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THE INDUSTRY'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE — EST. 1955

JUNE 2017

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LOOK FOR "HANDS-ON" APPROACH

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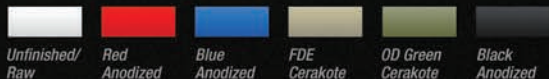


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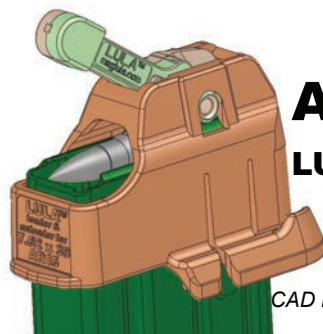
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

### Economic Impact Report Sways Opinion

By Jade Moldae



As the industry enters the summer months, there's a feeling of trepidation among some retailers, distributors and manufacturers. However, amidst reports of a "Trump Slump," the industry has since posted two consecutive months of background check increases over 2016 — with March and April's NSSF-adjusted NICS figures up 5.2 and 0.04 percent, respectively. While April's increase is marginally higher over April 2016, it's a positive development.

Prior to this year's Congressional Fly-In, NSSF released the 2017 Firearms and Ammunition Industry Economic Impact Report. This report was a valuable tool used in meetings with congressmen and senators, as it provided a state-by-state breakdown of jobs, wages and economic output generated by the industry.

Since 2008, the industry has posted noticeable growth across several measures:

- The overall economic impact of the industry has surged from \$19.1 billion in 2008 to \$51.3 billion in 2016 (169% increase).
- Jobs in the industry have grown by 81 percent to 301,123.
- Total wages more than doubled (137%) from \$6.4 billion to \$15.2 billion.
- Taxes generated by the industry have increased at the federal and state level, from \$1.5 and \$1.3 billion to \$3.8 and \$2.7 billion, respectively. This totals \$6.5 billion in taxes generated in the U.S.

These numbers reveal a burgeoning firearms, ammunition and hunting industry. Even though fear will not be a strong selling factor over the short-term, a variety of factors stand to benefit the

**THESE NUMBERS  
REVEAL A BURGEONING  
FIREARMS, AMMUNITION  
AND HUNTING  
INDUSTRY. A VARIETY  
OF FACTORS STAND TO  
BENEFIT THE INDUSTRY  
IN THE LONG RUN.**

industry in the long run. For one, positive pieces of legislation have been introduced in both houses of Congress to further protect public lands and encourage business (see p. 10 in this issue for more). And another: the industry has added new demographics to its ranks.

#### Inside This Issue

Given the challenging retail environment for brick-and-mortar stores, this issue of *Shooting Industry* provides an innovative look at how you can use Wi-Fi marketing to reach more customers and learn of their shopping preferences when at your store or range. See "Breaking Down Brick-And-Mortar Barriers" on p. 22.

Hunting season sales and optics represent a significant segment of your business, and this issue has a feature on each to help amplify profits in this time of year. See "It's Not Just Seasonal" and "Setting Sights On Increased Optics Sales" for more highlights.

As we launch in to summer, how are you approaching business? We'd like to hear from you, send me an email directly at [editor@shootingindustry.com](mailto:editor@shootingindustry.com). ☎



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## NICS News From The Frontlines

NICS delays continue to persist, and in many ways are getting worse — and it's costing our industry in lost productivity and sales. It used to be a 3–5 minute transaction to get a customer processed (10 on a bad day). It isn't uncommon for 15–25 minutes to process a form. The number of delays (especially on weekends) is noticeably higher.

For instance, I have numerous customers who are “regulars” and always get approved — then they'll come in two days after and are “delayed” on their very next purchase. I have accordion files full of forms from these delayed applications and I estimate more than 50 percent don't come back to buy. (On occasion we'll get a form processed like greased lighting; it's so nice when it happens.) My guys sit there and wait to

find out the result so they can take care of our customer as soon as possible. I'll look down at my security cameras and my guys are still sitting there 20 minutes later! I'm not happy, my customer isn't happy and my employee is half as productive and not feeling it either.

Lost sales, lost FET, lost local sales tax. This is fresh news from the battlefield in a down cycle for the industry. I'll give NICS credit for its efforts at communicating the big problems and outages — but something isn't right and it's choking our progress more and more.

If we put a conservative dollar estimate to it, I bet it would wake some folks up.

### RICHARD SPRAGUE, PRESIDENT

Sprague's Sports  
Yuma, Ariz.

## Diamond D Rig Success

I recently purchased a Dan Wesson Bruin in 10mm and had been looking for a holster to fit its 6.3-inch barrel. After querying Roy Huntington, I took his advice and visited Diamond D Custom Leather. They had exactly what I was looking for and in my identical gun model listed on the website. Their guy Mike Barrett answered all of my questions immediately and helped me through the process, but the website works very well, too. I spent a lot of money on a rig to protect my most expensive gun in the woods and told them I was there because of Roy.

Also, I spend some time on *Handgunner's* website, but there's nothing like high-gloss paper between a gun guy's fingers. Thanks for the tip and stay safe.

### JEFF LUCK

Plattsburgh, N.Y.

Via American Handgunner

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Fly-In Team Two meets with Rep. Richard Hudson (R-NC), who introduced the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act (H.R.38). From left: Jade Moldae (FMG Publications), Ryan Bader (TriStar Arms), Elizabeth Tuason (Armscor Precision), David Nau (Tactical Gear Distributors), Rep. Hudson, Nando Zucchi (Vista Outdoor) and Justin Moon (Kahr Firearms Group).

## Industry Makes Positive Impression In Nation's Capital

By Jade Moldae

In early April, executives representing firearms and ammunition manufacturers, distributors, importers and leading retailers attended the 10th Annual NSSF Congressional Fly-In in Washington, D.C. Attendees held a record number of meetings with members of both houses of Congress and discussed such matters as the \$51.3 billion national economic impact of the firearms industry and presented firsthand accounts on how proposed legislative bills would affect business.

"This year's NSSF Congressional Fly-In, our 10th, was important for us

because with a friendly administration and a new Congress, we have the opportunity to make real progress in advancing our industry's legislative priorities that will also benefit our member companies and their customers," said Lawrence G. Keane, NSSF senior VP and general counsel. "We were able to make the case to our lawmakers that our legislative priorities would help to grow business, create jobs and open up opportunities for sportsmen and women to participate in hunting and the shooting sports."

taking responsibility for both ZEV's and Mega's manufacturing operations.

"These two companies fit together like a puzzle. We will bring our quality management system and manufacturing experience, and ZEV brings amazing design, engineering and marketing skills, and the financial strength to facilitate our continued growth," Miller said.

"Both of our brands are focused on top-tier products, and our customers are very excited about ZEV's addition of a line of AR and rifle products. I want to emphasize to customers of both companies that, in the near-term, nothing will change in our

### Key Talking Points

The NSSF Congressional Fly-In served to inform members of Congress on several legislative priorities. Three of these priorities would provide immediate benefits to the industry:

- The Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act (H.R.788, S.593), would give states more flexibility to allow for Pittman-Robertson funds to be used for the development and maintenance of public shooting ranges.
- The Hearing Protection Act (H.R.367, S.59) would remove suppressors from the National Firearms Act (NFA) and the purchase of a suppressor would be regulated the same as firearm purchase, including an FBI background check.
- Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017 (H.R.38, S.446) would allow handgun owners who are legally permitted and authorized in and by their home state to carry a concealed firearm in other states.

Other important agenda items included support for the Sportsmen's Act recently introduced in the Senate and advancing export control reform.

In addition, attendees urged senators to confirm Judge Neil M. Gorsuch as the next Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. On April 7, the Senate confirmed Gorsuch as the 113th justice of the Supreme Court by a 54-45 vote, which was achieved after Republicans lowered the threshold on Supreme Court nominations to a simple majority vote.

Continued on p. 12

## ZEV Technologies, Mega Arms Merge

ZEV Technologies Inc. and Mega Arms LLC have announced plans to consolidate both companies.

ZEV Technologies designs and manufactures upgrade accessories for pistols, and operates facilities in Oxnard, Calif. and Centralia, Wash. Mega Arms manufactures high-end AR and other rifle products, and also operates a facility in Centralia, Wash.

Mega Arms President Mike Miller is



approach to the market. Both brands and product lines will remain in place," said ZEV Technologies chairman and CEO Matt Ridenour.

Both companies plan to use 2017 as a time for outreach to their customers as they move forward together.

Visit [www.zevtechnologies.com](http://www.zevtechnologies.com), [www.megaarms.com](http://www.megaarms.com)





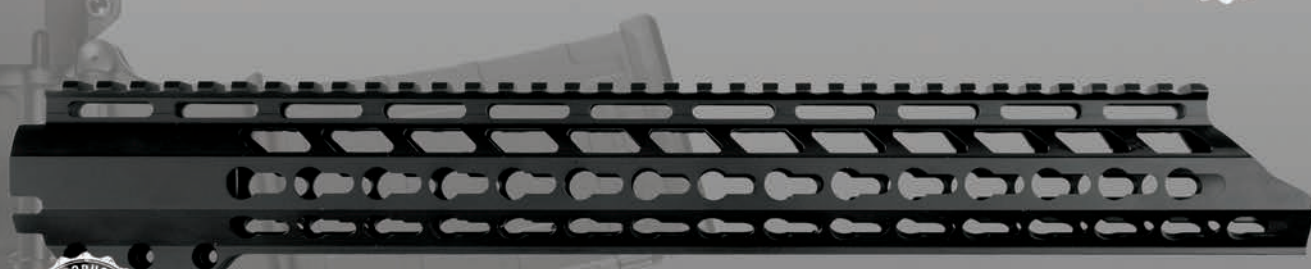
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- Browning
- Colt's Manufacturing Co.
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- Sprague's Sports
- St. Marks Powder
- Streamlight Inc.
- Tactical Gear Distributors
- TriStar Arms
- TulAmmo USA Inc.
- Vista Outdoor
- Winchester Ammunition
- ZEV Technologies



During the Congressional Fly-In, NSSF honored Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT) with its 2016 Legislator of the Year Award. (From left: Steve Sanetti, NSSF president and CEO; Sen. Murkowski; Lawrence G. Keane, NSSF senior VP and general counsel; and Rep. Bishop.)

Continued from p. 10

## NSSF Honors Legislators

Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, was presented the 2016 Legislator of the Year Award during the Fly-In. Senator Murkowski worked tirelessly to advance the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act (S.405) in the 114th Congress. With a group of bipartisan senators, Senator Murkowski reintroduced the Sportsmen's Act of 2017 (S.733) — which was approved out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee less than a week after introduction.

"Ensuring access to our public lands and keeping them open for hunting, fishing and recreational shooting now and for generations to come is one of my top legislative priorities," said Senator Murkowski.

NSSF also recognized Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), the chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources, as a 2016 Legislator of the Year. Chairman Bishop shepherded the House passage of the SHARE Act (H.R.2406), which would have included a number of legislative provisions to benefit sportsmen and women. Both bills went to a House-Senate conference committee where lawmakers were unable to come to final agreement.

"It is for Congress and the states to ensure hunters, anglers and shooters are able to count on reliable access to the lands they enjoy," Chairman Bishop said.

## Save The Date

NSSF has already announced the dates for the 2018 Congressional Fly-In, which will take place April 10–11.

Visit [www.nssf.org/govrel](http://www.nssf.org/govrel)

## Shoot Like A Girl President Receives Business Honor

Shoot Like A Girl's President Karen Butler has earned the Entrepreneur of the Year Award from the Women's Business Center of North Alabama (WBCNA). The award is given to a woman showing success and growth in business, leadership in industry and giving back to other like-minded women starting out in business.

The award automatically nominates Butler and Shoot Like A Girl for the National Small Business Association's Small Business of the Year Award.

"This award means so much to me. The Women's Business Center is where my company started. They gave me the guidance I needed to put Shoot Like A

Girl in motion, and for that I am extremely grateful. Our mission is to empower women to participate in shooting sports with confidence, and that is exactly what the WBCNA does for women in business — gives them the courage and tools they need to succeed," said Butler.

"It's success stories like Shoot Like A Girl that make our work so rewarding. To see someone's dream of owning their own business become a reality is what drives us to continue to offer quality services," said Joanne Randolph, president and CEO of WBCNA/The Catalyst.

Shoot Like A Girl has helped grow the number of women in the shooting sports by providing opportunities across the country for them to the experience shooting pistols, rifles and bows in a safe, controlled, women-friendly environment. These events



Karen Butler, Shoot Like A Girl president, was honored as the WBCNA's Entrepreneur of the Year for her efforts in empowering women to join the shooting sports.

instill in the participants confidence that they can shoot. The company continues to grow with a new, state-of-the-art trailer, a coast-to-coast tour and a sales training program for Cabela's.

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## Colt Purchases Facility, Looks To Future

Colt's Manufacturing Co. is purchasing its West Hartford headquarters and manufacturing facility and making new investments to expand operations and grow jobs in Connecticut. The move was announced by Connecticut Gov. Dannel P. Malloy's office March 24.

"This means hundreds of good paying manufacturing jobs for the people of our state," Gov. Malloy said. "Colt is an industry leader whose brand is recognized worldwide. The company was founded nearly two centuries ago here in Connecticut, and this planned expansion will ensure that they remain headquartered here."

According to the official announcement, the acquisition of the property is a key part of the company's growth strategy and is part of a \$23 million project by Colt targeting the retention of its current workforce of 600 employees and will lead to the creation of an additional 100 jobs at the location over the next five years.

"Colt is a proud part of Connecticut history and we are committed to our employees and the community," said Dennis Veilleux, Colt president, CEO. "We

are working hard to transform our business to better serve our customers and carry on Colt's tradition of quality and excellence. Acquiring our headquarters and facility is a key part of this strategy."

Last year, Colt emerged from Chapter 11 reorganization and is now positioning itself for growth, according to company officials. They emphasize acquiring the headquarters and manufacturing facility will enable the company to control its destiny and make the necessary further investments in its future.

Connecticut's Department of Economic and Community Development is supporting the expansion project through a \$10 million loan, with up to \$2 million forgiven if certain job milestones are met. State funds will be used to help in the acquisition of the manufacturing facility and the land, which has a total price of \$13 million.

Colt's union workers are endorsing the initiative.

"Our members have provided the skills necessary to produce quality Colt products in this region for many years," said Mike Holmes, UAW Local 376 shop chairman. "This transaction is an important step toward securing numerous skilled manufacturing jobs in our state. It is heartening to know the results that can



be achieved by the dedication of parties around the table and we applaud the efforts of everyone involved."

As part of the announcement, Colt emphasized its support for firearms safety education, including financial support for NSSF's Project ChildSafe, sponsorship of seminars in support of Connecticut law enforcement firearms safety initiatives and the inclusion of safety messaging in key marketing initiatives. Colt is also adding a safety section to its website to include a series of safety videos; a focus on safe firearms handling, safety at the range and safe storage in the home; and links to key sources of additional safety information published by NSSF, NRA and other reputable sources.

"These new measures underscore the fact that Colt is committed to safe and responsible use of its products," Veilleux said.

Visit [www.colt.com](http://www.colt.com)

## Otis, Americase Renew Partnerships With Kids & Clays

Otis Technology continues its support of the Kids & Clays Foundation, a partnership that began in 2015. Proceeds from Kids & Clays events (28 sporting clay matches this year) benefit Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) that provides housing and other help to thousands of critically ill children and their families across the country.

Otis is continuing its monetary support of Kids & Clays, as well as providing gun-cleaning supplies for use both during the shooting events and as auction items.

"With this organization, not only are we able to help grow the shooting sports, but we're also able to indirectly support Ronald McDonald House Charities," said Frank Devlin, director of commercial sales for Otis.

"Without companies like Otis

Technology, we'd be unable to grow the foundation to where it's at today," said Doug Jeanneret, executive director of the Kids & Clays Foundation.

Additionally, Americase Inc., manufacturer of carrying cases for guns, archery and industrial equipment, has made another significant donation to Kids & Clays in the form of custom Ultra-Lite 3017 shotgun cases to be used at each of the Kids & Clays sporting clay events in 2017. They will be auctioned at each event, with all proceeds supporting RMHC.

"We are very proud to be working with the Kids & Clays Foundation and their mission of helping children and their families when they need it the most," said Robby Kinsala, Americase president and CEO.

"Through their generosity, the fine people at Americase are making a large difference in the lives of many critically ill children and their families, and we can't thank them enough," said David Baron,



owner of Baron Technology Inc. and president of the Kids & Clays Foundation.

The foundation generated more than \$1.2 million in revenue in 2016.

"Our organization's strength and growth is contingent upon having generous partners who understand the vast benefits of contributing to the cause," Baron added.

Visit [www.otistec.com](http://www.otistec.com), [www.americase.com](http://www.americase.com), [www.kidsandclays.com](http://www.kidsandclays.com)



## Gerber Partners With Team RWB To Support Veterans

Gerber, supplier of personal knives, tools and equipment to U.S. military forces, announces a long-term partnership with Team Red, White and Blue (Team RWB). The multi-year program directly supports the organization's mission of enriching the lives of America's veterans by connecting them to their communities.

Founded in 2010, Team RWB and its 115,000-plus members are bringing veterans, their families and American citizens together through social interaction, community physical fitness and shared experiences in over 209 communities across the globe.

Team RWB offers two core programs. The Chapter and Community Program focuses on outdoor activity. Gerber equips each participant with knives and tools similar to those they used during active service through "Gerber Gear drops."

The Leadership Development Program



Gerber has entered into a long-term partnership with Team RWB.

takes "Eagle Leaders" through incremental levels of leadership, after which they join the Eagle Leader Fellowship, a more intensive, 12-month leadership development experience. After completing this course, Gerber honors them with its "Still Serving" kit.

Gerber's contributions to Team RWB include both financial support and product donations that will help to equip outdoor events for chapters throughout the U.S.

"Gerber's commitment to service members extends beyond their time in active duty, and we're honored to support such a strong, growing and impactful organization. Team RWB's community-based approach is both unique and results-

driven, which reflects the unstoppable character of our nation's veterans, who are still serving," said Andrew Gritzbaugh, VP of marketing at Gerber.

"We believe that engaged and empowered veterans are an incredible asset to our communities and to America. Together, Gerber and Team RWB are providing Eagle Leaders and veterans with opportunities to engage in healthy behaviors through outdoor events and activities in their communities that lead to more enriched lives," said Brandon Young, director of development for Team RWB.

Visit [www.gerbargear.com](http://www.gerbargear.com),  
[www.teamrwb.org](http://www.teamrwb.org)



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**STARTING AT: \$199 MSRP**

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## HIVIZ Continues Wyoming Expansion

HIVIZ Shooting Systems continues to consolidate all its third-party manufacturing operations in its Laramie, Wyo., complex, a process the company began in mid-2015. Construction of an additional 20,000-square-foot facility in Laramie is underway, aided by a \$3 million grant from the State of Wyoming in January.

HIVIZ manufactures light-gathering fiber optic sights, tritium sights, painted epoxy sights, recoil pads and accessories for the shooting industry.

Bringing its complete manufacturing capability in-house allows HIVIZ to be more competitive making its own products, as well as those of its customers, company officials say. The company continues to recruit and hire new staff, and plans to add 50 employees to its existing staff of 51 in the next year or two.

The new facility will allow HIVIZ to continue to expand its MIM (Metal Injection Molding) and CNC (Computer Numerical Control) manufacturing capabilities. HIVIZ currently produces all its own sight products, as well as an increasing amount of its customers' sights



HIVIZ's recent Laramie expansion was aided by a \$3 million grant from the State of Wyoming. The new building encompasses an additional 20,000 square feet.

and firearms components in its Laramie facility.

"We have the unique capability to take a product from concept all the way through the design, engineering and manufacturing processes, then package and ship our product anywhere in the world. This — and the fact that we focus on quality, timeliness and very competitive pricing — is what

is allowing us to grow so rapidly and to bring more jobs into the state of Wyoming, which we are delighted to do," said HIVIZ COO Mike Thomas.

The Laramie Chamber Business Alliance recently honored HIVIZ with its Large Business of the Year Award.

Visit [www.hivizsights.com](http://www.hivizsights.com)

## Wiley X Marks 30th Anniversary

Wiley X Inc. turns 30 this year. Myles Freeman Sr. launched the company in 1987, with a focus on developing shatterproof, impact-resistant eyewear for the U.S. Armed Forces. Today, Wiley X manufactures premium sunglasses not only for U.S. troops on the battlefield, but also for world-class athletes, anglers, hunters and everyday outdoor enthusiasts around the world.

Freeman's sons, Dan and Myles Jr. — current company owners — were just kids three decades ago, helping their dad out in the warehouse as Wiley X began to grow. The company has continued to innovate and expand its focus, which now includes cut-resistant, protective gloves for military, law enforcement and other tactical users.

Another of Wiley X's innovations is its exclusive Climate Control technology that features a soft, removable Facial Cavity

seal, which blocks out wind, debris and reflected light for enhanced vision and comfort. The company has also introduced its Worksight line, protecting workers in factories, construction, landscaping and other dangerous occupations.

"We have been blessed with success over these many years — a credit to our entire Wiley X team from top to bottom," said Myles Freeman Jr. "We have worked very hard to expand our presence, our product line and our brand across different markets and around the world. Even more importantly, we've achieved this growth while remaining true to our heritage and our core value, which is protecting the precious gift of sight."

All adult Wiley X eyewear styles meet ANSI Z87.1 High Velocity and High Mass Impact safety standards. Many also meet the military's stringent Ballistic VO impact certification. All models of eyewear have the added benefit of the company's signature focus on comfort and style.

Wiley X also has a Youth Force line,

designed for boys and girls ages 6 to 13. This eyewear line meets ASTM F803 Sports Safety Standards, and boasts styles and color combinations appealing to kids.

Additionally, Wiley X has launched collaborations with iconic brands like Harley Davidson, John Deere, Remington and 5.11 Tactical. The company utilizes DIGIFORCE digital prescription lens technology for those needing to wear prescription eyeglasses.

Visit [www.wileyx.com](http://www.wileyx.com)





## Streamlight Expands Battery Recycling Program

Streamlight Inc., along with several of its U.S. distribution partners, recycled 16,508 pounds of rechargeable batteries in 2016, exceeding their 2015 recycling total by nearly 1,800 pounds. The recycled batteries were nickel cadmium, lithium ion, nickel metal hydride and small sealed lead acid batteries.

Streamlight and its distributors are partners of Call2Recycle Inc. The organization helps businesses and municipalities in the U.S. and Canada protect the environment through its battery and cell phone end-of-life management solutions.

"We're proud to continue to do our part in 'going green.' Streamlight and its participating dealers have joined thousands of U.S. businesses in serving as battery collection sites in a collective effort to maintain a healthy and safe environment for our communities," said Streamlight President and CEO Ray Sharrah.



By recycling customers' eco-friendly rechargeable batteries, Streamlight and its participating dealers help prevent used products from entering the solid waste stream.

Since 1996, Call2Recycle has collected more than 130 million pounds of batteries and cell phones through its network of over 30,000 collection sites throughout the U.S. and Canada. Call2Recycle is a recipient of the Responsible Recycling Practices Standard (R2) certification.

Visit [www.streamlight.com](http://www.streamlight.com),  
[www.call2recycle.org](http://www.call2recycle.org)

## Army Marksmen Choose PolyCase's Inceptor Ammunition

The U.S. Army's Headquarters, Research & Development Detachment shooting team, stationed at the Natick (Mass.) Soldier Systems Center, has selected Inceptor Sport Utility Ammo by PolyCase Ammunition as its exclusive training cartridge in preparation for the All-Army Marksmanship Competition.

"After the team's utilization and evaluation of several brands, we identified Inceptor Sport Utility Ammo by PolyCase as the ideal target and range ammunition for our training needs. Our marksmanship team requires the utmost reliability, accuracy and safety. The frangibility for close-range use on steel significantly set this ammo apart from all others," said SSgt. Justin Coletti, captain of the shooting team.

"We are delighted with the team's interest in Inceptor ammunition, and the testimony from their team further demonstrates the value our Sport Utility Ammo provides," said PolyCase CEO Paul Lemke, also a retired Army officer. "We are committed to providing our

customers lasting value, whether they are the U.S. military or a casual enthusiast."



PolyCase Ammunition was founded to provide safe ammunition solutions to U.S. and NATO military personnel engaged in counter-terrorist operations. Sport Utility Ammo's lead-free copper-polymer blended construction was designed for use on hardened steel, with safe range distances measured in feet rather than yards. Inceptor Sport Utility Ammo is available in .380 Auto, 9mm, .38 Special, .40 S&W, .45 Auto and .300 AAC Blackout.

PolyCase ammunition is made in the U.S., and is marketed under the Inceptor, Ruger and Umarex brands.

Visit [www.policaseammo.com](http://www.policaseammo.com)

## Revision Assists Counterfeit Sting Operations

Revision continues its efforts to help law enforcement eradicate counterfeit Revision products. The company aided in a sting operation at the SIA Snow Show in Denver for the second year, and assisted a similar operation at the SHOT Show in Las Vegas. Both trade shows took place in January.

"Revision will take aggressive, unflinching action to eliminate any and all counterfeit operations. We created these products, and it is simply unacceptable to have low-level con artists steal our property and profit from it, especially at the expense of our end-users — the soldiers and police who protect us each and every day," said Jonathan Blanshay, CEO of Revision.

Revision's work in conjunction with the Dearborn and Ohio County Prosecutor's Office in Indiana led to the arrest of several individuals, including the owners of Airsoft Wholesaler Inc. (a California-based company trading as Lancer Tactical) and Guangzhou Yijia Optical Technique Co. Ltd. (a company based in Guangzhou, China trading as PTide).



Both companies were allegedly selling unauthorized counterfeit versions of Revision Military's Desert Locust goggles. Lancer Tactical is also accused of selling imitation versions of Revision Military's Bullet Ant goggles.

"Revision will relentlessly pursue offenders, and will not stop until all involved are brought to justice and put behind bars," Blanshay said.

Visit [www.revisionmilitary.com](http://www.revisionmilitary.com)



R. Turner

## **UMAREX USA INC.**

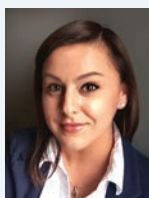
### **Appoints President**

Richard Turner has been named Umarex USA's new president after serving the past 10 years as the company's VP of sales and marketing. As president,

Turner has the responsibility for the full scope of company operations and reports directly to CEO, Adam Blalock.

Of Turner, Blalock remarked, "Richard has proven to be a successful and trusted leader. He understands our business and the markets we compete in and has a drive to succeed, motivated by his passion and appreciation for the skills and abilities of everyone in our work family."

Turner is a 1993 graduate of Birmingham Southern College and earned his MBA from the University of Alabama, Birmingham. His professional career has focused largely in consumer product and sporting goods industries where he has held various sales and marketing leadership roles.



P. Cuellar

## **TXAT/AGUILA**

### **Adds Marketing Coordinator**

Texas Armament & Technology (TxAT) and Aguila Ammunition have announced the addition of Patty Cuellar as the companies' marketing coordinator.

Cuellar will manage all special events and marketing activities for TxAT, and coordinate the development of brand communication materials, manage the trade show process, and implement new trafficking and inventory systems.

"Our company is experiencing rapid growth. We needed someone with Patty's diverse background to help us navigate through our growth successfully," shared Kristi Drawe, director of marketing for TxAT/Aguila Ammunition.

Cuellar previously served as marketing and business development manager at Distribution By Air and engineering and program coordinator at General Electric. She received her B.S. in advertising from the University of Texas at Austin.



S. McKelvain

## **SPRINGFIELD ARMORY**

### **Announces President**

Springfield Armory has announced the appointment of a new company president, Steve McKelvain. He spent the past 14 years as VP at Benelli USA,

and since 2013 was chief global marketing officer for Beretta's Optics division where he executed the rebrand for Burris Optics and led the integration of acquired electro-optics companies under the Steiner eOptics division and Steiner brand.

Springfield Armory CEO Dennis Reese said, "I am delighted to have a person as qualified as Steve work alongside me. He will be a great asset in leading our management team toward achieving our long-term objectives and vision for the future."

"Springfield has an outstanding line of products and that comes from having a great team and culture within the organization. I'm very excited to become a part of it," McKelvain said.

## **ERGO GRIPS**

### **Designates COO**

ERGO has announced the selection of a new COO, Dennis Milinazzo. He will assist owner and CEO, Steve Hines, in growing and expanding ERGO's customer reach and market share.

## **CROSSBREED HOLSTERS**

### **Appoints Sales Manager**

CrossBreed Holsters announces the appointment of Grant Ruckman as sales manager. Ruckman will oversee all aspects of new account activity and will work with existing accounts to grow the CrossBreed brand and Concealed Carry accessories. Ruckman started with the company in 2013, overseeing the shipping department, and brings prior experience as a sales specialist to his new role.

## **BUCK KNIVES**

### **Selects CFO, COO**

With over 15 years in senior management, finance and accounting, Trent Malone has been named Buck Knives' CFO. He will be responsible for

planning, implementing, managing and controlling all financial-related activities. Malone previously served as VP of finance for Fender Musical Instruments Corporation and held positions as director of accounting and global financial services.

Joe Piedmont has been promoted to COO from his position as VP of operations. In his new role, he will manage overall company operations including overseeing sales, marketing, product development, manufacturing, engineering, quality control, shipping and purchasing. Piedmont first joined the company as the product development manager and was quickly promoted to director of new products and engineering, and to director of operations shortly thereafter.

## **WEATHERBY INC.**

### **Names VP Of Manufacturing**

In his new position as VP of manufacturing for Weatherby, Charles Calvin's responsibilities include leading the manufacturing team to produce rifles, shotguns and ammunition. He will manage factory employees while integrating

functional support departments and supply chain partners.

Prior to joining Weatherby, Calvin was the VP of manufacturing at Leatherman Tool Group. He earned a bachelor's in mechanical engineering from Michigan State University and master's of manufacturing engineering from the University of Michigan.

## **GSM OUTDOORS**

### **Promotes Director Of Sales And Marketing**

After four years in roles as sales manager and marketing manager, Ben Smith has been appointed to director of sales and marketing at GSM Outdoors. The company encompasses brands such as Stealth Cam, Walker's, Western Rivers, Cyclops, American Hunter, HME and SSI.

## **DANIEL DEFENSE**

### **Advances VP Of Marketing**

Matt Allbritton has been promoted to the position of VP of marketing at Daniel Defense following five years with the company in a variety of roles. As VP of marketing, Allbritton will be responsible



for the development of the company's overall marketing strategy and direction.

## VISTA OUTDOOR

### Names SVP

Jason Vanderbrink, as new SVP, is responsible for leading Vista Outdoor's portfolio of domestic, international, law enforcement and government sales, and trade marketing operations. With Vista Outdoor since 2005, and most recently the company's VP for retail sales, Vanderbrink brings 17 years of experience in the outdoor recreation industry working across channels and customers.

## UNITED SPORTING COMPANIES

### Appoints SVP, HR Director

United Sporting Companies (USC) announces the promotion of Rob George to SVP of sales and marketing and Grace Brickle to director of human resources. In addition to the marketing team, George will be responsible for all USC sales related activities. In her new role, Brickle will be responsible for the company's human resources.

## HOGUE INC.

### Hires Sales Manager

Mike Keegan has been hired as the sales manager for law enforcement, government and international sales at Hogue Inc. In his new role, Keegan will maintain existing international sales channels as well as develop sales and marketing strategies within the military/L.E. markets. Keegan is a former law enforcement officer with involvement on his agency's SWAT team and violence suppression unit. He earned a degree in criminal justice from Sonoma State University and most recently worked at Steiner eOptics.

## IHEA-USA

### Names Executive Director

International Hunter Education Association (IHEA-USA) board of directors has hired Brad Heidel as its new executive director. Heidel brings over 15 years of experience in the outdoors industry to his new role. His career began with the Wildlife Heritage Association where his passion for hunting and conservation continued to grow. He also served as the director of



corporate relations for Pheasants Forever, Inc.

## BENELLI USA

### Promotes Directors

George Thompson has been promoted to director of product management from his most recent position as senior product manager for the Benelli brand. In his new role, Thompson will be responsible for leading the company's product development and execution in the U.S. including the Benelli, Franchi, Stoeger, Uberti USA and Stoeger Airgun brands. He will also maintain direct responsibility for the product development of the Benelli brand.

As director of sales and channel management, JP Fischer will lead Benelli USA's sales and channel management initiatives within the U.S. for the Benelli, Franchi, Stoeger, Uberti USA and Stoeger Airguns brands. Fischer will help the Benelli brands further expand into emerging markets. Fischer joined Benelli USA in 2014 and most recently served as the independent channel sales and marketing manager.

## GERBER

### Announces Director Of Sales

Marty Carlson has been promoted to director of sales, sporting goods for Gerber. In his position, Carlson will continue to direct leadership and act as sporting goods channel champion for the Gerber sales organization in the Americas.

"Marty has played an instrumental role in Gerber over the last six years developing

increasingly stronger relationships with a broad array of customers. His unique ability to advocate for our partners is matched only by his passion for the products and brand," said Tom Diefenderfer, VP of sales at Gerber.

## STREAMLIGHT INC.

### Expands International Sales Presence

Philippe Marzin has joined Streamlight as international regional manager, Europe. Based in Wirral, U.K., Marzin will build on Streamlight's growing international network, developing and implementing sales and distribution channels throughout Europe. Marzin has more than 20 years of experience managing international sales programs. He has a degree in mathematics, physics and technology and earned a master's degree in international sales and management from L'Ecole Supérieure des Technologies et des Affaires (ESTA School of Business and Engineering).

## WILEY X

### Hires SVP, Director

Wiley X has selected Frank Rescigna to serve as SVP of sales. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in branding, licensing, sales and operations aspects of the global eyewear industry.

Scott Donnelly also joins Wiley X and will serve as its director of product development. Donnelly was most recently the product development manager for FGX International and its brands: Gargoyles Performance Eyewear, Foster Grant Polarized, Rawlings Pro and Realtree. ①

# PERSONAL DEFENSE MARKET

## Adjusting To Sales Under A Pro-Gun President

By Massad Ayoob

Nearly six months into President Trump's term, the industry is still finding its way adjusting to the "new normal." Prior to Election Day 2016, almost all the talking heads predicted a sweeping Hillary Clinton victory — but as we all now know, voters had something else in mind. With Trump's victory and a continued Republican-controlled Congress, Washington, D.C. (and many states) experienced a pro-gun sweep for the most part.

As relief swept the gun culture and the gun owners' civil rights community, pro-gun activists like Miguel Gonzalez at [www.gunfreezone.net](http://www.gunfreezone.net) encouraged us all to sip a well-deserved cup of *schadenfreude*. That tasty satisfaction at the defeat of one's enemies still delights, but NRA-ILA and others (including Gonzalez) have wisely encouraged us all to press our advantage for more pro-gun victories — and to welcome new customers to the industry.

But something else has happened. The desperate "last chance" need to buy desirable semi-auto firearms for personal- and home-defense has seen its driving force soften in recent months. Across the country, sales of such guns, notably centerfire MSRs, have decreased.

I chatted with one gun shop owner who sighed, "I had stocked up on dozens and dozens of black rifles. It looks as if they're going to stay in the vault for a lot longer than I thought. I don't care, though. This is a whole lot better than what we would have faced in the long run if Hillary Clinton



SilencerCo Maxim 9

**"SINCE THE ELECTION, I'VE BEEN SELLING MORE REVOLVERS IN A MONTH THAN WE USED TO SELL IN SIX MONTHS."**

**ERNIE TRAUGH**

Owner Operator, Cedar Valley Outfitters  
Marion, Iowa

had been elected and allowed to pack the Supreme Court with people who shared her agenda."

His opinion seemed to be shared by most of the gun retailers I spoke with at the SHOT Show in January 2017.

### Impact On Suppressors

The "gun owner *schadenfreude*-to-complacency" factor has struck in the suppressor market. Sales of NFA firearms and gear had been accelerating greatly prior to the November 2016 election — like short-barrel rifles (SBRs) and especially, sound suppressors. Since then, many dealers who work in this area have told me sales are down. A large part of it seems to be the belief the Hearing Protection Act (H.R.367) currently awaiting action in Washington, D.C., making silencers legal for sale over the counter without BATFE paperwork, would save the \$200 licensing fee and through economy of scale, make the suppressors themselves cheaper.

The "legalization" of suppressors is by no means a done deal. Nonetheless, in a



S&W Performance Center Model G42

classic case of "perception is the reality," a pro-gun president turns out to hurt gun dealers in yet another way. Irony abounds.

### A Silver Lining

There is, however, a silver lining to this ominous cloud. Almost immediately after the election, I spoke with Roy Huntington, editor of *Shooting Industry's* sister magazine, *American Handgunner*. Roy predicted sales of MSRs would decrease once the threat of Hillary evaporated, but sales of recreational firearms ("fun guns," if you will) would increase — like sporting handguns, .22s, etc. Let's call it the "Huntington Hypothesis."

My travels around the country talking with gun dealers have largely confirmed Huntington's observation. Folks who like guns — especially those in their "peak earning years" and "comfortable retirement years" — seem to be reallocating their gun buying budgets instead of closing them out.

### Case In Point: Revolvers

Ernie Traugh runs Cedar Valley Outfitters, a busy gun shop in Marion, Iowa. He has noted a profound drop-off in sales of the usual bread-and-butter guns



Beretta APX



— MSRs and high-capacity, polymer-frame pistols. However, when I asked him about the “Huntington Hypothesis,” Ernie answered, “It’s absolutely true. Revolvers are a good example. Since the election, I’ve been selling more revolvers in a month than we used to sell in six months.”

In a recent *Women & Guns* article titled “Revolvers Making ‘Comeback’ ... Again,” long-time gun scene observer Dave Workman wrote, “Handgun popularity is cyclic, and according to some people attending this year’s SHOT Show, the cycle has started turning back toward revolvers. One probably cannot explain why handgun popularity runs in cycles, but it does. That’s why revolvers may go out of vogue, but they never go out of service. So long as there is a need for defensive sidearms, there will be a place for the revolver.”

I stop in regularly at the Pro Arms Gun Shop in Live Oak, Fla. Lately I’ve seen more hunting/sporting rifles on the racks than ever before in this establishment, since it has focused primarily on defensive firearms. There are noticeably more .22s,

from junior-size Crickett rifles to the increasingly popular S&W M&P clone of the MSR chambered in .22 LR — instead of the usual .223, .300 Blackout or .308.

The fine old Smith & Wesson revolvers and similar classics that once gathered dust in the used handgun showcase have all but disappeared. Pro Arms is not the only shop seeing this phenomenon. At the online gun forum, [www.pistol-forum.com](http://www.pistol-forum.com), one serious shooter from Dayton, Ohio recently wrote: “Today I decided to go gun shop hopping. I’m looking for a couple different K-Frames, so I decided

to see if I could get lucky. I went to nine different shops of various sizes. Most I hadn’t been to before. Nine different shops full of almost nothing but soulless plastic bullet pushers.” Why? Maybe ... *revolvers are selling again.*

Bottom line? The market has normalized after periods of panic buying. What’s going down in some sectors is going up in others. And, with what would have been the most anti-gun president in American history *not* at the helm, the retail firearms industry has won in the long run. **🔫**



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# OUTDOOR MARKETPLACE

## Breaking Down Brick-And-Mortar Barriers

By Taylor Smithfield

Online retailers have held some advantages over brick-and-mortars when it comes to customer acquisition and retention. While “e-tailers” benefit from online advertising, impulse purchases, email newsletters, social engagement and informative analytics, brick-and-mortars are at a disadvantage due to their often-independent operations. It’s naturally difficult to “network” with customers outside of the world’s largest network, but thankfully technology is rapidly breaking down the barriers between e-tail and retail.

### Beacon Technology: Not Your Father’s Marketing

We’ve previously discussed location-based marketing (LBM) or geomarketing, technology allowing retailers to communicate with customers based on the customer’s location to or within a store. Though geomarketing sounds like intimidating tech, you’ve perhaps encountered the invention while walking into your local mall or driving past a fast food restaurant, in the form of a notification on your phone (“Don’t go home alone tonight. Snag a Double Decker Burri-taco for only \$3.99!”).

By utilizing GPS coordinates, customers receive friendly texts or app notifications (only if they opt-in, of course) when they’re close by. On a smaller scale, “beacon” devices can be placed at various points within a store (near the entrance or specific product displays), triggering announcements about sales, requests for feedback or invitations to visit a website.

There are a slew of companies offering geomarketing services to retailers (check out *Outdoor Marketplace’s* July 2016 column online, “Beyond The Bricks: Embracing ‘Click And Mortar’” to learn more). However, let’s discuss a sister technology to geomarketing: Wi-Fi marketing.

### Wi-Fi? Why Not!

Yelp, the popular crowdsourced business review website, recently acquired a Wi-Fi marketing company named Turnstyle Analytics. Beside the fact this sentence reads like the opening of a Yahoo! Finance article, this acquisition is great news for you. Wi-Fi marketing is basically how retailers follow-up with customers by capturing their contact information in exchange for access to their guest Wi-Fi network. If you had to reread that sentence a few times, don’t worry, I’ll explain.

Imagine a new customer walks into your gun store. Let’s call her Andrea. Andrea immediately spots a sign at the front: “Free Wi-Fi! Connect to: RoysGunsNGear.” With phone already in hand, she

easily navigates to your wireless network and is prompted to login before she can gain free Wi-Fi access. She’s seen a similar login page while eating at Subway, so it’s familiar to her. Yours is customized with your logo, colors and a product promo. Opting to login with Facebook because it’s faster, she agrees to share her public Facebook information with your store. Just a few taps and she’s enjoying her free Wi-Fi. Essentially, Andrea has voluntarily provided you with contact and demographic information and you’ve rewarded her with convenient internet access. It’s a win-win.

In Andrea’s case, she chose to login via Facebook because it’s quicker and more secure. Other customers might login with another existing account: Twitter, Google Plus or LinkedIn. For those without a social media account, an email or phone number login is available. At the very least, you’ll retain the customer’s name and email or phone number. If they login via a social media account, you can also capture

their gender and age. But that’s not all.

On the backend, you can reference a database of information gathered from your Wi-Fi logins. Not only will you have access to an extensive contact list, you’ll gain insight into customer behavior like length, time of day and frequency of visits. There’s even a way to track the number of customers who *don’t* join your Wi-Fi (their phones emit signals whether they’re connected to your network or not), so you can compare how your Wi-Fi offering influences foot traffic. An attractive online dashboard displays this data with easy-to-interpret charts and graphs.

### Tailor And Target Your Marketing

Devicescape, a wireless networking software developer, conducted a study on the effectiveness of businesses offering free Wi-Fi. They discovered retailers who offered free Wi-Fi access had an increase in foot traffic, time spent in-store and the amount their customers spent. Sixty-two percent of business






owners observed customers lingered longer in their shops and 50 percent spent more. Just offering free Wi-Fi alone (without the bells and whistles of a marketing platform attached) has the ability to dramatically increase sales. Paired with a program like Turnstyle, you can tailor and target your marketing more effectively.

Yelp is in the business of customer acquisition and their Wi-Fi marketing service addition expands their offering into the realm of customer retention. The main goal of Wi-Fi marketing is to entice customers to return to your store again and again. Not only can you capture contact information and study customer patterns, you can create email and text message campaigns, making connections with customers even after they've left your store.

Maybe Andrea hasn't visited your gun shop in a couple months; she previously used to drop in every other week. A parameter can be set to mass text or email customers who fit this criteria (other custom criteria includes: upon entering or exiting your store, after a certain amount of visits, on customer's birthdays, for first time customers or recurring days and time). Marketing automation is a great way to target customers in a specific and personal way. Turnstyle also offers attractive email templates and an easy campaign scheduler. In addition, you can send emails or texts embedded with digital coupons to simultaneously reward customers while enticing them to return.

## Breaking Down Barriers

While it's difficult for local retailers to compete with the advantages of the internet, you can break down sections of that brick-and-mortar barrier with technology like Wi-Fi marketing. Not only is converting to a Wi-Fi marketing platform fairly simple, but the "fix it and forget it" nature of the integrated campaigns is invaluable. This is just another way to bridge the gap between e-tail and retail, which often feels like quite the chasm for business owners. Be on the lookout for Yelp's release of this service, and let us know if and how you'd consider utilizing this type of marketing (or if you currently do). 

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# ARMS & THE WOMAN

## Women Continue To Impact The Industry (And They're Not Done Yet)

By Shari LeGate

The first time I walked on to a shooting range, it was a little scary and intimidating. I called the previous week asking about lessons and booked a time. When I showed up, I expected a formal lesson — like you'd have in golf or tennis. Walking into the doublewide trailer, which served as the clubhouse, I checked in. The man behind the counter took my money, tied a builder's apron around my waist, filled it with 20-gauge shotshells, stuffed cotton in my ears, handed me a beat-up old Remington 1100, pointed to a group of old men on the skeet range and said, "just walk out there, they'll show you how to shoot," and I did. That was my introduction to the shooting sports in the late '80s. Thankfully times have changed.

Today, women are a common sight at shooting ranges, gun stores and competition events — and their numbers continue to grow. A report recently released by the National Association of Sporting Goods Wholesalers (NASGW), using up to 15 years' worth of NASGW survey data, shows women's participation has outpaced male activity in almost every category. Women's involvement in target shooting increased 64.1 percent overall from 2001 to 2015. In the same timeframe, women's participation in handgun shooting surged by 96.3 percent. Rifle target shooting climbed by 58.5 percent — well over the male participation increase of 35.3 percent.

The women's snapshot doesn't stop there. In 2013, Pew Research Center conducted a survey and found there was a substantial gender gap in gun ownership.

THE BUZZWORDS OF TODAY ARE "DIVERSITY" AND "INCLUSION." AND FOR THE LONGEST TIME, THIS WAS MEANT FOR THE WOMEN'S MARKET. NOT ANYMORE.



Photo by Howard Communications

Men were three times as likely to purchase a gun as women: 37 percent versus 12 percent. Just two years later in 2015, 78 percent of retailers who responded to survey questions said they experienced an upswing in women customers. Additionally, the way women entered the shooting industry saw a change. "Interest in the shooting sports" and a "desire for personal protection" were the most common reasons.

### Not Just Pink

When this new consumer base first showed up, the shooting sports industry scrambled to provide products to fill their needs. Manufacturers stepped up and truly wanted to reach the women's market, but some missteps were made. When the ladies/youth shotgun model first debuted, women often thought: "Thanks for letting us know we have the body of a 16-year-old boy." Next came the colored guns. The pinks, purples and light blues. Clothing was another challenge. Whether it was a shooting vest, camouflage gear or hunting attire, women were offered a downsized men's version.

However as more women entered the shooting community, their voices grew louder and their influence became stronger. They

wanted products designed for them, not products merely rebranded. Manufacturers, retailers and the industry as a whole responded, with new product designs, dedicated shelf space in retail stores and programs for shooting ranges with the purpose and intent of reaching out to women with a welcoming hand.

### Paving The Way Forward

Within any industry, evaluating the environment and current trends is just good business and the shooting sports is no different. Turning a critical eye on the direction and progression an industry is taking can show what areas are growing and what needs the most attention. Recently, the NSSF reported new target shooters (those who have taken up the sport in the last five years) are younger, female and urban compared to "established" target shooters — those participating for more than five years.

Women have made, and are still making, a substantial impact in the shooting sports industry. There are women in leadership positions of major organizations, they're forming and building industry-related companies and they're rising in the ranks of the competitive shooting arena. Women have moved from



being a shadow in the background to making decisions affecting strategic plans, marketing campaigns and adding their input to research and development of new products. But this doesn't mean reaching out to women or their role influencing the industry is finished.

The buzzwords of today are "diversity" and "inclusion." And for the longest time, this was meant for the women's market. Not anymore. Now the phrase "diversity and inclusion" paints a much broader stroke, referring not just to gender, but also to race, color, sexual identity, religion and culture.

With this new outreach, the role of women in the industry plays an even more important part than ever before. The path women forged for acceptance, involvement and relevancy in an industry that wasn't always welcoming can be used as a roadmap in reaching out to this new customer base. Women have paved the way by opening doors, breaking down barriers and using their influence to challenge an industry to think outside the box.


## An Ongoing Conversation

So, what does the future hold for the women in the industry now? If you look at the statistics and trends, it would be easy to say women's growth will continue at a substantial rate — but there's more to it than just the numbers.

Leaha Wirth, vice president of sales and marketing for HIVIZ shares it's about staying relevant. "It's up to us now. We can't just sit on our laurels and expect to be handed things. We have to continue working hard to know everything there is to possibly know about the guns we use, their applications and the sports we participate in. It makes us a better asset to our industry and it's an incentive for the industry to devote more resources to the female market," she said.

As consumers and business owners, it's important women keep reaching out and mentoring others. As more women and diversified groups enter the shooting sports, women know well the obstacles ahead and can offer guidance and assurance making the road easier to travel.

Recognizing the contributions women have made to the industry and how they've helped shape it is an ongoing conversation. A tremendous opportunity lies ahead for women and for the industry. One, if taken advantage of, can only increase participation numbers on all fronts.

For those of you who may recall, an old, well-known marketing campaign that targeted women once stated, "you've come a long way" and we have ... but we're not done yet. 

Shari LeGate is a video producer and shooting sports analyst for FMG Publications, as well as a regular contributor to *GUNS Magazine*. LeGate previously served as the executive director of the Women's Shooting Sports Foundation. A two-time national champion and World Cup medalist, LeGate was a member of the USA Shooting Team for 12 years — winning numerous titles and medals.



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# UPDATE ON *The Ammo & Reloading Market*

BY CAROLEE ANITA BOYLES

**W**ith the high demand and low availability of all sorts of ammo for the past couple of years, shooters have been keeping a close eye on the ammunition segment of the market. With the coming of a new political climate, retailers are hoping for more moderate supply and demand.

Oscar Costa, formerly a movie producer/director and now the owner of Oscar's Gunworks in San Gabriel, Calif., said sales of ammunition are down at his store.

"Everything is extremely slow," he relayed. "I think it's because of state politics. California passed Proposition 63 and people are confused about exactly what it is. There also are several things in the Legislature right now that would ruin the gun business here in California." According to the website Ballotpedia, one thing Proposition 63 requires is individuals who wish to purchase ammunition must first obtain a permit, which dealers have to see before they can sell ammunition.

Costa attributed the slow sales to economic factors.

"Because people spent so much money at the end of last year trying to buy MSR-platform rifles and the accouterments that go with them, they're now waiting for their income tax refund checks to make purchases," he said.

The most popular ammo with customers is 9mm, according to Costa.

"People don't buy much .40, but they do buy some .45," he observed. "During bird season people buy a lot of shotgun shells. Most people don't buy 5.56 because it's more expensive than .223 for shooting with their MSR-platform rifle. But the top seller is 9mm."

Most of Costa's customers do a lot of range shooting.

"They want range ammo, which is Federal and Winchester — Federal is the one we sell the most," he shared.

With the current trends in state politics, Costa expects his sales to change significantly during 2017.

"On January 1, 2018, customers have to get a \$50 license in order to buy ammunition, and they're going to be limited as to how much ammo they can buy per month," he said. "They won't be able to import ammo, or buy any outside the state and have it shipped to their house — this means no more online purchases. So I predict by the end of the year people will realize it's coming and buy ammo like crazy."

However, Costa claimed, the state Department of Justice is taking much longer than expected to implement other portions of the new law, so nobody is sure whether all of this will happen on time or not. "It's a very confusing time," he continued.

Although Costa has tried a number of promotions to try to boost ammo and other sales in his store, they haven't



made a lot of difference.

"I had a President's Day sale with incredible prices on everything," he said. "I advertised everywhere, and hardly anybody showed up. It's pretty bad."

### MEANWHILE ... IN THE SOUTHEAST

Across the country, in Tallahassee, Fla., the picture is quite different. Miles Glass, store manager of Kevin's Fine Outdoor Gear and Apparel, has seen a drastic *increase* in ammo sales over the past couple of years. However, he observed it has "slowed down a little bit" post-election.

"But over a two-year period we've seen a pretty serious uptick, and I think a lot of it has to do with basic economics. There was a several-year stretch where manufacturers were struggling to keep up with demand and people were buying up all the ammo," he recalled. "Basically, if someone walked in the door and saw ammo for a particular firearm they possess, they bought not one box — but two or three just because they were worried about scarcity."

Since the first of 2017, Glass has seen a mild slowdown in sales.

"I think the manufacturers have finally caught up to demand," he said. "Ammo seems to be more readily available, both direct from manufacturers and through distribution channels. However I still can't pick up the phone and get just any particular bullet I want, but availability seems to have gotten considerably better here in the last few months."

Glass thought politics might also have an affect on changes in ammunition sales.

"I think a lot of gun owners probably have some peace of mind with the last election," he noted. "There's less fear of any type of gun or ammo control at the federal level. A lot of people just aren't as worried as they were with the previous administration."

According to Glass, sales of rifle and handgun ammunition are trending a little differently from shotgun ammo.

"Rifle and handgun ammunition are very, very similar," he shared. "Probably 95 percent of the shotshell business — especially in the Southeast

— is hunting related, and it's been fairly steady. When we saw a rush on ammo, it wasn't on shotgun ammo. It was more on pistol and rifle."

When it comes to specifics, Glass said, customers are purchasing a lot of Federal Premium.

"Federal is king," he affirmed.

"Another one of the top sellers in pistol ammo is Blazer Brass. Then there's CCI, which is probably the most popular rimfire ammunition in the United States. Most of the .22 LR ammo I sell is from them; it's inexpensive to shoot, so it's very popular."

### WHAT ABOUT RELOADING?

The reloading segment of the market has changed in the past few years as well. Glass shared sales of reloading components have also been very strong at his store.

"You're not going to just walk into any store and find reloading components," he said. "You have to go into a true gun shop to find that; we do a good bit of business in reloading."

Robin Sharpless, executive VP for Redding Reloading Equipment, agreed.

"We've remained very busy," he stated. "Some of it may be the natural progression of people upstream as they become more avid about shooting. A lot of people jumped into reloading because they couldn't find ammo, and

then components were difficult to find for a while. But it's evened out, and there are plenty of primers and powder and bullets around now. Prices have continued to be high, especially on the shotshell side, because lead shot is so expensive."



FIOCCHI 8MM GASSER

Sharpless expects the reloading market to continue to grow.

"I think there was enough of a groundswell of growth when ammo was not particularly available that people got into it and liked it," he said. "This is especially true in parts of the country where people can't get outside and shoot during the winter. Reloading is a great way to stay in touch with your hobby in the months when there's 3 feet of snow and it's 14 degrees outside — since you're not going outside to shoot."

Economics also still favors reloading.

## ***“Demand is still outweighing supply — meaning folks will have to go to a true gun shop to find those more obscure calibers.”***

### MILES GLASS

Manager, Kevin's Fine Outdoor Gear and Apparel  
Thomasville, Ga.





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"We're still in a place where you can make ammo from used cases for about half what you pay for new ammunition," Sharpless continued.

### DOLLAR DAYS ARE GONE

Even though ammo overall has become more readily available, it's still not as accessible as it was years ago according to Glass.

"There's been such a craze on ammo we've seen manufacturers slowly but surely raise their prices," he said. "It's probably not going to stop anytime soon, so the days of buying a box of .22 ammo for a couple dollars are long gone. I don't think people need to fear they're not going to be able to get ammo for their gun, but demand is still outweighing supply — meaning folks will have to go to a true gun shop to find those more obscure calibers." ③



### MEC MARKSMAN

**"Reloading is a great way to stay in touch with your hobby in the months when there's 3 feet of snow and it's 14 degrees outside."**

### ROBIN SHARPLESS

EVP, Redding Reloading Equipment  
Cortland, N.Y.





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BY KEVIN RUSSELBURG

Photo by Burris

# SETTING SIGHTS ON INCREASED OPTICS SALES

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SYMBIOTIC MANUFACTURER-DEALER RELATIONSHIP  
FORGES FRESH OPPORTUNITIES FOR CUSTOMERS

**O**ptics sales represent an excellent opportunity for retailers to optimize their revenue. However, connecting with the customer and defining his or her needs is the ultimate service a dealer can provide. Currently, the optics market is experiencing some exciting advancements in technologies and electronics. Optics manufacturers have harnessed these innovations and integrated them into their products to meet the needs of an expanding and knowledgeable customer base. ►



An array of tools exists to allow manufacturers to gauge the direction of the market. Working closely with their dealer network and staying informed on other trending technologies in the industry has proven to be successful. This relationship helps guide the types of products the manufacturer chooses to introduce to the market.

Without close communication with the various segments of the optics industry, trends can often be overlooked or misinterpreted. Some manufacturers are noticing increased activity into specific technologies.

"Rangefinding has been available on scopes for years," said Duane Sorenson, Sun Optics USA VP of operations. "The latest market trend seems to be 'first focal plane' scopes that can rangefind at any power. With the development of new reticles, it's now easy for the user to accurately determine the range to target."

Sorenson provided his analysis on why the market has shifted in this direction.

"The market has revisited first focal plane optics for a variety of reasons, but mainly due to the fact it doesn't matter what power is being used: High and low power work the same. Another leading reason for the rise in popularity is costs have come down and consumers can buy a good-quality product at an economic price," he said.

## GOING THE DISTANCE

Across the industry, manufacturers have addressed the shift toward long-range shooting by maximizing the performance of today's rifles, cartridges and modern technology (like ballistic apps). Many dealers have accommodated this swing by offering a deep lineup of riflescopes geared toward long-range shooting.

Several manufacturers offer education to their dealers by conducting in-house instruction at their facility or through seminars and one-on-one training during trade shows and exhibits.

"With the amount of changes taking place at the current rate, it's important for dealers to educate themselves as much as possible. Researching new trends and technology advancements through industry publications will provide an adequate understanding, but we encourage our dealers to reach out to us

directly for in-depth information on specific products or technologies," Sorenson added.

Always looking to stay ahead of the curve, successful manufacturers are constantly keeping track of what's next in optics technology advancements. "We've seen digital reticles coming in at a reasonable price point, and with that many options are available by simple programming and operator input. Digital reticle technology allows consumers to program changes such as distance, elevation, wind speed, etc. directly on the scope itself," Sorenson said.

Sorenson also relayed the expansion of this technology could allow for integration between apps on a smartphone and the optic itself — allowing users to communicate and incorporate changes from the device to the scope.

## THE REGION & THE SEASON

The discussion around what sells well tends to be heavily influenced by the particular regional market where a retail shop is located.



Vortex Optics Fury HD



Pulsar Helion XP50

**"THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT MARKETING TO REMEMBER IS: YOU CAN ALWAYS BUY A CUSTOMER'S FIRST TRIP, BUT THE SECOND ONE YOU HAVE TO EARN!"**

**MATTHEW TYLER, VP of Development**  
SafeSide Tactical  
Roanoke, Va.

"With a large portion of our rifle sales being the MSR platform, we find our most common optics sold are those to help the sporting shooter at short to medium distances. Iron sights, or back-up sights, are our largest category of 'optics' sold by volume," said Matthew Tyler, VP of development at SafeSide Tactical in Roanoke, Va. "The majority of our customers move right into a flip-up style sight to cover their bases. After that, we see red dots being extremely popular and then moving into scopes in the 1-4 and 1-6 power ranges."

Tyler identified his store's top-selling optics, with the SIG SAUER ROMEO red dot a new standout.

"We've done very well with the Vortex line, until the last few months when the SIG ROMEO red dot took our market by storm. When comparing Vortex, SIG, EO-Tech and Trijicon, a lot of our customers find SIG offers a very competitive optic at a much more appealing price. The auto-off feature and extended battery life make it a go-to," Tyler added.

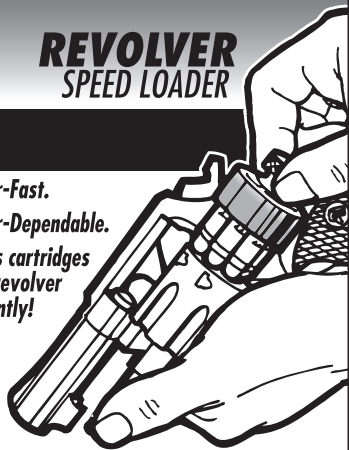


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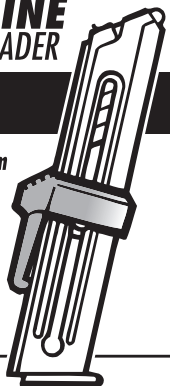
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◀ The information dealers glean from optics manufacturers will impact how they're able to approach sales at the counter with end users.

The majority of SafeSide's customers are interested in recreation and competition shooting.

"Often, they're buying similar optics but in different price categories. The competition shooters have a more specific set of criteria and a more well-rounded knowledge base of what they need the firearm and optic to do. Thus, they're generally willing to pay a little more for something that fits the bill," Tyler said.

### A "HANDS-ON" APPROACH

Dealers often display rifles on countertops, making them accessible to the customers. They'll feature specific optic options installed so customers can see them in action. Retailers with shooting ranges can also offer a variety of optics on rental firearms so customers can try them before they buy.

"We use a few displays to drive attention to our optics, but mostly we put thermal scopes, IR scopes, holographic sights and other optics on guns so people can pick them up, look through them and get a feel for them. We encourage customers to walk them to the back door and look at 3D archery targets in sunlight so they can see what it will look like in the field," shared Monte Montes, manager at Star Arms LLC in Stephenville, Texas.

By spending time listening to the customer to see what it is they want to do with each firearm, dealers can give advice as to which optic options would do the job the best.

"We start by asking what they're going to use the optic for and the optimal range they want to use it at — and if they have a budget. This quickly gives us a type and range to start putting in their hands and letting them look through or at," Montes said. "As far as product use, around here, it's mostly hunting, but we have some target shoot-

ers and long-range guys and gals as well. Inexpensive (relatively speaking) night vision scopes like NiteSite and Pulsar keep hog hunters happy at night. It meets their budget requirements, and allows them to hunt at night with Gen1 or Gen2 capability for under \$700."

### THE NAME GAME

Differentiating yourself from the competition not only comes down to excellent customer service, but also involves name recognition. Today, promoting a business involves the use of tools, like social media, to get the word out on a sale, or special pricing on key items previously unavailable.

"The best way to market any business is to market in as many ways possible," Tyler shared. "We have over a dozen billboards at any time, TV commercials on our local station, newspaper ads and campaign during special events — using direct mail coupons. An easy-to-navigate website, coupled with a responsive and constantly updated social media page, and even a phonebook listing for the folks with time and money who grew up without Google all play an important part. The most important thing about marketing to remember is: You can always buy a customer's first trip, but the second one you have to earn!"

Despite their advanced technologies and higher price tag, optics are no different than any other accessory when it comes to educating the customer. Knowledgeable dealers will take the time to understand the customers' needs and the budget they're working with and then provide the options to best fit those criteria. This level of service will bring the customer back (thus earning the all-important second visit) and often lead to additional sales through referrals. ☺



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# IT'S NOT JUST SEASONAL

KEEP YOUR CALENDAR OPEN  
FOR HUNTING SALES SUCCESS

BY JADE MOLDAE



**T**hink about it: New camo patterns, that must-have big-game rifle, game-specific cartridges, technology-packed laser rangefinders and versatile carry packs comprise just a fraction of the many products your hunting customers are scouting out year round.

**"IF YOU CAN'T  
COMPETE WITH  
THEM IN PRICE,  
YOU BETTER BEAT  
THEM IN SERVICE  
AND KNOWLEDGE."**

**JOSH DOBYNS**, *Shooting Sports Buyer*  
Kittery Trading Post  
Kittery, Maine

While we may be in the "summer doldrums," it's actually the ideal time to start preparing your hunting season inventory. According to Kittery Trading Post Shooting Sports Buyers Bryan Hurst and Josh DoByns, successful dealers regard hunting season sales as a year-round effort.

Located in Kittery, Maine, Kittery Trading Post has been a mainstay in the Northeast for nearly 80 years. The store does brisk business with hunters, especially those in New Hampshire and Maine. Whitetail is "hands down" the most popular game in the area, according to Hurst, and the store attracts a fair amount of bear and moose hunters.

Hurst oversees the orders for firearms, ammunition, reloading and optics, while DoByns handles archery, hunting clothing and firearm accessories. Together, they provide an experienced perspective of how to integrate hunting season sales year round.

"We don't approach hunting as seasonal," Hurst shared. "It's about looking at it as a 12-month season, and not just 'I have to do it all in three months.' There are too many people doing this; they're not able to get the product during those three months because the manufac-

turers are trying to supply everybody. It's kind of a domino effect from that. Anyone I've worked with who looks and thinks about it as a 12-month season has always been successful."

Hurst, who also has a sales rep background, pointed out hunters will often be on the lookout for new products, even if it's out of season — benefiting those retailers who maintain a current selection of products in this category.

"One thing retailers should realize: hunters are not just buying hunting stuff during hunting season. Yes, that's when they're going to buy the most, but they're always looking, shopping and thinking about hunting," he noted. "As a hunter myself, if I see a product and it catches my eye or if it's something I need, I'm going to get it — no matter if it's April, June or right during the season in the fall."

### GAME-CHANGING GEAR

Kittery Trading Post maintains an expansive supply of camo, and DoByns has observed a shift in recent years.

"We've seen a lot of manufacturers move toward proprietary or military-style camo. Kryptek is very popular. We expect to carry products associated with those patterns," he said.

In an encouraging sign, some clothing manufacturers have gone away from the "shrink it and pink it" mantra to better appeal to women hunters.

"Companies are a lot more aware of women hunters as 'hunters' who don't necessarily want to be called out with pink or anything," DoByns said. "There are still some subtle colors in it, and aqua looks like it will be strong this year. Aqua stands out a little better on the rack as well."



**SIG SAUER SIG HT .223**

When it comes to hunting accessories, game cameras are consistent sellers. Moultrie is the store's bestseller in this category, while Spartan Cameras and Cuddeback have also attracted interest from hunters.

"Game cameras have been the number one thing for scouting and everything else," DoByns

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said. “There has been a tremendous boom in cellular technology for game cameras; we also have cameras able to communicate to each other via Bluetooth. Now, people can see what’s happening at camp three states away and it comes right to their phone, tablet or computer.”

“You can be scouting in the woods while sitting in your office,” Hurst added.

Kittery doesn’t see too many hunters who use MSR-style rifles, but it does have a small segment of predator hunters who prefer the autoloading Browning BAR. Most hunters who frequent the store use either shotguns or bolt-action rifles.

“Our leading hunting shotgun vendor is Benelli,” Hurst observed. “Browning is our top-selling hunting rifle brand, and we sell a lot from Ruger as well. In handgun hunting, 10mm has been very popular; .357- and .500-caliber revolvers make great backup guns for bear hunters.”

There has been a recent trend of manufacturers offering rifle/scope combination packages, which has proven popular with customers. Kittery sells the Ruger American Rifle with Vortex Crossfire II Riflescope, Savage Axis II XP and others.



**Moultrie S-50i Game Camera**

“These packages are convenient, and they tend to appeal more to the weekend warrior-type guy who will go hunting once or to find a package for his kid,” Hurst said. “We’ve seen major growth in this segment for sure.”

“The offerings have gotten wider, you can hit just about any price point now with those combos,” DoByns continued.



**Remington V3 Field Sport MOBU Country**

## GETTING CUSTOMERS IN THE DOOR

Following several strong years, the industry continues its adjustment to the “new normal” with a president who openly supports the industry. The lack of a fear-induced environment has impacted the frequency of visitors in many stores, and Kittery has realized a change in how it handles its marketing.

“Instead of waiting for the sales to come fall in our lap, we know we’re going to have to work harder for the sale than before. This is why we’ll be very proactive with our promotions. We’re going to have hot prices to make people come in here and give them plenty of reasons to come back,” Hurst relayed.

In-store events remain an effective way to boost traffic.

“We’ve had great success through special promotional events — things like Ruger Weekend or SIG Promo Weekend — using direct mailings. We’re able to go back and research people who had purchased firearms from us before and add them to our targeted direct mailing list,” Hurst shared. “It’s costly, but works very well for us.”

Not every store can accommodate a large-scale event; there are other opportunities to set your store apart from the competition. For instance, Kittery hosts free hunter education seminars — bringing more unique customers into the store.

If you want to enhance your store’s profile among youth or women hunters, Hurst says it starts by stocking products for those customers.

“Dealers that actually carry hunting products for the youth, women and left-handers are going to sell those items — and it’s helped if the word gets out. So when it comes to the retail portion, it’s a matter of actually having these items in stock,” he said.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

Hurst and DoByns provided some final thoughts on how to be successful this year.


“For the smaller shops, they need to be known as *the* place to go, by offering a specific rifle setup or bowhunting equipment — specialization separates you from the competition,” DoByns shared. “They need to be the shop people know they can go to because Bass Pro, Cabela’s, Dick’s Sporting Goods and Field & Stream are all showing up everywhere. If you can’t compete with them in price, you better beat them in service and knowledge.”

“If a consumer comes in with one need, you want to be able to fill that one need immediately — not just relying on special orders. Not to say we don’t do special orders, we do, but we also want to make sure we have a wide selection,” Hurst said. “If someone wants to get a hunting bolt rifle, there’s no reason why they’re not leaving with one when they come in.”

One way to stay on top of trends in the hunting segment is to engage with customers. DoByns said Kittery Trading Post has adjusted its product mix after hearing about new products from customers; this helps with an updated inventory to match trends.

“As the hunting demographic changes, the products we carry change. We can’t continue buying the same products we bought 10 years ago,” he stated.

A thorough knowledge of the products that sell well for hunters in your area and superb customer service will help you meet the needs of customers without delay.

“The internet has made the world very small,” DoByns continued. “So if we don’t have it in the store by the time the customer gets to the parking lot, it’s just been purchased somewhere else.” 

How are you preparing for this year’s fall hunting season? We want to hear from you! Send us an email: [comments@shootingindustry.com](mailto:comments@shootingindustry.com).

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# SHOT SHOW

BY CHRIS DOLNACK

## PARTY CRASHERS

**W**hile the reviews for the 2017 SHOT Show have been overwhelmingly positive, a show as large as ours doesn't happen without a few complaints here and there. As you might imagine, some are minor and don't really have anything to do with the show itself. Others, of course, are absolutely legitimate, and as we sort through comments, suggestions, criticisms and compliments, it's those serious concerns we always want to address.

One concern in particular stood out this year, not for its frequency, but for its telling. One of our retail members approached me late in the show week to tell me he'd seen someone with a buyer's badge on the floor whom he knew for a fact was not a buyer and was not at all associated professionally with the industry. That person, he claimed, was wearing a store badge and "working" with another retailer our member knew and who was indeed a legitimate attendee.

"Did you get the name on the badge?" I asked him.

"Yes, but I don't want to tell you who it is. I don't want to cause any trouble. But you really ought to do something to stop this kind of thing."

Okay then.

Truth be told, this is a concern — and a valid one — we hear every year, just as we do those of suitcasing and outboarding. We take every one of them seriously: We comb our attendance list every year, performing an in-depth audit of a percentage of all buyers, wholesalers and other permitted attendees to the show. Here's how the audit works.

Those names and businesses with which we are not first-hand familiar are periodically asked to provide credentials supporting their claim of being active professionals in the firearms industry. It doesn't mean someone has to own a 50,000 square-foot store and staff half their county. It *does* mean if they can't produce an invoice for ammunition or firearms or accessories orders they've placed in recent months, there are going to be additional questions — and if those answers don't come back satisfactorily, they are removed from the attendee list.

Let me emphasize that we perform this audit every year. Annually we remove 10 percent of those on the list of attendees from the previous year's show. Yes, we understand the enormous draw the show holds for the family members and friends of those industry members who travel to SHOT Show every year, as well as consumers in general. But

the SHOT Show is a trade-only event, one requiring a significant investment from everyone attending. If you can't get the business done you need to get done because there are non-trade people gawking at the displays and chewing the fat, then any return you expected from your investment is compromised.

Nobody wants that. Not you and not us. But the SHOT Show is not the Pentagon. There will always be some people who gain admission and shouldn't be there. It's an unpleasant facet of a show this large. What we can do is control the issue. Our annual audit does much of that work, but we need your help.

Telling us we "oughta do something" about a problem without telling us who and what the problem is doesn't help us, and it certainly doesn't help you or protect the investment you've made in attending the show. Report the person and businesses you know or strongly suspect of being admitted to the show under false pretenses and we'll take care of the rest. Your report will be anonymous, so there will be no retaliation, and you won't be "causing any problems" — in fact, just the opposite. **S**

**CHRIS DOLNACK** is the SVP and CMO of the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

**IF YOU CAN'T GET THE BUSINESS DONE YOU NEED TO GET DONE ... THEN ANY RETURN YOU EXPECTED FROM YOUR INVESTMENT IS COMPROMISED.**





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### Jagemann Rifle Brass

Jagemann Rifle Brass is now available in the following calibers: 300 Blackout, .223 Rem., 5.56x45mm, 7mm Rem. Mag., .300 Win. Mag. and 6.5 Creedmoor. Additional variants in launch development as well! Contact [info@jagmannsportinggroup.com](mailto:info@jagmannsportinggroup.com) for current delivery status. [jagmannsportinggroup.com](http://jagmannsportinggroup.com)



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LockedOn 360° Mobile Gun Vise is the vise for seasoned hunters, youth and physically challenged shooters — allowing controlled movement for better shot placement. By reducing recoil, the vise allows safe and easy introduction to hunting for youth and the physically challenged. The seasoned hunter will appreciate the stability and range of motion it offers for those challenging shots. [lockedon360.com](http://lockedon360.com)



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## ANDY'S LEATHER

### Rhodesian Rifle Sling

The Rhodesian Rifle Sling is both a shooting aid, that supports the shooter when slung, and a carry strap. The slings are made with bridle leather and solid brass hardware in North Carolina. Swivels are available and sold separately. Andy's Leather also makes standard carry straps and other accessories. Dealer/Distributor discounts are available (when Andy's not in the shop he runs [www.scoutrifle.org](http://www.scoutrifle.org) and is editor of [www.scoutrifle magazine.com](http://www.scoutrifle magazine.com)). [andysleather.com](http://andysleather.com)



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## ZEISS SPORTS OPTICS

### Conquest V6 Riflescope

ZEISS announces the new Conquest V6 riflescope line. The Conquest V6 features a superior 6X variable magnification range, new ballistic turrets and new ballistic reticles ZBR and ZMOA, all in a compact SuperZoom 30mm riflescope. The new V6 utilizes FL lenses and T\* lens coatings to achieve an unsurpassed in its class light transmission of 92 percent. [zeiss.com](http://zeiss.com)





# NEW PRODUCTS

By Jenna Buckley

TO VIEW EVERY COMPANY AND PRODUCT  
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## BEAR & SON CUTLERY INC.

(800) 844-3034

[www.shootingindustry.com/company/bear-son-cutlery-inc](http://www.shootingindustry.com/company/bear-son-cutlery-inc)

Bear & Son Cutlery introduces the **BEAR SONG VI** butterfly knife in three models. The 5.25-inch knife features T-6 aircraft aluminum lightweight handles tough enough to last for years. The Bear Song VI is available with a black powder coated 1095 carbon steel blade and silver or black handle, or 416 Damascus blade with silver handle.



## HEXMAG

(970) 460-2000

[www.shootingindustry.com/company/hexamag](http://www.shootingindustry.com/company/hexamag)

Hexmag introduces **pistol magazines compatible with GLOCK 17, 17C, 26, 34 and 17L models**. The lightweight (1.4 oz.) magazine accommodates 17 rounds, with a 30-round version available soon. For California residents, a 10-round capacity version will follow. Available in black or Flat Dark Earth, the magazines are constructed of UV stabilized PolyHex2 Advanced Composite and feature Hexmag's patented gripping surface. In an industry first, the base plate can be removed without tools and the follower and base latch plate color changed to designate which ammunition is in the magazine for quick identification.



## ARIAT INTERNATIONAL

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[www.shootingindustry.com/company/ariat-international](http://www.shootingindustry.com/company/ariat-international)

Created with the true outdoorsman in mind, the **CATALYST VX DEFIANT** hunting boot by Ariat International features rugged innovation for optimal performance. Combined technologies — including CobaltVX, GORE-TEX and Vibram MONT — offer protection, stabilization, waterproof construction and traction in extreme temperatures and terrains. The boots are made of full-grain leather and durable hardware with the added comfort of arch support and Thinsulate Ultra insulation.



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Excel Arms expands its X-Series line of pistol-caliber carbines with the **X-5.7R**. This semi-auto rifle chambered for 5.7x28mm utilizes the popular FN Five-Seven magazine available in 20- or 10-round capacity. The X-5.7R has both a top and bottom Picatinny rail for mounting various optics and accessories. It has an O.A. length of 34 to 38 inches, a barrel length of 18 inches and weighs 6.25 lbs. A California and other restricted states "Featureless" model is also available.

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ELEY Ammunition is offering several new rounds to fit a variety of uses. **ELEY HIGH VELOCITY HOLLOW** (38-gr., 1,250 fps) and **ELEY SUBSONIC HOLLOW** (38-gr., 1,040 fps) represent two hollowpoint rounds created for .22 LR use. Specifically designed for semi-auto firearms are **ELEY FORCE** (42-gr., 1,250 fps) and **ELEY CONTACT** (42 gr., 1090 fps). **ELEY ACTION** (40-gr., 1,090 fps) is an all-purpose round for a multitude of shooting disciplines.



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From Wiley X's Climate Control Series, the **WX BOSS** (Model CCBOS12) features a sleek, wraparound style frame outfitted with polarized Venice Gold mirror lenses. The advanced glare-cutting capability and amber tint of these lenses make them a versatile choice for a wide range of outdoor activities. This new model features a soft, removable Facial Cavity Seal that blocks out wind, airborne debris and reflected light and creates a comfortable, climate-controlled environment for the eyes. The WX Boss frame is completely dressed in Kryptek Highlander camouflage.

## KAHR ARMS

(508) 795-3919

[www.shootingindustry.com/company/kahr-arms](http://www.shootingindustry.com/company/kahr-arms)

Three models of Kahr Arms CW9 9mm models are now California legal: the **CW9 BLACK CARBON FIBER FRAME**, the **STANDARD CW9 WITH FRONT NIGHT SIGHT** and the **CERAKOTE BURNT BRONZE**. All three CW9 models feature a 3.6-inch barrel with conventional rifling and weigh 15.8 oz. The models offer a trigger cocking DAO, lock-breach, Browning-type recoil lug and a passive striker block with no magazine disconnect. Capacity is 7+1.



CW9 CERAKOTE BURNT BRONZE



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Laser Ammo is now offering three new hunting adapters for use with SureStrike. The **MAUSER 8X57, .300 WIN.** and **6.5 X 55S SWEDISH** can be used in firearms, together with electronic targets, with simulators and more.

## TANGODOWN

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[www.shootingindustry.com/company/tango-down](http://www.shootingindustry.com/company/tango-down)

The new **IO COVER FOR TRIJICON MRO** (iO-002) from TangoDown keeps the optic's body and both lenses protected — even in the most harsh environments. Integral snug-fitting lens caps can be opened or closed with one hand and nest together to prevent flopping under recoil. The cover's durable thermoplastic polyurethane material resists solvents, oils and UV exposure.



OPTION 7

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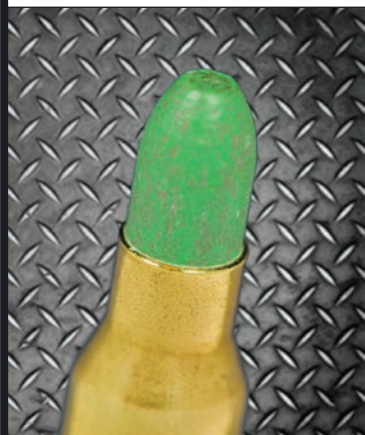
The **OPTION SERIES** represents Elite Archery's newest line of bows. Each of the two 32-inch axle-to-axle bows utilize 7075 T6 skeletonized risers featuring 65 percent greater strength-to-weight ratios than previous models in just 4.3 lbs. A new roller guard delivers speeds up to 342 fps while the Pro Grip reduces pressure points and hand torque. Option 6 has a 6-inch brace height and draw length of 26-30 inches (half-inch increments) and Option 7 has a 7-inch brace height with draw length of 27-31 inches. Each model is available in a range of camo colors and patterns including but not limited to, Ninja black, Realtree, KUIU Vias and Purple Rain.

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**SILENTSTRIKE** ammunition by Allegiance Ammunition fully functions in semi- and full-auto on the M4 and MSR platforms at 1,025 fps. Modifications to the firearm are not required. Rounds are currently produced in a lead-free fragmenting Tungsten powdercore in .223, 110-gr., 97-gr. non-frangible lead core and 9mm, 130-gr. lead-free powder metal core. The fragmenting SilentStrike gives excellent results in soft tissue even at subsonic velocities.





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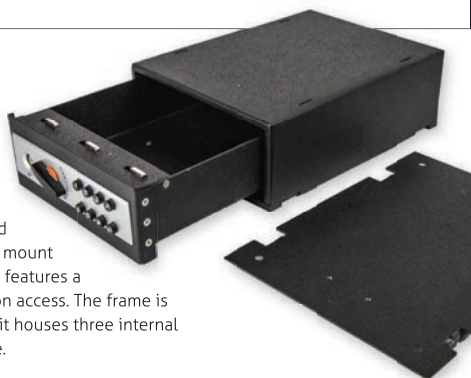
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(800) 852-0400

www.shootingindustry.com/  
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The **QUICKDRAWER 200M** by ShotLock was designed to secure full-framed handguns up to 1911 size and mount under or on top of any flat surface. The QuickDrawer features a spring-assisted drawer opening for rapid, push button access. The frame is constructed from military grade 14-gauge steel and it houses three internal locking points, a lock clutch system and key override.



## APEX TACTICAL SPECIALTIES

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www.shootingindustry.com/company/  
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Apex Tactical announces two versions of the **ACTION ENHANCEMENT TRIGGER & DUTY/ CARRY KIT** for the new M&P M2.0 from Smith & Wesson. Available with either a polymer or aluminum trigger body, the kit replaces the factory-hinged trigger with an Apex trigger featuring a center-mounted pivoting safety. The trigger reset length is shortened and the trigger pull weight is reduced. Each kit includes: aluminum or polymer action enhancement trigger, heavy duty 1/8-inch sear spring, full machined sear (two-dot), duty carry trigger return spring, ultimate striker block kit and slave pin. The kits function in the 9mm and .40 S&W versions of the new M&P M2.0, and are also compatible with the original M&P .45 model.



## ATIBAL SIGHTS

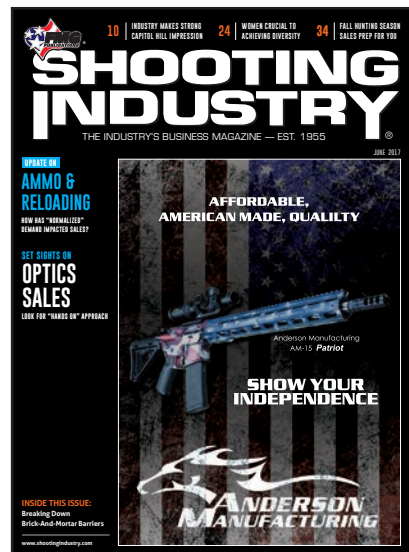
(626) 788-3110

www.shootingindustry.com/  
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New from Atibal Sights is the **MODERN RIFLE OPTIC COMPONENT (MROC) 3x32**. It boasts a 37.7-foot field of view at 100 yards, making it the largest field of view of any 3x prismatic scope on the market. The rugged, lightweight sight offers an illuminated, laser-etched reticle at a fixed 3x magnification with a bullet drop compensation (BDC) chevron. The windage and elevation adjustments are hand adjustable to allow quick and accurate modifications. An integrated detachable Picatinny rail provides industry-standard mounting options.

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## SI Online Exclusives This Month

Online readers at [www.shootingindustry.com](http://www.shootingindustry.com) will be able to access two online-only exclusives to accompany the June issue of *Shooting Industry*: further insights into the L.E./Tactical section of SHOT Show and how thermal imaging products have impacted the hunting market. To read these exclusives, visit [www.shootingindustry.com](http://www.shootingindustry.com). If you're reading online, click the "Online Extra" logo. Have a comment? Send us an email: [comments@shootingindustry.com](mailto:comments@shootingindustry.com).

### Things You May Have Missed: Law Enforcement & Tactical

With SHOT Show 2017 in the rearview, readers will be able to enjoy a look at some Law Enforcement & Tactical Gear they may have missed from the industry's mega trade show. *SI* Contributing Editor Mark Kakkuri delves into products from Barrett, Advantage Tactical, PrOlix and more.

### Thermal Imaging And Hunters

This month's second online-only feature explores how thermal imaging technology has changed the way hunters approach their time in the field. What does this mean for retailers?

FLIR's Tom Frane, director of global sales, details the four main reasons why hunters buy thermal and maintains brick-and-mortar dealers have an advantage in expanding sales in this category.



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## Challenges, Yes. But Signs Point To Sales Improving

By Russ Thurman

The industry received a bit of good news in early April when the March NICS background checks were announced. The FBI system conducted 1,356,929 (NSSF-adjusted) background checks in March, a 5.2 percent increase over March 2016.

While the increase may not impress some, it's a welcome shift from the declines of the first two months of the year. In January and February there were decreases of 23.8 and 12.7 percent, respectively, in NICS checks compared to the same months in 2016.

The number of March background checks was also the second highest for the month in the history of NICS; a record 1,501,730 background checks were conducted in March 2013.

During this year's first quarter, NICS conducted 3,693,502 (NSSF-adjusted) background checks. While that's a 10.78 percent drop from 2016, it's a 4.89 percent increase over 2015. Given this year's steep downturn, most in the industry would happily embrace 2015 business numbers.

### Moving Inventory

To boost sales, businesses throughout the industry are making deals. It's clearly a consumer's market. Deep discounts, price cuts and generous promotions — some by companies that rarely promote — are helping to move inventory and jumpstart a recovery.

Smith & Wesson's "Savings You Can Carry" mail-in rebate for consumers began in April, and runs through this month. Consumers can receive a \$75 rebate on the purchase of a new M&P Shield, \$50 back on a new M&P Bodyguard 380 and \$25 back on a new S&W SD or SDVE.

Winchester Repeating Arms gave consumers a \$25 rebate on the purchase of a new Super X Pump Turkey shotgun, and the company's Tax Break promotion during April earned consumers an 8 percent refund to cover state tax on the purchase of a new Winchester firearm. Browning upped the tax-related refund to 10 percent on the purchase of a new Browning firearm during April.

During March and April, Beretta gave consumers a \$75 rebate on the purchase of select models of the Px4 Storm.

In early April, Colt announced a \$50 price cut for Colt Competition Pistols.

The push to move inventory is having an impact.

"Smith & Wesson is clearly the leader in handgun sales," said Michael Halleron, former Chattanooga Shooting Supplies VP of business development. "They



## LONG-TERM SUCCESS IS BUILT ON STAYING THE COURSE DURING DIFFICULT TIMES, MIXED WITH A HEAVY DOSE OF BUSINESS GRIT.

are much more aggressive than last year with their dealer packages and consumer rebates."

Halleron says dealers who are promoting are also doing well.

"We participated in a few dealer promos recently, and one store sold 400 guns in one day. The other sold 2,000 guns in two days through their multi-retail channel approach. And the third sold 200 guns in two days. It appears, if you're promoting, the sales are there," Halleron said.

Overall, sales are improving.

"Concealed handguns continue to move well. MSRs, as a category, are doing better, as well as accessories. Optics are doing exceptional for us, especially in the last few months, from the high-dollar down to entry-level models," Halleron said.

### Staying The Course

Obviously, even with March's improved NICS numbers, it's too early to declare the slowdown over. Publicly traded companies, as of mid-April, are yet to see their stocks reach November's pre-election levels. Stock prices are improving — American Outdoor Brands and Ruger enjoyed an increase in the March NICS announcement — but it

hasn't been easy. In addition, there have been hundreds of layoffs throughout the industry, expansion plans have been put on hold and companies have slashed sponsorship and advertising programs.

That said, it's encouraging to know consumers are still purchasing firearms. This is vital. Unclogging the overstocked distribution pipeline is key to the industry posting a profit, even as it struggles to discover the new business normal.

Also important to business today: firearms and the industry are viewed more favorably than they were during the Obama years. While the anti-gun coalition is still in full-screed, it's not receiving the fondling media coverage of the near past. Plus, there has been a notable increase in gun ownership, a significant segment of whom are young, urban and women. And one additional key element: The industry is well respected, thanks in great part to NSSF.

Yes, there are plenty of challenges ahead, including the possibility of a real summer slump. However, long-term success is built on staying the course during difficult times, mixed with a heavy dose of business grit. **SI**

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