraising auctions as well as communicate their missions and other information to the GunBroker community.

"We're proud to support organizations like the NDA that are making a real difference for wildlife and



our way of life," said Allen Forkner, VP of public relations and brand management for GunBroker.com. "Whether it's conservation, veteran support, 2A advocacy or growing the shooting sports, we believe in using our platform to help these groups reach a broader audience and achieve their goals."

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

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SK GUNS SUPPORTS IABTI

SK Guns supported the 53rd International Association of Bomb Technicians & Investigators (IABTI) International In-Service Training and Expo (IIST) through its SK Gives Back initiative.

The expo took place June 22–27 in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. As part of the event, SK Guns donated the #053 Solo Lobo (translated: “Lone Wolf”) pistol chambered in .38 Super. This custom-engraved firearm was auctioned off to raise funds for the IABTI during the convention. The funds help bomb technicians and investigators be as educated and effective as possible.

“It can’t be overstated how dangerous the life of a bomb technician can be. Training and education for these members of our military, law enforcement and first responder communities is absolutely vital,” said Simon Khiabani, owner and founder of SK Guns. “We are proud to use our SK Gives Back initiative to support the IABTI and help fund the research and training programs they work on throughout the year.”

The IABTI IIST is the premier global event for bomb technicians and investigators to refine their skills and network with other international experts. The event provided attendees with a new perspective on the industry, access to career pathways, research and professional development opportunities.

“We are so grateful to Simon for his



kindness and willingness to help the IABTI conference, which helps facilitate well-needed training to bomb technicians around the world,” said Scott Wright, St. Johns County deputy and explosive ordnance disposal technician.

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

T/C ARMS ACQUIRES GREEN MOUNTAIN RIFLE BARREL CO.

Thompson/Center Arms announced the acquisition of Green Mountain Rifle Barrel Company. This strategic move further strengthens T/C Arms’ vertical integration and accelerates its resurgence as a U.S. manufacturer of high performance rifles and barrels. Green Mountain will continue to operate as an independent entity to serve the greater firearm community with its high-quality, precision-made barrels and will celebrate 50 years of being family-owned and operated and made in the USA.

Under former ownership, T/C Arms partnered closely with Green Mountain, rekindling long-standing local ties in New Hampshire. This acquisition

transforms that partnership into a joint manufacturing foundation. With design, engineering, and casting operations firmly based in Rochester and Farmington, N.H., the addition of Green Mountain’s production capabilities underscores T/C Arms’ pledge to American-made quality and local economic revitalization.

The integration of Green Mountain’s barrel-making expertise supports T/C Arms’ ambitious development goals, including exploring new barrel materials, emerging calibers and the latest in barrel making technology.

In recent months, T/C Arms has experienced strong industry support with suppliers eager to rejoin its supply chain, including key partners in barrel manufacturing. With Green Mountain inside the family, production agility and scalability will improve further.



Gregg Ritz, Thompson/Center Arms president and CEO, said, “Bringing Green Mountain into the T/C family is a pivotal step toward reclaiming our legacy and controlling more of our craftsmanship in-house. We are extremely proud to join forces with the talented team at Green Mountain, empowering their capabilities and implementing new machining innovation, all made right here in New Hampshire. We look forward to continuing to serve existing and new Green Mountain customers in the firearm community as we raise the bar for quality and service.”

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

USA CLAY TARGET LEAGUE LAUNCHES FREE TEAM INITIATIVE

The USA Clay Target League (USACTL) announced a new initiative to help high schools and colleges across America start clay target teams for their students.

The Free Team Initiative provides new school-approved teams with free

registration fees, free safety equipment and more for up to five athletes. By adding more new teams and student athletes than ever before, the league will continue to broaden its mission to provide school-sponsored shooting sports to the education community.

“The league’s mission from day one has been to provide safe, school-sponsored clay target shooting sports participation opportunities to students, their families and the education community as a



whole,” said John Nelson, USACTL president. “Making the start-up process as easy and affordable as possible while making sure everyone is safely equipped and educated is a key step toward fulfilling that mission.”

[/usaclaytarget.com/start-a-team](http://usaclaytarget.com/start-a-team)



WATCHTOWER FIREARMS EXPANDS DEALER NETWORK

WATCHTOWER Firearms is actively expanding its nationwide dealer network. With improved production capabilities and streamlined logistics, WATCHTOWER Firearms is now shipping its most popular firearms within 48 hours and invites qualified dealers worldwide to become part of its rapidly expanding network.

Among the high-demand models now in stock are the APACHE double-stacked 1911, the DEMOLITIA 1911 pistol — developed in collaboration with YouTube sensation and firearms expert Matt Carriker — and the new DEMOLITIA Blackout Edition.

WATCHTOWER Firearms will showcase these top-performing products along with new, unreleased innovations at primary fall industry shows, including the Nation's Best Sports (NBS) Fall Market, Worldwide Fall Expo and the NASGW Expo.

"AT WATCHTOWER Firearms, our mission is to deliver uncompromising performance to every shooter — from tactical professionals to discerning enthusiasts," said Jordan Davis, WATCHTOWER chief growth officer. "With our increased capacity, rapid shipping and growing dealer program, now is the perfect time to join the WATCHTOWER network."

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

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MIDWAYUSA FOUNDATION AWARDS \$14+ MILLION IN CASH GRANTS



To commemorate August's National Shooting Sports Month, MidwayUSA Foundation announced the distribution of more than \$14.2 million in cash grants to support youth shooting sports in 2025.

This record-breaking year includes multiple programs offered by the Foundation, including coach training, range development, organizational, and team grants. Youth shooting teams received \$7.7 million in cash grants.

Many teams are able to take advantage of multiple programs. Murray State University's Rifle Program received its annual team cash grant, as well as a range development grant in 2025. Head Coach Alan Lollar talked about the improvements to enhance the athlete and fan experience.

"We are really excited to be one of the few teams to have display boards down range in front of the athletes," he said. "In matches, we hope to take the game beyond streaming targets and show the current team score. This will make a match easier to follow and more fun for fans."

This year, 1,487 youth shooting teams received a cash grant, and the payouts averaged \$5,225.70. The funds are critical to the operation of high school and college

shooting teams and assist with expenses, including ammo, targets, entry fees, safety equipment and travel. The top five states receiving grant funding are Minnesota, Missouri, Texas, Iowa and Wisconsin.

"Our latest cash grant payout brings the Foundation's total cash grant impact to over \$80 million since 2008. These are real dollars showing up in communities across the nation, helping thousands of youth shooting teams," stated Pete Eisentrager, the newly appointed executive director of MidwayUSA Foundation.

Eisentrager continued, "Along with generous donors and selfless team leaders and volunteers, our endowment model will continue to fund America's youth shooting teams now and in perpetuity."

The next grant cycle for teams and organizations will open Oct. 15, 2025.

Supporters can donate directly to the youth shooting team of their choice, which MidwayUSA Foundation will match, thanks to Larry and Brenda Potterfield. Donations are tax-deductible and 100% of the donation goes to the endowment of the donor's choice; nothing is removed for operations.

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

BARRETT BREAKS GROUND ON 170-ACRE CAMPUS

The NIOA Group has officially broken ground on its new Barrett Firearms facility, heralding a new era in weapon systems manufacturing for Tennessee.

The ceremony marking the beginning of construction of the Barrett Manufacturing & Technology Campus (BMT) and NIOA North American Headquarters, was attended by a host of dignitaries including Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, Senator Marsha Blackburn, Tennessee Economic and Community Development (TNECD) Commissioner Stuart McWhorter, Rutherford County Mayor Joe Carr and Murfreesboro Mayor Shane McFarland, industry leaders, company executives and staff.

The BMT will be the NIOA Group's global center of excellence for firearms and advanced military weapons manufacturing and research capabilities. The ceremony was held in conjunction with TNECD.

The \$76.4 million project creates a 170-acre campus at 8808 Manchester Pike, not far from the company's original headquarters where it has operated for more than four decades. It marks the most significant investment in Barrett's history and reflects the NIOA Group's long-term commitment to advanced manufacturing and local jobs in Rutherford County.

Stage 1 of the BMT includes corporate headquarters, R&D capabilities, large-scale state-of-the-art manufacturing and



Government officials, NIOA ownership, Barrett Executives and project developers at the BMT Groundbreaking Ceremony. (Image: TNECD)

first floor office area spread over more than 250,000 sq. ft. The expansion will double the Barrett workforce over the next five years and enable the company to meet growing worldwide demand for its commercial and defense products.

Barrett CEO Bryan James said the new facility represented a bold step forward and a long-term commitment to the company's heritage in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

"As a locally founded business, we're proud to invest once again in the place that has shaped our success as a global leader serving both the commercial and military markets," he said. "This project not only underscores our commitment to the region, supporting hundreds of

local jobs, but it's a significant investment in our people, our customers and our capabilities."

NIOA Group executive chairman and chairman of the Barrett board, Rob Nioa, said the new facility would serve as the NIOA Group's global firearms and advanced military weapons manufacturing center of excellence: "This is a strategic investment that will give us the scale, technology and capacity to meet the evolving demands of our customers and defense partners worldwide."

Construction of the BMT is expected to be completed by February 2027, with operations to begin soon after.

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

SAAMI UPDATES ITS "SPORTING FIREARMS HANDLING & TRANSPORTATION" PUBLICATION

The Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute Inc. (SAAMI) has revised and updated its information publication, *Sporting Firearms: Safe Handling Considerations and Shipping Guidelines for Interstate Transportation*.

The publication reviews general transportation regulations for both Federal Firearms License (FFL) holders

and private citizens, common carrier restrictions, packing firearms for shipment and firearm safety.

The guidelines have been prepared by SAAMI to provide anyone concerned with the handling or shipment of sporting firearms certain basic and important facts about the subject. SAAMI notes that the statements and recommendations in the publication do not supersede local, state or federal regulations or constitute legal advice.

"SAAMI regularly updates its publications to ensure it is providing the industry and the public with the most current, accurate information, in this



case on the shipping of sporting firearms," said Brian Osowiecki, SAAMI director, regulatory affairs and administration.

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

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

GEARFIRE 



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GEARFIRE & KINSEY'S PARTNER TO POWER E-COMMERCE GROWTH

Gearfire, a leading provider of e-commerce solutions for the shooting sports and outdoor sports industries, announced the official launch of its integration with outdoor sports products distributor, Kinsey's Inc.

The integration allows Gearfire e-commerce retailers to seamlessly stream Kinsey's inventory of over 30,000 products, including its extensive selection of firearms, hunting and camping items and archery catalog, directly to their Gearfire site. Coupled with direct-to-consumer drop-shipping from Kinsey's warehouse, Gearfire's online retailers can immediately expand their product offerings and streamline order fulfillment without the burden of overhead associated with on-hand inventory or labor costs.

"Kinsey's has consistently been one of the most requested distributor integrations from our dealers, and we're thrilled to officially deliver it. This integration gives our online retailers access to one of the most diverse and well-stocked distributors in the outdoor sports industry," said Chad Seaverns, Gearfire COO.

Seaverns continued, "With the recent launch of the dedicated archery department for our e-commerce platform, the Kinsey's integration gives our shared dealers an easy and powerful way to tap into the archery market. We believe archery is a core pillar of the broader outdoor sports industry, and we're proud to better serve that community through this collaboration."

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



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HK ANNOUNCES HANDGUN CONTRACT WITH OKCPD

Heckler & Koch USA (HK) announced the 1,100-officer Oklahoma City Police Department (OKCPD) is transitioning to the HK VP9 for its official sidearm.

The OKCPD previously issued a combination of several different handguns to officers. This contract consolidates the department's sidearm options into a single model. Additionally, all new OKCPD recruits are being issued VP9s when they graduate from the academy.

"I've got to hand it to these guys; they really did their homework. Over the course of about a year, they thoroughly tested a variety of pistols from several different manufacturers. When it was all over, it was the VP9's superior out-of-the-box accuracy and quality, and HK's customer service that won out," said HK



Law Enforcement Sales Manager Jason Whitten.

The VP is the best-selling law enforcement and commercial pistol design in HK's history. It has a reputation for helping users shoot more accurately. Numerous reports of higher qualifying scores have come from agencies that adopted the VP9.

"I have total confidence that we will get a similar report from OKCPD," Whitten added.

[/hk-usa.com](http://hk-usa.com)



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INDEPENDENCE INDOOR SHOOTING RECEIVES NSSF'S FIVE-STAR RANGE RATING

NSSF has awarded Independence Indoor Shooting with its coveted Five-Star rating for range excellence. Five stars is the highest rating in NSSF's star-rating system, which evaluates shooting facilities based on appearance, management, shooting sports development and amenities.

Independence Indoor Shooting is in Meridian, Idaho, which is ranked as one of the fastest-growing cities in the United States. Situated west of Boise, Meridian has a population of around 135,000 people and Idaho overall ranks high in firearm ownership.

A full-service shooting facility, Independence Indoor Shooting opened in 2017 and is locally owned and operated. The range takes a community approach to business and sees itself as part of the indoor entertainment scene in the Treasure Valley. Its website proudly declares that Independence Indoor



NSSF's Zach Snow (fourth from right) presents the Independence Indoor Shooting team with its Five-Star range excellent plaque. The Meridian, Idaho-based range is the second facility to receive this coveted recognition in the Gem State.

Shooting is the place to enjoy "freedom, firearms and fun."

"We are thrilled to welcome Independence Indoor Shooting into NSSF's family of Five-Star shooting ranges," said Zach Snow, NSSF director, member development. "Independence Indoor Shooting checks all the boxes as a top-tier shooting facility — from its ranges to training classes to winning customer service and for putting out the welcome mat for first-time shooters. They do it right across the board."

"We are deeply honored to receive NSSF's Five-Star Range Rating, a testament to our commitment to excellence at Independence Indoor Shooting," said Ryan Later, general manager. "This prestigious recognition reflects our dedication to providing a safe, welcoming and top-tier shooting experience for our community. Thank you to NSSF for this accolade and to our staff and customers who make our range a vibrant part of the Treasure Valley."

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

VUDOO GUN WORKS MOVES TO OKLAHOMA

Vudoo Gun Works announced the relocation of its headquarters and all manufacturing operations to Prague, Okla. This strategic move marks a key step in improving manufacturing efficiency, expanding research and development and increasing access to a skilled workforce.

"We are delighted to establish our new headquarters in Prague," said Jacob Herman, CEO of Vudoo Gun Works. "This move reflects our dedication to innovation, growth and customer service. Oklahoma is a pro-Second Amendment state where elected officials actively support the Second Amendment, making it an ideal location for Vudoo Gun Works."

Vudoo is moving into an existing facility in Prague with a history of

precision machining and firearms manufacturing. The company expects to create 60 jobs in Oklahoma, with operations scheduled to commence on Monday, August 18.

"We are excited to welcome Vudoo Gun Works to their new home in Prague," said John Budd, CEO of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce. "With the nation's first bachelor's degree in gunsmithing offered right down the road at Murray State, Oklahoma was the obvious choice for Vudoo's relocation. This announcement is a testament to our state being the best place in the country to build and grow a business, and to our support of the Second Amendment."

Construction and updates have already begun on the facility, which will allow Vudoo Gun Works to increase production capacity, optimize precision rifle development and better serve the growing



market of shooting sports enthusiasts, hunters and Second Amendment supporters across the country. The site will also feature on-site accuracy testing, maintaining the high-quality standards associated with the Vudoo name.

Customers and partners can continue to expect the same exceptional accuracy, reliability and craftsmanship that define every Vudoo firearm, along with exciting new product innovations on the horizon.

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

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SMITH & WESSON SECURES 2ND MONTANA HIGHWAY PATROL CONTRACT

The Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) has once again chosen Smith & Wesson to enhance its operational capabilities. While the MHP continues to utilize the M&P9 M2.0 as their primary duty pistol, they have also selected the Smith & Wesson M&P15 SBR platform as their patrol rifle of choice and the Gemtech Abyss models as their suppressor of choice.

"This year, 2025, marks the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Montana Highway Patrol. For most of those years, our Patrolmen, now Troopers, were armed with a Smith & Wesson revolver or pistol. In addition to the Smith & Wesson M&P9 M2.0 that our Troopers carry on their person, we have recently selected Smith & Wesson to replace our aging patrol rifles. We

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look forward to continuing the excellent relationship we've developed with this American company and truly appreciate the reliability of their firearms and the customer service they provide," said Major Chan Barry, operations commander, Montana Highway Patrol.

"Smith & Wesson takes pride in continuing the long-standing tradition of partnership with the Montana State Patrol, which has spanned many decades. Their ongoing use of our products, along with their inherent trust in our brand and after-sales support, stands as the highest form of endorsement. We are honored to serve as the standard patrol rifle and suppressor for the Montana State Patrol and look forward to many more years of this esteemed relationship," said Mark Smith, S&W president and CEO.

[/ smith-wesson.com](http://smith-wesson.com)

FEDERAL HONORED WITH 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS PIONEER AWARD

Federal Ammunition was recently honored with the 2025 4-H Shooting Sports Pioneer Award, which recognizes individuals or companies that have made significant contributions to the 4-H Shooting Sports program at a national level.

"It is my honor to recognize Federal Ammunition, a truly remarkable legacy of support," said Scott Stuhr, National 4-H Shooting Sports Program coordinator. "From the very beginning of when the national 4-H Shooting Sports Program was conceptualized in the late 1970s, Federal Ammunition has played a vital role in helping develop, guide and sustain it. Since its official start in 1980, Federal has been our longest continuous donor, over four decades of unwavering support that has impacted millions of young people nationwide. This award is a tribute to that lasting commitment and vision."



"We, at Federal, are extremely honored to be recognized with the National 4-H Shooting Sports Pioneer Award," said Jon Zinnel, director of community relations for Federal Ammunition. "This award celebrates our long-term involvement and commitment, especially in helping to develop new initiatives, expanding opportunities for youth participation or securing resources to support the program. The core values of 4-H Shooting Sports match what our company also holds in high regard, such as safety, responsibility, sportsmanship and positive youth development within shooting sports." **SI**

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

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B. MADDOX

NSSF Appoints Board Member

Brandon Maddox, founder and CEO of Silencer Central and BANISH Suppressors, was recently appointed to the NSSF Board of Governors.

"Brandon brings deep knowledge of the regulatory landscape and a passion for protecting the rights of sportsmen and women," said Joe Bartozzi, NSSF president and CEO. "His entrepreneurial leadership and commitment to our industry's growth will be valuable assets to the board of governors."

Maddox founded Silencer Central in 2005 and is also the founder of the South Dakota Firearms Industry Association.



J. GOLOB

Springfield Armory Welcomes Pro Shooter & Brand Ambassador

Springfield Armory announced world champion shooter, author and military veteran Julie Golob has joined the company as a brand ambassador and professional shooter. Alongside Springfield Armory's legendary pro shooter, Rob Leatham, Golob will employ her proven skills as a professional shooter and content creator in addition to helping guide new product development for the company in this new role.

Steve Kramer, Springfield Armory VP of marketing, shared, "With [Golob's] wealth of knowledge, voluminous skill and extensive experience in the shooting industry, she will bring an invaluable and unique perspective to the company's efforts to continuously innovate and grow."

Golob shares her passion for firearm safety, shooting sports, conservation and hunting as an instructor, consultant, speaker, ambassador and creator. As a

published author of a primer on shooting sports and a children's book on firearm safety, Golob has also written numerous articles for prominent firearms publications.

Over the course of her career, she has earned more than 170 championship titles and top scores in international, national and regional marksmanship competitions across seven different shooting disciplines. She is also the first and only 7 Division USPSA Ladies National Champion.



M. FLEMING

Christensen Arms Appoints President

Matt Fleming was recently appointed president of Christensen Arms. Since

joining the company, Fleming has immersed himself in the company's operations, working closely with the team at its Gunnison, Utah, facility and focusing on product development, dealer support and brand alignment.

"Matt's leadership, industry knowledge and deep respect for the customer experience make him the right person to help lead the company into its next phase of growth and innovation," said Vic Keller, chairman of Christensen Arms.

Fleming brings more than two decades of leadership experience in the shooting sports industry to the role, most recently serving as president and CEO of MidwayUSA.



S. MOORE

Kimber Mfg. Promotes COO

Kimber Mfg. promoted Scott Moore to the position of chief operations officer

from his former position as VP of operations.

Dennis Dougherty, board advisor for Kimber, stated, "Scott's promotion is exciting for Kimber. We look forward to

his lean engineering expertise crafting a sharp new edge to our manufacturing as Kimber enters the fall season and beyond."

Moore served seven years as the VP of operations for Kimber before accepting a role at E-One. While with Kimber, he was instrumental in the company's transition from Yonkers, N.Y. to Troy, Ala. His prior experience stems from roles at John Deere, Case New Holland and Whirlpool manufacturing.

He served with the 5th Infantry Division following his graduation from the United States Military Academy at West Point.



Zanders Taps Business Developer

In his new business development role at Zanders, Caleb Barnett will work with key management staff members focusing on driving strategic growth opportunities, strengthening key partnerships and expanding the company's reach into emerging markets across the U.S.

Danny Siegler, president and COO at Zanders, shared, "[Barnett will] play a key role in accelerating our growth initiatives and delivering greater value to our dealer network."

Prior to joining Zanders, Barnett oversaw marketing, key accounts and ballistics testing for Underwood Ammunition.



Ocufii Makes Key Appointments

To support its growth in the firearms industry abroad, Ocufii announced the appointment of Moises Fernandez as head of Latin American sales and hired Murray Road Agency for marketing services, where CEO

Tim Brandt will act as chief marketing and communications officer for the organization.

Fernandez has over 17 years of experience driving innovation in the M2M (Machine-to-Machine), IoT (Internet of Things) and Location-Based Services (LBS) industries.

Ocufii CEO William Sandoval said, "Ocufii and niche-industry business partners will benefit from [Fernandez's] forward-thinking mindset and strong foundation in both embedded systems and wireless communication protocols."

Brandt's role for Ocufii is to bring industry knowledge, experience and know-how to the most underserved area in firearms sales, marketing and manufacturing — technology.

"Tim's experience, knowledge and relationships has already opened so many doors for us," said Sandoval. "... his navigation of the sales channels and the support of scaling operations dovetails into our team's skillsets in an exciting manner."



K. BROWN

Darby Adds Acct. Coord.

Kaleb Brown has joined Darby Communications as an account coordinator to support marketing strategy and client services across the agency's Hunt/Fish

portfolio.

A graduate of Lander University, Brown brings hands-on experience from the outdoor and firearms retail marketing space combined with a lifelong passion for hunting, fishing and the outdoors.



K. BAUMANN

Katadyn Group Appoints CEO

Karl A. Baumann was recently named CEO of Katadyn Group. Since assuming the role, he has traveled extensively across Europe, North America

and Asia, meeting with customers, and engaging with employees across Katadyn Group's offices and manufacturing sites.

A statement released by the Katadyn Group board of directors included, "His leadership capabilities, global perspective and innovation-driven approach make him well suited to guide Katadyn Group

into its next chapter."

Baumann most recently served as CEO of Ferrum Process Systems Group. Prior to that, he led Desinga Axxess Industry Holding, Regent Beleuchtungstechnik as well as Enswico AG and spent more than 15 years with Holcim Group, where he held several senior management positions in international roles and served as a member of the European Executive Committee.



Azimuth Technology Grows Team

Azimuth Technology welcomed Dustin Emholtz to its business development team where he will play a key role in advancing strategic initiatives, overseeing critical customer accounts and driving growth across new and existing product lines.

Tommy Thacker, Azimuth COO, stated, "[Emholtz's] experience, leadership and tactical insight are exactly what we need as we continue to scale our business and pursue new opportunities across commercial, government and new markets."

A U.S. Army veteran, Emholtz has over 20 years of industry experience from key roles at DPMS, LUTH-AR, Element Arms, APF & Dimensional Experts Manufacturing.



K. MOROS

Second Amendment Foundation Hires Legal Research Education Director

The Second Amendment Foundation (SAF) hired Kostas Moros as the director of legal research

and education. He is responsible for producing original research and policy positions for publication, coordinating and preparing amicus briefs and handling or assisting litigation as needed. He will also help identify educational opportunities for the organization and see those through to completion.

SAF Executive Director Adam Kraut shared, "We're excited to have Kostas join the team as a full-time employee and look forward to watching SAF's research and education programs grow under his

leadership."

Moros brings 10 years of experience to the SAF team with six years directly litigating Second Amendment cases in California. He is a member of several federal circuit courts, as well as the Supreme Court Bar and has authored numerous amicus briefs, a law review article and dozens of articles on gun policy.



K. STANTON

SK Guns Names Operations Director

As the director of operations for SK Guns, Kirk Stanton will oversee daily operations and develop strategies to

improve functionality and productivity. He is responsible for setting expectations across all departments to foster a cohesive and agile workflow.

Simon Khiabani, owner and founder of SK Guns, shared, "The experience [Stanton] brings to the table is exactly what we need as we continue to grow and expand our team and our capabilities."

Stanton's career began with the Putnam County Sheriff's Office, where he spent 10 years in service. He then became the owner/operator of Woody's Gunworks Firearms Refinishing. Most recently, he served as the GM of Top Gun Supply in St. Augustine, Fla.



D. MEDIGE

PROOF Research Names Account Manager

In his new role as the eastern U.S. account manager for PROOF Research, Dave Medige will focus on expanding

PROOF's footprint across the Eastern U.S. and delivering world-class support to dealers and end users alike.

"[Medige's] strong industry background and commitment to customer relationships make him a great fit for PROOF as we continue to grow and support our partners across the region," commented Brandon Hulzebosch, director of sales at PROOF Research.

Medige brings more than three decades of experience to the role from sales leadership positions at SDS Imports, Kimber Mfg. and FN America. **SI**



BY MASSAD AYOUB

SUPPRESSORS FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES

Whether we call them “silencers” as their inventor did, “suppressors,” or even “mufflers” (as they’re known in the United Kingdom), devices that reduce the sound signature of firearms are more popular than ever. They’re generally touted for hunting and target practice, but the fact remains they can be useful for legitimate defensive purposes.

While typically too bulky to adapt to concealed carry handguns, the defensive-minded customer can see (or be informed of by you and your staff) several good reasons to have them on a home-defense handgun or long gun. However, they’ll also have questions as to whether their use of the same can have negative consequences in court.

In Dec. 2024, Luigi Mangione was arrested for the murder of a big pharma CEO on a Manhattan street. The fatal shooting was captured on a security camera. The assassin shot his targeted victim from behind ... with a silenced pistol.

That shooting created some long-lasting headlines — and didn’t do any good for those of us in the Second Amendment movement who are pushing for laws to make suppressors easier to purchase by law-abiding private citizens. Mangione has pleaded not guilty to the murder charges he faces. In the coming months, his trial will dominate the headlines. We may be

sure this will trigger a wave of media condemnation of what anti-gunners will certainly paint as a “tool of assassins for silent murders.”

Yet for all this, there are some excellent tactical reasons to have a suppressor on a home-defense firearm or a “ranch rifle” carried in a hunter’s or farmer’s pickup truck.

Let’s look at both sides of the issue: the tactical aspects (and very real safety aspects) of silencers, and how they might be defended in court.

TACTICAL ADVANTAGES

Let’s assume a burglar alarm or security camera has alerted your customer to the fact there is one or more presumably violent felons who’ve just invaded his or her home. The customer has every right to use lethal weapons to defend themselves and other innocent members of the household. Even if they’ve called 9-1-1 or trusted their alarm system to automatically alert the police, there is the matter of response time (which is often quoted as 11 minutes on average and may take considerably longer, especially in rural areas).

There is an excellent chance there will be gunfire. The defending homeowner needs all of his or her senses to determine where in the house the deadly intruder(s) may be as the dynamic situation unfolds. The blast of a powerful firearm reverberating inside

◀ Featuring lightweight titanium construction (7 oz.), the SilencerCo S98 boasts an “eccentric design” to sit below the shooter’s line of sight. (Image: SilencerCo)

an enclosed space, such as a hallway, can be literally deafening.

Many years ago, I was among several gun writers attending a SureFire presentation in which they introduced their then-new line of silencers. We were told why a company that specialized in tactical lights had decided to manufacture sound suppressors. Through their law enforcement customers, SureFire was made aware of many cases where police officers who’d had to fire powerful guns in close quarters had to go out on disability because of hearing loss related directly to the incident.

And even before we consider long-term hearing loss from such an incident, why stun a primary sensory acquisition at the worst possible moment in a life-or-death confrontation? Many and perhaps most of your customers won’t have considered this in their home-defense plans — it makes good, ethical sense to remind them!

This is particularly true for the increasing number of Americans who have replaced the traditional home-defense shotgun with the AR-15 rifle. The hard crack of a .223 Remington can cause the ears to ring even through ear protectors on the range — what will its effects be in an enclosed space with no hearing protection?

Similar thinking several years ago drove SIG SAUER to start selling its own line of suppressors, primarily for law-enforcement carbines. Ruger recently announced a partnership with a silencer manufacturer (Dead Air Silencers) as well.

ABATING FEARS OF SOUND, RECOIL

Remind your customers home-defense guns are pool weapons, which might be used in an emergency by various authorized members of the household, not all of whom will be seasoned shooters who’ve become inured to gunfire. What causes less experienced shooters to anticipate their shots, jerk their triggers and miss? Fear of that ear-splitting sound, and fear of recoil.

Suppressors reduce recoil, as well as soften the sound report. This is true with any firearm: A Joe Biden Signature Model double-barrel shotgun, as well as a 5.56mm AR-15. As Jeff Cooper famously

said, "The purpose of shooting is to hit, and it's all the more true when firing in a life-or-death defensive situation."

An added benefit stemming from this is that the quieter sound and lighter recoil of a suppressed defense weapon encourages more practice among the members of the family who are less enthusiastic about range practice.

Finally, consider this: When looking down the barrel of a homeowner's defense weapon, might a violent intruder be more intimidated into flight or surrender if something about the gun told them, "The person pointing that thing at me looks like a professional?" A silencer might just have exactly this bloodshed-preventing deterrent effect.

THE STIGMA

If you've been in the business a while, you've probably lost count of customers who had been around guns all their lives but were shocked

to suddenly discover it's legal in most states to own silencers, or indeed, even machine guns. Such is the legacy of the Firearms Act of 1934, which demonized those tools, along with short-barreled shotguns and rifles. Their fear that a jury of non-gun people would associate such things with gangsters, terrorists and assassins is justified.

The arguments above in favor of suppressors, if properly presented by defense counsel, *should* neutralize such prejudice. The defense would be able to show silencers are now widely used by hunters and recreational shooters, and cases such as Mangione's are extremely rare. As an expert witness who also teaches the liability side of firearms, I'm often asked about silencer cases, and my answer is that it's unexplored territory: I can't find a case of an armed citizen using a suppressor in a self-defense situation.

In every case I've found of a legitimately owned Class III fully

automatic weapon being used for self-defense, they have at a minimum been presented to the Grand Jury and have sometimes gone to trial. The latter have always resulted in acquittal, but with very substantial legal fees. The same results might arise with other NFA weapons.

The increasing prevalence of suppressors on hunting rifles, as seen on TV in outdoor sports shows and in general hunting/outdoorsman magazines would help defend against "assassination weapon" accusations, as will the increasing use of suppressors on police patrol rifles. I for one think suppressors will be defensible in court.

Of course, there is no need to worry about surviving criminal trials and lawsuits until after one has survived the home invasion. For the reasons cited above, I think our industry can make a compelling logical argument suppressors can indeed improve survival odds for the embattled law-abiding citizen. **SI**



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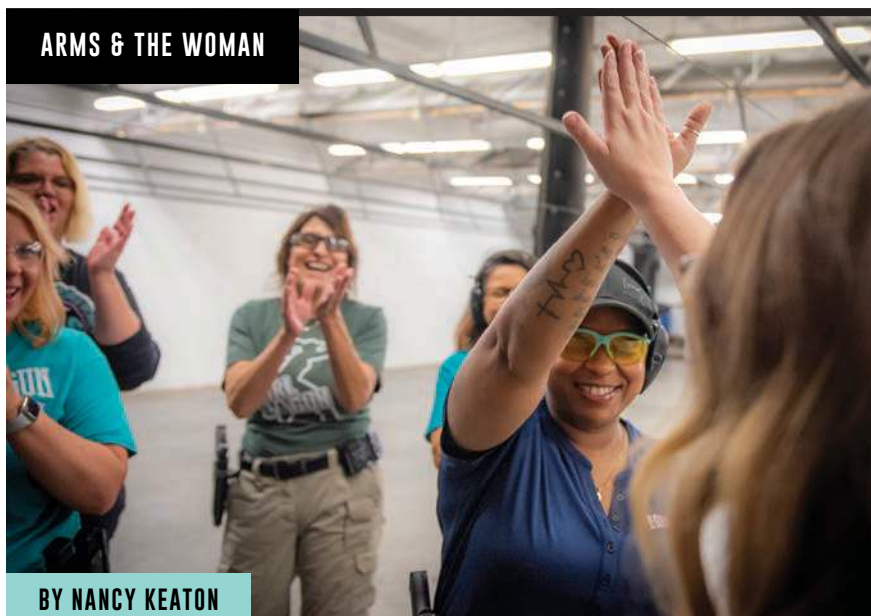
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BY NANCY KEATON

AIMING HIGHER: HOW AG & AG IS RESHAPING WOMEN'S SHOOTING

It wasn't exactly the "dark ages," but in 2011 women were still a rare sight on the shooting line. When Julianna Crowder noticed the absence of other women at IDPA matches and concealed carry classes, she was inspired to host a "Girls' Night Out at the Range" to make a welcoming place for them. With this first get-together, A Girl & A Gun (AG & AG) was born.

One month later, Robyn Sandoval's husband learned of Crowder's next event and signed Sandoval up. That single gesture changed her life — and soon after, it helped change the industry.

Today, Robyn Sandoval, alongside COO Sandra Woodruff and Training Director Tatiana Whitlock, shares how AG & AG has grown into a national powerhouse for women in shooting sports, and what lies ahead.

LEADERSHIP TEAM BACKGROUNDS

Robyn Sandoval, President/CEO/Owner

"I don't know if I was more scared of shooting the gun or meeting other women who shot guns or going to a dirty gun range — or all of it," Sandoval recalled with a laugh, describing her first time at the range with Crowder. "But I went, and I pretended to know

what I was doing."

That moment marked the beginning of something much bigger. After Crowder was featured in *IDPA Magazine*, instructors from across the country reached out to express interest in replicating the model.

"It just turned into a 'thing' almost overnight," Sandoval noted. "We had to decide what to call it — a club, a chapter, an affiliate, a franchise. We had to make it up, it didn't exist."

As interest surged, Sandoval's unique skill sets proved critical. With a background in publishing — writing law books and auditing manuals for banks — she had already led a transition to online systems and marketing models.

"I had to learn to code, design, market, make it interesting. I just took my day job and applied it to firearms training," she shared.

In 2013, she and Crowder became 50/50 partners in the business and grew the club into the nation's largest firearms organization for women. A decade later, Crowder moved on to new passions, and Sandoval bought out her share.

"It was an opportunity to guide AG & AG forward in new ways," Sandoval said.

Today, Sandoval is the steady hand and passionate voice guiding

◀ Sonja Washington, facilitator of the AG & AG Bell County – TX Chapter, high-fives a fellow AG & AG peer after finishing a training exercise at the range.

AG & AG into its next era, one built on community, empowerment and industry collaboration.

Sandra Woodruff, COO

Woodruff joined AG & AG in 2019 and became COO Jan. 2024. With a deep background in systems administration, she was the right leader to modernize operations and improve internal processes.

"We needed to be able to collect facilitator credentials and report on them efficiently," she explained. "Moving to a product that allowed our facilitators and A-Team members to update their records was a big deal."

She also oversaw the selection of a new accounting firm and the adoption of technologies to streamline AG & AG's operations.

"It's all the behind-the-scenes stuff," Woodruff shared, "but it makes us more efficient and transparent as an organization."

Tatiana Whitlock, Training Director

Whitlock first encountered AG & AG in 2013 at its National Conference.

"That was my first AG & AG event, and it has been an incredible journey ever since," she recalled.

After Crowder and Sandoval read about her in the NRA's *Woman's New Energy* program, they invited her to speak and instruct at the conference.

"Being surrounded by 300 women who were dedicated, passionate and energized completely shifted my understanding of what it meant to be a female shooter in the U.S. They broke every stereotype," she said. "That immediately sold me on A Girl & A Gun and its mission."

When longtime Training Director Kathy Jackson retired, Whitlock was asked to step into the role.

"Those were big shoes to fill," she admitted. "But the growth I've seen in AG & AG, both in numbers and in the depth and merit of our training, has been profound."

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR THE FUTURE Sandoval

Sandoval's vision continues to drive AG & AG's evolution. She's currently

working with the NSSF and NRA to formalize partnerships that will bring AG & AG chapters into more ranges and deliver foundational programs like First Shots and Women on Target through AG & AG's network.

The AG & AG National Conference is already one of the most sought-after events in the shooting community, selling out in 30 minutes this year with 750 students and over 500 on the waitlist. While Sandoval doesn't plan to significantly expand capacity, she's introducing new "tent cities" for additional workshops and dry-fire classes to broaden offerings.

"We've become the largest women's organization in the country dedicated to training," she stated. "Everyone wants to be at our conference; students, instructors, vendors. It's electric. It's magical."

“
Our membership is approaching 9,000. My goal is for A Girl & A Gun to be the first brand people think of when they think of women and firearms.”

Robyn Sandoval • President/CEO/Owner
AG & AG

Reflecting on AG & AG's rapid rise, she said, "I'm just grateful to deliver quality content that people find valuable. Our membership is approaching 9,000 — larger than any other women's shooting organization. My goal is for A Girl & A Gun to be the first brand people think of when they think of women and firearms."

Woodruff

Woodruff is focused on continuing improvements behind the scenes.

"Since I came on, we've hired more staff to take on responsibilities Robyn used to juggle herself. It's allowed her to focus on strategic growth and innovation," she reasoned. "And now

we have a strong board of respected members helping guide our future."

Whitlock

Whitlock is proud of what AG & AG offers its members.

"We provide more than just a place for women to shoot. It's solid training, skill development and encouragement to pursue opportunities beyond the range," she remarked.

She highlights programs like Sniper Academy, Upland Adventures and DRIFT Academy, a unique blend of driving and shooting.

"What we're doing now is light-years beyond what existed a decade ago. And that's the secret: continue offering engaging, diverse opportunities that meet women where they are and inspire them to grow."

HOW RANGES CAN BENEFIT

When Sandoval speaks to range owners and retailers, she emphasizes women are not a one-time sale.

"Women aren't a transactional opportunity; they're a relational one," she asserted. "They'll come in for training, but they'll also buy their firearm, safe, cleaning kits and ammo. And they'll keep coming back."

She points to NSSF's 2014 study, which found if training is presented at the point of sale, women close nearly 100% of the time.

"That's why having an AG & AG chapter and trained facilitators at your range makes a difference," Sandoval advised. "It brings women into the community and supports the business, too."

AG & AG's model is designed to benefit everyone involved.

"We're transparent about that," she added. "We want to grow our membership. We want ranges to gain loyal customers. We want instructors to have students. We all win when we work together."

AG & AG remains a beacon for what's possible when vision meets dedication — and when women are given a safe, supportive space to learn, grow and lead. **SI**

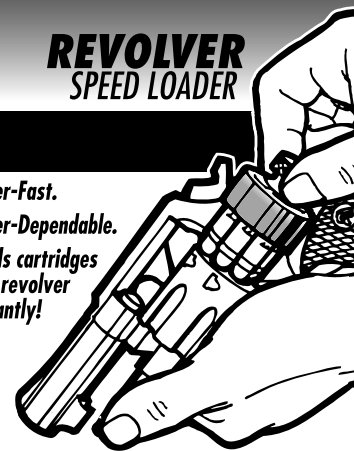
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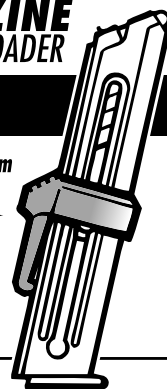
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BY ANNE CONRAD

ARE YOU EMBRACING THE “REVOLVER REVOLUTION?”

The handgun industry is evolving interestingly, especially regarding revolver sales. The dynamics have shifted, and your average revolver buyer is probably not who it used to be. There will always be wheelgun fanatics, but in the past few years, handgun buyers were a little shy of revolvers because semi-automatic handguns were the shiny objects in the gun case.

A shift in how we think about revolvers, especially for personal carry, has begun. After interviewing revolver experts, I came to the conclusion revolvers are cool again!

Ken Campbell, CEO of Gunsite Academy in Paulden, Ariz., shared demand for revolvers has risen so high it has led to a new class being offered for students.

“We have seen this (rising revolver popularity) for several years at Gunsite Academy, even to the point of offering revolver-only courses, so we can really ‘get in the weeds’ with the students and their revolvers,” he said. “Many people

may claim they carry a full-sized or mid-sized pistol all the time, but my bet is they have a small revolver in their pocket or waistband when they make a quick trip to the store.”

Darryl Bolke and Bryan Eldridge with American Fighting Revolver (AFR) have been instrumental in the “revolver revolution.” During my discussions with Bolke about revolvers, I have appreciated his frank honesty regarding his assessment of the industry. In our last conversation, we discussed how gun stores can meet the needs of their revolver customers and what their analytics regarding wheelguns reveal.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS & 50 STATES

Bolke feels like the resurgence of revolver popularity is threefold.

“Let’s be honest: the reality is many people walking into gun stores these days want a ‘fire extinguisher’ to protect themselves. They want something they can load and put in the drawer,” he stated.

◀ Revolvers have been enjoying a rebound for myriad reasons. One of them, according to Darryl Bolke, is their status as a “50-state-legal” firearm. “[It’s] a huge benefit for people who don’t keep up on gun regulations regularly,” he contended.

Another factor in the popularity of revolvers is in the states where regulations have strengthened regarding semi-automatic handguns, revolvers are a clear alternative.

“Having a 50-state-legal gun is a huge benefit for people who don’t keep up on gun regulations regularly,” Bolke continued.

Revolvers can appeal to industry-adjacent consumers — such as outdoorsmen.

“There are a lot of people who are not traditional firearms people who realize they need a gun. Hikers, mountain bikers, fishermen and other non-hunting outdoorsy people see revolvers as a little more palatable way to protect themselves in the woods from snakes and coyotes than semi-automatic pistols,” he said.

““

Let’s be honest: the reality is many people walking into gun stores these days want a ‘fire extinguisher’ to protect themselves. They want something they can load and put in the drawer.”

Darryl Bolke • Co-Owner
American Fighting Revolver

THE ANSWER SHOULD BE “YES”

There’s a sales tip here: Pay attention to your customers’ lifestyles and get clear on where they might live. Are they in a city, or do they live in a rural area? What do they want to accomplish with their new gun?

People love to demonize things, especially firearms. At the recent A Girl

“

Find out why your customer wants a firearm, what its purpose will be and their skill level by carefully listening to them. Ask questions and spend the time digging for the best answer.

& A Gun National Convention, Bolke spoke to women regarding their choices with handguns.

“There are pros and cons to each type, and a wise salesperson will fit the firearm to the person and not

the other way around,” he said. “The answer should be, ‘Yes, both are okay’ — not one or the other. Fit what you are trying to do with the gun, not what a gun writer or a salesperson says you want.”

Another sales tip: Find out why your customer wants a firearm, what its purpose will be and their skill level by carefully listening to them. Ask questions and spend the time digging for the best answer.

GROWING SKUS

A firearm writer for over 40 years, Rob Garrett hosts Sunday Night Snubs live on Instagram at 9 p.m. each Sunday. He offered some great insight and a different perspective on the renewed popularity of revolvers.

“Boredom seems to be one factor in the renewal of revolver popularity,” Garrett observed. “People might be bored with semi-automatic pistols; they all start looking the same.”

He continued, “In a sense,

people are looking back to the old days. Certainly, Colt would not be introducing their new Python and Anaconda in two different calibers, nor would Smith & Wesson introduce its Ultimate Carry in two calibers. The Taurus Timber is another excellent example. If there were no resurgence, then you would not see all these companies making new models. You’d see them reducing SKUs, and instead, it seems every year, the SKUs are increasing.”

Does your gun shop also have a range? Do you rent guns so people can try them? Have as many of the most popular revolvers (especially snubs and other carry models) available for customers to try.

Revolvers are not going away and are showing significant gains in popularity. Their simple and classic design gives beginning shooters an easier gun to start with and older enthusiasts so many directions to take as they collect their favorites. **SI**

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“SILENCE” IS GOLDEN

By Bryan Hendricks

Booming Market Cracks Sound Barrier For Retailers, Manufacturers

Sound suppressors are a hot growth segment in the firearms industry, and this sounds like a ringing register to savvy marketers. All the cool kids are using suppressors, including squirrel hunters who use them on .22-cal. rimfire rifles and big-game hunters who want to reduce their sonic footprint and preserve their hearing. Even handgunners use them with increasing frequency.

Suppressors have been available for decades, but demand is soaring because the process for obtaining them is so much easier, contends Josh Hunter, an associate at Fort Thompson Sporting Goods in Sherwood, Ark.

“The demand for suppressors has skyrocketed!” Hunter exclaimed. “Five years ago, I think we sold 14 suppressors over the course of the entire year. Last year we sold over 340. People have always been interested, but it’s easier now as far as the paperwork and applications process are concerned.”

Formerly, a prospective silencer buyer had to be fingerprinted by a law enforcement agency, Hunter said. He had to obtain proper passport-type photographs. He had to snail-mail a check along with a printed application to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

“And then you had to send everything off and hope it arrived,” he recalled. “The only indicator it had was when your check was processed. These days, as long

have an eForms account, I can get your fingerprints. I can get your photos. I can build the entire draft here. You look it over. I look it over. We can send it, and you're done. It's gone from being a couple days' process on the low end to maybe 20 or 30 minutes."

MACH-PLUS TERRITORY

Kristopher DiMauro, co-owner of Guerrilla Armament in Jacksonville, N.C., agrees streamlining the application process has pushed the suppressor market into Mach-plus territory.

"We invested a bunch money on a digital fingerprint reader, and that blew up our suppressor sales exponentially," DiMauro said. "Once the electronic

filing kicked into place, it was a little slow burn, but now we're selling close to 2,000 to 3,000 suppressors a year. The timeline (for approval) around the beginning of eForm went from eight to 12 months to three to six months. It continued for two or three years, but then something happened where wait times just disappeared. Like the flip of a switch, we started getting approval in days. When someone got approved in a couple days, they bought another one."

As with any business, location is everything. A retailer in a target-rich, avid firearms environment stands to sell more inventory than a retailer in a dabbler environment. Guerrilla Armament is near Camp Lejeune, a

giant U.S. Marine Corps base populated by young firearms enthusiasts where turnover is constant.

"The Silencer Shop says we are the number-one dealer in North Carolina," DiMauro shared. "It's extremely helpful being near Camp Lejeune. Marines are 18 to 30 years old, and for the most part, Marines have nothing but disposable income, as long as they don't have a new Ford Mustang at 28% APR."

“**[SUPPRESSORS] ARE ABSOLUTELY PULLING THEIR OWN WEIGHT AS FAR AS AN ITEM THAT'S WORTH KEEPING IN THE STORE.**”

Josh Hunter • Associate
Fort Thompson Sporting Goods
Sherwood, Ark.

With the rise in demand and in profitability, the number of silencer manufacturers has increased. Now, consumers can match a silencer to a specific platform and specific application.

"Now there are a ton of manufacturers making silencers," DiMauro noted. "Each one is kind of different and unique. With 3D printing, everybody is creating niche designs

about how they're trapping gas, letting it expand and slowing it down."

The consumer base for suppressors is diverse and dynamic, he added. It truly is a democratic marketplace.

"It used to be only the tactical guys who were into machine guns wanted suppressors," DiMauro recalled. "It's everybody now. Yesterday, I sold a .22-caliber suppressor to a 48-year-old woman. I sold a SureFire RC2 to a Marine who turned 21 and wants to finish a clone build of a Mark 18 general issue rifle."

POPULAR APPLICATIONS

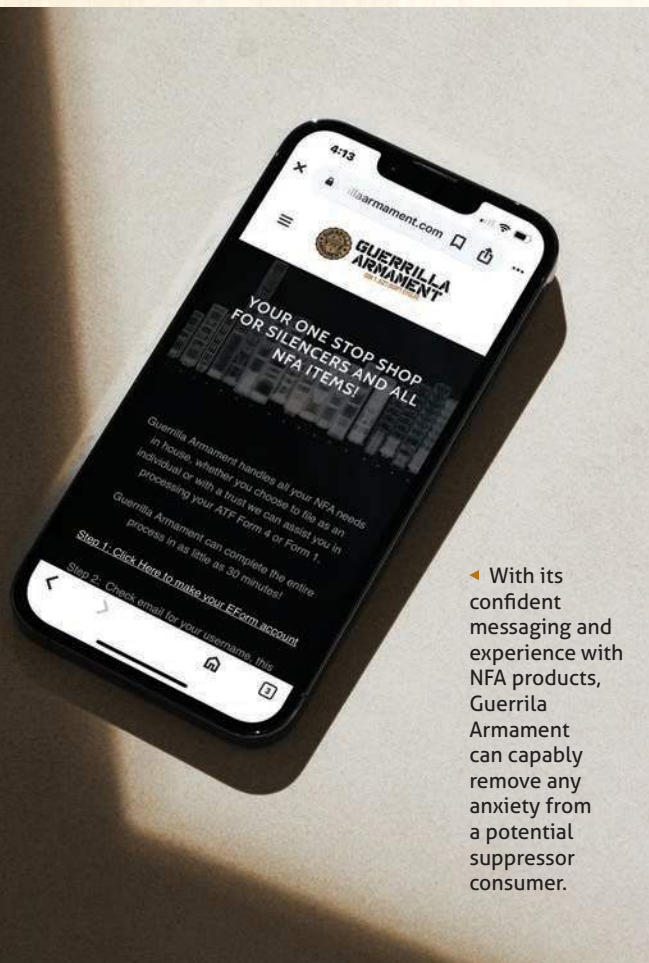
West Texas isn't exactly a dabbler market for suppressors. It's more like a boutique market, said Danny Anderson, owner of SK Arms in Midland, Texas.

"Our area has a lot of varmint hunters, but this is the 'Oil Patch,'" he explained. "I have a lot of wealthier clients who take stuff to hunt elk too, but locally they hunt hogs and varmints."

Because they run multiple platforms, they match an appropriate suppressor to their firearm according to the application.

"A lot of people buy multiple suppressors," Anderson shared. "Back in the day, because of the paperwork, people wanted to buy one silencer and make it work for as many guns as possible. Now we try to educate people when you do that, you get a jack of all trades and master of none: A silencer not able to work optimally on any of your platforms."

The most popular



◀ With its confident messaging and experience with NFA products, Guerrilla Armament can capably remove any anxiety from a potential suppressor consumer.



In five years, Ft. Thompson Sporting Goods in Sherwood, Ark., has enjoyed an exponential increase in suppressor sales. The store stocks a diverse supply to provide maximum performance on multiple platforms. Josh Hunter (pictured) says a streamlined application process has turbocharged the suppressor market.

applications, Anderson said, are for .22 cal., .30 cal. and 9mm. Diligent Defense is Anderson's most popular steel silencer. Otter Creek is also popular.

"My market these days is cheaper, simple designs that work on bolt actions, 3D-printed, higher-flow silencers," he explained. "You've got a big gap in the \$900-\$1,100 price point. Everything is expensive or cheap depending on the

application."

DiMauro says Guerrilla Armament stocks 300 suppressors in 20 different brands. The Dead Air Sierra 5 is his top seller, followed by the Otter Creek Labs Polonium 556. The SilencerCo Sparrow 22 is a popular multi-platform "can."

"We sell them on everything," DiMauro said. "Most of the time it's rifles, but if they want to

mount it on a pistol, we sell them a Ruger Mk. 4 or KelTec P17. It's a fantastic suppressor host."

EDUCATION KEY

Despite the soaring popularity of suppressors, Josh Hunter contends customers are not particularly knowledgeable about them. He is constantly educating buyers about the best "can" for their intended application.

DIVING INTO NFA STUFF IS THE BEST THING WE'VE EVER DONE. I DOVE SO FAR INTO IT, I CHANGED MY SIGNS. GUERRILLA ARMAMENT, THE NFA EXPERTS IS ON OUR SIGN NOW."

Kristopher DiMauro • Co-owner
Guerrilla Armament
Jacksonville, N.C.

"Everyone always comes in looking for a 300 Blackout suppressor," he informed. "Seventy percent of the time, this is where all these conversations start. It's a

great caliber to suppress and it works really, really well, but it comes with some challenges people aren't aware of. You can hunt pigs with it. You can hunt deer with it. It's not going to beat your kids up."

Hunter declared a sizable portion of his customers have pivoted from 300 Blackout suppressors to those for .45 Colt platforms to great effect.

"I advise your readers to take a good hard look at .45 Colt lever actions. The number of people who come in looking for 300 Blackout platforms and then leave with .45 Colt platforms and come back to tell me just how thrilled they were they went that route is way more than I can count," he said. "It's a much easier starter jaunt into suppressors than 300 Blackout because you don't have to worry about gas systems or any kind of pressures or back pressure or getting gas in your face. It's quiet, and it's very, very easy."

Despite their popularity, Fort Thompson Sporting Goods does not emphasize suppressors, Hunter said, but it's slowly changing.

"I would say suppressors are probably not all that dissimilar to things like flashlights, lasers — that kind of thing — but the margins on suppressors are pretty decent," he claimed. "I think it was last year we sat down and had a conversation about suppressors, and the general understanding is we didn't make any money on them, which

is not at all the case. In fact, they are significantly more lucrative to sell than firearms. It was an eye-opener because the impression had always been we really just kept them to bring people in. Until three or four years ago, that was 100% accurate. Within the past few years, sales have gone up and up and up. They are absolutely pulling their own weight as far as an item that's worth keeping in the store."

A BACKBONE

For Guerrilla Arms, suppressors are the backbone of the business.

"Diving into NFA (National Firearms Act) stuff is the best thing we've ever done,"

DiMauro shared. "I dove so far into it, I changed my signs. *Guerrilla Armament, The NFA Experts* is on our sign now."

Several years ago, Guerilla Arms carried SKUs from "six to seven brands," according to DiMauro. Today, Guerilla Arms carries 300-400 "in stock right now" from 20 different manufacturers, he elaborated.

"Since we pay attention to trends and since we were on the forefront of the suppressor game, we saw it coming. When it did happen, we went headfirst into it," DiMauro recalled. "When lead times dropped, I invested \$50,000 in more suppressors. Luckily, we have great relationships

with sales reps and other manufacturers, so we never ran out of cans."

SK Arms reserves a large section of its facility for storing suppressors, informed Danny Anderson, manager. He, like every other suppressor vendor interviewed for this article, said he was waiting for the passage and enactment of the so-called, "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," which would remove suppressors from the purview of the National Firearms Act to a less-regulated category under the Hearing Protection Act. The legislation was being debated when this article was written.

"Suppressors will be in incredibly high demand

if it happens," he advised. "Manufacturers will take years to catch up."

Uncertainty over the bill did cause a slowdown in suppressor sales during the summer, our sources said, because of speculation the heavy tax on suppressors would be eliminated. This would significantly reduce the price of suppressing a firearm, so customers waited.

"People love saving money," DiMauro concluded. "They're waiting for legislation that may or may not happen. There will still be a background check and restrictions. I think people look too far into this type of legislation and let it determine what they buy." **\$I**



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NAVIGATING THE USED GUN MARKET



By Tim Barker

Most customers walking into a gun store are searching for something shiny and new. But it doesn't mean there's not a lucrative opportunity for guns that have seen a little — or even a lot — of use.

When managed properly, the used gun market can expand your inventory (sometimes with no upfront investment cost) and provide customers access to unique collectibles — while also offering higher profit margins.

Consider display cases filled with new GLOCKS — each promising to return around 12% when they sell. Now, compare this with a used GLOCK, where you'll clear 30 to 50%, depending on what you paid for it.

"It's good money," noted Jess Hancock, owner of The Wichita Gun Club in Wichita, Kan.

His shop takes an energetic approach to the market, pulling in used firearms from customers and estate sales. The key is making sure

your outlay is low enough a profit is guaranteed.

"We start at the 50% mark and people sell their guns to us for it. Then you double your money," Hancock said. "You feel a little bit bad. But you know, at the same time, we didn't force them to sell it to us."

Why are people selling their guns? Hancock sees a lot of activity from families of deceased gunowners wanting to rid themselves of collections.

"These men are passing away, and their families don't want their guns," Hancock explained. "I mean, they don't want them at all. And they want [to get] them out of their houses as quickly as they can."

In Oklahoma City, much of the used gun activity at H&H Shooting Sports is driven by the economy.

"I see a lot of people bringing stuff in because they need cash," observed Mike Rust, H&H general manager. "It's almost always the same story. They hate to sell it, but they need the money for bills."

At Country Attic Treasures in South Lebanon, Ohio, the economy is also a

major driver. Often it shows up when a customer wants a new gun, but doesn't have enough disposable income, said owner Scott Ready.

"In a tough economy; folks looking to upgrade will sell to create some extra dollars because they have their eye on something else," he stated. "Before pulling the trigger on a purchase, they'll say, 'I've got these other three guns. What can we do?'"

PURCHASE OR CONSIGNMENT

Is there any other category of product that doesn't really cost anything upfront? It's one of the more interesting dynamics of the used gun market — depending on how you want to approach it.

You can buy guns outright from a customer. Or you can go the consignment route, where you essentially enter into a partnership with the customer.

The latter approach has worked well for Country Attic, where Ready prefers to emphasize new gun sales.

"Used guns offer us an opportunity to increase the breadth of our inventory without having to invest inventory dollars to do it," he said. "So, everything we have in the used gun category is sold on a consignment agreement."

With the store taking only 20% of the sales price, the approach has the

added benefit of being better for the customer, Ready argues. When buying a gun from a customer, you have a strong motivation to pay as little as possible to offset the associated risks. This equation shifts with consignments, since both the store and customer share similar risks and rewards.

"We believe very strongly we want to build long-term relationships," Ready emphasized. "So, we like to stay aligned with their needs."

On the other hand, there's certainly more profit potential if you simply buy the guns outright. It's the preferred option for Rust and H&H Shooting in Oklahoma.

Where consigned guns net a 20% take, the store generally aims for a 30% return on store-owned used guns. It does require the initial outlay of cash to cover the purchases, but Rust sees it as a worthwhile tradeoff.

"I'm paying my guys a commission to sell it. I'm insuring it while it's here. I'm safeguarding it. I have to check it in. I've spent the same amount on labor," Rust shared. "If I can make 30% instead of 20%, I think it's worth spending our money on."

EVALUATING COLLECTIBLES

When a customer shows up wanting to sell a GLOCK or any other firearm currently in production, it's fairly easy to come up with an offer.

Look at your store's own sales history as well as completed auctions on sites like GunBroker.com to get a solid idea of what it can be expected to sell for after it hits your shelves.

But what about the oddities, like World War II handguns, old Colts and Smith & Wesson revolvers and higher-end custom rifles? These firearms are a golden opportunity to inject some uniqueness into the inventory. If you aren't careful, though, you could end up paying more than you can hope to recoup.

"WHEN MANAGED PROPERLY, THE USED GUN MARKET CAN EXPAND YOUR INVENTORY AND PROVIDE CUSTOMERS ACCESS TO UNIQUE COLLECTIBLES — WHILE ALSO OFFERING HIGHER PROFIT MARGINS."

"We love selling and buying old military guns," said Rust, in Oklahoma City. "Pricing those can be a challenge."

Take the case of early 1911s. You need to know if you are dealing with something all original, or something that was worked over several times by military armorers.

"You almost have to disassemble one to prove it's 100% authentic," Rust informed. "It could be the difference between a \$1,200 shooter and a \$3,000 collectible."

One of the keys to evaluating these firearms is taking a more deliberate approach. A GLOCK seller may get to walk out the door with a pocketful of cash, but the fellow who brings in a handful of German Lugers will need to be patient.

When this happened at H&H (it was a collection of more than 15 Lugers),



The Wichita Gun Club takes an energetic approach to used gun sales, acquiring them from customers and estate sales. They bring high-end quality to the shop's inventory.



Jess Hancock has developed a knack for acquiring used gun inventory through estate sales. He even travels to other states to evaluate and make offers on larger collections. He's learned through experience, though, to offer bids based on bulk — rather than individual guns in an estate, which can be used as leverage to increase bids elsewhere.

they took photos of each gun along with detailed notes. Then, after a few days, they were able to send an educated offer for the collection.

"I had a chance to research each and every one and do my due diligence to figure out exactly what I was looking at," Rust recalled.

Where to do this due diligence can vary, based on the gun in question. Completed auctions (rather than active listings) on sites like GunBroker.com and Rock Island Auctions can be particularly helpful. Also, consider enlisting the help of employees and customers who have expertise with certain types of guns.

It's been extremely effective for Jess Hancock, in Wichita.

"I have an AK guy. I'll send him a couple of pictures and a text and he's spot on," Hancock shared. "He just lives and breathes AKs and knows everything about them and gets me right in the ballpark of what I should pay and what it'll sell for."

He has other guys he can turn to for 1911s and Smith & Wesson wheelguns, where an extra screw in the cover plate can mean a significant difference in value.

"One of the things I learned being a cop for 30 years: If you don't know it, don't wing it. It'll get you in trouble every time," Hancock advised.

ESTATE SALES

The easiest way to bring used guns into the shop is by letting customers

know you buy them. These guns will trickle into the store, usually one or two at a time. It may be all you can handle — depending on how much space can be allocated to a used gun display.

But to turbocharge your used gun inventory, consider dipping a toe into the estate market. Those families who suddenly find themselves with collections of guns and related accessories want nothing more than for someone to take them off their hands.

With the consignment-only approach used by Country Attic Treasures, there will likely be some limits to how many guns you can absorb at any one time. When dealing with large collections, Ready's strategy is to divide everything into three categories — guns that will sell easily, guns that might take a while and guns the store has no interest in.

"We'll carve it into chunks like that, and we'll take one chunk at a time and kind of work through it, based on the client's goals," he explained. "Some folks just want to get it turned as quickly as possible. With others, there's no rush. They want to get every dollar out of it that they can."

For a competitive edge (if you are bidding against others), consider the aggressively friendly approach used by both H&H Shooting Sports and Wichita Gun Club.

When an estate opportunity arises, they'll visit the collection in person to get a better assessment. And when the offer is made, it covers every firearm.

Often, they'll also buy safes, reloading equipment and other accessories in the collection.

"We really feel like we're helping people out who don't have any other option on how to get rid of it," informed Rust in Oklahoma City. "We want to be fair and make them a good offer, and if they accept, we'll show up with a company check and three or four people and get stuff packed up and out the door."

Wichita's Hancock has been active in the estate market for many years, even traveling to other states to evaluate and make offers on larger collections. The "buy everything but the kitchen sink" approach has served him well, even with guns that have no hope of reaching the used gun display at his shop, which specializes in higher-end handguns.

Many of the guns go straight to penny auctions on GunBroker, where his company is currently among the site's top 100 sellers.

"We keep 60 or 70 guns all the time on our GunBroker listings," he said. "We're just taking the risk and throwing them up at a penny and letting the market drive it."

They've even figured out a way to deal with all the extras — guitars, pellet guns, cleaning equipment, holsters, safes, etc. — they've pulled in with larger collections. When they get enough stuff, they have a garage sale in the parking lot. He remembers one event had 300 or so people lined up in the morning, waiting for the sale to start.

"I put one guy on a table with this load of crap and told him to sell it for whatever they offer. Just get it gone," Hancock shared. "We sold every single thing in 90 minutes."

There's also a lesson to be learned from one of his earlier estate encounters. After being sent a list of guns offered for sale, Hancock responded with a detailed account of how much he could offer for each item.

He got crickets in response.

"Then I realized I did all their work, and they took it and shopped me around," he said. "So now I don't release that information to anybody. I give them one price when I'm buying an estate." **81**

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By Pat Covert

Boost Profits With Knives!

Knives Help Fill Out Your Bottom Line During Tough Times

The good news about the financial state of our country is we have ended the stifling economy of the previous administration and are eliminating years of government waste. The bad news is the changes the Trump administration is implementing aren't going to happen overnight. Even then, the sales of the firearms typically take a breather without the threats of a liberal government at the helm.

There is still a lot of "shaking out" to do and this is a good time for firearms dealers to diversify their stock with the added profits provided by cutlery. *Shooting Industry* spoke with representatives from two prominent cutlery manufacturers to get their views on what's hot in the world of knives and what the impact the tariffs may have on the manufacturers, firearms dealers and consumers as these changes go forward.

THE CURRENT CUTLERY MARKET

Alabama manufacturer Bear & Son Cutlery, founded in 1991, offers an array of fixed blade and folders produced domestically.

Bear & Son President Ken Griffey told *SI*, "The knife market is dynamic, with trends continuously evolving. Currently, we're seeing strong demand for everyday carry (EDC) knives featuring automatic mechanisms such as out-the-front (OTF) designs and assisted-opening technology. In terms of aesthetics and durability, handle materials such as natural bone, Micarta, G10 and exotic hardwoods are gaining popularity."

Kyle Stuart, marketing manager of cutlery manufacturing giant CRKT (Columbia River Knife & Tool) shared his observations on trends impacting the hunting segment.

"High-end blade steels such as MagnaCut are gaining a lot of interest among consumers. We're also seeing an uptick in interest in pocket fixed blades as well as knives that use off-the-shelf utility blades," he said. "Specifically

for the hunting market, we're seeing a move to more modern materials like Kydex versus leather sheaths and slightly smaller blades that are nimbler when field dressing."

When it comes to EDC, Stuart added innovative designs stand out.

"There's always demand for interesting designs and innovations beyond the basics. Some consumers tend to graduate into seeking more complex mechanisms and truly unique designs, which is where CRKT really shines," he stated.

BENEFITS FOR FFL HOLDERS

"While the market slowdown may impact sales of mid-to-higher tier firearms and accessories," noted CRKT's Stuart, "knives can still fill the need for a self-defense tool or simply 'scratch the itch' to get a new piece of gear at a more tolerable price point. And with so much competition in the knife industry, consumers will see many brands push harder in innovation, design and value."

"The reality is simple: Everyone owns a knife — or could use another,"

added Bear & Sons' Griffey. "Just like firearms, knives are a core piece of gear for many customers. For firearms dealers, offering a selection of quality knives — especially American-made models — can be a smart and profitable move. Knives tend to have lower price points than firearms, but they can yield strong margins and consistent sales. Stocking a variety of styles, from tactical folders to hunting knives and EDC options, allows retailers to meet the diverse needs of their customer base and build basket value with every transaction."

TARIFFS & THEIR EFFECT

Expected tariffs imposed by the U.S. on foreign cutlery manufacturers and suppliers worldwide in the months to come could reshape the world of knives as we know it. The question is, to what extent?

CRKT built their company on cutting-edge designs by collaborating with notable custom knifemakers and having them produced offshore, particularly Taiwan. Over the years, they've added China — and others to a lesser degree — to the mix. CRKT is one of many manufacturers to have ventured down this trail.



Bear & Sons 3" Baby Barlow

Stuart addressed this issue, saying, "The impact of a prolonged trade war on those companies using imported steel or knives is still to be determined. By the time this issue publishes, it's likely (hopefully) the trade war with China will have subsided, but I think we can still address this question."

What were the immediate impacts of this trade war? Will it encourage U.S. knife makers to use domestic steel (or is there too much demand/cost-prohibitive with other industries and

companies pursuing the same)? Or will things return to the status quo once the economic standoff has subsided?

Stuart continued, "The trade war forced many companies to quickly reassess their supply chains and scenario plans against an ever-changing trade policy. Many companies that have been in business for decades, in strong financial positions with an already diversified supply chain, will clearly be able to weather the immediate impacts better than younger companies still establishing a footing."

According to Bear & Sons' Griffey, "Tariffs on imported knives from China have led to significant price increases across many brands and that impact has been felt quickly. Bear & Son Cutlery is one of the few remaining U.S. manufacturers with the capacity to mass-produce quality knives domestically, and we've continued to invest in that capability over the long term."



Growth in our industry hinges on one key principle: offering a product customers are proud to carry."

**Ken Griffey, President
Bear & Son Cutlery**

I also checked in with Mark's Outdoors, a retailer in Vestavia Hills, Ala., that sells a bumper crop of knives per year. They informed me their three current bestselling brands are Benchmade, Spyderco and Kershaw.

All of Benchmade's knives are made in the U.S. and the majority of Spyderco knives are made domestically. Kershaw is owned by KAI USA, a Japanese cutlery manufacturer that produces many of its knives at their factory in Tualatin, Ore. Retailers' bestselling knives vary, but some stores, like Mark's Outdoors, could adapt very easily.

LONG-TERM OUTLOOK

"The long-term outlook for the knife market remains strong," Griffey forecasted. "Demand for quality knives — whether for EDC, outdoor use or

collection — is steady, and we expect to see growth among smaller U.S. companies."

Griffey also anticipates continued expansion of offshore manufacturing in places like the Philippines and Taiwan.

"However, building consistent quality in those regions takes time and oversight," he noted. "In the end, growth in our industry hinges on one key principle: offering a product customers are proud to carry."



CRKT Soldotna Fixed

CRKT's Stuart is cautiously optimistic.

"We believe long-term market growth will be moderate. To some degree, growth is dependent on a number of external factors such as trade policy, political party in office, loosening state knife laws and consumer trends in tactical and outdoor segments," he reasoned.

Nimble responsiveness and a strong product line will win the day, according to Stuart.

"Growth in the knife market will come from a laser focus on a tight and excellent product assortment, being highly in-tune with the target consumer, maintaining strong relationships with market partners and relentlessly pursuing the next innovation," he shared.

HEDGING YOUR BETS

Where the tariffs end up is anybody's guess, but going into fall, most dealers are fast preparing for the more lucrative hunting seasons to come. In a down political year, hedging your bets with affordable and profitable knives can keep your store's bank account up during the slow periods to come.

Now would be a good time to establish relations with American cutlery manufacturers who produce their knives here in the U.S., and keep tabs on those who outsource their wares to Asian manufacturers, particularly China. Make sure your store has the edge! **SI**



SELLING TO THE DIY CUSTOMER

By Carolee Anita Boyles

Some gun owners want their gunsmith to do everything: clean their guns, repair any problems and customize

their firearms. Others want to do it all themselves. These DIY customers tend to explore the fun side of the shooting experience, and it represents a market segment the savvy retailer can capture.

Caleb Savant is a gunsmith and video and studio supervisor at Brownells in Montezuma, Iowa. Although Brownells is often thought of as a supplier to retailers, the company has its own retail store

with a strong customer base of do-it-yourselfers.

"The do-it-yourself gunsmith is our core customer," Savant noted. "Since 1939, we've been a company that services gunsmiths. As gunsmithing information has become more readily available through the internet and other sources, there has been a huge influx of guys who want to do it themselves. What I do here at Brownells is make content all day, every day for both gunsmiths and for those do-it-yourself customers, as well."

This information goes out through a variety of outlets, including a large YouTube channel.

"The information is free and it's easily accessible," Savant said. "Not only do we tell you how to do it, we also tell you what products we're using and what to consider when you're picking the particular product. We also tell you not just how to put something together, but how to select the right parts for the build you're doing and what parts are good for it."

WHERE VIDEOS COME IN HANDY

Savant produces videos on a wide variety of topics, with the list of subjects growing all the time.

"We cover everything from how to mount an optic to how to change and mount triggers," he confirmed. "We have a full AR-15 build series that takes you step by step and piece by piece through a full AR-15 build. When we say, 'every component,' we mean every little pin in detail is covered for how to install every part."

Not only does Brownells' YouTube channel tell gunsmiths how to install parts and build guns, but it also has videos on how to troubleshoot problems when things go wrong.

"If you mess up somewhere, there's a video to tell you what you may have to redo," Savant said. "We try to cover everything on that end."

Savant also produces product- and brand-specific videos.

"We've done a lot of product videos for Leupold on their optics," he informed. "If you name a product we carry, we've probably done a product video of some kind on it, or if not, on something similar to it. We do videos on everything all the way to tactical gear."

These videos are not just on firearms. They are also on all kinds of gear related to guns and shooting.

In their own take on "Myth Busters," Brownells creates videos on firearm-related myths.

"We call the series 'Smith Busters,'" Savant said. "We have a video on pretty much everything firearms-related." (Brownells is also on other major social media platforms, giving them a broad reach to firearms enthusiasts.)

AMERICA'S MOST POPULAR RIFLE IS ITS MOST CUSTOMIZABLE

Cost is one of the biggest things holding gun owners back from getting into doing their own gunsmithing, according to Savant.

"A lot of gun parts aren't inexpensive," he said, "and the ones that are inexpensive are generally not very good and they're harder to

work with. A lot of people have a fear — especially when they start having to file on something — of messing it up and being out the cost of the project."

One of the most customizable platforms, of course, is the AR-15. Savant shared the AR continues to be one of the most popular guns to customize as well.

"If someone buys one off the shelf, the most common thing you're going to see them change out is the stock and the grip," he shared. "Then, if they're feeling a little bit bolder, they may change out the handguard."

When it comes to other firearms, Savant observed, customers are more about accessorizing than they are about changing core components.

"I think because there's only so much you can do as a DIY person to other guns until you get into some pretty challenging gunsmithing that it's not practical for most DIYers to do," he said. "You've also got to have some expensive tools to do it."

"MUST-HAVES" FOR AT-HOME GUNSMITHS

When it comes to basic "must-haves" for the DIY gunsmith, Savant contends the most important thing is a good workspace.

"You need a good bench to work on," he stated. "You also need a good vise; a good gunsmith's vise is very important."

Brownells makes a gunsmith's vise for the home gunsmith.

"We also carry several other manufacturers' vises that are affordable," Savant added. "A DIYer

can get one of those affordable vises and do a lot of what they need to do without spending a terrible amount of money."

(Savant particularly likes the Brownells' brand vise and says Tipton is a less expensive option that provides good value for the price.)



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IT COMES DOWN TO KNOWING YOUR MARKET

Not every retailer has DIY customers, so it pays to know your market before delving too deeply into products suited to these shoppers. Just ask Art Huckfeldt, the manager at Frontier Arms in Cheyenne, Wyo.

"We don't see a lot of customers who do their own gunsmithing," Huckfeldt stated. "If someone comes in and buys a gun, we show them how to tear it down to clean it. But as far as replacing triggers or things like that, we don't recommend our customers do those things. You've got to have the right tools and the knowledge, and our customers don't."

Although a lot of gun owners

"A DIYER CAN GET ONE OF THOSE AFFORDABLE VISES AND DO A LOT OF WHAT THEY NEED TO DO WITHOUT SPENDING A TERRIBLE AMOUNT OF MONEY."

Caleb Savant • Senior Video & Studio Supervisor
Brownells Inc.



Caleb Savant has been producing content for Brownells to educate end users on basic gunsmithing and DIY applications for several years. The AR-15 invites customization, and the company's YouTube channel regularly features content on the interchangeability of the platform.

became interested in working on their own firearms during COVID, Huckfeldt didn't see a lot of change in what his customers wanted during that time. The one place he does see clients doing their own customization, Huckfeldt confirmed, is on AR-type platforms.

"Those are kind of like LEGO," he observed. "Something like that our customers may modify, but even when it comes to taking bolts apart, they still bring them in for us to do and we take care of them."

Cheyenne is a military town, Huckfeldt added, so they have a lot of customers who should know how to take care of their firearms. Even those clients, however, still bring their guns in to be worked on.

"I don't think they're teaching

them like they used to, like when I was young and in the military," he said. "But as far as modding stuff up, it's easy to do. We see a little bit of it,

"[AR-15S] ARE KIND OF LIKE LEGO. SOMETHING LIKE THAT OUR CUSTOMERS MAY MODIFY, BUT EVEN WHEN IT COMES TO TAKING BOLTS APART, THEY STILL BRING THEM IN FOR US TO DO AND WE TAKE CARE OF THEM."

Art Huckfeldt • Manager
Frontier Arms • Cheyenne, Wyo.

but all it does is add weight to the gun and make it harder to handle. Every now and then we see one or two guys who want to do that."

Even the trope of someone who finds an old, rusty gun in a pawn shop and restores it doesn't hold true for Huckfeldt's clientele.

"I don't see anyone doing any of their own bluing," he noted. "There's what they call 'cold bluing,' but it's not a very good way to do it. If you're going to re-blue a gun, you need to send it off to someone who does electroplating. We don't have any customers who are doing so."



Tipton Best Gun Vise 360

As with many other aspects of retail sales, it pays to know your market and know your customer. If you have the right clientele, a section of do-it-yourself products can be a source of additional sales for your bottom line. **\$1**

GUN SHOP SPECIALIZATION

Should You Specialize? How Much?

By Jerry Ahern

Specialization can be handled two ways. You can specialize in a specific product area while still stocking and selling other shooting goods or you can limit your stock to only one category of goods. Each has its drawbacks, and yet each can be accomplished successfully, if the market is there, with the proper preparation and effort.

GUN SHOP TENDENCY

Most gun shops have a tendency to specialize to some extent. After a short time, the owner or buyer determines what sells well, and stocks these items a bit more heavily than others. In some cases, this trend grows to the point where the dealer becomes known as the place to get target rifles, trap and skeet guns or whatever. To his market area, he becomes a specialist.

For most gun shops, this is the way to answer the question, "Should I specialize?" You simply let your customers determine the answer for you. No big decisions on your part, just an evolution into the area of semi-specialization.

KEEPING CUSTOMERS

There is still some effort required on the dealer's part; he must be sure as his inventory of non-specialty goods dwindles, he is not slowly losing those customers who still think of him as a full-

line shop.

Before we get into the area of true specialization, let's consider those shops that are specialists in name only. Many times we'll see a place called "The Cop Shop" or "The Smoke Pole," only to find varmint rifles, trap shotguns or other such items being offered in quantity. Certainly these names are a bit more colorful than "Joe's Gun Shop," but they do tend to indicate specialization, and may deter some passersby from coming in.

If you are determined to change into a real specialty shop, you had better be sure the path ahead is not strewn with remnants of those who have tried it before, and it leads into the direction you are headed.

Your past sales records, a good hard look at your market area and those competitors in your area and a determination to specialize may indicate to you you should make the move. Wait! Think of some negative aspects specialization can bring:

1. You'll be losing all of the sales outside of your area of specialization.
2. Present day sales trends, that perhaps caused you to consider specialization, may change.
3. Shooting interests in your market area may be affected by circumstances beyond your control; the closing of a trap range or the move of a club to a site out of your market area.
4. Some guy with a lot more smarts and money may have the same idea, and he may do it bigger and better than you.

If this does not scare you out of the notion, there may be some positive aspects that may appeal to you. First there is the knowledge you are *the* place in town for whatever the shooter may need in your area of specialization. This presupposes you have a stock of everything these shooters need. Inventory control in a specialty shop is easier and, because you will be buying only specific shooting items in larger quantity, you may be able to get better prices and better delivery.

DEPARTMENTALIZING

There is yet another way a gun dealer can specialize without changing his buying, which is to departmentalize his gun shop.

If you have three cases available for display of shotguns, why not make one the "Trap & Skeet Department," another your "Hunting Department" and the third a "Collector Department."

Each case, then, becomes a specialty shop. If your shop has the room and layout conducive to this sort of departmentalization, why not consider a group of specialty shops within your present confines? Let the more successful of these grow and spread into others that are less successful, and you may soon find the gate possibly leading you into the world of specialization. **\$I**

Editor's Note: The above article was published with the same title in the May 1981 issue of *Shooting Industry* in the monthly *Firearms Retailing* column.

NEW PRODUCTS

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By Jenna Buckley



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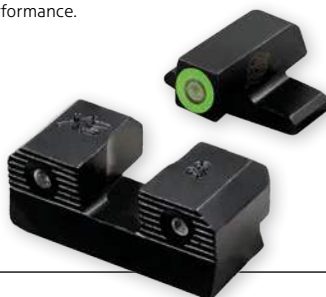
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XS Sights now offers **R3D 2.0 NIGHT SIGHTS FOR SPRINGFIELD ECHELON** pistols. Available with a green front dot sight, the R3D 2.0 features bigger and brighter rear tritium dots than its predecessor. PVC rings surround the rear tritium dots for a more defined edge to improve sight picture and differentiate the front and rear sights. The EasyPress features eliminate the need for filing and hammering and reduce the force needed for installation by up to 50%. Designed with a black-nitride surface finish, this treatment offers twice the corrosion resistance of traditional black oxide, ensuring superior durability and long-lasting performance.



LAPUA

lapua.com

TRUE-RANGE EXPANDING (TRX) HUNTING BULLETS AND AMMUNITION from Lapua deliver long-range precision with the highest ballistic coefficient (BC) values in its class, ensuring a flat-shooting trajectory and superior resistance to wind drift. Upon impact, TRX offers exceptional terminal performance, unmatched energy transfer and near-100% weight retention with its solid-copper, polymer-tipped design. TRX Bullets are currently offered in the following calibers: 6.5mm, 120-grains TRX; 30-cal., 150-grains TRX; and 30-cal., 165-grains TRX. TRX Ammunition, available in the fall, will include 6.5 Creedmoor, 120-grains TRX; 6.5x55 SE 120-grains TRX; and .308 Win., 150-grains TRX.



THE HEADREST SAFE COMPANY

(888) 227-7233
theheadrestsafe.com

From the Headrest Safe Company, the **COMPACT** is ideal for sedans and luxury vehicles and features a hotel-style lock. A simple keypad entry opens and closes the safe door, just like those used in hotels. The safe accommodates a full-size pistol and keeps valuables safe while the user is not in the vehicle. The Compact Headrest Safe will fit in virtually all vehicles with a two-prong post headrest pattern and can easily be installed. Once installed, it locks in place so only the user can remove it. The fabric coverings look and feel like real leather. Exterior dimensions are 8" H x 5.5" W x 10.75" L and interior dimensions are 5.5" H x 3.5" W x 7.5" L.



SMITH & WESSON BRANDS INC.

(800) 331-0852
smith-wesson.com

Smith & Wesson introduces two Lipsey's Exclusive revolvers, the **MODEL 610** and **MODEL 617 MOUNTAIN GUNS**. The Model 610 large-sized N-Frame is SA/DA, chambered in 10mm Auto and has a six-round capacity. It features all stainless steel construction, a beveled cylinder front edge and a tapered-profile 4.25" barrel. It weighs 40.2 oz., and OAL is 9.6". It also includes a Patridge-style front sight with a gold bead insert and a black adjustable rear sight. The high-grade walnut Bear Hug grip was designed by Tyler Gun Works. The Model 617 Mountain Gun is chambered in .22 LR and has a 10-round capacity. It is built on a medium-sized K-Frame and weighs 36.1 oz., with an OAL of 9.46". It also has all-stainless-steel construction, a gold bead front and adjustable rear sight, beveled cylinder front edge and high-grade walnut Bear Hug grips.



SPYPOINT

(888) 779-7646
spypoint.com

SPYPOINT introduces its non-cellular trail camera, the **FORCE-24**. It delivers 24 MP photos, 2K video with sound and customizable settings for a reliable, easy-to-use scouting setup ideal for areas without cellular coverage. Low-glow LEDs deliver clear nighttime images without spooking wildlife, while advanced capture options — like five-photo bursts in Multi-shot mode, Time-Lapse and Time-Lapse+ — let hunters fine-tune how and when the camera records activity. All photos and videos are saved directly to an SD card, meaning no cellular transmission plan is required.



HLR SPORT

VICTORY ARCHERY

(866) 934-6565
victoryarchery.com

The 0.204" small-diameter shaft of Victory Archery's **HLR** arrows reduces wind drift for long-range performance and delivers deadly penetration for quick, ethical kills on big game. Engineered with a high-modulus carbon structure and carbon weave technology, the HLR minimizes torque and provides a more uniform spine consistency for repeatable accuracy. Sleek 50-grain SHOK insets, paired with Victory backweights, further boost penetration and durability in the field. Available in Elite, Gamer and Sport models, HLR arrows boast a straightness tolerance of $\pm 0.001"$, $\pm 0.003"$ and $\pm 0.006"$, respectively. They're available in 200, 250, 300, 350, 400, and 500 spines and come individually hand-fletched with a left helical for optimal vane alignment.



WEATHERBY INC.

(307) 675-7800
weatherby.com

The **MODEL 307 ALPINE ST** from Weatherby features a carbon fiber stock and spiral-fluted barrel. The rifle's two-lug design is equipped with an M-16-style extractor, and the bolt has a unique tool-less disassembly feature for easy break down for cleaning and field maintenance. The lightweight Peak 44 Bastion stock has dual sling studs for accessories. The Alpine ST line features shorter barrels on Weatherby Magnum calibers; most barrels will be 2" shorter than traditional offerings. Other features include a TriggerTech trigger, radial muzzle brake and Certakote finish on all metal work. The Alpine ST is offered in 14 chamberings, including 6.5 CM, 22 CM, 6.5 PRC, .257 WBY, 6.5-300 WBY, 7mm BC, .300 Win. and 300 WBY.



ESCORT SHOTGUNS

(877) 278-4448
escortshotgunsusa.com

ESCORT Shotguns expands its **BULLTAC PUMP-ACTION SHOTGUN LINE WITH THE ADDITION OF THREE NEW COLOR OPTIONS**: OD Green, Flat Dark Earth (FDE) and Gray (12-GA model only). The BullTac is available in 12 GA, 20 GA and .410 bore, all chambered for 3" shells. Each model features an 18" chrome-plated steel barrel with a fixed cylinder bore choke, suitable for use with both shot and slugs. This pump-action platform includes a 5+1 round capacity and a high-strength synthetic bullpup stock with an integrated carry handle and adjustable cheek rest. A Picatinny rail allows for easy mounting of optics and accessories and comes standard with flip-up front and rear sights. OD Green and FDE finishes are available across all gauges.

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NEW PRODUCTS

TURNBULL RESTORATION

(585) 657 6338
turnbullrestoration.com

The **DOVETAIL PICATINNY RAIL MOUNT FOR RED DOT OPTICS** from Turnbull Restoration was developed in response to demand from owners of lever-action rifles with octagon barrels and is also fully compatible with all barrels featuring a 3/8" 60-degree dovetail. It installs in place of the factory rear sight, offering a secure, mil-spec mounting base while preserving the firearm's classic integrity. It is compatible with both one-screw and two-screw Picatinny bases and utilizes a standard #10-32 cup-point set screw, requiring only a 3/32 Allen wrench for mounting.



ROMEO8T-AMR

JULIET3T-AMR



SIG SAUER

(603) 610-3000
sigsauer.com

From SIG SAUER, the **ROMEO8T-AMR** optic is smaller and lighter than traditional holographic sights. Developed alongside the **JULIET3T-AMR** micro magnifier, the ROMEO8T-AMR leverages SIG SAUER's revolutionary Automatic Modified Reticle (AMR) technology to instantly transition between user-selectable reticle configurations as the magnifier is engaged or disengaged. The ROMEO8T-AMR boasts a 40mm objective lens for unrivaled situational awareness, while the high-performance coatings and lens system perform under night vision. The ROMEO8T-AMR and JULIET3T-AMR system meet MIL-810-STD protocol, are IPX8 waterproof and fog proof and fully covered by SIG SAUER's Infinite Guarantee.

in recent years.

Looking back to my Feb. 2025 column once again, something I wrote then is worth repeating now: “We need to get back to showcasing the joy of the shooting sports and competition shooting. Emphasizing the benefit of regulated hunting seasons is another opportunity for our industry to make inroads.” With the fall hunting season already upon us, make sure you’re connecting with hunters and providing the standout service that will keep them coming back into your store.

REFRAMING THE CONVERSATION AROUND SUPPRESSORS

Suppressors have been a bright spot across the U.S. firearms industry throughout this year. As I wrote in this column last month, the entire NFA segment is poised to ignite when the \$200 tax stamp ends Jan. 1, 2026. (For even more suppressor market insights, see Bryan Hendricks’ excellent “‘Silence’ Is Golden” feature starting on p. 28.)

Recently, I sat down with Rick Elder, CEO of HUXWRX Safety Co., who shared additional perspective on why suppressors have been so popular.

“We’re seeing a surge now because a suppressor isn’t just a gun accessory anymore — it’s a health and safety device,” he stated. “People care about safety, and departments care about liability. We’ve reached a tipping point where the science, the mission and the market are finally aligned. And yes, I believe this is long-term. Suppressors will be as normal tomorrow as seatbelts are today.”

HUXWRX is focused on innovation, which has been facilitated by the ease

of additive manufacturing (otherwise known as ... 3D printing). According to Elder, the company can easily run “thousands of prototypes” per year, rather than a couple of iterations, to get exactly what they’re looking for. This “refusing to accept limitations” mindset led to the development of HUXWRX’s patented Flow-Through suppressors — which redirect expanding gases forward, away from the operator’s face and respiratory system. According to Elder, this technology has been very well received by consumers and professional users.



We need to stop treating suppressors like novelties or ‘cool gear.’ They’re PPE — personal protective equipment — and we need to teach that like it’s gospel.

Rick Elder • CEO
HUXWRX Safety Co.

Elder says the conversation around suppressors needs to be reframed to better educate customers on their benefits.

“We need to stop treating suppressors like novelties or ‘cool gear.’ They’re PPE — personal protective equipment — and we need to teach

that like it’s gospel. You wouldn’t send a fireman into a burning building without a mask. Why are we sending people into training or patrols without proper suppression?”

Elder continued, “Most people — civilians and professionals alike — haven’t been made aware that they’re being exposed to a laundry list of toxins such as heavy metals, carbon monoxide, hydrogen cyanide and much more. With understanding comes accountability. We’ve taken it upon ourselves to expose the risks and build solutions that protect the mind, body and mission.”

A mission-first mindset will help dealers expand sales to customers.

“At HUXWRX, we train our dealers the same way we train operators: teach the *why* first,” Elder said. “We’re not simply selling suppressors. We’re selling peace of mind to a mom whose 19-year-old kid just signed up to serve. We’re selling long-term performance to an officer who wants to retire with his hearing intact. And we’re educating a generation that didn’t know they were fighting a battle they couldn’t see. That’s our mission and we take it very seriously.”

Elder’s passion here is evident, and it got me thinking: Have you evaluated your store’s mission recently? Are you clearly communicating it to your employees? Do your interactions with customers reflect it? Now is a great time to reassess your store’s mission, how it sets you apart from the competition and what you can do to further elevate it. Even changes that might seem small or intangible can make a significant impact. As the saying goes, “How you do anything is how you do everything.” **SI**

YOUR OPINION MATTERS

Dealers, we’d love to hear from you!

Great! I’ve got some thoughts.

Perfect. Just send an email to comments@shootingindustry.com



BY JADE MOLDAE

AFTER Q3 2025: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Earlier this year, a roundtable of dealers reported higher-than-expected firearm sales in the weeks following President Donald Trump's victory in the 2024 presidential election. At the time, in the Feb. 2025 issue, I highlighted these observations from experienced store owners Henry Parro of Parro's Gun Shop and Jacquelyn Clark of Bristlecone Shooting, Training & Retail Center in this very column — noting, “there is still more opportunity for business in this market.”

Here in the closing weeks of Q3 2025, things have turned rather sharply. Yes, there are “hot pockets” of growth (namely, suppressors — which will be expounded upon later), but the industry largely finds itself in a perplexing place. Some manufacturers have reacted to the contraction by contracting themselves, with marketing teams across the industry experiencing “organizational restructuring.”

But, as we'll evaluate, it's not universal.

MULTIPLE PATHS TO GROWTH

This month's *Industry News* section showcases forward-thinking companies like KelTec and Barrett, which each are embarking on strategic efforts to expand capacity and better secure opportunities for future growth. Others, like Henry and Voodoo Gun Works, are relocating to improve efficiencies.

And, there are acquisitions afoot. Earlier this summer, Ruger acquired Anderson Manufacturing (closing the Anderson brand and integrating the company's Hebron, Ky., facilities into its manufacturing portfolio). Colt CZ Group purchased Valley Steel Stamp, with Colt CZ Group CEO Radek Musil emphasizing the “strategic rationale” behind this transaction was to achieve “vertical integration in select categories” (e.g., revolver frames, cylinders, spare parts and other firearm components).

Two additional recent acquisitions, also highlighted in this issue's *Industry News* section, shed further light into the thinking of growth-oriented brands. Highlighting the benefit of vertical integration, Thompson/Center Arms has added Green Mountain Rifle Barrel Co. to its portfolio. In a press release, T/C Arms stated this integration will help support its ambition to “[explore] new barrel materials, emerging calibers and the latest in barrel-making technology.”

The Kinetic Group (TKG) officially added Fiocchi of America to its lineup of brands. In a corresponding move, HEVI-Shot (a TKG brand) is moving its operation from Sweet Home, Ore., to Ozark, Mo. (where Fiocchi's U.S. business is located) to form “a center of excellence for shotshell products,” according to TKG Chairman and CEO Jason Vanderbrink.

Whether it's through expansions, relocations or acquisitions, these

◀ After a tough Q3, there are opportunities ahead to generate business in Q4 — including hunting season and the holiday-buying season.

methods are employed with one goal in mind: to further sustain long-term profitability. Looking at acquisitions, in particular, I would wager additional consolidation is very likely. It's not as dire as “survive or be absorbed,” but until the market is further corrected — and businesses can streamline and adjust accordingly — it's going to be challenging for smaller, less profitable companies to stay afloat. In today's market, staying nimble, informed and responsive will be crucial.

NICS STREAK STOPPED

It had to happen sometime. A streak that began Aug. 2019 — lasting 70 consecutive months — finally ended in July. The July 2025 NSSF-adjusted NICS background checks totaled 978,731, the first time since July 2019 the NSSF-adjusted NICS monthly total did not exceed 1 million. (The July 2019 total was 830,579.) July 2025 represented an 8.1% drop from July 2024 (1,064,790).



In today's market, staying nimble, informed and responsive will be crucial.

Though the 1-million streak ended, the U.S. firearms industry has been on quite a run. This impressive, near-six-year stretch began in President Trump's first term, persisted through a global pandemic and social unrest and preserved under an ardent anti-gun presidential administration. To put the magnitude of this streak in context, from Jan. 2000–July 2019 (a period of 19.5 years), the 1 million monthly mark was eclipsed just 67 times.

There was a time when if a month posted 978,731 background checks, especially during summer, it would have been celebrated — which further shows how expectations have changed

Continued on p. 45

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