

NEW FIREARM ROUNDUP

SHOT Daily spotlights the latest offerings in rifles **P. 16**, shotguns **P. 32**, and handguns **P. 44**. Plus, we lace up new boots **P. 54**.



FEATURES 3-GUN FUN AT MIDNIGHT

Crimson Trace Corp. hosts a unique shooting competition **PAGE 96**

WINCHESTER'S NEW AMMO

Deer Season XP has been designed just for deer hunters **PAGE 108**

NEWS EVA SHOCKEY

Living in the digital age requires a special set of social skills **PAGE 4**

MOSSBERG THINKS SMALL

New catalog highlights rifles and shotguns sized for younger shooters **PAGE 84**



NSSF

DAY 1, JANUARY 20, 2015

SHOT DAILY

THE DAILY NEWS OF THE 2015 LAS VEGAS SHOT SHOW BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE BONNIER CORPORATION AND THE NSSF



Browning's New Small-Bore Citori 725

Browning's Citori 725 is now available in 28-gauge and .410 bore. Since its launch in 2011, the 725 Citori has been a big hit with hunters and target shooters alike. It weighs up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pound less than the standard Citori, thanks to a slimmer receiver and barrel contour. The 725 is the liveliest Citori ever and an excellent platform for small gauges.

Both the 28-gauge and .410 bore will be built on the sleek 20-gauge 725 receiver and are offered in Field and Sporting models.

The Field models will come with 26- or 28-inch barrels and weigh approximately $6\frac{3}{4}$ pounds in either gauge. SRP: \$2,539.99.

Sporting models will come with a choice of a 30- or a 32-inch barrel with an extended Invector choke and weigh $7\frac{1}{4}$ pounds. SRP: \$3,199.99.

Target shooters will especially like the "Fire Lite" mechanical triggers. Booth #15129.

—Phil Bourjaily
(browning.com)

Browning's new Citori 28-gauge and .410 will be built on a 20-gauge frame.



2015 SHOT Show Opens

This morning, when the doors open on the 2015 SHOT Show, more than 65,000 industry professionals from 100 countries and all 50 states will spend the next four days reviewing new products, attending career-enhancement seminars, and networking in booths and along the aisles. The annual show, now in its 36th year, features more than 1,600 exhibitors and covers more than 630,000 square feet. Over the years, it has become an industry must-attend event for retailers, manufacturers, and marketing professionals in the shooting-sports industry.

National Shooting Sports Foundation president Steve Sanetti knows the value of attending the show and extends a greeting to all. "Welcome to the 2015 SHOT Show!"

We're extremely excited to see old friends and make new ones, all while working together to promote, protect, and preserve hunting and the shooting sports through this, the largest trade show in the world for the firearms industry," he says. "We have a jam-packed week ahead, including a number of new and enhanced venues such as the all-new SHOT Showcase Theater and the greatly expanded New Product Center. Of course, there will be seminars for retailers, press conferences for the media and buyers, and thousands of new products to see."

He also urges attendees to make an effort to stop by the Project ChildSafe/"Own It? Respect It. Secure It." booth (#L350) in order to "help all of us help our communities and the shooting sports stay safe."



HANDGUNS

2015

Steady Course

Though 2015 won't go down as a great year for innovation, the industry's steady course will mean that retailers and customers will still see a lot to like **By Chris Christian**

Despite numerous advances in handgun design, John Browning's 1911 remains one of the most popular handguns around—and this year sees some interesting new models on that platform. At the same time, a moonclip-fed 9mm Ruger LCP will surely garner a lot of attention, as will a new concealed-carry ACP from Taurus.

CZ-USA/ Dan Wesson

► A new 1911, a special limited-edition CZ 75, and some interesting new guns from Dan Wesson make up CZ's new handgun introductions this year. The first "Made in the USA" handgun to bear the CZ name is, appropriately, a 1911. The CZ 1911 A1 (\$839) is a government-size model that is built without a trigger safety, as many 1911 aficionados prefer. It is constructed with a forged carbon-steel frame and slide, finished in black-matte oxide, and ships with two 7-round magazines. The 1911 A1

was the designation for the improved model adopted in 1924. CZ's A1 largely stays true to those specifications, with a few deviations. It is equipped with a serrated slide stop, a magazine catch, and main-spring housing, and features checkered walnut grips. The lanyard loop has been omitted. The barrel is stainless steel with a 1:16 twist. Additional features include an aluminum trigger and a slightly higher rear sight than the original. The ramp front sight is dovetailed into the slide to allow shooters to more easily install other sight options if they choose. The trigger is factory-

tuned to 5 pounds.

During its 40 years of service, the CZ 75 has become one of the most widely used handguns among police and military worldwide. As a result, it is one of the most copied designs. To celebrate the 40th anniversary, CZ will issue a special-edition 40th Anniversary CZ 75 9mm (\$1,499). Only 1,000 guns will be produced. The anniversary model is based on the CZ 75B and features a highly polished blue-steel slide and frame. The slide and frame feature intricate hand engravings by CZ's master engraver Rene Ondra in the Czech Republic. The operating

controls (slide release, thumb safety, magazine release, extractor, grip screws, and magazine base plate) are finished in rainbow titanium nitride. The grip panels are made with a smooth, high-grade California maple that has been dyed to complement the overall appearance of the 40th Anniversary model. The gun ships with two 16-round magazines and a leather-bound hard case.

Under CZ's Dan Wesson banner, three new handguns join the product line this year, including an updated version of Wesson's highly accurate double-action revolver. The original Dan Wesson double-

BROWNING

For 2015, Browning will introduce the Black Label 1911-380 semi-auto pistol (\$669.99), which combines two of John M. Browning's original inventions—the 1911 pistol and the .380 ACP cartridge. The Black Label is scaled down to 85 percent of the size of a .45 ACP 1911 handgun. This new single-action 1911 is built upon a precision-crafted composite frame and is made in the U.S. Features include an extended ambidextrous safety, a beavertail-grip safety, a skeletonized hammer, and a machined steel slide that wears fixed combat-style sights. With a 4.25-inch barrel, it has an overall length of 7.5 inches and weighs 17.5 ounces empty. The finish is black matte, and the magazine holds 8 rounds. It ships with an ABS case. Booth #15129. (browning.com)



Browning The Black Label 1911-380 semi-auto combines the 1911 design with the .380 ACP cartridge. The single-action is built on a precision-crafted composite frame and is made in the USA.



CZ-USA Clockwise from top: The 805 Bren PS1 pistol is a civilian-legal version of the CZ 805 Bren. The Dan Wesson Silverback is the only two-toned 1911 in the DW line. The CZ 75 9mm is a 40th anniversary limited edition of the original CZ 75. The CZ Scorpion EVO 3 S1 Pistol is a civilian-legal version of the Scorpion sub-machine gun. The DW Valkyrie .45 ACP is a variation of the CCO. The CZ 1911 A1 makes use of a carbon-steel frame and slide.

action .357 Magnum revolver achieved an enviable reputation for rugged construction and accuracy, which was enhanced by the unique tension barrel system, the forward crane latch, and the rear ball detent lockup. Interchangeable barrels, barrel shrouds, and grips made it a versatile gun. This year the Dan Wesson Model 715 (\$1,168) ships with a 6-inch barrel and heavy shroud in a custom Dan Wesson hard case that includes cutouts to hold additional interchangeable barrel/shroud assemblies (as well as the wrench to properly remove and install them). The new Model 715 accepts all Dan Wesson barrels and grips from the 15-2 and newer models.

The new DW Valkyrie .45 ACP (\$2,012), a variation of the CCO, has a Commander-length slide on a compact Officer frame. It includes all the latest upgrades of the CCO platform, including Dan Wesson's ECO frame and recessed slide stop hole paired with ball cuts on the slide's dust cover and carry cuts up front. Along with slim G10 grips, it utilizes the same sights and controls as the Dan Wesson ECO with the barrel and bushing of the CCO.

The new Dan Wesson Silverback is currently the only two-toned 1911 in the Dan Wesson line. It features a stainless-steel slide with polished flats and is equipped with adjustable target-style tritium sights and the Razorback rib and ball cuts on the dust cover. The stainless-steel frame is finished in a Duty Black nitride finish and wears G10 full-thickness grips. It will be available in .45 ACP (\$1,883) and 10mm (\$2,064).

The CZ Scorpion EVO 3 S1 Pistol (\$849) is a 9mm civilian-legal semi-auto version of CZ's famous Scorpion sub-machine gun. With a black composite finish, it features a blowback action with a 7.75-inch barrel. The newly designed low-profile sights consist of a fixed-post front sight and an adjustable rear sight with four different apertures that can quickly shift the point of impact from close to distant targets. The sights ride on a Picatinny rail that allow for the easy mounting of optics. Additional features include ambidextrous controls and a non-reciprocating charging handle that can be swapped to either side. The trigger reach is adjustable. One accessory item is the arm-brace adapter that can quickly add an MSR-style buffer tube to the rear of the action for added stability. Two 20-round magazines are included.

The new CZ 805 Bren PS1 Pistol (\$1,982) is a civilian-legal semi-auto version of the CZ 805 Bren. It has an 11-inch barrel that features a two-port muzzle brake. Chambered for .223/5.56mm, the action is housed in a one-piece aluminum upper receiver with a Picatinny rail



Kahr Clockwise from top left: Auto Ordnance 1911 BKO is a G.I.-spec 5-inch barrel in .45 ACP. The Kahr CT9093 features a full-length polymer frame and stainless-steel slide. The Kahr CW9 features an unusual purple polymer frame and is available in 9mm. The CW380 utilizes drift-adjustable rear sights and white-bar combat sights.

and uses STANG magazines (two 30-round magazines are included). It uses the same sight system as the Scorpion, along with the accessory arm-brace adapter. The rear of the action features a multipurpose mounting point that is fit from the factory with a single-point sling attachment. Booth #11955. (cz-usa.com)

Iver Johnson Arms

➤ A very compact four-shot derringer and a long-slide 1911 highlight Iver Johnson's new handgun offerings for 2015. The Frontier Four is about as compact as a handgun can get. The single-action derringer is chambered for .22LR and features a 2-inch barrel. The overall length is only 4 inches, and it weighs a scant 5.6 ounces. Constructed from stainless steel, it has a four-shot capacity and utilizes a unique rotating firing pin to handle the four chambers with one shot per trigger pull.

Whether for sport or home defense, the 1911 .45 ACP remains one of the most popular handguns on the market. For 2015, Iver Johnson goes a step beyond with the introduction of the Eagle XL (\$870). This blue-steel 1911 utilizes a 6-inch barrel long-slide configuration. Among its features are

#1 IN 3-GUN

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an adjustable rear sight with a dovetailed front sight, a skeletonized hammer and trigger, a beaver-tail grip safety, front and rear angled slide serrations, a lowered and flared ejection port, an extended slide stop, and an extended single-side thumb safety. Empty weight is 42 ounces, and its length is 9.75 inches. Booth #15553. (iverjohnson.com)

Kahr Arms

➤ Four new models and line upgrades join the Kahr semi-auto concealed-carry handgun line this year, along with a new Auto Ordnance 1911 .45 ACP. The CT9093 9mm (\$369) features a full-size polymer frame with a matte stainless-steel slide and drift-adjustable bar-dot sights. The 3.95-inch barrel gives it an overall length of 6.5 inches. Height is 5.08 inches and empty weight with magazine is 20.6 ounces. The pistol ships with one 8-round magazine.

The new CT380 .380 ACP (\$399) features a 3-inch barrel. Overall length is 5.52 inches, height is 5.3 inches, and it weighs 11.44 ounces empty. The pistol has a black polymer frame with textured grips and 4140 steel inserts molded in front and back for added rigidity. The action is a locked-breech modified Browning recoil lug that locks open on an empty magazine. The safe-cam DAO operating system is the same as that found on other Kahr pistols. Sights are the Kahr drift-adjustable white bar-dot pattern with a pinned-in-front polymer blade.

The Kahr CW9 in purple (\$435) is a version of this popular 9mm pistol with a purple polymer frame. It features a 3.5-inch barrel. Overall length is 5.9 inches, and the compact frame gives it a height

of only 4.5 inches. Drift-adjustable bar-dot white sights and a 7+1 capacity complete the package.

The CW380 in purple (\$404) gets the same purple polymer frame treatment as the CW9 (and also shares the drift-adjustable white bar-dot combat sights). It features a 6+1 capacity in .380 ACP. Overall length is 4.96 inches, height is 3.9 inches, and the empty weight is 10.2 ounces.

Lastly, from the Auto Ordnance side of Kahr comes the 1911BKO (\$571). This is a GI-spec 5-inch barrel .45 ACP 1911. It features a 7-round magazine, a drift-adjustable rear sight with a blade front, and an empty weight of 39 ounces. Finished in black matte, the grip panels are brown checkered. Booth #15449. (kahrarms.com)

Ruger

➤ The The double-action-only inertia-firing LC9 has proven to be a popular and reliable handgun. This year, Ruger announces a new version of the LC9 9mm.

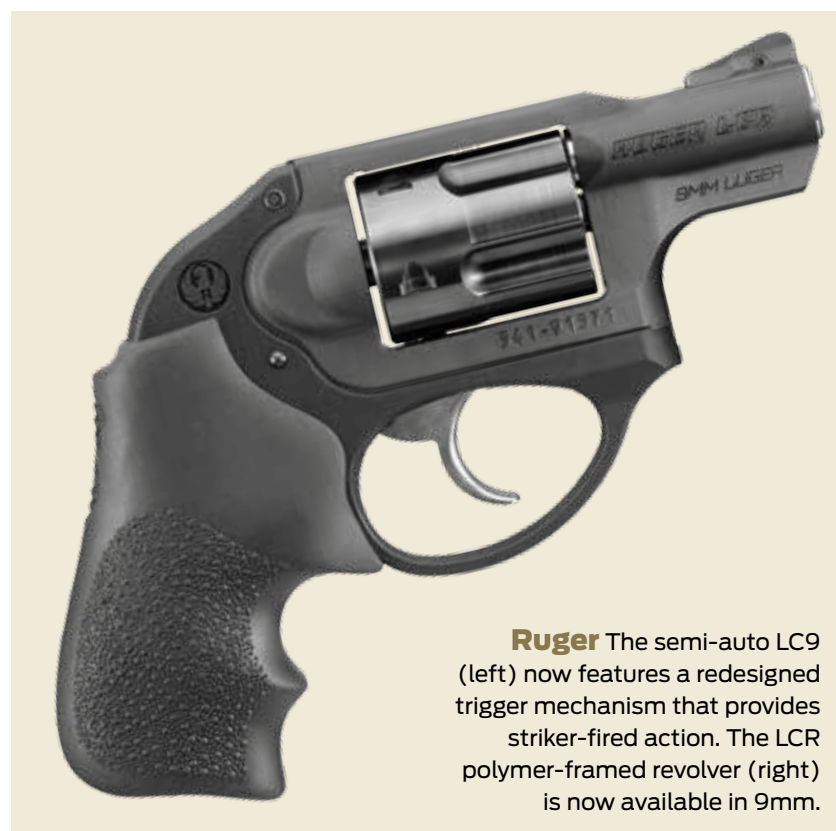
The new LC9 9mm features a newly designed trigger mechanism that provides a striker-fired action with a shorter, lighter trigger pull than the original LC9. It uses the same holsters, magazines (including extended magazines), lasers, and accessories as the original. It features a blued through-hardened alloy steel slide, a one-piece glass-filled nylon frame with aggressive checkering, a grip extension magazine floorplate, a 7-round magazine, and adjustable three-dot sights. The 17.2-ounce pistol has a 3.12-inch barrel. Overall length is 6 inches, height is 4.5 inches. Additional features include an integrated trigger safety, a magazine disconnect, and a visible inspection port to show a loaded chamber. It

MAGNUM RESEARCH

A new 1911 .45 ACP and a new finish for the Desert Eagle high-light Magnum Research's 2015 lineup. The DE1911GSS (\$904) is a full-size 1911 single-action semi-auto chambered for .45 ACP. It features a 5.05-inch barrel, a trigger pull factory set between 3 and 4 pounds, a stainless-steel matte-finished frame with black appointments, checkered wood grips, and a high-profile rear sight that is drift-adjustable for windage with a serrated and pinned front-sight blade. The MarkXIX Desert Eagle has been around for a while and is a proven platform in either .50AE or .44 Magnum. For 2015, it will come in a new Cerakote Burnt Bronze finish (\$1,696) that will be available exclusively through Bill Hicks & Co. Ltd. Booth #15449. (magnumresearch.com)



Magnum Research The DE1911GSS (top) is a full-size 1911 Single Action. The MarkXIX Desert Eagle (below) is now available in a new Cerakote Burnt Bronze finish.



Ruger The semi-auto LC9 (left) now features a redesigned trigger mechanism that provides striker-fired action. The LCR polymer-framed revolver (right) is now available in 9mm.

ships with one inert magazine for safe disassembly, one 7-round magazine, a soft case, and a cable-locking device.

Introduced in 2009, the Ruger LCR polymer-framed DA revolver has expanded from its original .38 Special+P offering to include .357 Magnum, .22 WMR, and .22 LR. For 2015, Ruger now introduces the 9mm LCR (\$599) to the line. Chambered for five rounds of 9mm and fed by moonclips (three moonclips ship with the gun; additional clips are available), its pinned replaceable ramp front sight allows elevation adjustment. The 9mm LCR sports the same polymer-frame DA-firing-action stainless-steel cylinder and 1.875-inch barrel, fixed U-notch rear sight, and Hogue grips as the .38 Special version. Booth #11940. (ruger.com)

Smith & Wesson

► The new M&P22 Compact Pistol (\$389) is chambered for .22LR and is 15 percent smaller than the full-size 9mm/.40-caliber M&Ps. It features a 10-round magazine capacity (it ships with two 10-round magazines), ambidextrous manual safety, and reversible magazine release. The trigger is factory set at 5.8 pounds. A Picatinny dust-cover rail accommodates accessory lights or

lasers. The 3.65-inch barrel is threaded to accommodate suppressors and is shipped with a threaded protective muzzle cap. The barrel material is carbon steel with an aluminum-alloy slide and a polymer frame. Sights are a white-dot front and a two-white-dot rear that is adjustable for windage and elevation. Overall length is 6.65 inches. Empty weight is 15.03 ounces.

From the Smith & Wesson Performance Shop, this year will see a new series of ported M&P pistols designed for competition use. The series includes 9mm and .40 S&W pistols in barrel lengths of 4.25 and 5 inches. All include ported barrels and slides to reduce recoil and rise. Additional features include a user-adjustable trigger stop, three palm-swell grips with a textured backstrap to allow users to custom-fit the pistol to their hand, a Performance Center sear that produces a 4.5-pound trigger pull with a fast reset, and removable mounting brackets that allow shooters to install a variety of popular competition red-dot sights. S&W has added higher iron sights to the slide to allow their use in concordance with mounted optics. Magazine capacity is 17 (9mm) and 15 (.40 S&W), and the guns accept standard M&P magazines. Booth #13729. (smith-wesson.com)

TAURUS

The new, patented Curve is a concealed-carry .380 ACP designed to be contoured to the body and therefore comfortable and “print-free” in any position on its carrier. About the size of a smartphone, this little USA-manufactured double-action-only semi-auto pistol packs 6+1 rounds in a highly concealable 5.18-inch package. Features include a matte-blue carbon-steel slide and a stainless-steel barrel, a loaded-chamber indicator, and an integrated LaserLyte LED light-laser system. In addition, the gun comes with the Taurus Security System for long-term locking storage. SRP: \$392. Booth #14240. (taurususa.com)



Taurus A patented design, this innovative .380 ACP has been specially designed for concealed carry. No bigger than a smartphone, it follows the contour of the body so it will be “print-free.”

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FOOTWEAR

2015

Onward and Upward

Boot manufacturers continue to take advantage of advanced materials to create lighter yet stronger footwear for outdoorsmen **By Peter B. Mathiesen**

Military and law-enforcement contracts trailed off in 2014, but there was an offsetting increase in domestic boot production in the sportsman- and work-related categories. And though most manufacturers saw more stable and even lower fuel costs, the state of an anemic economy kept pricing flat. European manufacturers, however, were the lone exception here, due to the Euro's plunge against the dollar. Here's a look at what's newer, lighter, and hotter in footwear for 2015.

Ariat Though best known for its equestrian wear, the company also builds quality boots for outdoorsmen, such as this Conquest. The boot features ATS Pro technology for superior stability and all-day comfort.



5.11 Tactical

➤ The trim EVO 8-inch boot is built for speed, stamina, and traction over any terrain in any climate. A convenient waterproof side zipper adds to its stability and lightweight performance. A 14mm heel to toe drop increases responsiveness and agility while allowing for a natural stance. For enhanced durability, the innovative EVO Cupsole platform is cemented and stitched. The integrated eVent membrane is waterproof, breathable, and resistant to blood-borne pathogens.

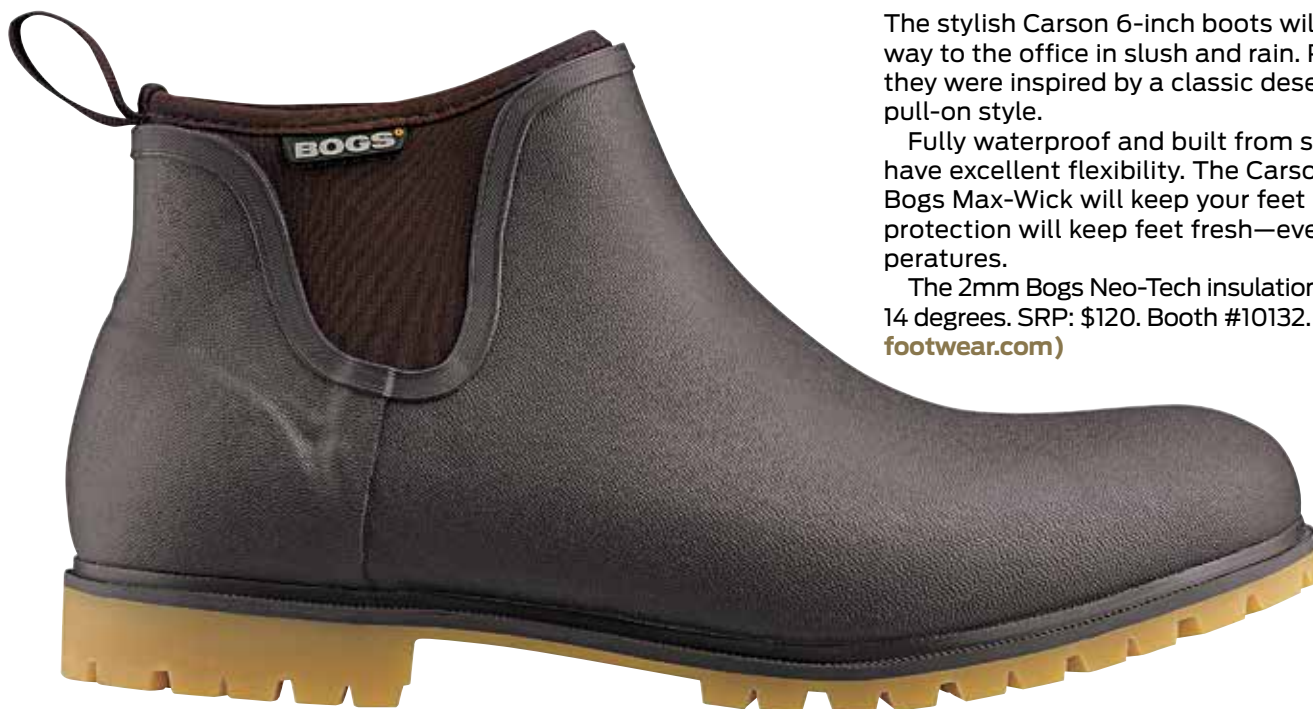
To minimize weight without sacrificing resilience, the boot is equipped with a non-metallic-construction YKK side zipper. The full-length EVA midsole, nylon shank, and genuine OrthoLite insoles ensure confident footing over long distances.

To prevent slips and squeaks, the EVO offers an oil-resistant outsole. Meanwhile, its thick sausage laces will remain tight and secure. The boot also boasts an intelligent friend-finder tracking lug, to enable a quick footprint ID. Available in black, in sizes 4 to 11.5 (regular). Wide sizes are also available. SRP: \$144.99. Booth #13162. (209-527-4511; 511tactical.com)

Ariat

➤ Ariat may be best known for its line of equestrian footwear, but it also builds quality boots for hunters as well. New for 2015 is the Conquest, which features ATS Pro technology for superior stability and all-day comfort, a waterproof bootie construction and waterproof leathers, and a

BOGS



The stylish Carson 6-inch boots will work hard in camp or on the way to the office in slush and rain. Part of the Men's City Collection, they were inspired by a classic desert boot silhouette in a convenient pull-on style.

Fully waterproof and built from soft, pliable rubber, these boots have excellent flexibility. The Carson's 2mm lining of EverDry and Bogs Max-Wick will keep your feet dry and the DuraFresh anti-odor protection will keep feet fresh—even for daily wear in warmer temperatures.

The 2mm Bogs Neo-Tech insulation will keep feet warm down to 14 degrees. SRP: \$120. Booth #10132. (541-485-2070; bogsfootwear.com)

5.11 Tactical The trim EVO 8-inch boot is built for speed, traction, and stamina. A full-length EVA midsole and nylon shank ensure comfort in all conditions.



Lowa Originally designed for running mountain trails, the hybrid Innox is now a lightweight hunting boot.



cushioning EVA midsole and rugged, slip-resistant Duratread outsole. The men's 6- and 8-inch uninsulated boots are \$189.99 and \$199.95, respectively. There are two insulated boots—400 grams of Thinsulate (\$209.95) and 800 grams of Thinsulate (\$219.95). The line also features a pair of pull-on boots; uninsulated (\$199.95) and insulated (\$209.95). Booth #10020. **(ariat.com)**

Danner

➤ Constructed on Danner's lightweight Terra Force platform, the

new 8-inch Sharptail delivers a stable yet athletic base underfoot. The newly modified design features a lower profile, and reduced leather content helps improve the boot's flexibility and wear.

The boot has a wider toe box. The truer anatomical fit provides ample toe room for added comfort. A cushioning OrthoLite footbed provides maximum comfort for long days in the field.

The upper features durable waterproof full-grain leather with 900-denier nylon. A leather toe and heel cap provide added protection in high-wear areas. The

boot is lined in 100 percent waterproof, breathable Gore-Tex. The new Sharptail outsole offers a shallow, outer-lug pattern that has been designed specifically for grassy terrain.

The Sharptail series includes an 8-inch lace-up, a 10-inch rear-zip, and a 17-inch snakeboot version. Available sizes include men's 7-16D and 8-14EE, and both widths are available in half sizes up to 12. The Sharptail ships July 2015. SRP: starts at \$179.95.

Booth #10770. **(800-345-0430; danner.com)**

Georgia Boots

➤ Legacy 37 footwear features a full-grain leather and 900D Realtree Xtra Cordura upper with the Georgia Waterproof System and a moisture-wicking interior lining. The outsole is oil- and slip-resistant and is attached via Goodyear welt for added flexibility and durability. A TDC polyurethane footbed and an EVA heel pad for weight relief and shock absorption deliver comfort all day long.

Styles include an 8-inch lace-up and an 11-inch Wellington. The 8-inch-style is available with 400 grams of 3M Thinsulate Ultra insulation. Available styles include Styles Crazy Horse brown accents and Realtree Xtra camo in sizes 8 to 13 in D and EE. SRP: \$149.99

to \$169.99. Booth #11340. **(740-753-1951; rockyboots.com)**

Irish Setter

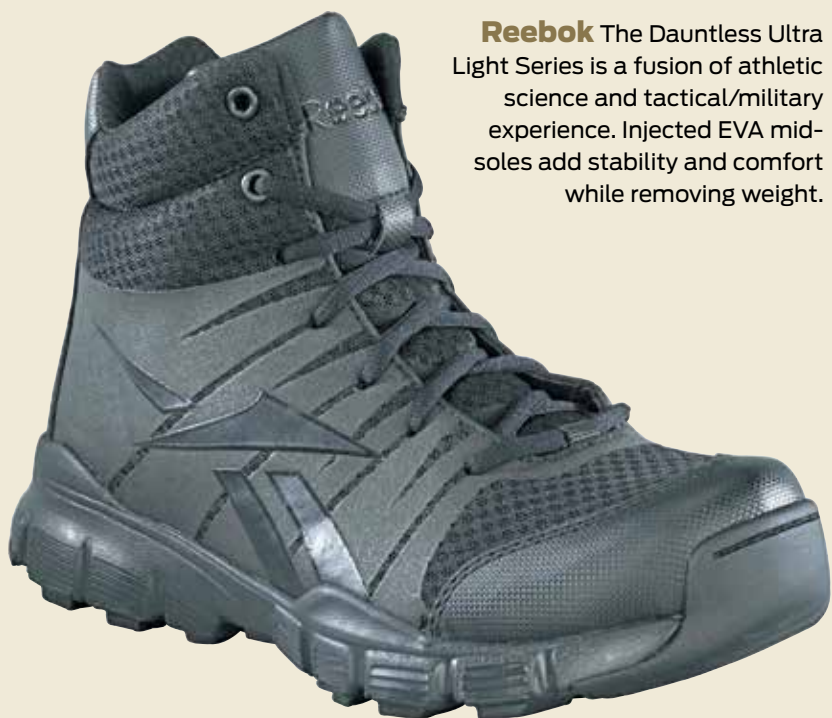
➤ The new RutMaster 2.0 knee boot features the innovative and improved ExoFlex Fit System. The extended ExoFlex panel expands for easier on/off convenience with a more comfortable fit. The adjustable gusset closure accommodates most large calf sizes.

The 2.0 is a super lightweight, nimble boot that utilizes an aggressive Mudlite sole. There's a convenient heel kickplate along with additional abrasion-resistant panels for enhanced durability. ScentBan linings and a footbed cover combine with an anatomically correct removable footbed to provide better long-lasting underfoot comfort.

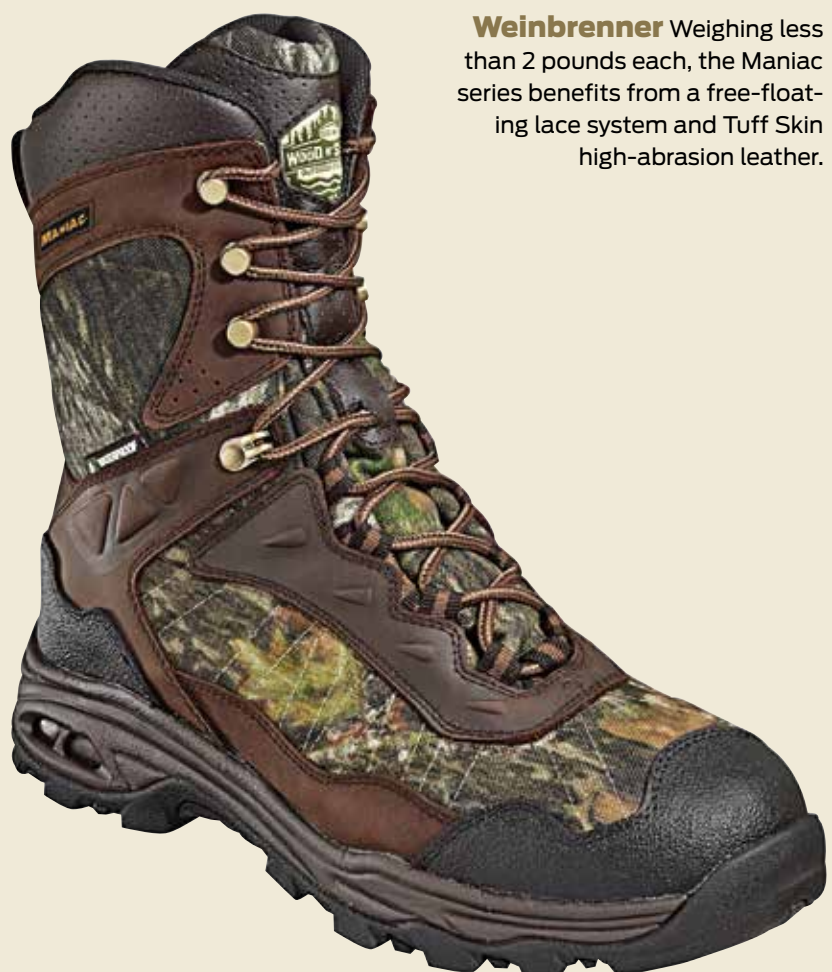
Available in Mossy Oak's Infinity camo pattern in men's and women's sizes. The RutMaster is available uninsulated, or in versions with 800 or 1,200 grams of insulation. Sizes: D 8 to 14, EE 8 to 14. SRP: starts at \$142. Booth #10047. **(800-738-8370; irishsetterboots.com)**

LaCrosse

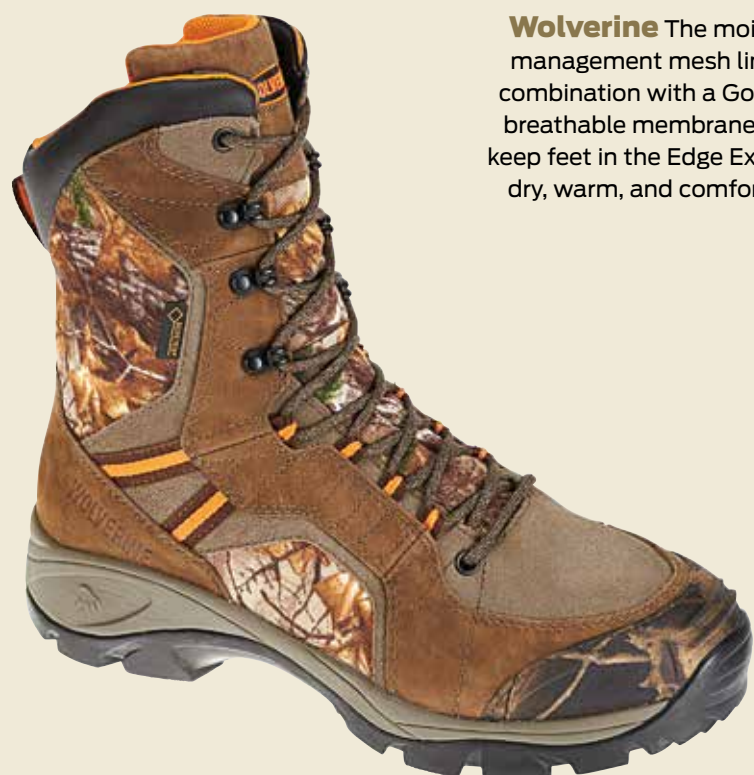
➤ Set to launch in fall 2015, the 4X Burly delivers an all-around comfort package at an affordable



Reebok The Dauntless Ultra Light Series is a fusion of athletic science and tactical/military experience. Injected EVA midsoles add stability and comfort while removing weight.



Weinbrenner Weighing less than 2 pounds each, the Maniac series benefits from a free-floating lace system and Tuff Skin high-abrasion leather.



Wolverine The moisture-management mesh lining in combination with a Gore-Tex breathable membrane helps keep feet in the Edge Extreme dry, warm, and comfortable.

price. LaCrosse's Alpha construction provides lightweight, waterproof protection and makes the boot easier to slip on and off. Quad Core technology delivers four layers of cushioning underfoot by combining a three-layer sponge rubber midsole with a dual-density molded polyurethane footbed.

The contoured Ankle Fit design ensures the heel is locked in place while the back gusset is adjustable to accommodate various calf sizes and to allow pants to be comfortably tucked inside. The rugged, non-loading outsole offers superior traction in mud and loose terrain. The snakeboot style features 360 degrees of flexible and impenetrable protection from angry vipers.

A family of three styles, the 4X Alpha is available in 3.5mm and 7mm neoprene levels. The snakeboot version comes in 3.5mm neoprene. The series is adorned with Realtree Xtra Green and Realtree Xtra to support multiple seasons. Sizes include men's 6 to 15 (whole sizes only).

A family of four styles, the 4X Burly is available with Realtree APG, Mossy Oak Infinity, and Realtree AP camo patterns as well as two levels of Thinsulate Ultra Insulation. Sizes: 6 to 15, whole only. SRP: \$129 to \$159. Booth #10770. **(800-323-2668; lacrossefootwear.com)**

Lowa

➤ Originally designed for mountain trail running, the Innox is an outdoorsman's ideal hybrid of an athletic shoe with serious ankle support and a lightweight hiking boot. Weighing less than 2 pounds in a size 9, the lightweight synthetic upper delivers comfort while the sole and foot platform keep your ankle vertical.

Using a waterproof and breathable Gore-Tex lining, the boot is guaranteed to stay dry. The NXT sole has sticky traction and will last multiple seasons. The boot's closed loops spread the lace tension and work effectively to create a stable platform on steep, uneven terrain.

The Innox is Gore-Tex waterproof and will quickly displace moisture in warm conditions. Whether you're speed hiking or chasing elk or mule deer, these boots will get the job done while providing non-fatiguing stability.

Available in a GTX Mid and Lo in brown. Sizes: D 7.5 to 15. SRP: \$215. Booth #10232. **(203-353-0116; lowaboos.com)**

Muck Boots

Muck's second generation of the Pursuit Shadow Trail is one of the

lightest full-size hunting boots on the market. The goal was to develop a lace-up boot that had outstanding fit and lacing control while significantly reducing wear fatigue and heightening comfort. The result is a hybrid of a Muck boot and a traditional lace-up moccasin.

The 100 percent waterproof exterior uses 5mm neoprene wrapped in Spandura with additional CR foam and fleece lining and a sock liner. Hunters are given outstanding scent control with a combination of agion antimicrobial treatments to prevent the growth of odor-causing bacteria and an Inscentable scent-masking barrier.

The all new EVA mid and Pod outsole has dramatically lightened the boot frame while offering exceptional cushioning support and grip on wet surfaces. Rated to -40 F, the Pursuit Shadow is an ideal choice in the treestand or on a long stalk, especially when the temperature drops severely. Finished in Real Tree Xtra. Sizes: 7 to 15, whole only. SRP: \$265. Booth #10951. **(877-438-6825; muckbootcompany.com)**

Reebok

➤ The Dauntless Ultra Light Series is a fusion of Reebok athletic science and Warson's tactical/military experience. The seamless technology gives upper support, flexibility, and a glove-like fit. The injected EVA midsole adds stability and comfort while removing weight. All this is built on top of the company's longwearing Dauntless All-Terrain rubber outsole, which provides 360-degree traction on any surface.

The Dauntless Ultra Light Series is available in an 8-inch tactical boot and a 5-inch athletic hiker. Both sport side zips in an athletic oxford. They offer NATO laces, moisture-wicking nylon-mesh liners, removable injected EVA cushion inserts, dual-density rubber bottoms, and lightweight injected EVA cushion midsoles.

All black and 100 percent non-metallic, the athletic oxford has a TPU bruise plate, which provides additional stability and protection on rocky terrain. Also available in coyote and limited edition Kryptek-Typhon camouflage. Sizes: 7 to 14. SRP: starts at \$100. Booth #10179. **(314-754-0382; reebokwork.com)**

Rocky

➤ Featuring a thin rubber outsole for better contact with the ground and a unique sock-like fit for ease of mobility, the Ram Stalker is a

UNDER ARMOUR

Specs for the Ridge Reaper Extreme include a synthetic/textile high-abrasion 900-denier nylon upper with seamless construction wrapped in a Gore-Tex breathable liner. The UA Scent Control lining with a Cupron anti-bacterial copper-infused sockliner helps mask scent.

There is a proprietary ClutchFit ankle support system, and a TPU toecap, heel, and mudguard for added protection. The Ortholite sockliner with memory foam top layer, ESS shank and Poron heel crash pad, Ultra-light injection TPU outsole, and internal shank all make up a lightweight EVA and mid-sole.

Colors include 951-Ridge Reaper Camo Barren, Battleship, and Black in sizes: 8 to 14. SRP: \$224.99. Booth #11040. (888-727-6687; alwayslethal.com)



unique stalking boot constructed with a quiet, lightweight ripstop upper. The boots are guaranteed waterproof and include 400 grams of PrimaLoft insulation. A speed-lacing system ensures the boots are fast and easy to get on and off.

Available in Realtree Xtra camouflage and widths D (8 to 11.5) and EE (11 to 13). SRP: \$159. Booth #11340. (740-753-1951; rockyboots.com)

Weinbrenner

➤ Weighing in at less than 2 pounds each, this athletically inspired boot line is among the lightest outdoor hunting boots ever created. The Maniac Series remains as light as a feather while enjoying state-of-the-art construction. The boots incorporate the newest technologies, including a free-floating lace system, Thinsulate Ultra insulation, and Tuff Skin high-abrasion leather.

With a VGS Hiker Unit outsole and waterproof Scotchgard protectors, these boots are made to withstand the seasonal elements. The heavy-duty exterior is combined with a lining designed to offer 24-hour comfort. The breathable construction features Scentmask technologies, a compression-molded EVA midsole, and the Visible Gel system.

The line offers four models, and the boots are available either uninsulated or with 800 grams of 3M Thinsulate Ultra insulation, with either camouflage or a black-

mesh pattern. Featuring an 8-inch shaft, Maniac boots are available in men's sizes 8 to 14, D and E widths. SRP: \$149.99 to \$179.99. Booth #20040. (800-826-0002; weinbrennerusa.com)

Wolverine

➤ Always ready for any hunting adventure, the Edge Extreme uses best-in-class materials and design for high performance. The lightweight, athletic boot features a durable Nubuck and 900-denier polyester upper with a Gore-Tex waterproof, breathable membrane. Those feature, in combination with a moisture-managing mesh lining, will make sure that your feet stay dry, warm, and comfortable on the trail.

The NXT odor control helps stop odors before they start with organic enzymes that destroy the bacteria that causes odor. The 600-gram 3M Thinsulate Ultra Insulation provides the perfect amount of warmth for cold days and while on active hunts.

A compression-molded EVA midsole and a removable open-cell polyurethane footbed offer support and cushion in each step. The Edge Extreme is equipped with an aggressive Vibram rubber lug outsole for superior traction.

Available in Realtree Xtra camo, the 8-inch and mid-cut hiker sizes include M 7 to 14; EW 7 to 13. SRP: starts at \$220. Booth #10340. (800-545-2425; wolverinebootsandshoes.com)

Georgia Legacy 37 footwear features a full-grain leather and 900D Realtree Cordura upper with the Georgia Waterproof System and a moisture-wicking interior lining.



Muck The second-generation Pursuit Shadow Trail is a waterproof, lightweight lace-up boot with outstanding fit and lacing control designed to greatly reduce wearer fatigue. The boot also controls scent.



Rocky Featuring a thin rubber outsole for better contact with the ground and a unique sock-like fit for ease of mobility, the Ram Stalker is constructed with a quiet ripstop upper.





Over the course of the last 15 years, Project ChildSafe has distributed 36 million gun locks and safety information kits via 15,000 law enforcement organizations around the country, including community police, sheriff's departments, and military police.

Own It? Respect It. Secure It.

NSSF expands its firearms-safety initiative **By David Draper**

The responsibilities that come with gun ownership begin at the point of sale. As soon as the transfer from retailer to consumer is made, all gun owners, whether purchasing their first handgun or adding another long gun to a growing collection, are tasked with ensuring the safe and secure storage and handling of that firearm. To remind gun owners of that responsibility and raise awareness about its ongoing Project ChildSafe campaign, the National Shooting Sports Foundation recently launched the "Own It? Respect It. Secure It." initiative. The campaign harnesses the widespread reach of the shooting and outdoor industries, including manufacturers, retailers, shooting ranges, wildlife agencies, and others, to reinforce the fact that proper storage is the number-one way to prevent firearms accidents and misuse, and keep firearm safety top of mind among gun owners.

"Accidents involving firearms are at a historic low, but we think we can do better," says Bill Brassard, senior director of communication for NSSF and leader of the organization's education programs. "Whenever an accident happens, particularly when it involves a child or at-risk person, it's damaging to the image of gun owners, the vast majority of whom store their firearms safely and responsibly. The 'Own It? Respect It. Secure It.' initiative shows the industry's commitment to gun safety and reminds gun owners of their responsibility to keep guns from falling into the wrong hands."

The "Own It? Respect It. Secure It." campaign is designed as a component of the firearms industry's popular and longstanding Project ChildSafe program. Over the course of the last 15 years, Project ChildSafe has distributed 36 million gun locks and safety information via 15,000 law enforcement organizations around the country, including community police, sheriff's departments, and military police.

The program—which is supported by greatly appreciated contributions from diverse public sources, including the firearms industry—is one of industry's most visible outreach programs. "Own It? Respect It. Secure It." is designed to refresh the program's safety messages and expand their reach to an even wider audience.

Formally launched in June 2014, the ORS initiative has received overwhelming support from the firearms industry. In just a few months, more than 600 companies, including most of the major firearms and ammunition manufacturers, incorporated some aspect of "Own It? Respect It. Secure It." into their messaging through ORS logo



placements in advertisements and other marketing materials.

"Companies are using the logo and messaging on their websites, in catalogs, in advertising—however else they deem fit," says Brassard. "One manufacturer put the logo on counter mats for retailers, and a gun safe manufacturer plans to put the logo on its products. Flipping through your favorite gun magazine,

you're going to see that logo. It's a great reminder. We're very pleased at the rate the industry has gotten behind this important safety program."

According to Brassard, several gun manufacturers have also embraced the "Own It? Respect It. Secure It." message. Mossberg featured the campaign prominently in its youth catalog. "A perfect fit," says Brassard. This past summer, Glock used the program to great advantage with its law enforcement customers, creating a pledge that featured ORS and Project ChildSafe messaging at its core.

Participation in the "Own It? Respect It. Secure It." initiative is virtually effortless. Sign-up information, along with all

the tools to participate, including downloadable logos, counter cards, posters, and other materials, are easily accessed via nssf.org/ORS. Retailers and ranges can also order hard copies of stickers and counter cards directly from NSSF. Companies here at the 2015 SHOT Show can get more information and sign up for ORS at the Project ChildSafe booth.

"The 'Own It? Respect It. Secure It.' initiative provides the firearms industry with an expanded, unified message about firearms safety," says Brassard. "By signing up, companies and organizations can play a part in reinforcing the message that safety is a responsibility all gun owners must take seriously."



"The 'Own It? Respect It. Secure It.' initiative **shows** the industry's **commitment to gun safety** and reminds gun owners of their responsibility to **keep guns** from falling into the wrong hands."



NSSF Retailer Education sessions cover everything from marketing to compliance.



School's In

NSSF is offering retailers an education throughout SHOT Show

By Robert F. Staeger

You can't go to SHOT Show without learning something. From new optics technology to innovative bullet designs, every manufacturer's rep can teach you about their company's latest products. But retailers can get a broader education just up the escalator from the show floor. As it's done for several years, National Shooting Sports Foundation is providing Retailer Education Seminars for the first three days of SHOT Show.

Tickets for each class cost \$20—a bargain for the education available. “By charging a fee, we’ve been able to increase the quality of the speakers and to increase attendance,” says NSSF senior vice president and chief marketing officer Chris Dolnack. “These sessions now have value attached to them. You paid for the ticket, and are getting a professional speaker, and are receiving an excellent value.” The \$20 fee covers some amenities—coffee and pastries in the morning, soda and snacks in the afternoon—but for the most part has helped NSSF attract and retain even better instructors.

Among the classes are two FBI-led sessions: one today on the new NICS E-Check 2.0 (9 a.m.), and one tomorrow on federal prohibitions (3 p.m.). NSSF is also offering a session on its Affinity Member benefits at 3 p.m. Tuesday.

Compliance

► One of the major topics covered is

ATF compliance. NSSF is entrusting this topic to the experts—including some of the same people on the organization's compliance team—who do self-audits at members' request to troubleshoot for any potential compliance issues. Wally Nelson and Harry McCabe, both former deputy assistant directors at ATF, will moderate a Q&A session on Tuesday at 1:30 p.m. “We’ve reached out to the attendees and asked what questions they have, and they’ve us some talking points ahead of time,” says Patrick Shay, NSSF's director of retail development. “And then we’ll open up the session and address any issues. We did this last year, and had a really great session with a lot of great questions.”

The Q&A session affects NSSF's educational agenda going forward as well. “It allows us to take the pulse of the issue and see what concerns people have,” says Shay. “If something's not clear to this group of retailers, I'm sure there are others out there who feel the

same way, so we also base articles on the questions we get.”

Tomorrow, Nelson returns at 9 a.m. for a two-hour session with Chris Renzuli, a firearms lawyer from New York, on NFA Compliance and Best Practices. “There's been huge growth for everyone in that area,” says Shay, “and we get questions all the time on it.”

Marketing and Merchandising

► Other classes are concerned with the complexities of outreach. Tomorrow's 11:30 a.m. session on Increasing Diversity in Hunting and the Shooting Sports is taught by Jim Curcuruto, NSSF's director of industry research and analysis. The class is evidence of NSSF's goal of broadening hunting and shooting participation in underrepresented populations.

“It will cover a great deal of marketing, and on the very subtle ways you need to approach some key

demographics that we haven't been very inclusive to lately,” says Shay. “We're going to be focusing on the Hispanic and African-American communities for the next couple of years; this class will provide insights to retailers regarding approaching these new markets.”

Similarly, NSSF is building on the success of last year's Marketing to Women session with a Merchandising to Women class on Thursday at 9 a.m. Last year's instructors, Julie Golob and Randi Rogers, have returned. “They've heard horror stories about women getting steered toward the pink gun, or trying to get fitted for a shotgun and the associates don't know what they're doing, or not being able to find clothing and range bags for women shooters,” says Shay. “To me it's kind of a ticking clock. We've got this great influx of new women shooters, and we as an industry need to be proactive and reach out to them so they don't get discouraged and turn toward a new sport. So it's

a great opportunity, but also it's something we really need to address as an industry."

The Right Instructor

► Settling on topics for these sessions is a lengthy process, says Shay. NSSF polled the attendees of last year's SHOT Show University and retailer seminars, as well as those who attended the numerous compliance seminars NSSF hosted throughout the summer. "I try to get as good a picture as possible about which topics we need to address," says Shay. "And then, based upon the needs of our retailers, I start looking for subject matter experts who will work with our industry."

"For example, Bill Napier is one of my consultants now; he used to be head of loss prevention at Cabela's. So it's a natural fit for him to do a class on cutting-edge store security technology [today at 10:30 a.m.]. Larry Ahlman, who's on my retail advisory committee, built a business over 40 years of buying and selling used guns, and he's got a great way to teach other retailers how to be successful." (Used Guns: How to Buy and Sell takes place tomorrow at 1 p.m.)

Another great instructor is Tracy Moffatt, a veteran of the golf industry who's taught a number of retailer ed sessions over the years. "She does a great job of helping independent retailers understand their financials, and what they really need to look at," says Shay. "We find that a lot of the retailers are great, great gun guys, but they may not have the most solid business backgrounds. We're trying to flesh out their knowledge base on how they can tweak what they're doing to be more successful." (Moffatt will also teach sessions on growing profit and inventory turnover on Thursday at 10:30 a.m. and noon.)

Not Just for Management

► It's not only managers who can learn something from these seminars; counter salespeople will get a lot out of them, too. "Many sessions are from the perspective of running the business, but other courses would be more appropriate for sales staff," says Dolnack. "We offer something for everyone."

That's an important part of the retailer sessions. "If you can find the time, it's easier for a business owner or proprietor to find professional development opportunities," Dolnack says. "It's much more difficult for firearms retail counter staff."

Frontline staff can benefit from most of the classes being offered. "A lot of the ATF sessions—the compliance ones and the NICS ones—would be great for the frontline staff," says Shay. "If they understand the federal prohibitors, they can help explain if somebody's delayed or denied, and how they can overturn a denial. The NICS E-Check 2.0 is a user interface, so they can understand how to better use the system. And the ATF and compliance stuff are similar. I think any staff that sells firearms would benefit from those."

Similarly, the diversity and merchandising to women sessions would also be helpful. "I'm sure there'll be tips for how to approach these different customers, and how to train your staff to interact with someone who's perhaps not as comfortable in a gun store, who's maybe not seeing a lot of people that look like them," says Shay. "How do you interact with them and make them feel comfortable? That's a valuable skill for any salesperson."

And teaching valuable skills is what the retailer education sessions are all about.

Seminars are being held in Lando Room 4302 on the 4th floor; tickets for the sessions (if they have not sold out) will be available on the 4th floor.



The NSSF's new government relations office in Washington, D.C., allows the trade association to be a much more effective voice for the industry among the nation's lawmakers.

NSSF Goes to D.C.

Inside the new Capitol Hill office **By Robert F. Staeger**

For much of its existence, the National Shooting Sports Foundation kept its distance from Washington. The trade association's original charter prohibited NSSF from engaging in government relations activities. Then, beginning in 1999, various municipalities began filing lawsuits against handgun companies, and it became impossible to stay above the fray.

The charter was changed, and NSSF has been growing its government relations capacity, retaining and hiring lobbyists and retired government officials to support its government relations effort.

Now, the organization is taking another big step—staffing a major government relations office in Washington, D.C. In the aftermath of 2012's tragic Sandy Hook shootings, NSSF made government relations a much more prominent part of its agenda. "It's currently the number-one strategic goal of NSSF, though we still have other important goals as well," says Lawrence Keane, who heads up NSSF's government relations efforts. "As a trade association for a heavily regulated industry that is constantly being threatened by well-organized, well-funded gun-control and anti-hunting organizations, it was important for NSSF to have a larger presence in Washington, D.C."

To that end, NSSF has moved into a much larger office in the Hall of States building on North Capitol, the same building that houses Fox News, NBC, and C-SPAN. It's only a short walk to the Capitol itself, particularly the Senate chamber. And the staffing up has begun. Keane will be dividing his time between NSSF's headquarters in Connecticut and Washington, D.C.

Having a large presence in Washington, Keane explains, is vital. "It will enable NSSF to have more face-to-face interaction with members of Congress and their staffs," he says, "and it will be easier for us to communicate information on policy matters. We'll be viewed as being more serious and a stronger voice for our industry by making the commitment to have a physical presence."

That's already been noticed on the Hill, says Keane, judging from the reactions of the organizations NSSF partners with on its array of issues—groups such as the National Association of Manufacturers on manufacturing issues, to the NRA on gun-control issues, and the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation and Safari Club International on conservation policy, to mention a few. "As part of a highly regulated industry, it's important for us to have a constant, 'boots-on-the-ground' presence because our issues never go away," says Keane. "They are constantly a matter of discussion on the

Hill, even if it's not on the front page."

One exciting ramification of the new office is that NSSF's annual Congressional Fly-In program will become more flexible. "One of our objectives is to encourage more industry members to participate," says Keane. The new D.C. office makes coordination much easier. "We'll be less reliant upon being able to get conference rooms and hotels. And that flexibility will allow the event to continue growing, as it has since its inception in 2008."

The media has reported that NSSF was the second-most influential Second Amendment organization in the country, and the new D.C. office helps cement that reputation. "We don't necessarily consider ourselves a Second Amendment organization, per se, the way the NRA does," says Keane, "but we're a trade association whose industry happens to be firearms, so you can't divorce the Second Amendment or the gun control politics from the lawful commerce. They're intertwined inexorably."

The larger issues don't change, but the D.C. office allows the NSSF to maximize its impact on the specifics. "We're much more able to have an influence on Operation Choke Point, for example," says Keane, referring to a U.S. Justice Department initiative investigating banks and businesses they work with for instances of fraud. Working with key members of Congress and their staffs, NSSF succeeded in getting the FDIC to remove arms and ammunition sellers from the list of "high-risk business" that are the operation's focus.

Overall, the new office offers a substantial benefit to members: It gives the industry a louder and stronger voice on Capitol Hill. "Members will benefit from our ability to prevent adverse legislation and to achieve good legislation," says Keane.

"I would encourage people to become members of NSSF, and to become voting members if they're currently supporting members. And also to educate themselves about initiatives we undertake," says Keane. "And if they're in Washington, to come visit us and see their membership dollars in action."

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NSSF's Hunting Works for America's chapters build coalitions that join the hunting and shooting communities with business groups. Recruits include small business owners, retail associations—anyone who values hunters and shooters as customers.



Money Talks

NSSF's Hunting Works for America shows the shooting sports political power **By Bill Miller**

When the federal government considered banning gun ranges on the Sonoran Desert National Monument in Arizona a few years ago, a coalition of businesses and shooting-sports advocates got busy. A similar group mobilized in Iowa to challenge a state agency's ban on traditional lead ammunition to hunt doves. Both groups were organized through Hunting Works for America, an initiative started in 2010 by the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

In 2012, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management dropped its plan to oust the shooting ranges on the national monument. In Iowa, meanwhile, Governor Terry Branstad lifted the ban on lead shot.

Chris Dolnack, NSSF's senior vice president and chief marketing officer, credits the Hunting Works for America chapters for promoting facts on both issues. "We organized and launched the organizations, but in very short order, these are self-run groups," he says. "When you see threats to traditional hunting and traditional ammo, it makes sense to help organize those business interests."

Hunting Works For America's footprint continued to grow in 2014. In December, Hunting Works for Oregon joined Arizona, Minnesota, North Dakota, Iowa, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Colorado, Utah, and Wisconsin, becoming the 10th state to be included in the award-winning Hunting Works for America program. The groups seek to educate policymakers on the links between shooting sports and local economies.

But first, they build coalitions that join the hunting and shooting communities with business groups. The recruits are chambers of commerce, tourism bureaus, retail associations, and small business owners—anyone who values hunters and shooters as customers.

"Obviously, all politics are local," Dolnack says. "And when you have the horsepower of businesses and businesspeople in local communities, that's far more powerful than the influence of any organization from out of state. They understand better than anyone the economic impact. They see the people coming in wearing camo; they know who's buying breakfast sandwiches at four in the morning."

And when chapter members meet with policy makers, they bring hard economic data. For example, a recent NSSF study shows that there are about 14 million hunters in the U.S. who spend nearly \$40 billion on licenses and equipment, including guns and ammunition. But the chapter members also know about hunting's economic impact in their own states. Arizona chapter members report there

are about 269,000 hunters in their state who spend about \$1,200 each year on trip-related expenses and gear. This generates about \$342 million in sales, and results in some 5,700 jobs, for a payroll of around \$208 million. Total economic impact of hunting in Arizona is \$592 million, according to the chapter.

The newcomer chapter in Wisconsin reports there are 895,000 Badger State hunters who each year spend about \$2,800 apiece on gear and other expenses. That creates about 34,000 jobs and \$1 billion in wages and salaries. The total economic impact of hunting in Wisconsin is \$4 billion.

In the effort to save the Arizona shooting ranges, chapter members noted that there was more at stake than sales of firearms, cartridges, and range fees. Convenience stores, restaurants, and gas stations also faced lost revenue.

"Hunting Works for Arizona had letters to the editor and meetings with editorial boards," Dolnack says. "They got retail officials involved, and that had a tremendous amount of influence. Their message was, 'If you shut down these ranges, it will impact future employment.'"

At the end of the day, Dolnack says, the ranges stayed open to the public.

Opposition on other issues, however, is assured. Environmental groups insist that traditional lead shot, found in the discarded parts of downed game, is toxic to raptors. Meanwhile, the chapters and NSSF counter that raptor populations are growing in the U.S. This fact, coupled with economic data, can push back against "emotional rhetoric, junk science, or no science at all," Dolnack says.

NSSF, therefore, would like to see chapters in every state, but it's not a quick process.

"We have far more requests than budget and staffing would allow," Dolnack says. "We can properly establish three a year with our budget. But we could get them up a lot faster if every person at the SHOT Show would enroll in NSSF as a member. If we could increase our revenue through significantly increased memberships, we'd have more dollars available." ■



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FEATURE



The nonpartisan NSSF PAC has rallied to fund candidates for federal office who support the Second Amendment, the hunting community, and the firearms industry.

Joining the Battle

NSSF PAC helps defend the Second Amendment **By Bill Miller**

The gun debate in the U.S. is like a long battle of attrition, one that awards victory to the side that's most committed, patient, and willing to spend. In 2013, the National Shooting Sports Foundation and other pro-gun groups marked several political wins, including the defeat of an amendment from U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein that would have banned all modern sporting rifles. A year later, anti-gun groups were back in the fight, raising money for the 2014 midterm elections. Americans for Responsible Solutions, for example, announced it would try to raise \$20 million. Meanwhile, former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg started a new group, Everytown for Gun Safety, with \$50 million of his own money. He pledged to back gun-control candidates and ballot issues like enhanced background checks.

"I have no doubt that he will do that," says Larry Keane, NSSF's senior vice president and general counsel. "So, we're looking at about \$70 million plus on the other side."

Joining the battle is the National Shooting Sports Foundation Political Action Committee (NSSF PAC). Founded in 2010, the nonpartisan PAC has rallied to fund candidates for federal offices who support the Second Amendment, the hunting community, and the firearms industry. In the latest two-year election cycle, the PAC had raised \$330,000 by the start of the third quarter of 2014, says Keane, who also is the PAC's treasurer.

Even more contributions were expected before the elections on November 4, says Keane. If those numbers seem small compared to the opposition, remember that NSSF PAC is new. It began in 2010, and has experienced strong growth in just a few years, Keane says.

The PAC raised \$10,600 from 15 contributors in its first year. But in 2013, 287 people donated \$202,025 to the PAC, Keane says.

And in the first seven months of 2014, the PAC raised \$135,000 from more than 130 donors (in the first 6 months, the PAC raised \$118,720). By then, the PAC had already helped nearly two-dozen campaigns. From June to July, the PAC raised \$16,280. Raising more than \$15,000 in just one month's time shows our supporters are engaged. By Election Day, the NSSF PAC reached the milestone of having raised \$500,000 since it was founded.

Included were the re-elections bids of U.S. Sens. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.; Charles Grassley, R-Iowa; Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., to name just a few, and dozens of candidates for the House, like

U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson, D-Minn.

Obviously, NSSF PAC is not alone in these efforts. For example, the National Rifle Association's Political Victory Fund raised more than \$18 million for the election cycle, according to the Federal Elections Commission. NSSF officials say their primary mission is to guard the commercial interests of the firearms industry. The PAC is an important way in which NSSF achieves its mission. But officials also say that supporting NSSF PAC puts elected officials on notice that industry members are an educated and politically involved group.

The PAC is tightly regulated by FEC rules. All contributions must be personal contributions because federal law forbids contributions from corporations. Therefore, the PAC can only solicit from its "restricted class," which is made up of executive and administrative staff (employees) of NSSF and its corporate members who agree to allow the PAC to communicate with their executives, and NSSF's non-corporate members such as individuals, sole proprietors, and partnerships. Also, contributions are limited to a maximum of \$5,000 per calendar year.

"It is very restricted and very complicated," Keane says. "There's a lot of effort that goes into compliance." But, he adds, the efforts are essential, considering the forces arrayed against the firearms industry and the traditions that it supports.

"We must remain ever vigilant," Keane says, "to protect the interests of our industry and our firearms freedoms, and to protect and preserve our hunting and shooting-sports heritage, which is under attack every day." For more information, go to nssfpac.org.

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By 2019, there will be a ban on traditional ammunition in California, which could seriously harm hunting and conservation in the state.



Showing Our Mettle

NSSF defends the use of traditional ammunition **By Robert F. Staeger**

Hunters have been using traditional ammunition containing lead components to harvest game for centuries, but lately calls have been coming from certain quarters to ban traditional loads because of their lead content. The theory goes that the lead in unrecovered game sickens animals who eat it, damaging wildlife populations. And, the claims go, it has the potential to harm humans, as well. But studies have disproven this idea, and wildlife populations are thriving in the United States. So what's going on?

"It's important to recognize that the fundamental tenet of the science of wildlife management is that you manage wildlife populations, but you don't manage to prevent harm to individual animals of a species," explains Lawrence Keane, senior vice president and general counsel of NSSF. "Because if that becomes the basis of wildlife management, then you've just made the argument to ban hunting."

"In fact, the excise tax dollars raised from the sales of traditional ammunition is one of the primary sources of wildlife conservation funding in the United States," says Keane. The Pittman-Robertson excise tax is a tax on firearms and ammunition, the revenue from which is earmarked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife Restoration Trust Fund, one of the country's primary sources of conservation funding.

"So the very ammunition that groups like the Humane Society of the United States [HSUS] and others demonize is what pays for wildlife conservation," says Keane. "If traditional ammunition were to be banned, wildlife conservation funding in the U.S. would crater, and the animals those groups purport to be concerned about would suffer as a consequence."

It's easy to see why the bottom would fall out of the Pittman-Robertson Fund if traditional ammunition were banned. Ninety-five percent of all ammunition sold in the United States is traditional. Only 5 percent of firearm ammuni-

tion is made without lead components, and four-fifths of that is shotshell ammunition, made chiefly for waterfowl hunting. "Only one percent is metallic ammunition made with non-lead," says Keane. "And much of that is steel-core ammunition used for target shooting, not for hunting. So less than one percent of all ammunition is alternative, non-lead projectiles for the hunting market."

And if 95 percent of the ammunition market were suddenly illegal, it's hard to see how the non-traditional calibers would pick up the slack. Especially since there's another wrinkle, in that the ATF is impeding the expansion of alternative ammunition into certain calibers. The Gun Control Act pro-

hibits using certain alternative hard metals, most notably brass, in any caliber in which there is a handgun that can also fire that projectile; this is to protect against the proliferation of armor-piercing rounds, unless ATF finds that the otherwise banned projectile is intended for a supporting purpose like hunting.

"There are now 32 petitions pending before ATF to exempt brass rounds intended for the hunting market from the armor-piercing ammunition laws, and the ATF has declined to grant any one of them," says Keane. "They won't decide one way or the other. Some of those petitions have been pending before ATF now for well over three years."

But what of the original environmental concerns?

"There is no sound science of wildlife population impacts that would warrant banning traditional ammunition beyond current restrictions," says Keane. "Raptor populations, for example, are soaring—pardon the pun—in the United States, even as hunting has increased in the last several years, according to the most recent data from the Fish and Wildlife Service."

Some groups also claim that traditional ammunition poses a risk to human health, but science doesn't back them up there, either. In 2008, the Centers for Disease Control studied blood lead levels in hunters in North Dakota. Hunters that were tested had lower levels than the average non-hunter. "In fact, hunters in the study who consumed game for the longest period of time actually had lower lead levels than other hunters in the group," says Keane. Similarly, the state of Iowa has been testing for lead in its citizens for decades, and have never seen a single case of elevated lead levels. There's no evidence for it in the data. The CDC has never reported a single case of lead poisoning from consuming game harvested using traditional ammunition.

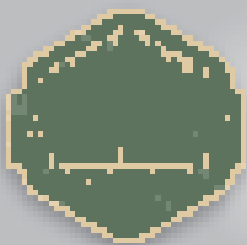
Nonetheless, anti-hunting opponents of traditional ammunition continue to push. "They are well-funded, highly motivated, and going about this one slice at a time," says Keane.

Another slice that comes under fire is an exemption in the Toxic Substance Control Act that says the Environmental Protection Agency

Anti-hunting opponents of traditional ammunition **continue to push.** "They are well-funded, highly motivated, and going about this **one slice at a time,**" says Keane.



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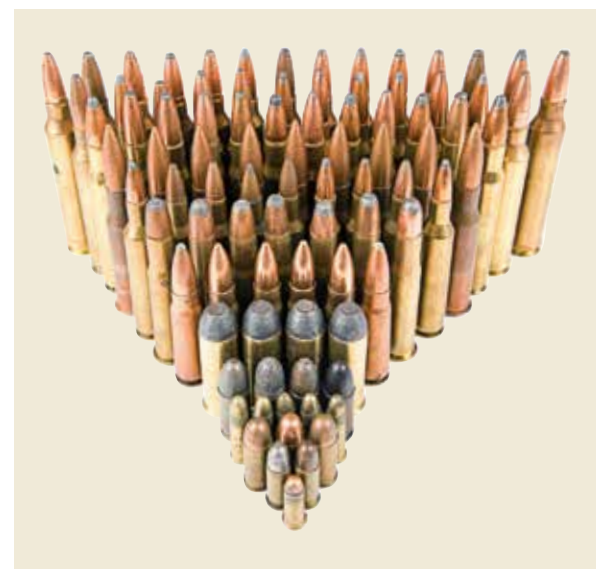
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Petitioners to the EPA hope that banning certain components in lead ammunition will have a broader effect—like striking the lead pin with a bowling ball.

cannot regulate firearms or ammunition under the act. “That was put in place so it could not be used to achieve gun-control objectives,” explains Keane. The exemption needs some clarity: The Center for Biological Diversity petitioned the EPA that while the exemption prevents it from regulating fully assembled cartridges of ammunition, it doesn’t ban regulation of the individual component parts. The EPA denied that petition—as NSSF argued, if you can ban the parts, you can ban the whole—but the matter remains in litigation. “That’s why it’s important to protect that exemption, to clarify it, and to take the argument away. We need to make it absolutely clear to the EPA, to the petitioners, and any court that the EPA does not have the authority to regulate ammunition, including the component parts, under the Toxic Substances Control Act.”

Nonetheless, we’re about to see the consequences of a ban on traditional ammunition. With its law AB 711, California has banned the use of traditional ammunition for all hunting. “Big game, small game, upland, it doesn’t matter,” says Keane. “All lead ammunition will be banned in California, which will have a devastating impact on conservation funding and on participation, because the price of alternative ammunition will increase by 300 percent on average, according to a recent economic study by Southwick and Associates.” The ban will be phased in and be completely in effect by 2019; state officials are in the process of drafting regulations to implement it.

In the meantime, NSSF is working to educate legislators and policymakers about the issue. The organization has commissioned an economic impact study for California to see what the impact of the ban will be to hunters, from the price of ammunition to the lack of availability. “With certain calibers, if you took all alternative ammunition production and brought it to California, it would be insufficient to meet the demands of all the hunters there,” says Keane.

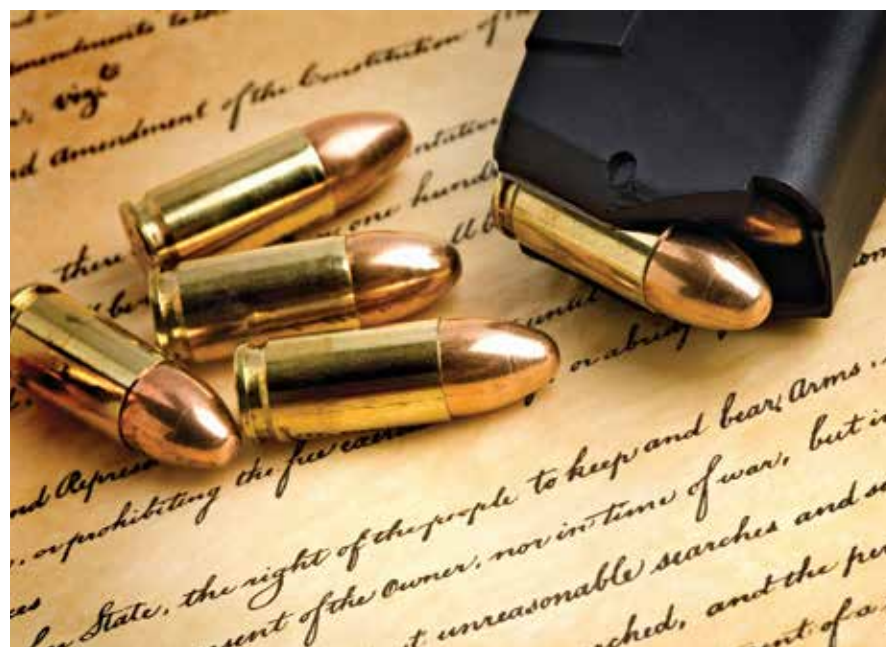
For example, under California AB 711, regular .22 rimfire ammunition will be banned; you’d have to get alternative .22 ammunition. “Good luck finding that,” says Keane. “You can’t even find lead rounds in .22. As a practical matter, there really aren’t any alternatives in the marketplace. That essentially ends small-game hunting in California.”

Which, of course, is the largely unstated agenda of the ban’s proponents. “It’s important for hunters to realize that when the Humane Society of the United States pushes for a ban on traditional ammunition, it’s just a strategy to achieve its primary mission, which is to end hunting in the United States. Hunters should not be fooled that this is just about traditional lead ammunition.” ■

The Good Fight

NSSF legal team works to protect the industry **By Christopher Cogley**

The National Shooting Sports Foundation is dedicated to promoting, protecting, and preserving hunting and the shooting sports. A large part of accomplishing that goal takes place in courtrooms across the country where the NSSF legal team fights to protect the rights of its members and the shooting-sports industry as a whole. And in 2014, there was certainly no shortage of battles for the NSSF legal team to fight.



In its mission to defend the rights outlined in the Second Amendment, NSSF has been fighting more battles at the state and local levels—particularly in its efforts to overturn firearms restrictions enacted by city and state governments in the days after the Newtown shootings.

“There’s an explosion of firearms litigation, and more cases are being filed every day,” says Lawrence G. Keane, NSSF senior vice president and general counsel.

A great deal of that litigation in 2014 was centered around Second Amendment challenges to state laws that were enacted in the wake of the Newtown shooting. The NSSF worked with a wide variety of groups to fight against state laws such as the one enacted in Colorado that requires universal background checks for the sale of any firearm and bans magazines that hold more than 15 rounds of ammunition. Another state law NSSF fought against in 2014 was the one in Maryland that created a list of illegal semi-automatic firearms and banned magazines that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition. In New York, NSSF lent support to the New York State Rifle & Pistol Association to fight the NY SAFE Act, which, among other things, defines assault weapons to include any semi-automatic firearm with a detachable magazine; prevents the transfer of firearms to anyone, even immediate family, without a background check; and requires background checks to buy ammunition.

The NSSF focused its efforts on two different fronts in Connecticut. The first was to challenge SB 1160, Act Concerning Gun Violence Prevention and Children’s Safety, and the other was the *Shew v. Malloy* case that challenges Connecticut’s ban on modern sporting rifles and magazines that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition.

While the majority of the Second Amendment cases that NSSF lent support to during 2014 were focused on new laws passed at the state level, NSSF also helped out with several cases that were filed by pro-Second Amendment groups to challenge existing gun laws that violate the definition of the Second Amendment as determined by the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in the *Heller* and *McDonald* cases. At the forefront of this effort was the *Ezell v. Chicago* case where NSSF helped to overturn Chicago’s ban on shooting ranges by arguing that the right to possess firearms for protection also implies an inherent right to receive training on how to use those firearms in a safe and effective manner. The NSSF also worked on the *Illinois Association of Firearms Retailers v. Chicago* case and helped overturn Chicago’s ban on firearms retailers operating within the city. There is still work to be done in this case, however, because the regulations and restrictions imposed on firearms retailers by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago City Council prevent gun stores from operating in 99.5 percent of the city.

While these two cases were significant victories that will set precedent for other cases, there are Second Amendment battles across the country that didn’t have a favorable outcome, and that trend is troublesome for NSSF and other Second Amendment advocates. “There’s increasing frustration among the Second Amendment-rights community because the courts are upholding gun restrictions even when they

clearly violate the rights outlined in the *Heller* decision,” Keane says.

Keane explains that the majority of these decisions are focused on an individual’s Second Amendment rights, and while NSSF is certainly invested in these cases and lends its support to the National Rifle Association and other groups that are fighting to protect these rights, NSSF typically doesn’t take the lead in these cases, preferring instead to use its resources to fight cases that threaten the lawful commerce of firearms and ammunition products.

“As the firearms industry trade association, the NSSF focuses its litigation on cases that restrict—or threaten to restrict—the lawful commerce in firearms and ammunition products,” Keane says. “We believe the lawful commerce in firearms and ammunition is cloaked with Second Amendment protections.”

A Strong Defense

➤ One of the biggest threats to the lawful commerce in firearms and ammunition that NSSF battled in 2014 was the ongoing assault on traditional ammunition by the Center for Biological Diversity and other anti-hunting organizations. Keane explains that although the NSSF helped defeat the initiative to have traditional ammunition banned completely—even for military, law enforcement, and self-defense purposes—the case to protect traditional ammunition made with lead from being banned in hunting applications is still at the forefront of NSSF’s legal efforts.

“We are leading the charge to protect the right of hunters to choose the type of ammunition they think most appropriate to use for hunting,” Keane says. “We are fighting aggressively against organizations that are using agenda-driven pseudo-science to try and get legislation passed, or regulations put in place, that would effectively make it impossible for anyone to participate in hunting or the shooting sports.”

That battle had a huge victory in 2014 when the CBD’s case against the U.S. Forest Service, which attempted to ban traditional ammunition within the Kaibab National Forest, was dismissed. During 2014, NSSF filed briefs in the CBD’s appeal of the dismissal of its lawsuit against the EPA, challenging the denial of a petition to ban traditional ammunition. Both cases represent a significant step in the right direction and provide good examples of sound scientific information overcoming illogical arguments by anti-hunting groups. But it’s a safe bet that there will be many more battles before that war is won.

Unfortunately, the attempts to ban traditional ammunition aren’t the only flawed-science cases that NSSF is aggressively fighting against. One of the most prominent issues in that category is California’s microstamping law. In 2014, NSSF, along with the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers’ Institute (SAAMI), filed a lawsuit against California stating that it is impossible for firearms manufacturers to comply with the microstamping law California enacted in 2007 and implemented in May



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FEATURE



NSSF fights poorly conceived gun laws in the courtroom, but in the federal and state legislatures, it can help prevent those laws from passing.

2013. The law requires that for all new models of semi-automatic pistols, manufacturers have to imprint the gun's make, model, and serial number in two separate locations on the cartridge casing. But because the technology does not exist to do this reliably, there is effectively no way for manufacturers to comply.

"The only reason you would enact restrictions that manufacturers cannot possibly comply with is if you are attempting to use a back-door method to ban the product those manufacturers are making," Keane says. "And that's exactly what's going on here."

In a related issue, NSSF is also providing expertise in the *Pena v. Lindley* case to show that the requirement that firearms possess the flawed microstamping technology in order to be on the state's approved handgun roster is not possible for manufacturers to comply with, because—as the NSSF is attempting to prove in the other case—it's impossible to implement the microstamping requirement, and therefore, there's no possible way for any new models of handguns to be added to the state's approved handgun roster.

Local Heroes

➤ Microstamping isn't the only issue that NSSF is dealing with in California. Another trend that seems to be gaining traction is the practice of municipalities—especially in the San Francisco Bay Area—attempting to pass anti-gun laws at a local level that override state law. The NSSF has filed preemption challenges against Pleasant Hill's Ordinance 876 that imposes regulations on gun dealers and Sunnyvale's Measure C that requires ammunition vendors to maintain a sales log and report the theft of any firearms within 48 hours. The NSSF is also aiding in the preemption challenge to overturn Sunnyvale's municipal code that bans magazines that hold more than 10 rounds.

These might be small cases, but the implications for the industry could be substantial if precedence is set in cases such as these. "It's really important to the industry to protect a state's preemption law, because otherwise we're going to end up with a patchwork of different and conflicting laws across the state that no one will know how to comply with," Keane says.

Cases such as this, which seem to affect only a handful of business, might not seem as pressing as the federal issues, but when it comes to protecting the rights of NSSF members and the industry as a whole, every case is important. And so is every members' support. Keane sees the hand of former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg behind the growing problem of anti-gun municipal ordinances.

"It is death by a thousand cuts," he says. "Industry members need to join the NSSF, because it's that support that allows us to fight for the industry in the courtroom and in the halls of Congress."

Keeping the Fire Burning

Remember Zippo cigarette lighters? The company that has made those iconic smoke starters for more than 80 years is still around—and in recent years it has ventured into outdoor products. Sub-branding itself Zippo Outdoor, the company now manufactures a line of hunting, fishing, and camping products. "The good news is that Zippo has manufactured quality lighters for decades," says Chris Funk, marketing product manager. "But that's also the bad news, because companies that are good at what they do tend to get pigeonholed and known for only a specific product. That's why Zippo Outdoor was created, so people would know we are more than just lighters, and we could grow our brand."



Two of Zippo's newest outdoor cooking products are the All-Terrain Grill, available now, and Windproof Stove, coming later in the year. "We believe the All-Terrain Grill is the perfect grill for camping and tailgating," says Funk. "First of all, we wanted a grill that would set up and take down quickly and simply. Second, we wanted it to hold heat well, so we manufactured both the base and lid from cast aluminum. Our goal was for consumers to be able to cook great food while on the road."

The grill has a porcelain-coated, cast-iron cooking grate—which also helps hold heat—and with the twin burners set on high the temperature can reach 530 degrees F in 10 minutes, and 755 degrees after half an hour. A through-lid thermometer displays cooking temperatures. Each burner ignites with the push of a button and produces 8,000 BTUs, for a total of 16,000. It operates on either a 1-pound propane canister or a 20-pound propane tank. Attachment hoses for both are included.

Other features are spring-assisted fold-away X-frame legs and an anti-rattle lock system for quiet travel. A large stainless-steel work surface and utensil hooks help in food prep, and the large, rubber-coated wheels make travel over uneven ground easy. It's assembled in the U.S. with domestic and foreign components. SRP: \$399.95.

Making its debut at this year's SHOT Show is Zippo's Windproof Stove. "A unique feature of the stove is that it doesn't use a wind screen to block the wind, but rather a chimney screen," says Funk. "If you remember what a Zippo lighter looks like when you flip it open—its chimney has a three-two-three hole pattern—we've used that same methodology in developing our new cooking stove. The new stove will retail for less than \$300." Booth #13905. (888-442-1932; zippooutdoor.com) —W.H.Gross

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Mossberg's Youth Movement

A new catalog highlights Mossberg's commitment to young shooters **By Brian McCombie**

Mossberg's commitment to the youth shooting market got even stronger last summer when the gunmaker released its all-new "Mossberg 2014 Youth Catalog." The 12-page full-color catalog features 45 Mossberg shotguns and rimfire and centerfire rifles with the company's innovative EZ-Reach forends (pump-action shotguns), Super Bantam stock spacer adjustment system (shotguns and rifles), and Mossberg's unique FLEX TLS (Tool-less Locking System).



The 20-gauge 500 Super Bantam Duck Commander has the same features as the larger Waterfowl model.

"One of the key things we are trying to convey with a separate catalog is Mossberg's commitment to build specific firearms for young and smaller-statured shooters," says Tom Taylor, Mossberg's senior vice president of sales and marketing. "We're not just chopping off the barrel or shortening the length of pull. We've truly reduced the scale of these firearms so they provide proper fit and balance."

Mossberg already offered approximately 90 percent of these firearms, notes Linda Powell, the company's director

system on shotguns and rifles, a one-inch spacer can be easily added to increase the length of pull as the young shooter grows. Overall, reduced dimensions with shorter barrel lengths provide proper balance and lighter weight for more enjoyable shooting.

But it isn't only the younger shooters and hunters who will appreciate these firearms. Smaller-statured men and women, who may have experienced difficulty using standard firearms, will also find products here made with them in mind.

"We're not just chopping off the barrel or shortening the length of pull."

of media relations. But the separate catalog will make smaller firearms easier for consumers—and retailers—to find, rather than having to page through the standard catalog while shopping for their son or daughter.

For 2015, Mossberg will offer a new Youth Catalog in the spring, both in print and on-line formats. Powell notes that the catalog will include several new items, plus upgrades and options to a number of current products.

Mossberg specifically designs its Youth, Bantam, and Super Bantam firearms to dimensionally fit smaller-statured shooters. For example, the EZ-Reach forends on Mossberg's pump-action shotguns are located closer to the receiver so cycling is easier for those with shorter arms and reduced grip size.

This, combined with shorter length of pull, will improve comfort and control. With the innovative Super Bantam spacer

Mossberg sales representatives will provide retailers with printed copies of these catalogs for customers. Mossberg offers Point of Purchase displays to highlight the company's youth offerings, and the gunmaker is also running print ads in national outdoor and shooting publications to announce the youth catalog and its many offerings.

As Taylor notes, the Mossberg 2014 and 2015 Youth Catalogs reaffirm Mossberg's commitment to bringing the younger shooter into the shooting sports by eliminating a participation barrier. Shouldering a rifle or shotgun that's too bulky and awkward is a real turn-off for a youngster. But the young boy or girl whose first shooting experience is with a firearm contoured to their body size is much more likely to become a long-term participant in our shooting sports. Booth #12734. **(203-230-5300; mossberg.com)**



Brittany Boddington: "The best we can do as females is to keep hunting and showing the world that this is a sport for both genders, equally."

A Woman's Touch

The ladies of Sportsman Channel speak up

Sportsman Channel hosts Jana Waller (*Skull Bound TV*), Melissa Bachman (*Winchester's Deadly Passion*), Haley Heath (*The Outfitters Built by Ford F-Series/Yeti's Ultimate Hunt*), Leigh Creekbaum (*The Chase*), Sonia Hendrick (*Bullets & Broadheads*), Brittney Glaze (*Destination Whitetail*), Brittany Boddington (*Petersen's Hunting Adventures*), Julie McQueen (*Brotherhood Outdoors*), Michele Eichler (*Easton Bowhunting TV*), and Jada Johnson (*Big Boys Adventures*) comment on the burgeoning role women are playing in the outdoor industry.

Q Looking at how far women in the outdoors have come, do you believe women still have a ways to go? If so, what can be done to help? Or if not, why?

A JANA WALLER: If women want to be respected and considered as equals in the hunting industry, it's critical that we don't use sex to sell ourselves. I've seen the posts of women in bikini tops pulling back their bows. I don't think posting so-called hunting

photos showing cleavage and skin does any woman any favors. While it may "sell" your page or a particular hunting product, it truly degrades hardcore women who live to hunt and aren't in it for the attention of men.

MELISSA BACHMAN: It's always a battle when women become a part of something that has been primarily dominated by men in the past. With that said, we are very lucky to have such supportive men and companies within the hunting industry who have been actively

promoting the outdoors to women. What helps tremendously is the common love and passion for hunting and the outdoors. As a community, it's more important than ever to band together and put the numbers in our favor. One thing that can be done to help is for all hunters to not only be supportive of new people, but to help them out and offer advice. The more people we can get involved, the stronger we become as a hunting community.

BRITTNEY GLAZE: Every little

girl should have the chance to grow into a woman hunter, if that's her choice. It's a good thing to know how to hunt and harvest game—not just for the sport but also to provide for your family. You never know when you may have to.

BRITTANY BODDINGTON: There is always more to be done. The female demographic is growing on its own, and the emergence of women in hunting in the media has helped encourage many would-be hunters to get out into the field. The best we (as females in the



Left to right: Jana Waller, Melissa Bachman, and Brittney Glaze. As hosts at Sportsman Channel, these high-profile women not only feel an obligation to encourage more women to take up hunting, but also feel the need to encourage women to be strong supporters of hunting rights and the Second Amendment.

media) can do is to keep hunting and showing the world that this is a sport for both genders, equally.

JULIE McQUEEN: We have definitely come a long way, and the only way to keep progressing forward is to support and respect women in the outdoors. Many of us have learned to support each other and lean on our fellow women hunters when we need to. We have created a nice support system that's working for us, and the goal is to continue to grow that network of positive energy. Women in our industry have raised the standard of what it means to truly be an outdoorswoman, and I'm proud of how far we've come.

Q Do you have an urge to overachieve in the hunting world because you are a woman and you feel you have something to prove? If so, do you think that has driven you to be the best in your field? If not, why?

A MELISSA BACHMAN: Absolutely. When coming into a camp or meeting new people, I feel I'm put under a microscope. In general, I believe many people still doubt a woman's ability to hunt and pack meat out, and some still question a woman's mental and physical toughness. I look at it as an incentive to work harder and prove these people wrong. The more women we can get in the field, the faster we can skew this thought process. We just had a little bit of a late start, but I can assure you there are many great female hunters joining the hunting

community.

LEIGH CREEKBAUM: In the first few years of our hunting show, I had my own personal insecurity about being on TV. I felt like I had to overcome so many obstacles. For a while I didn't fully embrace or enjoy the outdoors because I felt so much pressure. I do want to be better each and every time I go out, and one way I do that is by listening to people at camp. I learn so much just by listening.

SONIA HENDRICK: I don't hunt because I have something to prove as a woman. I hunt because I feel spiritually and genetically drawn to the outdoors; it's truly a part of my hard-wiring. I strive for success in the field and chase down goals because I'm driven. I don't think anyone hunts or pursues anything they're passionate about with aspirations for mediocrity. Every life lesson can be learned and put into practice outdoors.

JADA JOHNSON: Absolutely. I feel like men don't view our level of

skill and talent as equal. I constantly feel like I have to work harder, practice more, and shoot better so that I can receive the level of respect that guys get.

Q Whether you like it or not, young girls and women look up to you as a role model since you are on TV. Do you believe you are a role model? Was there an experience that opened your eyes to being a role model?

A JANA WALLER: Since I'm passionate about protecting our current hunting rights and passing on our hunting heritage to our youth, I don't take my position as a hunting TV show host lightly. It's even more critical to portray women as confident, intelligent, passionate hunters. We need to convey the message that we hunters are the ones who give more back to animals than any other organization or group of people. That's why I

have partnered with four of the leading conservation groups for *Skull Bound TV*. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Mule Deer Foundation, and the United States Sportsman Alliance are all sponsors of our show, and I proudly promote their messages on every episode through "The Conservation Minute." I also speak at numerous hunter-safety classes and expos to discuss the importance of not only safety in the field but the critical aspect of wildlife management to sustain healthy game populations and habitat. Having a TV show gives me a great platform to get that message across.

BRITTNEY GLAZE: Yes, I believe I am a role model. It's my passion to introduce as many women and little girls as I can to the outdoors. I receive lots of fan mail, and I have little girls sending me videos saying they want to be like me. That opened my eyes, to think I am someone's hero. That's an honor, and now I have a drive to never let them down.

JULIE McQUEEN: Being a role model is serious business. Any young girl can go look at my Facebook page or any public statement that I put out without me worrying about it being offensive. I am constantly considering the impact that I might have on others, and I strive to encourage them and personally respond to everyone when I'm able to. A turning point for me was one of the first times a lady sent a private message to let me know that her daughter was a fan of our show. Her little girl wanted to have the same camou-

“
Pink is not the universal color for women. I don't know why, but I feel like it cheapens the gear and gives guys a reason not to respect us.”—Jada Johnson

flage and the same gun, and she wanted go to the same places that I went to. I took that very seriously. It's easy to be a good role model when you have good intentions every day.

HALEY HEATH: I looked up to my mother as a hunting role model as a child. She taught me that it was okay to love hunting and give it my all. I hope that young women look at me as a strong woman/mother that loves the outdoors, works hard, and passes on my passion for the outdoors to others.

Q If you could tell the CEO of a big-box retailer or manufacturer one thing about catering to women in the outdoors, what would it be?

A **MELISSA BACHMAN:** Create gear that not only matches the quality of items men are using, but make it even better. Women need items that fit, that are functional, and that look good. It's that simple. I want to look nice in the field, but it has to work as well as or better than gear built for men. **JADA JOHNSON:** Pink is not the universal color for women. We like other colors, too. I have such a hard time finding feminine gear that isn't

pink. I don't know why, but I feel like it cheapens the gear and gives guys a reason to not respect us.

Q Why be on TV? Why do this? Some critics of outdoor TV say everyone has egos and they are just fulfilling that desire, but it does take a unique personality to be on TV. Tell us what drives you to do what you do.

A **MELISSA BACHMAN:** For me, being on TV is secondary. I grew up hunting, and there is nothing I would rather be doing at any given time. I dreamed of a way to hunt for a living, and television was an outlet that allowed me to do this. I believe my story is more than just a girl with a dream to hunt. It's really a story of having a dream and working night and day to make that dream become a reality. I started out at the lowest possible rank, an intern working for free. I drove 150 miles a day to simply get my foot in the door. I knew the odds were against me, but I was simply unwilling to give up. Times got tough, money got tight, but through it all I simply worked harder and believed that in time new opportunities would come my way. Now, nine years later, I own

my own production company, host 26 original shows a year, and hunt for a living—which was my ultimate goal. There is something to be said for setting a goal and working hard to achieve it.

SONIA HENDRICK: I made the leap to live our outdoor life in front of an audience because I'm passionate about our outdoor heritage. More than that, I do it because I'm passionate about my family. At the end of the day, we have a family-focused message that I hope resonates with others.

BRITTANY BODDINGTON: I wanted to write; I was a journalism/mass communication major. But the written media has become secondary to visual media. My dad [Craig Boddington] started off writing and later got into TV. I did the same, but on a much shorter time schedule. It seems that in order to compete in this industry, TV is a must. Now, every big outdoor magazine has a show under the same title. I got lucky because I like to film as much as I like to write. I can share my world with the public, and I enjoy taking people on my adventures. As for TV being a tool to inflate an ego, perhaps that is why I still pick up side jobs like being a nanny; nothing deflates a big ego like changing a dirty diaper.

HALEY HEATH: I'm a little different from other TV hosts because I was not looking to get into the filming world. It was just meant to be, I guess. I never have liked attention and am a very private person. When this career happened upon me, I took it as a platform for me to help get more women, children, and families involved in the outdoors. I continue in this profession because it is my passion, and it is a great way to show a woman and mother who hunts. I don't always get an animal, nor do I shoot the biggest, but I have fun and make memories with my family and friends, and get to share my adventures with the TV audience, hoping to inspire others to do the same.

Q Tell us about how you are handling the attacks from anti-hunters. This is by no means a part of the job you probably thought was on the table. Do the attacks take you by surprise in their intensity? What is your strategy for answering them specifically when it comes to social media? Do you answer? Let it go? Delete and ban?

A **JANA WALLER:** When it comes to attacks from anti-hunters, nothing surprises me anymore. I do not argue with them, but simply ban and delete them from our social media sites. I will only answer questions that appear to be from legitimate people who seriously have a lack of knowledge on a particular topic.

MICHELE EICHLER: We are not going to change their minds, and they for sure won't change ours. It amazes me how disgusting they can be. I rarely answer. I mostly ban and delete so that they don't distract from what we do. I did answer one girl once when she attacked me for hunting and killing animals. I brought to her attention that the beautiful feather earrings she was wearing were the result of someone having to kill that bird for her to pluck their feathers out and that the meat was probably wasted. Not to mention her leather belt and boots. Pure ignorance.

MELISSA BACHMAN: In the beginning I took all the attacks very personally. They weren't in small numbers, either. They came by the thousands and had a serious impact on my career. The scariest thing for me was worrying if everything I had worked so hard for could literally be thrown away in a matter of days when the attacks hit the hardest. In the end, I believe they made me much stronger, and I chalk it up as a victory for the hunting community because they see us—more specifically, women—as a direct threat. We are getting new people



Julie McQueen says, "Being a role model is serious business. I am constantly considering the impact that I might have on others."

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FEATURE

involved, and we are showing people that hunting is a great way for families to bond. We've scared the antis. We've struck a nerve, and the only way they know to react is through threats and violence.

BRITTANY BODDINGTON: I grew up hearing about anti-hunters, so I knew when I got into this that there was a possibility of becoming a target. I never guessed that the attacks would be as vicious as they have been. You need thick skin. I try to answer the intellectual questions on hunting and the morality involved, but when they go into name calling or cursing I simply delete and ban them.

JULIE McQUEEN: I've been harassed, threatened, and bullied by anti-hunters on social media on a pretty regular basis. It's been a learning process overall. I've come to understand that they are finding time in their lives to seek me out and harass me because there is something wrong with them. If they were truly happy in their own lives, then they wouldn't feel the need to disrupt mine. My response is to go on with my life and mostly ignore them. Some of them have threatened me with violence, so I'll take legal action against those. But most of them go away when they are ignored. I have too many positive things going on in my life right now to pay a lot of attention to them, but I don't want this to become an epidemic where they continue harassing others like they have harassed me.

HALEY HEATH: Over the course of eight years, I have been attacked numerous times by antis. Some were just a few comments or a small group telling me I'm a killer and I'm horrible, but there have been times where they have pushed too far. It got so bad at one point there were physical threats on not only me but my children. I can delete and ban when it's just a few, but when hundreds are threatening my children's lives, more must be done. I had to get the FBI involved and have protection for my children—even at their school. It was a very serious and scary time. It amazes me how the antis can not want you to hurt an animal, but they are perfectly fine with harming a child.

Q What is your favorite piece of gear that you will never give up—even if someone offered you \$1 million for it?

A **JULIE McQUEEN:** I would give up most of my gear for \$1 million because it's replaceable! Seriously, I do have a few guns I couldn't put a price tag on. I carry my dad's .357 service pistol as a sidearm when I'm in the field sometimes. You wouldn't be able to get that one away from me.

HALEY HEATH: My Remington Model 700.

Q What is the one invaluable takeaway from your experience in outdoors TV?

A **JANA WALLER:** Remembering that hunting is about experiencing and connecting to the Great Outdoors, gathering your own organic food, passing on our passion and the camaraderie around the campfire. It's not about time length or record books.

BRITTNEY GLAZE: Just be yourself, and the rest will fall into place.

BRITTANY BODDINGTON: Keep it fun and appreciate the gift of being able to do what you love professionally. Never lose sight of the passion that drove you to hunt.

JULIE McQUEEN: Given the choice between spooking the game or peeing in your pants, always choose the latter.

HALEY HEATH: It is a small industry requiring hard work, honesty, and a smile to get you through. Booth #13923. 📺

AN UPLIFTING ADD-ON FOR A REMINGTON 700

Adding a tactical or varmint-style bolt knob to a Remington Model 700 rifle can be a great idea. The factory knob can be a slippery little nugget when a shooter's hands are wet, cold, or bundled in heavy gloves.

But upgrading to an oversize knob can be complicated and expensive, and represent a substantial alteration to the original rifle. A gunsmith would have to cut down and thread the original knob and install a new one. The bill could top \$150.

Then along came the Bolt Lift from Kinetic Research Group (KRG). The polymer Bolt Lift halves—supported by spacers—clamp around the factory knob. Reinforcing pins and a single stainless-steel Allen screw snug it all in place. The entire installation takes less than five minutes.

The KRG Bolt Lift sports a textured finish for an even more positive grip and weighs virtually nothing. The finished bolt looks pretty spiffy, too. Better still, the KRG Bolt Lift retails for just \$28. Booth #10664. (720-432-1145; kineticresearchgroup.com) —Tim Irwin



The KRG Bolt Lift clamps around the Remington 700's factory bolt-action knob and takes only five minutes to install.



Making Waves

Innovative turkey packs from ALPS Outdoorz aim to change the game **By Joe Keller**

Turkey vests are a great option if you're setting up on a flock you've patterned. But if you're running-and-gunning or if you're staying put in a ground blind, the venerable old vest might not be the right tool.

Justin Leesmann of ALPS Outdoorz gets it. The avid turkey hunter and ALPS marketing manager helped design the new Crossfire pack. It's an all-in-one, 2,325-cubic-inch backpack that has a smaller accessories bag you can detach, strap across your chest, and carry along for convenient access to just the essentials. It gives you the option to keep a few of your calls and shells on your chest, and ditch the pack, which can be bulky—especially if you're making a tight stalk on a smart bird.

"The accessory pack has just enough space to carry calls and a few essentials, but it's small enough that it won't be in the way when you are getting set up or raising

the gun to fire," says Leesmann, who tested the pack while hunting spring and fall turkeys. "It's very different, and hunters like having these options."

The pack is also tailor-made for ground blinds. Take off your big pack, put it aside, and use the small pack so you're not digging through your laundry bag or rummaging through your vest as turkeys show up and strut.

Zach Scheidegger, ALPS product manager, says this is a different system for turkey hunters, and he expects the Crossfire to make waves. "It's such a versatile pack that we're confident hunters will appreciate all of the features it has to offer."



The Crossfire pack has a detachable accessories bag.

hold my striker, but it popped out while I was doing the running part of running-and-gunning. The accessories pack does hold tight to your chest while you're on the move, and it's perfectly positioned, on a slight angle, to make it easy to reach in without making a lot of movement. Lefties are left out; the accessories pack really only works its magic for righties because of the angle.

The Crossfire is offered in Realtree Xtra and Mossy Oak Break-Up Infinity. SRP: \$139.99.

Made for Women

➤ At first blush, the only thing that gives away ALPS Outdoorz's new Huntress pack as a women's hunting tool is the touch of pink on the logo. But there's more to it than some stitching. The 2,222-cubic-inch Huntress has several modifications just for women.

"For one, the shoulder straps are shorter," says Leesmann. "That makes it ride higher on a female's torso than a pack made for a man."

Shorter straps also mean more size adjustment; ALPS left the adjustment straps long to fit a variety of female forms. "The waist belt is also cut differently to fit a woman better," he says.

Leesmann adds that they sought feedback from women hunters before deciding on the Huntress specs. One of the things those women did not want was a lot of pink. "They didn't want it to look too much like a girl's bag, but they did like the touch of pink in the logo," he says. "That was just enough—not too much and not too little."

Otherwise, the pack has many features that you'll also find on other ALPS's packs, like beefy zippers and a vented back to keep hunters cool when trekking through the backcountry. At 2,200 cubic inches, it is a medium-to-large-sized pack that will carry raingear as well as an extra jacket, extra ammo, and a camera. The front pocket is built with compartments to help keep smaller items, like calls and your license, accessible and organized.

On the exterior, you can use lashing straps to load more gear. The brushed-fabric pack comes in Realtree Xtra.

A drop-down pocket secures a bow or rifle. The pack is hydration-compatible, and if you have your own reservoir, there's a slot for it. Mesh pockets on the outside hold water bottles, if that's the way you roll.

"We think we got the whole pack just right," says Leesmann. "And the women hunters who have used it agree." SRP: \$119.99. Booth #3653. (800-344-2577; alpsoutdoorz.com)

In the Dark

Crimson Trace demonstrates the value of laser sights
By Slaton L. White

Most times, to say a company—or person—is in the dark implies a certain cluelessness on their part. But the folks at Crimson Trace Corp. would take it as a compliment—as long as you are speaking about the company's celebrated Midnight 3-Gun Invitational (M3GI), the third installment of which was held at a dusty desert range in central Oregon late last summer.

As 3-Gun competitions rise in popularity across America, so do the challenges. The idea behind this event was, naturally, to create a venue that would show off the manufacturer's product lines, but in a way that complemented the company's unique world view. There's no other way to explain having nearly 200 competitors run around in the dark with handguns, rifles, and shotguns trying to punch out a variety of intriguingly set paper, clay, and metal targets.

"At Crimson Trace, our goal is to make laser sights standard equipment for every personal-protection handgun in this country," says marketing manager Kent Thomas. "While we are not a '3Gun' company, we envisioned that if we could show the top shooters and media members in the U.S. the hands-on benefits of lasers to make them even faster and more accurate shooters, it would easily translate to the marketplace. After three years of what has been called 'the most challenging, anticipated, and greatest shooting event of the year,' it would seem we've been able to make these professional shooters converts to the benefits of laser sighting systems."

These products include Lasergrips and Laserguards with red and green lasers, all of which feature Instinctive Activation, as well as Lightguard 100-lumen tactical lights. "Put simply, Instinctive Activation means that when you hold your gun in a normal firing grip, the laser is on," says Thomas. "When you holster or disengage your grip, the laser turns off. There's no button switching, no thinking, no battery drain, and no valuable time lost. Instinctive Activation will help you become a more accurate shooter because it will help place you on target faster. It will also allow you to reach for your personal defense firearm with much more confidence."

Another product used by competitors was the Rail Master platform, which combines laser sights and a tactical light. All of the above, Thomas says, "are proudly designed, engineered, and manufactured in the USA."

CTC has learned that event sponsors, including Smith & Wesson, Mossberg, Leupold, Warne, Ergo, and Nosler, find the M3GI a cost-effective way to get their latest products in front of serious competitors as well as the shooting-sports media. "Smith & Wesson has always been a strong

The CTC Midnight 3-Gun Invitational is designed to show the benefits of laser-sighting devices. But it's more than that—it's a venue where one can compete seriously or shoot casually in a unique environment under the stars.





A side benefit of night competition is the opportunity to have a portrait taken with the Milky Way in the background.

advocate and supporter of the shooting sports as both a way to grow new participation and as a means for current gun owners to hone their firearm skills,” says director of marketing communications Paul Pluff. “As one of the fastest growing segments, the sport of 3-Gun requires competitors to be well versed in multiple firearms disciplines that align with our current portfolio of products that include high-end competition firearms within our Performance Center, Pro Series, and M&P lines. By supporting matches such as the Crimson Trace Midnight 3-Gun Invitational,

Smith & Wesson is able to highlight the efficiency of our products when used in competition as well as help introduce new shooters to the fast-paced, exciting world of 3-Gun competition.”

The eventual winner (for the third time) was SSG Daniel Horner, a member of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit. Horner bested a field of nearly 200 competitors and shot his way through 10 stages during the two-night event. Horner also won a \$10,000 first place purse because he had—and used—Crimson Trace laser sighting products on all of his firearms during the competition. Joining Horner on the 2014 M3GI winner’s podium were SGT Matt Sweeney (second place) and SSG Joel Turner (fourth place). Those U.S. Army soldiers were accompanied to the event by Lt. Col. Bret Tecklenburg, the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit Commander from Fort Benning, Georgia.

The 2014 M3GI available prize package included more than \$250,000 worth of firearms, gun parts, ammunition, range gear, firearms maintenance items, optics, clothing, and other gear. Smith & Wesson (Booth #13729) and O.F. Mossberg & Sons (Booth #12734) sponsored a special 3-Gun school during the opening days of the competition designed to give members of the media, some of whom were new to 3-Gun, an idea of how to shoot these events. It’s not a willy-nilly run-and-gun event; each stage needs to be thought out carefully, and each shooter needs to determine how best to run the course in order to achieve the best score—a combination of accuracy and time.

“Competitive shooting—specifically, 3-Gun Competitions—are one of the most rapidly growing segments of the shooting sports, and the Crimson Trace M3GI shoot has become one of the premier 3-Gun competitions,” says Linda

Powell, Mossberg director of media relations. “Mossberg became involved this year with the launch of a one-day media school prior to the match. More than 50 members of the media had the opportunity to train with some of the sports’ highest-regarded competitors, including Mossberg-sponsored Jerry, Kay, and Lena Miculek, while becoming familiar with the firearms used and some match stages. For many attendees, this was their first exposure to 3-Gun, and it was obvious that it would not be their last.”

Powell also notes that the manufacturer worked closely with Jerry in the design of his signature competitive shotgun—the 930 JM Pro semi-auto.

But practice during the day is one thing; competing at night is another matter entirely. The event places a premium on safety, which is why every person at the range (competitors and non-competitors alike) was fitted with a pair of chemical glow sticks. As spectators and competitors moved from stage to stage, the glowing, ghostly lights reminded me of the scene from *Poltergeist* where the disturbed spirits descend the staircase in the haunted house.

At night, some targets that were a cinch to hit during the day proved to be surprisingly hard to nail when the lack of light robs you of depth perception. But the competition amply demonstrated the utility of laser sights. Even under the strain of competition, the lasers allowed the shooter to quickly and easily get on target. The value to someone interested in lasers for personal defense was self-evident; at close range, that red or green light tells the approaching miscreant that it would be a wise move indeed to immediately disengage—or suffer the consequences. Booth #16731. (800-402-2406; crimsontrace.com)

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Can You Hear Me?

Even in the cell-phone age, two-way radios remain relevant **By Christopher Cogley**

There was a time when cell phones were as rare in hunting camps as an old-timer without a story to tell. Today, from the woods of Maine to the mountains of California, you'd be hard-pressed to find a hunter in the field who isn't carrying the latest smartphone in his pocket. But even if your customers have access to the most technologically advanced communication tools on the planet, it doesn't mean that their phone isn't without its limitations. To make sure your customers are covered when they need to be, it's important to remind them about the technology they've been relying on for years and encourage them to find a place in their hunting packs for the two-way radios that are as valuable today as they've always been.

"In the places where I hunt, there are stands where I have cell coverage and there are stands where I don't, and that really hasn't changed much in the last three or four years," says Bob Donnellan, vice president of sales for Giant International, the licensee for Motorola consumer two-way radios.

Donnellan explains that when it comes to determining where to place new cell towers, service providers typically look at where people live and where they work. Because most of those areas are already covered by the cell towers that were built years ago, there hasn't been a large number of new towers put up in the last few years. As a result, coverage areas haven't expanded much. And because most hunting occurs in places that typically aren't close to where the majority of people live and work, cell coverage in your customers' favorite hunting woods is likely to be just as spotty next season as it was this year.

"Consistent coverage is obviously one of the biggest limitations of cell phones. One of the biggest benefits of two-way radios is they don't rely on cell towers to provide service," Donnellan says. "But even if you know without a doubt that you're going to have cell coverage where you hunt, think of the radio as a safety tool rather than a communication device."

Most two-way radios like Motorola's Talkabout MU350 feature an emergency alert button that can instantly notify other hunters or outdoorsmen in the area that someone needs help. It's a standard feature on radios and one that cell phones don't come equipped with.

"That sound will automatically turn the volume up on any Motorola radio in the area," Donnellan says. "One of the best benefits of two-way radios is being able to talk to people you didn't know were there. If you get lost or sprain an ankle or a thousand other things, chances are good that if you go to channel 1 on your radio, you're going to be able to get in touch with someone who isn't too far away from where you are. In an emergency situation, that can make all the difference in the world."

The Talkabout MU350 also has a built-in flashlight and an 11-channel weather receiver with a NOAA alert feature that can warn hunters and outdoorsmen of severe weather. Unlike cell phones, two-way radios also give hunters the freedom to talk with multiple people at the same time, so when they're coordinating hunting locations, pick-up times, and letting their friends know that they're going to be late to camp, everyone gets the same message at the same time with just one push of the button. And because the MU350 is also Bluetooth-compatible, hunters don't even need to push the button anymore to access those reliable safety and communication capabilities.



Motorola's Talkabout MU350 two-way radios feature an 11-channel weather receiver. The radios are also Bluetooth-compatible; there's no need to push a button to communicate.

"With this feature, you can have the radio inside your jacket, keeping it warm and keeping the batteries working well, and you don't have to push the button to talk to your buddies," Donnellan says. "You also don't have to worry about the game you're stalking getting spooked if someone happens to call when you're about to take the perfect shot."

The radio has the capability to sync with any standard Bluetooth device, but Motorola has also released a PTT Pod that can be attached to a backpack, jacket, ATV, or even a bow so the speaker and microphone can be mounted wherever it's easiest to access them.

"This is something that's designed for someone who's serious about what they're doing in the woods and they're active while they're doing it," Donnellan says. "These are the people who are in the woods to hold something other than a radio, but they still want the ability to communicate consistently and effectively."

And because that ability to communicate consistently and effectively depends on having reliable service no matter where you are, it's a safe bet that regardless of how quickly technology changes, hunters will continue to find a valuable place in their packs for the radios they know they can always count on. Booth #4026. **(800-927-2744; motorolasolutions.com)**

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Bucking Tradition

Benelli's new break-action shotgun delivers plenty of steak with the sizzle **By Phil Bourjaily**

Benelli's over/under just might be the most buzzed-about gun at the 2015 SHOT Show. It's a totally new take on break-action shotgun design that offers several advantages to its owner. Although Benelli has never made an O/U before, there is no mistaking this gun for any other brand; the swooping lines of the receiver, the rakish angle of the forend tip, and the Progressive Comfort system in the stock all mark this gun as a Benelli original.

The squared-off stock head allows the 828U's stock dimensions to be adjusted with shims, just as many semi-autos can be. In all, a total of 40 different combinations of drop and cast can be made.



As the 828U goes up against established, traditional O/U models, it has a lot going for it: It's light, lithe, soft-shooting, and widely adjustable for fit. The lightweight alloy receiver and carbon-fiber rib keep the weight of this 12-gauge well under 7 pounds, a trait I appreciated last November when I had the chance to carry it across miles of South Dakota in search of sharptails and wild ringnecks.

The slender lines make it a natural pointer, and the Progressive Comfort system tamed the recoil of the heavy 1 3/8-ounce pheasant loads we shot. One of the gun's biggest advantages over any competing O/U is that the squared-off stock head allows the gun's stock dimensions to be adjusted with shims, just as many semi-autos can be. With the 828U, Benelli widened the ranges of shim adjustments, allowing the end user a total of 40 different combinations of drop and cast without any gunsmithing at all. Optional buttpads allow you to adjust stock length. Given that stock bending and fitting of traditional break actions can run into the hundreds of dollars, the 828U's adjustability is a strong selling point.

An "under-the-hood" look at the 828U reveals several unique design features. The gun locks by means of a steel lock-plate that hooks onto the monoblock almost like the bolt head of one of Benelli's semi-autos, freeing the alloy receiver from the need to contain the stresses of firing. While other O/Us use linkages that cock ejectors and hammers, all those systems are separated on the 828U. Opening the top lever cocks the hammers, while an ingenious "pulse fired" system drives the ejectors. The trigger group pops out with the aid of a simple (included) tool for cleaning. With the trigger removed, it's also a simple matter for the owner to convert the safety from automatic to manual.

With a top rib made of carbon fiber and no side ribs, the 828U has a lively feel, and the trim action keeps the barrels down low in your hand so the gun points naturally. As I said, it was miles between birds on our South Dakota hunt, but the gun shot where I needed it to when the time finally came. The Progressive Comfort system, which debuted on last year's Ethos semi-auto, really does work. I have tested an Ethos with Progressive Comfort alongside my Montefeltro, which weighs exactly the same amount, and I can easily tell the difference in recoil, especially with heavy hunting loads.

Initial 828U offerings will be a plain black anodized receiver model for \$2,499 or an engraved silver version for \$2,999. Both will come with a choice of 26- or 28-inch barrels. However, Benelli's manufacturing tolerances mean all barrels will be completely interchangeable, allowing hunters to use additional barrels, which will be a great feature once target barrels become available.

No question Benelli's new O/U has plenty of sizzle, but there's lots of steak there, too. Booth #13656. (800-264-4962; benelliusa.com)

Customer Driven

When you listen to your customers, amazing things happen.

Just ask Doubletap Ammunition **By Richard Mann**

In the last few years we've seen the rise of boutique ammunition manufacturers—small ammo companies offering a limited selection of quality loads, often for a specific purpose. That's how Doubletap out of Cedar City, Utah, started in 2002. Owner Mike McNett began loading four different 10mm autoloads out of his garage. At that time there was not a wide variety of 10mm ammo to choose from; 10mm shooters liked McNett's stuff and began asking him to offer loads for other cartridges. So that's what he did.

Today, Doubletap Ammunition operates out of an 18,000-square-foot facility that houses a full ballistics laboratory and 22 employees. Doubletap now offers more than 460 different loads for 74 different cartridges. It's no longer just about the 10mm. The company manufactures other defensive handgun loads as well as hunting loads, long-range loads, tactical loads, and even loads specifically engineered for safari. Essentially, McNett's garage handloading setup has grown into a premium full-line ammunition operation.

What may be the most unusual aspect of Doubletap's ammunition is that the catalog is customer driven. Most of the new loads that have been and will be added come from customer suggestions. That is the model that built the business, and it's the model McNett still follows. Doubletap also understands that when it comes to ammunition, the endless array of options can be confusing to the consumer. To simplify the selection process, Doubletap structured its packaging to make it easier for a customer to find exactly what he's looking

for. All Doubletap boxes are black, but the oval-shaped brand logo in the center is colored and labeled differently depending on the ammo's intended use. For example, Defense ammo is blue, Hunter is orange, Tactical is green, and the oval for the Safari ammo has a zebra pattern.

This is premium stuff we're talking about here, not high-volume plinking loads like you'll find on the counter at the gun show. I test-fire lots of



Mike McNett's garage handloading setup has grown into a premium full-line ammo operation.

guns every year, and it's not unusual to find that loads from Doubletap are the most accurate and consistent. In addition, Doubletap offers ammunition in hard-to-find chamberings such as .327 Federal Magnum, .35 Whelen, .38 Super, .50 AE, 9.3x62mm, and 9x25 Dillon.

For 2015, Doubletap will be adding brass-cartridge manufacturing equipment to help keep up with demand. They will also be selling unprimed brass. A three-tiered incentive-building dealer-direct program is in place, and as always, if you have a specific load your customers need, that's Doubletap's specialty. And they're good at it. At my request, Doubletap added a 160-grain .45 ACP Barnes TAC-XP load at 1,050 fps. McNett calls it the MANN load, and it's what you'll find in my carry gun.

Doubletap has combined that boutique specialty shop mindset with mass production and an emporium-like shopping experience. They've come a long way from a garage operation. Booth #2918. (866-357-1066; doubletap.ammo.net)

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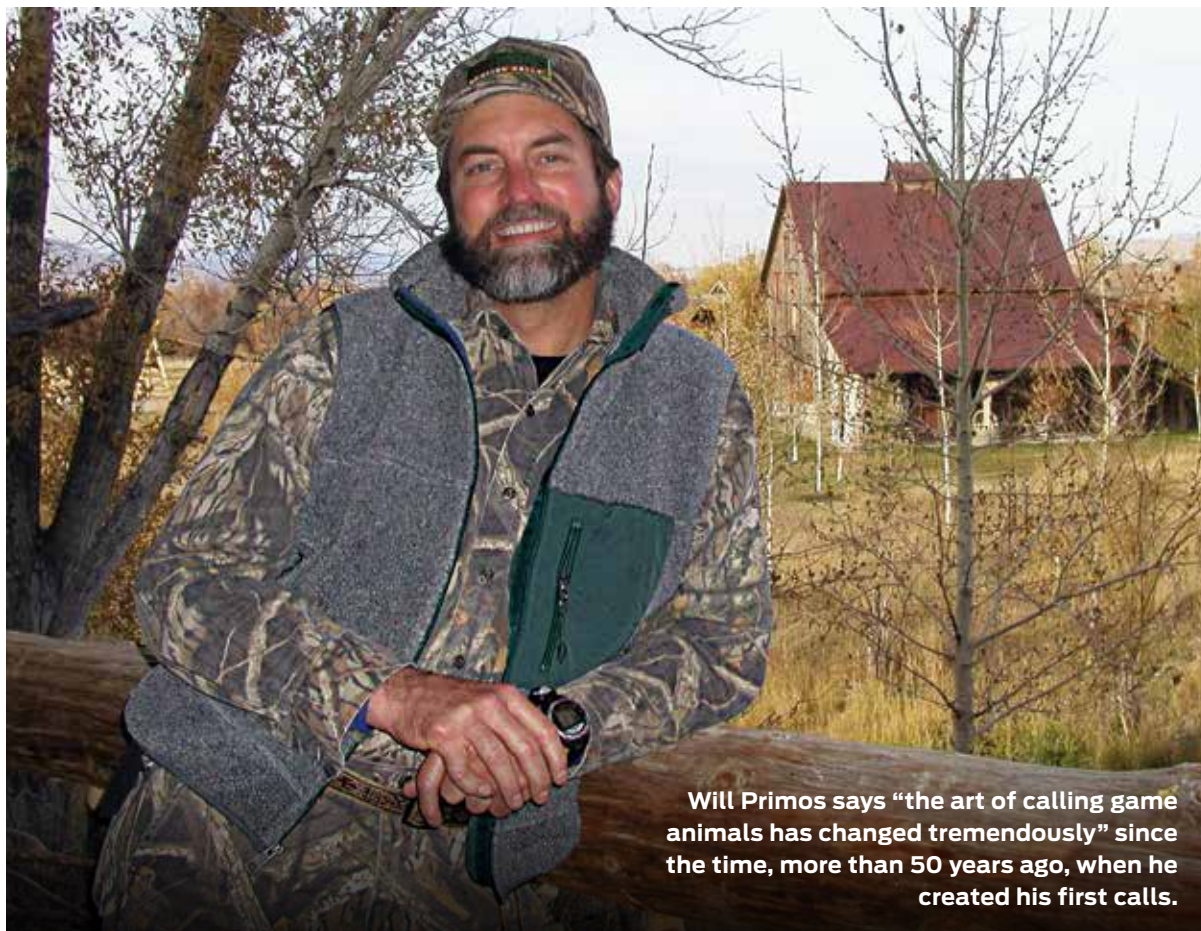
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A Higher Calling

Hunting calls have evolved along with the enthusiasts who use them

In 1963, 11-year-old Will Primos crafted his first call. “I was duck hunting with my Uncle Gus in green timber,” Primos says. “My uncle was an expert duck caller, and I was absolutely enthralled hearing him make that call sing. That was my first experience witnessing the magic—and when I got home, I made my own call by copying my uncle’s.”



Will Primos says “the art of calling game animals has changed tremendously” since the time, more than 50 years ago, when he created his first calls.

Now, more than 50 years later, Will Primos is considered one of the most influential call makers of the modern era. And according to him, the art of calling game animals has changed tremendously since those days so long ago.

“First off, the category was ‘game calls’ back then,” he says. “Now it’s ‘hunting calls.’”

That says a lot about where the market was and where it is now. But hunting focus aside, Primos says today’s calls and the hunters who employ them have changed quite a bit since he started the company that bears his name.

A Greater Understanding

► Today’s hunter is well aware of how effective calls can be. The hunting industry has had a huge impact on that education, and Primos Hunting was on the cutting edge. Back in 1986, Primos decided that people would believe in his product and buy it if they could see it work.

“I had Boyd Burrow come out in the turkey woods with me to create a video showing my calls at work,” he says. “The first video I put out was called ‘Spring Turkey Hunting with Primos.’ My style was to just hunt and be myself. It’s a different way of teaching, but through watching us, people realized they could be successful if they followed what we were doing.”

The success of the video led Primos to create the Truth series of videos, which cover every type of hunting. Success with these videos led to television and the Outdoor Channel, where Primos produces the popular show, *Primos*

Truth About Hunting.

“Today’s hunter is certainly more educated,” Primos says. “But we still have work to do. We need to teach them how to be successful and also make calls that are easy to use. For example, our Hoochie Mama elk call is number-one in the category because it’s easy to use, and it sounds great. But the key is knowing how to set up. The tendency is to have the caller too close. You want to have that call 80 to 100 yards behind the hunter. We’re teaching that.”

Innovation In Design

► Primos Hunting grabbed momentum by focusing its business on multiple lines for a variety of game species. As Primos has added calls, it has also improved materials and technology. But one thing that hasn’t changed is the quality of the workmanship.

To this day, Primos still checks the quality of the calls coming out of the factory.

“We have a team of employees who come sit in my office and lay out a sampling of calls, and we check them to see that they’ve maintained the quality we started with,” he says.

“There are certain things that I will not allow to be removed from my daily responsibility, because it keeps me in touch with the grassroots of the company,” says Primos. “We understand calls. We understand what makes a good sound and how to create that product, because we are our own customers. We love to hunt and want to be successful at it. Our calls add to our success



The Hook Up box call uses a patented magnetic hinge design that positions the paddle perfectly every time for realistic calls.

rate in the field.”

This also means Team Primos has the ability to recognize a good idea when they see it. “Consumer feedback plays a huge part,” he says. “Many ideas have come to us from the public. I’ve bought a lot of good ideas, too. Of course, there were some I believed in that didn’t work. But that’s all part of it.”

Innovation in engineering has also led to better calls and new designs. Injection molding, over-molding, CNC machining, and computer-aided drafting and machinery have all advanced call design. Engineers who pour their heart into the products they design have played a huge part.

For example, Primos’ new Hook Up box call uses an innovative set of magnets that connect the box and lid automatically, placing just the right amount of pressure on the calling surface and making it easy to use, with a rich, natural sound. Before heading into the woods or sneaking to the next spot, the detachable paddle is easy to remove and store against the back of the box for silent carry. SRP: \$42.95.

“Our product design engineer Anthony Foster

thought of that,” Primos says. “It’s been really well-received because it’s so easy to use. It’s great for someone who is just starting out.”

It was so successful, in fact, that it won a *Field & Stream* Best of the Best Award.

More to Come

➤ These days, Primos says, innovations in the call market might be coming faster than ever before. The ubiquity of 3-D printers has given call makers, whether high-volume household names or the latest up-and-comers, the ability to create prototypes faster and with far less expense. “We have the ability to design a call, print it, and test it for a season,” he says.


Faster prototyping means call makers can try more ideas and quickly accelerate innovation.

“A call company’s success comes down to quality, and a belief in what they are doing,” Primos says. “Everyone here is a hunter. If we don’t use a product and don’t believe in it, we can’t market it. If it’s not our heart and soul, we aren’t going to do it.” Booth #14551. (601-879-9323; primos.com)


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Just For Deer

Winchester's new Deer Season XP ammo is engineered with one animal in mind

By Slaton L. White

Though big-game hunters have always enjoyed reading about elk, caribou, moose, and other large critters, the animal that commands the most attention every fall remains the white-tail deer. Which explains in a nutshell why Winchester Ammunition went to the considerable trouble of developing a new deer-specific cartridge—the Deer Season XP—that is being introduced at the 2015 SHOT Show.

“The vast majority of hunters only go after deer,” says Mike Stock, Winchester’s centerfire product manager. “So, it makes sense to build a cartridge specifically for deer.”

Stock notes that many big-game cartridges

Winchester's affordable Deer Season XP polymer-tip ammo is designed to drop most deer in their tracks.



designed to take bigger game tend to “underperform” on deer. Even when a hunter places the bullet in a lethal location, it may simply pass rapidly through the animal without fully expanding. The Deer Season XP, however, is designed to drop a deer in its tracks.

“Nobody likes trailing a wounded deer,” Stock says. “The new polymer tip design and the larger impact diameter of this cartridge leads to larger wound cavities—especially upon entry—and shorter and better blood trails. In testing last fall, about 80 percent of the deer shot dropped in

place. Of the 20 percent that ran, none went farther than about 50 yards.”

One of those testers was *Field & Stream* deputy editor Dave Hurteau who hunted with Deer Season XP in east-central Nebraska last November. Given its performance, he says, retailers “should start making room on your ammo-hoarding shelves right now, even though the cartridge won’t be available until April.” (Winchester says it is building stocks right now so it can meet that deadline.)

“Winchester’s Deer Season XP features a radically new polymer tip,” he says. “In a word, it’s big—bigger than you’ve seen before. In essence, you’ve got a big wadcutter bullet with polymer-tip-bullet accuracy designed drop deer where they stand. From what I saw, it does just that.”

Hurteau adds that on the range, fired from a variety of Thompson/Center rifles, Deer Season XP consistently produced MOA or better accuracy. “In the field, the two deer I shot—a main-frame 8-pointer and a doe, both at around 250 yards—ran a total of about 30 yards before tipping over. By the time the trip was done, another eight or 10 deer fell to this round, and all that were hit well went pretty much nowhere.”

Usually such performance comes with a price. But the Deer Season XP was designed to deliver economical high performance. “A box of Deer Season XP will retail for around \$20,” says Stock. In fact, Deer Season XP will be priced within one dollar of the manufacturer’s popular Power Point brand. “It’s really for the hunter who aspires to shoot a polymer tip but doesn’t want to spend \$35 per box to do it.”

To help guide hunters to it, the load will be available in the mid-price-range silver packaging. “We know that most deer hunters don’t gravitate to the higher-priced black box level,” he says. Retailers should also appreciate Winchester’s game-specific messaging on the box, a tactic learned through the successful introductions of the Razorback XT (hogs) and Long Beard XR (turkeys) products. “If you can’t figure out this is for deer, you need to turn in your hunting license,” Stocks says.

The new load will be available in 95-gr. .243 Win., 130-gr. .270 Win., 130-gr. .270 WSM, 140-gr. 7mm Rem. Mag., 150-gr. .308 Win., 150-gr. .30/06 Spr., 150-gr. .300 Win. Mag., and 150-gr. .300 WSM. Currently, .30/30 isn’t offered, but, Stock says, “We’re working on it.” Booth #13334. (winchester.com)

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Like Day and Night From Meprolight

Meprolight has introduced the MEPRO 21 (H), the latest addition to its line of Day and Night self-powered reflex sights. This new model is based on the company's combat-proven sights used by the Israel Defense Forces, and features new camouflage patterns to help shooters blend in with common hunting surroundings.

"We are very pleased to launch our new family of sights, designed especially for hunters, at the 2015 SHOT Show," says Benny Kokia, vice president of sales and marketing at Meprolight. "The MEPRO 21(H) will provide a perfect solution for hunters—with advanced camouflage for forest and desert environments."

Developed for the Israel Defense Forces, this advanced optical sight was specifically designed for quick, instinctive, and accurate shooting, and can be used while on the move or in close-quarter situations where the use of both eyes is critical.

The M21 (H) is a maintenance-free, dual-illuminated, red-dot reflex sight that provides instant aiming in all ambient lighting conditions without the need for batteries.

Illumination of the aiming dot is achieved by a fiber-optic light collection system during the day and by a miniature self-powered tritium light source at night.

Moreover, transition between the two lighting systems is instantaneous and automatic to ensure good contrast between the aiming dot and the target area.

The M21 (H) further offers a unique light collection system that features fiber-optic collectors on both the top and front surfaces to gather more light when shooting from within a dark enclosed space toward a bright target area.

"These sights are standard army issue for the Israel Defense Forces," says Kokia. "They have been extensively field tested and have gained worldwide popularity. We believe that they will also be well-received by the hunting community, who are known for their expertise in this area."

It's never a matter of needing to activate the sights, says Kokia. "The sights operate continuously—24/7, day and night—enabling accurate, instinctive shooting, even on hunting trips last-



The MEPRO 21 (H) was developed for the Israel Defense Forces but is now available for hunters in new camouflage patterns.

ing several days," he says. "No maintenance is required, making them ideal for these types of excursions."

All of Meprolight's products undergo meticulous quality assurance according to international standards, and the company complies with U.S. and NATO military specifications. Booth #10067. (meprolight.com) —Peter Suciu



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A Better Connection

ERGO Grips mold the shooter to the firearm **By Bill Miller**

As a kid in Canyon, Texas, during the 1950s, Steve Hines made toy guns from old M-1 Garand gun stocks that were stripped from drill rifles and dumped behind the ROTC building at the local college. And one of the stocks he made in wood shop at Canyon High School was a “sporter” version for a 1917 Enfield. This lifelong interest in firearms grew with Hines’ strong grasp of industrial design and production, and his ability to see opportunities in tough challenges.

“My fascination with guns,” Hines says, “has always been that a firearm is, basically, a small machine.”

From his early days working with wood and metal, Hines would later shift to polymer and rubber materials to found ERGO Grips—a successful maker of special grips for modern sporting rifles. Based in Moriarty, New Mexico, the company has expanded into tactical stocks and rails for MSRs. It also makes other shooting accessories, including handgun grips.

The original ERGO Grip came out in 1998 with finger grooves and a rubbery texture. This design enhanced performance by providing a better connection between shooter and gun, says ERGO rep Matt Foster. “If you think about how you interface with a rifle, the trigger is the most important component. And

the grip is the next most important part. The original ERGO Grip pushes your hand a little away from the trigger and gives you better trigger-finger placement. Hence, the name: ERGO Grip.”

Learning Curve

➤ Hines’ earliest business experience came at age 15, when he was working in an auto parts store in Canyon, about 20 miles south of Amarillo. Later he earned a degree in industrial distribution at the local college—the same place he got the discarded M-1 stocks—now called West Texas A&M University. By the early 1980s, Hines had worked at various manufacturing companies in the Texas Panhandle and New Mexico; he stayed a couple of years at each one, but layoffs inevitably would come.

During the downtime, Hines returned to auto parts sales and operated a gun shop in Canyon. He also turned to making replacement parts for vintage rifles and found a niche with “butter-knife” bolt handles for Mannlicher-Schönauer rifles. “I machined them out of bar stock,” he says. “I would finish them on a belt sander and then polish them.”

But this process was time consuming. “I knew a guy in Amarillo who was in the jewelry business, and he schooled me on investment casting,” Hines says. “I knew that was the way I had to go because I couldn’t spend two hours building a bolt handle.”

The experience was just one of many challenges for Hines to think through. He knew he had to develop more streamlined, cost-efficient production methods. That was one

learning curve. Another was how to get his products into the catalogs of national gun parts dealers. That was essential, he says, “because butter-knife bolt handles were a very narrow market.”

Not every entrepreneur understands the business side of the business. But Hines proved to be a ready learner. The process “taught me how to be familiar with Brownells,” he says. “They picked the bolt handles up immediately, and later when I made grips, they picked them up immediately as well. I’ve always enjoyed doing business with them because they are always fair to their vendors. MidwayUSA is the same way. I know they’re fierce competitors, but I enjoy doing business with both of them.”

“Meaty” Grip

➤ In the late 1990s, Hines was working in the Albuquerque area, but another round of layoffs focused his attention on a friend’s challenge to help improve the MSR platform.

“The rifle didn’t seem very ergonomic to me,” he says. “A good friend suggested I come out with a more ergonomic grip. I took an A2 grip, cut the top off of it, and then put body putty around it.” The Original ERGO Grip was born; the patent was filed in May 1998.

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Suddenly Hines was working with polymers and rubber, which he hadn't done since his first job out of college, handling injection molding at a Texas Instruments plant in Lubbock. But, while working in his shop outside Albuquerque, Hines knew he didn't want to revisit the time-consuming struggles he had shaping metal for bolt handles.

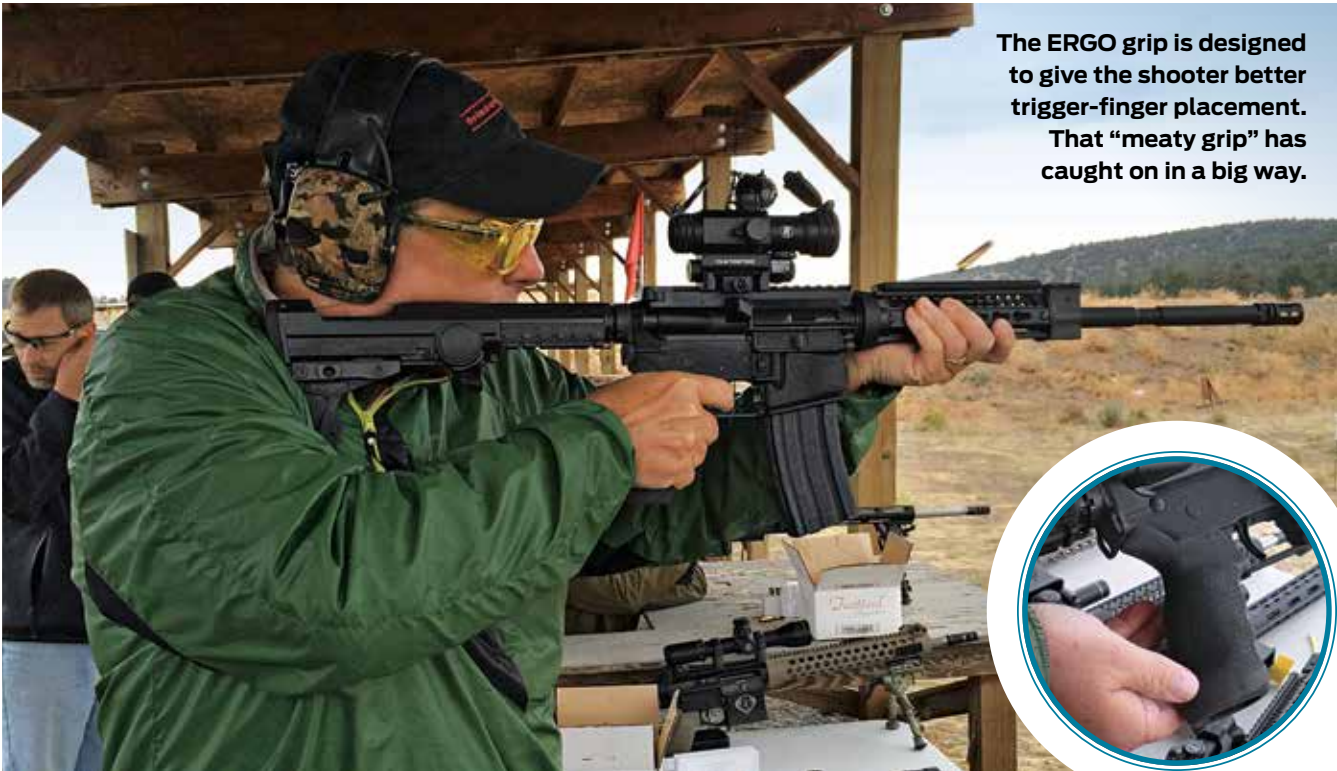
"I developed a technique with fixed molds," he says. "I'd pour the first round, then move on to others. It was so much less labor intensive."

The Original ERGO Grip is a "meaty" grip, says Keith Olson, a 3-Gun competition shooter who lives near Salem, Oregon. "It has a rubberized texture to it. You grab ahold of it, and you know it's better than the standard grip."

Olson also likes the ERGO Tactical Deluxe Grip, which has an ambidextrous palm swell suited for medium and large hands. "It pushes out and fits right into the hollow of your hand," he says. "I first saw one a few years ago on a competitor's gun. When I tried it, I knew I had to get one."

Open the Door

► There's an old saying: "When opportunity knocks, open the door." The success of ERGO Grips is testimony that Hines under-



The ERGO grip is designed to give the shooter better trigger-finger placement. That "meaty grip" has caught on in a big way.

stands this essential wisdom.

He saw other manufacturers move into the rail business and thought that product might fit into his operation. "Seven years ago, when we moved into a new building, we got some CNC equipment and started building our own rails," he says. "Then we just kept adding more things—1911 grips, rail accessories, and swivel mounts."

He says it helps that the nearly

two-dozen employees who now inhabit his factory are almost all gun enthusiasts.

But that workforce is helped by a man in charge who is able to see opportunity even in adversity. He cites New York's controversial SAFE Act, which limits magazine capacity and bans certain types of semi-automatic firearms. To him, that opens the door for revolver accessories, and he is responding to

it with the new Delta Grip for J-Frame wheel guns.

The triangular grip helps people with large hands, like Hines, to get a better grasp on smaller handguns.

According to Foster, it "rotates your hand to a more natural grip angle instead of straight up and down. It gives you a more natural aim and tames recoil with a larger surface." Booth #20001. (877-281-3783; ergogrips.net)

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The Best of Both Worlds

Meopta benefits by being a creature of two continents

Many American hunters either own or aspire to own European optics because of the long-held perception that they are the finest in the world. In other words, they are made with the finest glass and the most advanced engineering and coatings, and the manufacturers of this group are believed to produce optics visibly superior to competing models made elsewhere.



Reinhard Seipp, general manager and chief operating officer of Meopta USA, with a nice pronghorn taken while using a Meopta spotting scope.

But just what does the term “European optics” mean?

“To me, European optics are products that are inspired by European hunters, designed and developed by European engineers, and built by European craftsmen,” says Reinhard Seipp, the German-born general manager and chief operating officer of Meopta USA, a Czech manufacturer of premium optics.

“Being a hunter, engineer, and craftsman myself, I appreciate the advantage it gives me in my professional life. In my past in Europe, I knew of several colleagues managing optics companies that were also hunters and engineers who understood the crafting of their product. Today, here in the United States, most optics companies are led by passionate hunters with marketing and sales backgrounds but little



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understanding of engineering or fabrication. In my limited travels in Asia, I have never met an engineer who had even a rudimentary understanding of hunting. To me, that makes the difference.”

Meopta has been making top-tier European optics for more than 80 years and is unique in many ways. The company is owned by an American family of Czech decent and has a massive production facility in the Czech Republic, where the MeoStar and MeoTac lines are produced. In addition, the company produces many other advanced optics for military and industrial applications. Meopta also has a U.S. headquarters in New York where the company assembles its European-quality MeoPro line, designed for the American hunter.

Lately, Meopta has watched with interest as many of its European competitors have shifted production to Asia.

“Meopta is unusual among European optics manufacturers in that we design, develop, and manufacture all of our optics in-house, despite the big shift of outsourcing to OEMs in Asia by other well-known brands,” says Seipp. “Time and again we hear customers and journalists say they can’t believe the quality of our optics at

such great price points. There are many reasons for this, and our dealers and their customers benefit.”

Seipp points out that Meopta keeps costs down and quality high by being product-focused. “It is common knowledge that there are only a few glass makers in the world, and, for most of our optics, we use Schott glass,” he says. “Otherwise, Meopta is unique because of the turn-key optics production capabilities. We control the entire process from grinding and polishing the glass in-house to developing and applying advanced coatings that produce up to 99.8 percent light transmission per lens surface. Throughout this process, we incur no outsourcing fees. Product ships from the company directly to dealers without additional markups by brand importers or distributors prior to reaching the dealer.”

In a recent article in *Outdoor Life* on optics trends (“Rise of the Clones”), the editors pointed out the practice of private labeling: “One of the little-known practices (to consumers, at least) of the optics industry is how few companies manufacture their own products. Instead, most have their optics built for them by OEM outfits, generally in Asia, and then slap

their brand name on them.”

According to Seipp, this can add unnecessary costs. “Outsourcing fees can add up quickly, given the many administrative efforts this requires—purchasing, shipping, receiving, quality control, payments to suppliers—all of which add no value to the product itself. At Meopta, we have total control over the engineering, design, and manufacturing process, and are thus able to offer superior optics—true European optics—at a more affordable price than our competitors. Fewer middle men with Meopta means more profit for dealers and better prices for their customers.”

Despite the trend to outsource to Asia, there is still that long-lasting and powerful perception that European optics are the finest. Cabela’s acknowledged this trend in 2009 when the retailer launched its own Instinct Euro brand of optics, made by Meopta.

“Many of our customers want European optics, and I think there are several reasons for this,” says Tom Gallagher, Cabela’s senior director of merchandising, archery/optics/hunting equipment. “Like Cabela’s buyers who have hunted around the world over the years and seen European optics in use, American hunters have seen this

themselves as they travel abroad. European optics are also used by many U.S. guides and outfitters, which also influences perception of the product.”

Gallagher acknowledges that Meopta’s reputation proved to be a potent attraction. “We heard other European optics companies we visited talk about this Czech company that builds great optics but was little known in the United States,” he says. “So, we arranged a meeting at the SHOT Show and discussed the hopes of building a relationship to help Cabela’s launch European-style binoculars for our customers. Once we traveled to Meopta’s factory to see their operation, we knew they were the right company to help us launch a premium brand under the Cabela’s name.”

Given that European optics command a premium price, retailers need to cultivate the sale.

“Many consumers will need to be sold on their first Meopta product,” says Seipp. “Invite customers to shop for their optics at low light. They can really see the difference then.”

Meopta is proud to be a rare animal, an American-owned European optics company. It is in many ways the best of both worlds. Booth #3544. (800-828-8928; meoptausa.com)

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Turning Challenge Into Opportunity

Gerber remains committed to U.S. manufacturing **By Christopher Cogley**

As it's putting the finishing touches on its 75th Anniversary, Gerber is most likely feeling a little nostalgic. Three quarters of a century in business will tend to do that to you. Like any company that's been around for that long, there have been ups and downs, successes and failures, highlights and blooper reels. But through it all, there has been one aspect of the company that has remained unchanged—its home in Portland, Oregon. And it's this headquarters and manufacturing facility that Gerber touts as one of its greatest accomplishments in the past 75 years.

"Portland is a nucleus for the outdoors industry," says Andrew Gritzbaugh, marketing communications manager for Gerber. "We are proud to not only be a part of that, but to have helped create what has become such a large part of this community's identity."

Gritzbaugh references a graphic that outlines the companies in the athletic and outdoors industry that also have their roots in Portland, and it reads like a Who's Who of industry leaders—from Nike, Adidas, and Columbia to Leupold & Stevens, Danner, Pendleton, Leatherman, and Benchmade.

"This is our home," Gritzbaugh says. "It's an important piece of our heritage, and it will always be an integral part of our company."

That part of the company seemed, by some at least, to be in jeopardy 10 years ago when Gerber began sourcing some of its products overseas. Gritzbaugh says there was a variety of reasons that Gerber took this step, not the least of which was the intense pressure that was placed on the company by retailers and consumers who were demanding access to quality products at price points that weren't feasible coming out of the Portland manufacturing facility. But it wasn't just lower prices that Gerber had to deliver if it wanted to remain competitive in the industry; it was innovations.

"At the time, we were identifying important product opportunities in the market, but didn't have the capabilities to develop them,"

Gritzbaugh says. "The company realized that if we were going to deliver the innovative products our customers wanted, we had to find partners overseas."

Although this new business strategy caused some critics to speculate that it might be the end of Gerber's U.S. manufacturing, Gritzbaugh says that was never really an option for the company. There were many reasons for this decision, but Gritzbaugh makes it clear that at the top of the list were 250 very important reasons.

"Our 250 employees aren't just part of the company, they *are* the company," he says. "A lot of them have been with Gerber for 20 or 30 years. They're part of the community, part of our family."

They're committed to the company, and the company is committed to them."

Gerber also had another commitment. A commitment to the U.S. military and the personnel being sent into harm's way.

"Gerber is a leading direct supplier of knives and multitools to the U.S. military," Gritzbaugh says. "Every soldier in the U.S. Army deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan between 2007 and 2012 was issued a Gerber MP600 Multiplier, and from 2010 on, a Gerber Strap Cutter."

That commitment also played heavily into Gerber's decision to maintain its manufacturing facility in Portland, as did the realization that the company had a very strong

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FEATURE

customer base of outdoor enthusiasts who relied on the quality knives and tools that were being manufactured domestically. And while all these factors made a strong case for the need to continue manufacturing in the U.S., Gerber also recognized that if it didn't embrace the new technologies available overseas, and deliver the lower price points that weren't possible by manufacturing domestically, there was a strong chance that it wouldn't remain competitive enough in a rapidly changing industry to be able to honor its commitments to its employees, the military, or its loyal customers.

As you would expect from a company that has been around for 75 years, Gerber took the challenge and turned it into an opportunity. Instead of using overseas manufacturing as a way to make its existing knives and tools available at lower prices, Gerber decided to continue manufacturing its current line in the U.S. with same standards of quality that its customer base had come to expect. To complement that line, Gerber developed new product assortments that would be manufactured overseas and offer both the latest technology and the lower price points that market was demanding.

"The approach was to source new products and new categories, but not outsource the existing catalog," Gritzbaugh says. "That way we could expand the brand and break into new markets while still remaining true to our core customers and our company's heritage."

The strategy seems to be working. The Gerber brand continues to grow as the company expands its category reach and market penetration by making a wider variety of products available to a larger assortment of consumers.

"We've been very successful at introducing new consumers to the knife and tool industry," Gritzbaugh says. "And everybody has benefited from that because the industry as a whole is continuing to grow."

What's more rewarding—especially to the people at Gerber—is that the company has been able to accomplish

this without sacrificing any of its U.S. manufacturing operations. More than 100 products—roughly one-third of Gerber's entire line—are still made at the Portland headquarters.

"We actually make more products in the U.S. than many companies who manufacture all their products here," Gritzbaugh says. "But because so many people are only exposed to Gerber through mass retail, there can be a perception that all our products are manufactured overseas."

It's a perception that would be difficult to change, and one that was probably unavoidable the instant Gerber made the choice to begin manufacturing some of its products abroad. But that perception isn't preventing Gerber from doing what it believes is right for the company and the industry.

"Obviously, you're never going to please everybody, and unfortunately perception wins a lot of the time," Gritzbaugh says. "For us, it's not about changing perception as much as simply exposing people to all the great things we do here—in this country and in this community."

And Gritzbaugh says that those things are only going to increase in the months and years to come.

"There used to be a huge difference in cost between manufacturing domestically and manufacturing overseas," he says. "But that gap has narrowed considerably, and the decision to keep things in-house is becoming much easier to make."

It's great news for U.S. manufacturing, and though it will undoubtedly result in more of Gerber's products being made in Portland, it's unlikely to change the company's overall focus.

"Our goal has always been to create problem-solving products that serve the unique needs of a variety of consumers," Gritzbaugh says. "No matter what else changes, I think that will always be our focus."

And with 75 years now firmly in the rearview mirror, it's a philosophy that's obviously working. Booth #13614. (800-950-6161; gerbergear.com)

ON THE FLOOR

UMAREX OFFER

For the 2015 SHOT Show, Umarex is offering a limited number (500) of replica U.S. Marshals Museum Edition Colt Peacemaker air-powered revolvers for purchase. First come, first served. Booth #15062.



EVA SHOCKEY

Eva Shockey has been front and center in the news lately. (Did you catch her on the May 2014 cover of *Field & Stream*?) She will be greeting fellow hunters today and tomorrow from 11 a.m. to noon at Skull Hooker. Booth #2219.

Special Needs

Savage Arms finds success in catering to niche markets **By Slaton L. White**

Frederick the Great once famously said, “He who defends everything, defends nothing.” The retail equivalent might be, “You can’t be all things to all customers.” Savage has taken that wisdom to the bank by creating products that appeal to particular people.



In 2015, Savage will offer more than 18 models specially designed for left-handed shooters, including bolt-actions, slug guns, and semi-autos.

“Specialty guns are our bread and butter, and they’re great business for us,” says firearms marketing director Bill Dermody. “All of our product offerings fulfill a special need. For example, lightweight

predator rifles, F-Class Target rifles, a firearm that properly fits a woman—those are all special customer needs.”

The latest special need to be filled is a line of bolt-action rifles

tailored for left-hand shooters. This may seem an odd choice since the left-hand market is considerably smaller than the market for right-handers. But, according to Dermody, the niche is bigger than it seems at first glance.

Though left-handers are commonly thought to make up only about 10 percent of the population, Dermody insists research doesn’t take into account those right-handers who are left-eye dominant. “These hunters and shooters greatly benefit from a left-handed firearm,” he says. “Add the two groups together and the number of potential customers spikes up significantly. If retailers want to sell more guns, they can’t ignore this niche.”

For lefties, having a left-handed bolt-action gun is extremely important because it allows a fast follow-up shot. A shooter’s support hand

never has to leave the forend—or his cheek leave the stock—while the trigger hand operates the bolt. Also, having the action open on the left side makes for easier loading with the left hand, and hot spent cases never fly across the face.

Dermody notes that for 2015, Savage will offer more than 18 models of left-handed firearms. “We have left-handed options available throughout our product line, including big-game and predator hunting, law enforcement, and target competition,” he says. “We also offer left-handed slug shotguns and bolt-action and semi-auto rim-fire rifles.”

Savage also intends to expand these offerings. “When we release a new firearm, it’s usually only in a right-handed model, but oftentimes we introduce the left-handed version in the years that follow,” Dermody says. “However, if you are a dealer who wants to stock a left-handed Savage, or who wants to order one for a specific customer who is looking for a left-handed model not listed in the catalog or website, just call us. Many times our special-order department can build left-handed versions of any of our rifles. The only limitation to this is the availability of left-handed stocks for particular rifles. Booth #14551. (savagearms.com)



The Buck Commander Crew is dropping by Stack-On (Booth 605)...

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Keeping In Step

Blackhawk updates two popular lines of boots **By Peter Suci**

Blackhawk is introducing two new lines of boots that are made for far more than just walking. The Black Ops V2 and the Ultralight (and Ultralight Side Zip) provide a wearer with a relaxed, rugged design that will protect feet and yet provide maximum agility.

“The original Black Ops Boots is a popular boot, so much so that it won the product competition and contract to become the official duty boot for the Pennsylvania State Police,” says Chuck Buis, Blackhawk product director. “The tough, street-ready duty boot gives long-lasting support and comfort in the toughest environments. The revised V2 boot takes this proven design and adds side pockets on the boot upper for storing tools.”

The Black Ops V2, which is based on the proven design of the original Black Ops Boots, boasts many of the same features that made the original so popular. This includes a Cordura and an abrasion-resistant leather upper combined with a sturdy Vibram outsole that provides stability and footing, even in tough environments. The boot’s high-abrasion-resistant, non-woven back-counter reinforcement inside the heel also offers added support and durability, and there are also two side pockets for storing utility items. A tongue pocket can hide the shoestring.

Blackhawk has also kept in step with an updated line of boots for operators, and the Ultralight and Ultralight Side Zip boots won’t weigh down the wearer. These new boots are constructed with a



Blackhawk Black OPs V2 and Ultralight Side Zip boots are designed to protect the feet and also provide maximum agility.

Cordura and abrasion-resistant leather upper, fully gusseted tongues with shoestring pocket, a Vibram outsole, and a Speed Lace Toggle.

“The Ultralight Boot is the updated version of the popular Light Assault Boot,” says Buis. “Operators need to protect their feet but remain agile. Both the Ultralight Boots and Ultralight Side Zip boots address these needs with a tough Cordura upper, a Vibram outsole, and a long-wearing, water-friendly PU midsole. For a quick on and off, the UltraLight Side Zip feature a YKK Coil Zipper.”

Both boot styles feature arch ventilation ports, which facilitates water drainage from the boot. A Dri-Lex moisture-wicking inner lining and an anti-microbial OrthoLite custom-molded foot-bed combine to keep feet cool and fresh.

The Black Ops V2 boots are offered in black (SRP: \$219.99); the Ultralight Boots and Ultralight Side Zip boots are available in suede leather and Desert Tan (SRP: Ultralight, \$169.99; Ultralight Side Zip, \$174.99). They are also available in a black full-grain leather (SRP: Ultralight, \$169.99; Ultralight Side Zip, \$174.99) for those who need to keep their boots shined up. Booth #14551. **(800-379-1732; blackhawk.com)**



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Browning's 3,300-cubic-inch Bull 3300 backpack weighs only 3½ pounds—much lighter than comparably sized competitors'.



Lighten Up

Browning's new packs shed the weight **By Joe Keller**

Is there room for another hunting pack company in the industry? Signature Products Group is betting there is. The Salt Lake City-based company is new to the hunting-pack segment of the outdoors industry, but it's arriving with years of mountaineering, hiking, and pack-making under its belt. And now, as a new partner with Browning, SPG has introduced several new designs marked with the Browning name, wrapped in Mossy Oak or Realtree. Each pack and bag has one thing in common: materials that make them some of the lightest in the industry.

"That's what makes them stand out," says Andrew Howard, who represents the company. "Weight is so important because we hunters like the option to carry a lot of gear. We don't want to start out heavy before anything's packed."

The flagship of the new line is the 2,500-cubic-inch Buck 2500RT. It comes in Mossy Oak Country or Bottomland or Realtree Xtra (SRP: \$199). Other packs include the Bull 3000RT (SRP: \$249) and the lumbar Billy 1700RT (SRP: \$189). The RT stands for roll top. The bags close at the top something like a dry bag, in order to make it easier to get at contents without having the extra weight of a cover. The packs also stand out because they have tan or earth-tone panels that give the packs a distinctive look.

Pack designer Joe Boud notes that rain or other moisture can add 20 to 30 percent to the weight of a pack. A light, durable fabric is the holy grail of the industry. Signature Products Group is tapping into the experience of its Utah-based hunter staff to solve the problems inherent in pack design, such as balancing a hunter's desire for a light, strong, and quiet pack.

And Boud thinks they have found the answer—a strong, new fabric SPG calls Hypo-Sonic.

"Everyone is trying to make a quiet fabric that will hold a camo pattern," Boud says, a hunter who comes from electronic-pack design and pro-

duction. "This new fabric is one-third lighter than the industry standard and is not laminated or stitched together. That makes it a very big deal."

The 3,300-cubic-inch backpack, called Bull 3300, weighs in at just 3½ pounds. That's extraordinarily light, compared to even the best, most expensive pack in the market right now. At 2,220 cubic inches, competitor Tenzing's TZ 2220 weighs 4 pounds. Badlands' Clutch starts at 7 pounds 4 ounces.

But innovation doesn't stop with the material. The bags have a cool, toothless-zipper along the waist belts. The technology actually comes from the medical field and seems tailor-made for hunters. "A toothless zipper is quiet and strong, and the only reason they aren't all over the packs now is that they are much more expensive than, say, a Size 10 YKK," says Boud. "But don't be surprised if you see future bags with these silent, sliding cinches."

Another innovation doesn't sound groundbreaking, and may even be stating the obvious. Internal pockets are marked to indicate what each pocket is made for. You might be thinking, "I don't need anyone to tell me where to put my flashlight." But you have to admit, it could come in handy when you are just starting to use the pack, and figuring out a place for your lights, rangefinder, calls, and the heap of other items we pack into our bags.

"It's also handy because it helps make sure you don't forget anything," says Howard, who is a big fan of the Billie, a lumbar-fanny pack. "It fits different from any pack I've used. There are many pockets, and they are intuitively placed. It's the one I'll be using in the field this year." Booth #15129. (browning.com)



Signature Products Groups Browning-branded backpacks are made of SPG's new sturdy, light-weight fabric, Hypo-Sonic.



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NEWS

Shooting Events to Improve Children's Lives

The Kids & Clays Foundation finished another highly successful year in 2014 supporting sporting clays events around the country that benefited Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC). More than \$1 million was raised from the program last year, and all proceeds helped critically ill children and their families.

Now in its 16th year, the Kids & Clays Foundation has expanded to 13 sporting clay events in 10 states with nearly 4,000 participants. The organization recently hired a full-time executive director, Doug Jeanneret, whose mission is to grow the foundation's reach into the future.

"This is a great opportunity for me to represent an organization that is a shining star in the shooting-sports industry," says Jeanneret. "Using sporting clay events to help families in need is not only unique to the outdoors industry, but it is vitally important to show the public that shooting sports are great for the community at large."

Kids & Clays staff and board of directors support the RMHC through a number of means, including providing event development and best management practices, safety information and equipment, the majority of the shotshells used for each event, firearms and other merchandise packages for auctions, loaner firearms for new shooters, and sponsor marketing materials.

A key spokesperson for the Kids & Clays Foundation is Kim Rhode, five-time Olympic medalist in shooting sports and an icon in the outdoor industry. "Outdoor sports are about kids and families, so it's only natural that I support the Kids & Clays Foundation," says Rhode.

The Kids & Clays Foundation began in 1999 as a new fundraiser to support the Chicago Ronald McDonald House near Comer's

Children's Hospital. Founders Glenn and Kathy Lubeznik wanted to help the House raise funds to support their mission of helping critically ill children and their families. That fundraiser has grown into what is now one of the largest series of sporting clay events in the country, raising \$13 million in net funds since its inception.

The organization is currently working to grow its series of events to help even more Ronald McDonald Houses and the families they serve across the country. "We've been contacted by numerous Ronald McDonald Houses asking for support in developing sporting clay as well as trap and skeet fundraisers," says Jeanneret. "To expand, the Kids & Clays Foundation needs more resources, including funding and merchandise. Considering how our mission helps critically ill children and their families, I truly believe companies will step up to the plate."

The Kids & Clays Foundation has a long list of McDonald's affiliated sponsors as well as sponsors from the outdoors industry, including Winchester, Browning, Boyt, Beretta, Baron Technology, White Flyer, Lincoln Traps, Blaser, Laser Shot, Promatic, *Sporting Clays* magazine, and EZ Go, to name a few. It is the charity of choice for the National Skeet Shooting Association, the National Sporting Clays Association, and the Amateur Trap Association. Booth #L336.

(kidsandclays.com)

Five-time Olympic medalist Kim Rhode is a key spokesperson for the Kids & Clays Foundation, which organizes shooting events to help critically ill children and their families. "What better way for the outdoor community to display its compassion and generosity than helping raise funds for Ronald McDonald House Charities?" asks Rhode.



Enter: Sandman

Dead Air unveils an uncompromising new line of suppressors

By some accounts, the suppressor market is the fastest-growing segment of the firearms-accessory market. Without question, competition and customer loyalty in this niche is fierce. Mike Pappas and Todd Magee, both formerly of SilencerCo (Pappas was co-founder and Magee was a designer), certainly are intimately acquainted with both the opportunities and the challenges of this market. That's why they've banded together to form Dead Air Armament.

"I'm finally building the no-compromise cans that I've always wanted to make," says Pappas, Dead Air's founder and director of product development. "No corporate bottom lines to deter the mission. The only thing that matters to Dead Air and myself is, 'How does it sound?' And the Sandman sounds awesome."

The Sandman (more properly, Sandman 7.62) to which he refers is Dead Air's initial foray into the suppressor market. Consisting of three models—Sandman-S, Sandman-L, and Sandman Ti—each is designed "to deliver uncompromising quality in design and manufacturing," says Pappas. SRP: Sandman L, \$1,099 (includes a $\frac{5}{8}$ -24 key mount muzzle brake; Sandman S, \$949 (includes a $\frac{5}{8}$ -24 key mount muzzle brake), and Sandman Ti, \$849.

Pappas and Magee believe that what sets Dead Air suppressors apart from the competition is attention to detail in engineering and materials. For example, Sandman baffles are constructed from 100 percent Stellite, a cobalt-chromium alloy. Though more costly than traditional stainless steel, Stellite offers better performance under extreme conditions. The tubes are made from high-performance precipitation-hardened stainless steel. "The idea was to reduce weight without sacrificing strength," says Pappas.

The Sandman Ti features a titanium tube with precision rifle-direct threads specifically designed for the challenging environments faced by law enforcement professionals. "The old adage 'close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades' could not be more true when developing products for professionals whose very lives depend on making an accurate shot in difficult circumstances," Pappas says. "The equipment must perform, and we believe Dead Air hits the mark."

The company is also unveiling a new product targeted specifically for .22 shooters at the 2015 SHOT Show.

"This isn't a 'me too' compulsory foray into the .22 suppressor market," Pappas says. "We wanted the best, and we believe we have delivered. The Mask-22 features a blend of titanium and 17-4 PH stainless-steel construction for direct-thread applications. In addition, the Cerakote finish will provide years of protection from the elements. And, like the Sandman line, it's backed by our no-questions-asked lifetime warranty." SRP: \$449.

Dead Air Armament products are made in the U.S. and are distributed by BPI Outdoors. Booth #14814. (deadairsilencefrs.com)



Dead Air's new line of suppressors features baffles made from Stellite, a cobalt-chromium alloy. The tubes are made of high-performance precipitation-hardened stainless steel.

"The only thing that matters to Dead Air and myself is, '**How does it sound?**' And the Sandman sounds awesome."

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The Voice of the Customer

Badlands listens—and reaps the rewards **By Bill Miller**

For some police and military personnel, the equipment they're issued isn't always what they'd prefer. Given the chance, some would patrol with the civilian gear they buy for personal backcountry adventures. So last year, Badlands, maker of feature-rich camouflage hunting packs, accommodated operators with its new "Black Series." Included were three tactical packs, a binocular case, and a utility pocket.

Badlands' BOS packs have been field-tested by search-and-rescue teams.



"There's a huge crossover between the hunting crowd and military, police, and SWAT," says Blake VanTussenbrook, Badlands' marketing director. "They started reaching out. They were saying, 'Hey, I'm using this pack or that pack in my line of work, but my hunting pack is the most comfortable.' So, we decided to draw from scratch some new designs."

Customer satisfaction, after all, is the longtime goal for Badlands, which offers an unconditional lifetime warranty on products. The company, based in West Jordan, Utah, celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2014. The BOS and RAP18 tactical packs and the HDX day-pack are offered in a dark "gunmetal gray" or "Serengeti brown." The packs include popular features from the hunting models, such as the "Hypervent" suspension system.

But the new packs are covered with MOLLE webbing and straps for compression and lashing. The fabric, made from Aramid fibers, is by the Swiss company Schoeller. According to VanTussenbrook, it's "the strongest, lightest stuff we could find."

And, as with the hunting packs, the stress points on the tactical models are reinforced with panels made of Hypalon, which is, according to VanTussenbrook, "literally

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the strongest material you can get a sewing needle through.”

The Badlands brand is part of the Vortex Corporation, which was started in 1992. Mountaineering packs were the first offerings. Its William Joseph brand still makes fishing gear. Badlands and its red bull skull logo were born in 1994, when the corporation shifted focus to camouflage backpacks for hunters. The company has since added a full line of hunting clothes with base layers and camouflage tops, pants, and outerwear.

Also new last year was the “Ascent Series,” featuring the lightweight Mirage tent and six sleeping bags. The bags, both synthetic and down-filled, offer choices for all seasons, including winter bags designed for 10 degrees below zero. The tent is also made of lightweight material and reinforced at stress points with Hypalon.

Badlands, however, didn’t rush into the competitive tactical gear market. VanTussenbrook says the company took its time with the Black Series to ensure the battle-field packs would stand up to the company’s reputation.

“We depend on people knowing about Badlands’ unconditional quality and warranty,” he says. “It gives you peace of mind that if something fails, you won’t have to

pay for a replacement.”

Product research was critical, he says. Input was especially helpful from SWAT team members trained in mountain search and rescue.

“Those guys are tough on packs,” VanTussenbrook says. “So we said, ‘Hey, run this,’ because we knew they’d be in some gnarly situations. We’ve been known to tweak packs based on feedback.”

In addition, a Badlands pro staff member tested the BOS pack last August on a nine-day early-season mule deer hunt in Utah’s Wasatch National Forest. T.J. Cunningham, also of West Jordan, says he typically packs about 50 pounds into base camp, but he realizes that military operators carry 85 pounds or more because of ammo and other gear.

Though military operators have yet to field-test the pack, Cunningham says he believes the BOS, with a 2,200-cubic-inch capacity, is ready for the rugged valleys of eastern Afghanistan. “The main compartments are nice and large and open,” he says. “There’s plenty of room to put your sleeping system in there, and winter gear right next to it.”

The Hypervent suspension, he adds, is well padded and matches the contours of the back. He also notes that the padded shoulder straps and hip belt don’t impede

him from pulling the 72-pound draw weight on his bow.

Shedding the pack while closing the distance on a stalk is easily done with quick-snap buckles, Cunningham says. Also, the pack’s main material is an “ultra-quiet fabric that won’t alert” game when it touches brush or gravel. Cunningham’s test model in Serengeti brown blended well with his clothes and other gear colored in dry earth, making it a serious option for hunters, police, and military operators.

“I think the potential for cross-over is fully there,” he says. “With this, you can have a neutral pack, run it with any camo pattern, and it’s not going to be ridiculous.”

VanTussenbrook says Badlands’ future depends on creative marketing and dealer relations. The social media push launched in 2013 has shown tremendous results. For example, “likes” on Facebook grew from 10,000 in 2013 to nearly 50,000 in fall 2014.

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are essential to the digital effort, but the company is also accelerating efforts on YouTube and Google+. But all the benefits of digital technology can’t replace dealer relations and, by extension, customer satisfaction.

“When we started, it was inde-

pendent dealers who took a chance and put Badlands in the shop,” VanTussenbrook says. “They know their customers by name, and we know our dealers by name.”

Last year, Badlands helped dealers by offering free POP displays. “We didn’t even require a minimum order,” he says. “We wanted every shop to be able to have the best-looking display we’ve ever produced. That is how we’ve been for the past 20 years and will continue to be as long as we’re in business.” Booth #10119. (badlandspacks.com)



The BOS pack has a 2,200-cubic-inch capacity, expansive main compartments, and padded straps.

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MKS Supply Introduces Faithful Copy of M1 Carbine

Original World War II- and Korean War-era M1 Carbines are increasingly hard to come by, so much so that many collectors may be rightfully wary of taking their expensive originals to the range. To rectify the problem, MKS Supply has produced faithful modern copies of the original Inland brand, which were originally produced by the Inland Division of General Motors and accounted for almost half of all the M1 Carbines. These feature the same compact size and light weight (5 pounds 3 ounces) of the original vintage M1 Carbines.

The newly manufactured M1 Carbines are 100 percent American-made with 100 percent American parts and are practically indistinguishable from the originals—right down to the part construction and



MKS Supply has produced faithful modern copies of three M1 Carbine models, made with 100 percent American parts and based on the original designs of the Inland brand.

stampings, and these even include arsenal-stamped stock markings known as cartouches. However, to ensure these don't show up on the market as originals, the company marked the

underside of the barrel and inside of the stock. These markings are not visible unless the action is removed from the stock.

"The new Inland M1 Carbine is like having living

history in your hands," says Charles Brown of MKS Supply. "The Inland M1 Carbine, like its World War II brothers, is an effective, lightweight, low-recoiling long gun and just a whole

lot of fun to shoot."

Three Inland M1 Carbine models are available from MKS Supply, including the M1 1944 wood-stocked original design without bayonet lug (SRP: \$1,049); M1 1945 wood-stocked original with bayonet lug (SRP: \$1,049); and the M1A1 Paratrooper (SRP: \$1,179), which features the folding heavy wire stock as seen in such TV series as HBO's *Band of Brothers*.

The 1945 and Paratrooper models are offered with one 15-round magazine. The 1944 model has no bayonet lug and comes with a 10-round magazine to comply with laws in states that limit magazine capacity to 10 rounds and/or prohibit the sale of firearms with bayonet lugs. Booth #16144. **(877-425-4867; mks supply.com)** —Peter Suciu

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Mossy Oak Introduces New Camo Pattern

Break-Up Country debuts at the 2015 SHOT Show **By W. H. Gross**

A new camouflage pattern is being introduced at the 2015 SHOT Show by Mossy Oak, joining an entire family of Break-Up camo patterns that has been available for the past 15 years.



Mossy Oak's new pattern, Break-Up Country, took about two years to develop. The pattern, which has a soft, neutral background, has been designed to work effectively anywhere across the country.

"It's a new and improved look with larger elements in the pattern and a soft, neutral background," says Larry Moore, director of research and development for Mossy Oak. "Some of the components in the new pattern are elements we've never included in a pattern before, such as pine branches and pine needles. Our intent with the new pattern is for it to be used anywhere across the country and still be very effective. That's why we named it Break-Up Country."

Moore says it takes Mossy Oak about two years to develop and produce a new camo pattern. "We have a research team—headed by owner Toxey Haas—that meets with our marketing and sales representatives, and they decide not only what the new pattern will look like, but also where it will fit within our current stable of patterns. We then go into the woods and digitally photograph various elements we may want to include in the pattern. We also bring tree branches and leaves indoors to a studio where they can be photographed from various angles. Once a background is chosen, we begin placing those photographed elements in the pattern by computer."

Moore says that sometimes a camo pattern can look great when printed on paper but not so great when printed on fabric. "So all of our team members stay involved throughout the entire process to make sure a new pattern looks as good as we expect it to on the final product."

A great camo pattern also has to have shelf appeal. "That means it not only has to work well in the woods, but it also has to look good under the fluorescent lights of a retail store when viewed by the retail customer," he says.

Break-Up has been Mossy Oak's flagship camo pattern for years, and Moore says the company has no set time table for unveiling new patterns. "It depends upon the lifespan of a pattern, which is usually five to six years. If a pattern begins to fade in sales or licensees begin to show less interest in a particular pattern, we then look to bring out a new one. But we never kill a pattern; it's our licensees who make the decision about how long a pattern lasts. We're always working on

new patterns—it's just a matter of deciding when to introduce one."

Mossy Oak has about half a dozen camo patterns currently being marketed, with three times that many patterns having been developed



over the years. Their original Bottomland pattern, introduced when the company first began in 1986, is still popular with many hunters.

"Some outdoorsmen have an emotional tie to that pattern, so we still produce it," says Moore.

It's interesting to note that one segment of camo consumers have no interest in hunting; they wear camouflage solely as a fashion statement. "For some people, it's a lifestyle they want to identify with," says Moore. "As a result, we have our Lifestyles line, made up of nontraditional camo colors: reds, pinks, blues, purples, turquoise."

Moore estimates about 10 to 15 percent of Mossy Oak's business is for non-hunters, and he expects that part of the business to increase in the future. "More women are becoming involved in the outdoor sports, and most women tend to like colors that are not as hardcore as what the guys wear," he says.

Located in West Point, Mississippi, Mossy Oak does not produce any finished camouflage garments itself. Rather, the company supplies the camo patterns and prints the fabric that is sold to some 1,200 of its licensees. In turn, the licensees then produce everything from camo-patterned clothing, to automobiles, to smartphones, to key chains.

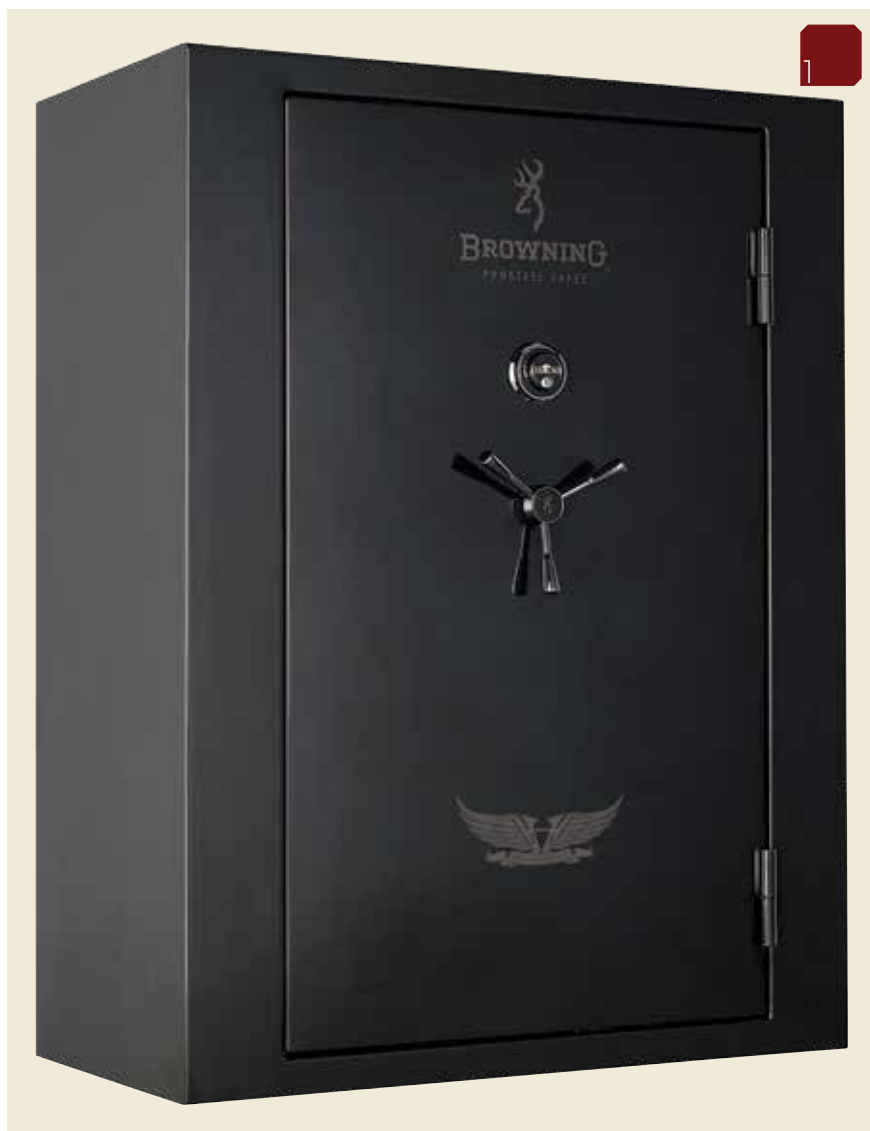
So the next time you can't find your phone or your car keys, you can blame Mossy Oak.

Booth #10735. **(662-494-8859; mossy oak .com)**

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NEW PRODUCTS



Browning Safes

► The Browning ProSteel Heavy Safe series will feature a tough 11-gauge steel body and Pry-Stop end bolts for improved break-in protection. The new safes will also feature a 1-inch formed door with inner plate, the Force Deflector locking system (which uses a rotating cam device to prevent bolt or handle forces from reaching the lock), and hardened steel pin lock protection. In addition, a new ThermoBlock fire-protection system delivers a fire rating of 1,550 degrees F for 80 minutes, and a full DPX door rack provides storage for valuables, handguns, and long guns. Four models will be offered. SRP: \$1,599 to \$3,069. Booth #15129. (browning.com)

LWRCI

► The IC-A5, the newest addition to LWRCI's Individual Carbine Rifle, is a direct descendent of the rifles developed by LWRCI to meet the requirements of the U.S. Army Individual Carbine Program. The IC-A5 in 5.56 NATO is built on the LWRCI patented self-regulating short-stroke gas piston system designed to improve reliability and durability in the field. The rifle also offers a nickel-boron-coated bolt carrier for improved wear and corrosion resistance.

Features include a low-profile two-position adjustable gas block with normal and suppressed settings, a fully ambidextrous lower receiver, a monoforge upper receiver machined with longer, 12-inch SPR style rail system, and a cold-hammer-forged spiral-fluted barrel. In addition, the scalloped front rail design allows easy access to the low-profile gas block and modular rails available on the sides and bottom of the handguards. Dual controls for bolt catch and release, magazine release, and fire control mean both right- and left-handed shooters can operate the rifle to full effectiveness. SRP: \$2,599, 14-inch barrel; \$2,749, 16-inch barrel. Booth #12971. (lwrci.com)

Leatherman

► Leatherman is breaking out of the traditional box in such a big way that it might just forever change the way people see multi-tools. This year at SHOT Show, Leatherman is launching a new Bracelet and Watch that are designed to allow people to have access to a wide

assortment of important tools anywhere they go—including airplanes. Leatherman's Watch and Bracelet are completely TSA-compliant and feature a variety of interchangeable links that include different functional tools to give users access to everything from screwdrivers and Allen wrenches to bottle openers and hex drives. Designed to be as stylish as well as functional, the watch and bracelet are available in stainless steel or black; the watch features a high-quality Swiss-made timepiece. The SRP range for the Bracelet and Watch is \$150 to \$600, depending on the model; Leatherman is also selling the links separately for \$25 to \$30 so users can customize their bracelets and watches.

Leatherman is also releasing the new Rev multi-tool, which is designed to be carried in your pocket to make it just a little easier to get access to the Rev's 420HC blade and its dozen other tools. SRP: \$37.

For outdoor enthusiasts, Leatherman is launching its new Signal survival tool, which includes many of the tools customers expect from a Leatherman, plus additional features such as a diamond knife sharpener, a fire-starting rod, and an emergency whistle that can make the critical difference when signaling in a survival situation. SRP: \$120. Booth #14512. (800-847-8665; leatherman.com)

DryGuy

► The DryGuy Force Dry DX uses forced air to gently dry boots, shoes, and gloves in about an hour. Producing a mild heat, it expedites the dry time of soggy hunting boots without damaging expensive materials and inner liners. As it works to remove moisture, the Force Dry DX also helps eliminate odors by preventing the growth of bacteria and mold. It dries up to four garments simultaneously and features a three-hour timer. SRP: \$79.95. The Select Dry Silent Boot and Shoe Dryer utilizes thermal convection technology, or naturally rising warm air, to dry footwear overnight. It silently removes perspiration and moisture (and the odors that accompany them), so you start your day with warm, dry boots. SRP: \$39.95. Booth #3546. (dryguy.com)



1) The Browning ProSteel Heavy Safe's Pry-Stop end bolts offer improved break-in protection. 2) LWRCI's IC-A5 in 5.56 NATO sports dual controls for right-handers and southpaws. 3) The new Leatherman Watch is completely TSA-compliant. 4) DryGuy's Force Dry DX dries boots in just an hour.

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