

# SGB

ISSUE 1440  
OCTOBER 6, 2014

# WEEKLY

THE WEEKLY DIGITAL MAGAZINE FOR THE SPORTING GOODS INDUSTRY



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Photo courtesy Woolrich

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## MOVERS & SHAKERS

**Bergans USA** hired **Ryan Pennock** as customer service manager.

**Charles River Apparel** added three outside sales reps to handle growing accounts in Texas, Oklahoma, and Western New York and Pennsylvania. **Sharon Wohlleber** will focus on Southern Texas, **Scott Schaefer** on Western New York and Western Pennsylvania, and **Scott Blankenship** will cover Northern Texas and Oklahoma.

**Creative Recreation**, a division of Rocky Brands, hired **Rich Cofinco** as creative director. Prior to leaving in 2012, Cofinco was Creative Recreation's co-founder and original designer.

**Epoch Lacrosse** added **Zack Dorn**, the official world record holder for the fastest lacrosse shot at 116 mph, to its team of endorsed athletes.

**Hibbett Sports** promoted **Jared Briskin** to SVP and chief merchant. Briskin replaces **Rebecca Jones** who left the company.

**McDavid** promoted **Jeff King** to national sales manager for all team and institutional accounts. King has more than 21 years of experience in the sporting goods industry.

**Patagonia** added **Corey Simpson** to its Ventura-based public relations team as PR and communications coordinator.

**Smack Sportswear**, best known for its volleyball apparel, appointed **Christopher Jenks** as chairman of the board and accepted the resignation of Smack CEO **Bill Sigler**.

**VF Corp's** SVP and CFO **Robert Shearer** will retire in March 2015 after 28 years with the company. **Scott Roe**, currently VP, controller, and chief accounting officer, will succeed Shearer.

**The World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI)** named **Dhyana van der Pols** to the newly created role of head of textile innovation and manufacturing.



## RSG

### ACQUIRES RALEIGH-BASED CAPITAL RUNWALK

The Running Specialty Group (RSG), an operating segment of The Finish Line, Inc., announced the addition of Raleigh-based Capital RunWalk to its national community of retail locations. This expands RSG's market share to include North Carolina.

Capital RunWalk was established in 1994 and serves as a multifaceted social connection point for runners and walkers alike.

"At Capital RunWalk, we take pride in being a destination of choice for the Raleigh fitness community," said Mike Zimmerman, owner and founder of Capital RunWalk. "By joining RSG – an innovative team with a high level of expectation when it comes to service – we will combine the best of the best in running specialty while remaining true to our customers and our local ties."

"Our goal is to establish an elite channel of retail locations to serve the running community nationwide," added Bill Kirkendall, Running Specialty Group president. "This is achieved in part by aligning with existing running specialty ambassadors, such as Capital RunWalk, to increase our footprint and gain greater insight to the industry for continued store growth."

The Running Specialty Group has 59 specialty running stores in 13 states and the District of Columbia under The Running Company, Run On!, Blue Mile, Boulder Running Company, Roncker's Running Spot, Running Fit, VA Runner and Capital RunWalk banners.



## UNDER ARMOUR PARTNERS WITH THE NFHS NETWORK

Under Armour and the NFHS Network, the nation's leading high school sports media company, announced a new multi-year partnership, making Under Armour the first anchor partner of the Network. The NFHS Network is the single online destination for viewing boys and girls high school sporting events live and on demand from across the country so that fans never have to miss a game.

As part of its multi-year partnership, Under Armour will receive a full slate of traditional sponsorship and digital media elements including in-game promotions and featured content, pre-roll video ads and integrated site takeovers. Both Under Armour and the NFHS Network will work collaboratively to develop integrated and unique original programming and content opportunities.

"Under Armour is the brand of the next generation of great athletes. We are dedicated to partnering with the most innovative and authentic game-changers in team sports," said Brian Cummings, VP of team sports, Under Armour. "Our partnership with the NFHS

Network provides our brand with a unique and engaging opportunity to reinforce our commitment to the future of high school sports."

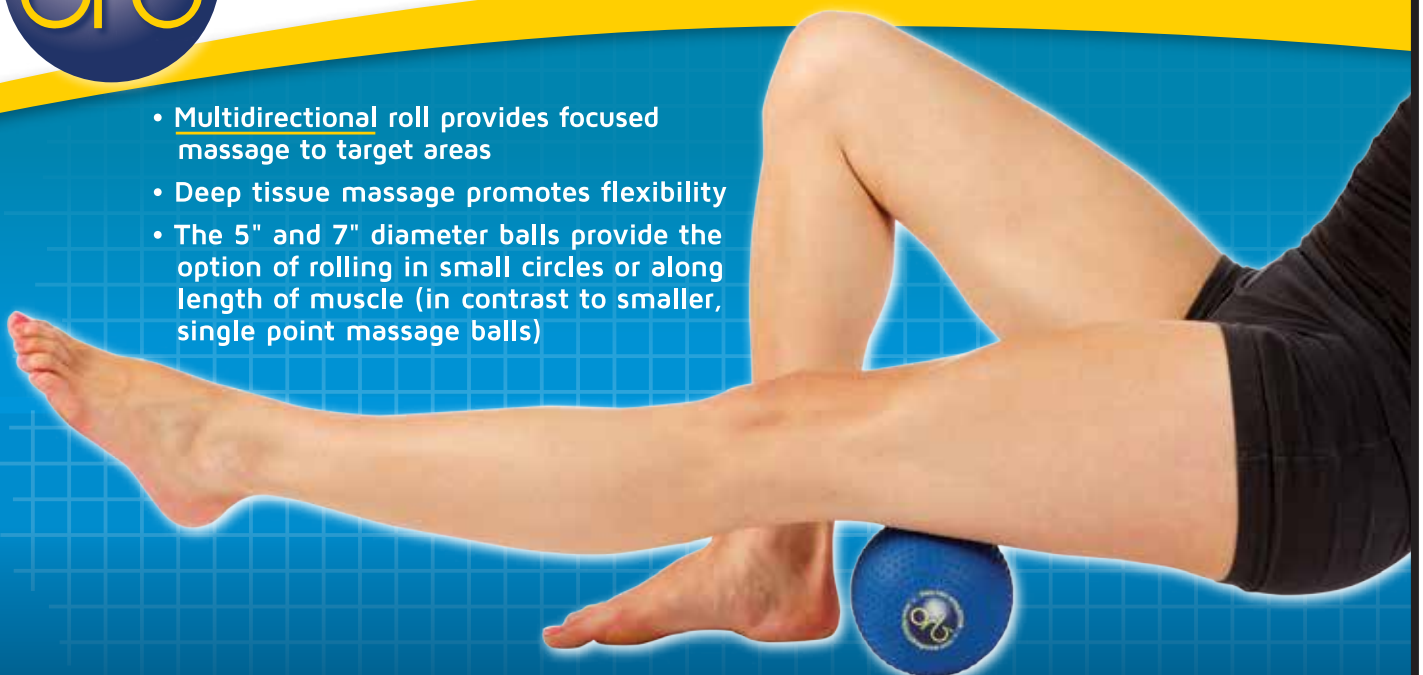
During the inaugural 2013/14 school years, the NFHS Network attracted more than 3 million viewers to watch live broadcasts of more than 28,000 events. With coverage of 27 different boys and girls' sports and activities, the NFHS Network is the largest destination for high school sports' broadcasts in the country.

"For the first time ever, the NFHS Network is giving students, communities, and extended families the opportunity to connect to high school sports through live digital video. Nearly 50 million Americans identify themselves as high school sports fans and nearly 8 million students participate in high school sports and activities. The NFHS Network strives to serve and support both the athletes and their fans," said Andrew Saltzman, chief revenue officer, NFHS Network. "There's no better partner for us than Under Armour as their brand and products resonate so deeply with our audience."



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## WOOLRICH

### OPENS FIRST STANDALONE STORE IN NORTH AMERICA IN SOHO

Woolrich, Inc., the Pennsylvania-based outerwear and lifestyle brand, opened its first standalone retail space in North America at 125 Wooster Street in New York's SoHo neighborhood. The two-level flagship will carry men's and women's apparel and accessories from the brand's contemporary collection, Woolrich John Rich & Bros.

It will also feature men's wear from the designer label Woolrich Woolen Mills. The move marks a significant step for the company's international retail expansion, which follows the recent opening of three European stores in Hamburg, Sylt, and Prague.

The SoHo flagship is designed as a contemporary retrospective of the company's 184-year history. Vintage items from the original Pennsylvania mill, including wool-production tools, swatch cards, catalogues, and various garments from the historical Woolrich archive, decorate the space. The 1,400-square-foot ground floor features antique windows and furniture recovered from an old hardware store, while the 500-square-foot basement level is designed as a contemporary "Woolrich Men's Club" which will double as an event space. The ground floor will highlight the Woolrich John Rich & Bros. collection – notably the full range of iconic Arctic Parkas which are finally available in the U.S. for men and women. The basement level will house the brands Made-in-America product including blankets and bags and the Mark McNairy-designed Woolrich Woolen Mills collection.

"We've been talking about bringing our retail concept back home to the U.S. for a long time," said Josh Rich, Woolrich, Inc. executive vice president. "The brand has performed very successfully in Europe and Asia over the past few decades thanks to our partnership with WP Lavori in Corso, but we've never had a strong retail presence in the U.S. We're moving into SoHo just as the temperature is dropping, so the timing couldn't be better. Woolrich has been outfitting Americans for more than 180 years and with our ongoing expansion plan, we're poised to be America's favorite outerwear brand for 180 more."



Woolrich, Inc. and WP Lavori in Corso, the Italian company that holds the license to design, produce, and distribute Woolrich John Rich & Bros. in Europe and Asia, have signed a long-term, international distribution agreement which will see WP Lavori in Corso managing the European, Japanese, and Korean markets, while Woolrich, Inc. will manage activities in the U.S. and Northern America - both companies will be involved in coordinating activities in China. "WP has a long-standing relationship with the Woolrich family, so this a natural next step for us," said Cristina Calori, founder and president of WP Lavori in Corso. "We're excited to enter into this partnership and open the doors to the first North American Woolrich store in New York."

Expansion into Asia and North America mark the first steps in the development of the Woolrich John Rich & Bros. brand outside of Europe. By 2020, the Woolrich global store network will reach 50 units all in major capitals and ski resorts in Asia, Europe, and North America and will see new retail locations opening in Aspen, Boston, Chicago, Hamburg and Tokyo beginning in October 2014.

## BOOT BARN FILES FOR IPO

Boot Barn Holdings, Inc., which operates 155 stores in 24 states, filed for an initial public offering. The company plans to raise up to \$86.25 million. The number of shares to be sold and the expected pricing weren't revealed, according to a filing with the Securities & Exchange Commission.

Boot Barn, founded in 1978, focuses on western and work-related footwear, apparel, and accessories. Core brands include Ariat, Dan Post, Justin, Levi Strauss, Lucchese, Miss Me, Montana Silversmiths, Resistol and Wrangler. The store base expanded to 155 stores at the end of June from 86 stores, as of the end of fiscal year 2012, with 14 new stores resulting from organic growth and 55 new stores resulting from strategic acquisitions.

The company recorded 19 consecutive quarters of positive same-store sales growth averaging 11.6 percent per quarter and same-store sales growth of 6.7 percent in the 2014 fiscal year. Net sales increased to \$345.9 million in 2014 from \$168.7 million in 2012 representing a compound annual growth rate of 43.2 percent. In 2014 there was a net income of \$5.7 million rebounding from a loss of \$5.3 million the prior year.

The company plans to list on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol BOOT. The underwriters are J.P. Morgan, Wells Fargo, Piper Jaffray, Baird, and Jeffries.

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## ADIDAS

### SETS \$2 BILLION STOCK BUYBACK

Adidas AG resolved plans to return up to €1.5 billion (\$2 bn) in total to Adidas AG shareholders over the next three years primarily through stock buybacks. In addition, Adidas AG confirmed its stated commitment to pay an annual dividend to shareholders in the range of 20 percent to 40 percent of net income attributable to shareholders.

The shareholder return program will be predominantly financed from the Group's free cash flow.

"With the announced return of cash today we underline our strong confidence in the cash generation and growth potential of our group. We believe that our shares are currently significantly undervalued and this provides an excellent opportunity to optimize the company's cost of capital, deploy cash, and create further value for our shareholders," said Robin J. Stalker, CFO of The Adidas Group.

The repurchases may cover up to 10 percent of the company's shares. Adidas intends to start the share buyback program in the fourth quarter of 2014.



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GIVING BACK

## New Balance Initiates NB SparkStart Volunteer Week



New Balance, Inc. and New Balance Foundation last week kicked off their first New Balance SparkStart Global Volunteer Week in support of NB SparkStart, a global charitable initiative focused on improving the health, well-being, and self-esteem of children through movement. Associates in 17 global locations in the U.S., Canada, UK, China, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, among others, will join together for nearly 30 community volunteer projects that range from playground makeovers to mini-sports' days with local children's organizations.

NB SparkStart aligns New Balance, Inc. and the New Balance Foundation philanthropy, volunteering, and other responsible business activities.

"Our goal is to inspire millions of children around the world to discover and nurture their movement spark," said Anne Davis, New Balance vice chairman and executive vice president of administration. "Children thrive when they are physically active. Whether it's a love for jumping, running, soccer, or riding a bike, we believe that children who find their spark – how they love to move – stay active for a lifetime."

The company's inaugural SparkStartGlobal Volunteer Week efforts align directly with the NB SparkStart goal by encouraging associates worldwide to coordinate service projects that inspire a lifetime of movement and healthy eating in kids.

"Giving back is part of New Balance's DNA," said Amy Sweeney, community outreach manager at New Balance. "Launching our first Global

Volunteer Week to unite global associates in service is a big milestone and will enable us to make an even greater impact in our backyards worldwide."

Through grants, associate volunteerism and engagement, athlete involvement, product donations, retail events, and consumer engagement, NB SparkStart works to improve the health, well being, and self-esteem of children worldwide. NB SparkStart aligns New Balance, Inc. and the New Balance Foundation philanthropy, volunteering, and other responsible business activities.

"Doing well and doing good is part of the unchanging core and future vision of New Balance," said Davis. "We see this during Global Volunteer Week as our associates volunteer as coaches and catalysts with children in their local communities, using their resources, energy and skills to inspire children to move, play, and learn healthy habits for life."

Since its inception in 1981, The New Balance Foundation has been committed to supporting causes that will make a long-lasting and sustainable change in the world. Since 2001, the Foundation's focus has been on preventing childhood obesity through supporting research and grassroots organizations that are teaching children how to make healthy eating choices and helping them to be more active.

Consumers can visit [newbalance.com/NBSparkStart](http://newbalance.com/NBSparkStart) for stories of how New Balance associates and athletes discovered their spark and the impact it had on their lives. Follow on Twitter or Instagram at [@nbgivesback](https://twitter.com/nbgivesback) [#nbsparkstart](https://www.instagram.com/nbsparkstart).



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## MUCK BOOTS

### PARTNERS WITH MODERN FARMER MAGAZINE

Muck Boots partnered with *Modern Farmer*, the lifestyle magazine focused on food, farming, and country living, on a limited-edition boot. The Modern Farmer Muck Boot, \$160, is a lightweight, fully insulated boot with 3mm of Neoprene for optimal warmth and is 100 percent waterproof. A PK mesh lining is breathable while a sockliner reduces friction and heat buildup. An EVA midsole offers cushioning.

Available in women's sizes 5-11, the *Modern Farmer* Muck Boot is currently available for purchase on ModernFarmer.com. The boot is offered in Modern Farmer's bold signature orange color with the Modern Farmer logo affixed to the topline of the boot.

Launched in April 2013, Modern Farmer is devoted to the people, policy, issues, animals, plants, and technology of contemporary farming and food and recently won a National Magazine Award.

This is the first footwear collaboration for the magazine.

## GOPRO

### INTRODUCES HERO4



GoPro unveiled HERO4, available in HERO4 Black, \$499, and HERO4 SilverR, \$399.

HERO4 Black delivers two times the performance of its best-selling predecessor and now captures cinema-quality 4K video at 30 frames per

second (fps), 2.7K video at 50fps and 1080p video at 120fps, virtually eliminating rolling shutter in most scenarios while allowing for time-bending slow motion effects. HERO4 Black also features an entirely redesigned audio system that captures high fidelity sound with 2x the range of previous models. Additional enhancements include improved image quality, low light performance, highlight moment tagging and an improved user interface that allows for easier discoverability and access to key features and controls. The HERO4 Black is the highest performance GoPro to date.

HERO4 Silver delivers the same professional image quality as HERO4 Black less some of the higher performance video capture modes including 4K30, 2.7K50 and 1080p120. HERO4 Silver includes a built-in touch display and ease-of-use over the no-holds-barred performance of the HERO4 Black. The HERO4 line will be available October 5 on GoPro.com and at select retailers worldwide.

"For the past twelve years, our passion has been to make it easy for people to self-capture jaw dropping, professional quality footage of themselves engaged in their favorite activities," said GoPro Founder and CEO, Nicholas Woodman. "That passion led us to embark on our most ambitious design and engineering effort ever, and the result is nothing short of the ultimate GoPro - the HERO4 Black. We can't wait to see what the world captures with it."



Columbia Women's Platinum 860 TurboDown Jacket

## COLUMBIA SPORTSWEAR

### INTRODUCES TURBODOWN

Opening the door for everyone to embrace PED (Performance Enhanced Down), Columbia Sportswear introduced TurboDown, a patent-pending insulation construction that creates oversized results - it's like a "down jacket on steroids."

TurboDown leverages the strengths of science and nature layering natural down, synthetic Omni-Heat thermal insulation, and Omni-Heat Reflective technology into every baffle. The patent-pending layering system is an industry first.

IT has the warmth, look, and feel of natural down and performs in all weather conditions.

Columbia asked an independent third-party entity to test TurboDown's heat-retention capabilities against several of its competitors' similarly-priced insulated jackets. Using a computer-controlled environmental chamber to regulate variables, Columbia TurboDown took on the Marmot Zeus, North Face ThermoBall, Patagonia Down Sweater, and Patagonia Nano Puff. In each case, Columbia products insulated with TurboDown performed better - beating competitors by margins ranging from 8 to 22 percent warmer.

Columbia's president and CEO, Tim Boyle explained "It's time that the outdoor industry embraced the use of PED. Performance Enhanced Down offers unmatched performance and this winter, you can experience how science can enhance the limitations of nature, and it's legal!"

In keeping with Columbia's commitment to making its innovation accessible to all, the collection will be tiered in three categories, Gold, Platinum and Diamond. Prices range from \$130 to \$325.



## BASIS

### INTRODUCES BASIS PEAK

Basis, a wearable device maker backed by Intel, unveiled a new smart watch, the Basis Peak.

Available in November, Basis Peak will retail for \$200 and builds upon previous Basis models to provide better performance, increased functionality and an improved physical design. In developing Peak, Basis reengineered its optical heart rate engine with more powerful sensor design for improved accuracy and consistency. Peak also continuously monitors movement, perspiration and skin temperature.

The multi-sensor approach, combined with Basis' BodyIQ technology, enables Peak to automatically detect walking, running, biking, sleep phases, sleep quality, and more. Even with these sensors working 24/7, Peak maintains a battery life of up to four days, a challenge for many other wearable devices on the market today. Peak boasts water resistance to 5ATM, enough to withstand swimming, and is capable of displaying smartwatch notifications, like incoming calls and texts, from an iOS or Android phone, a feature that will be introduced in the future.

"Since our first product, Basis has continued to set a high standard of rich data and insights for both fitness and sleep," said Jef Holove, general manager of Basis. "Now with Peak, we've achieved an even higher level of performance and extended functionality delivering an all-in-one device to help people live healthier day and night, at work or working out."

"As we drive innovation in wearable technology, Intel is confident that the technology improvements in the next generation Basis product help deliver on that promise," said Michael Bell, corporate vice president and general manager of Intel's New Devices Group. "With the introduction of Peak, Basis has expanded the boundaries of what a fitness and sleep tracker can do by delivering actionable information and data to its users that changes and improves their daily habits."



Adidas unveiled the J Wall 1 signature basketball shoe and apparel collection – the first in a line of signature products designed for Washington Wizards NBA All-Star point guard. The J Wall 1 features a sleek, bold design inspired by Wall's quick on-court play and fashion-forward off-court style.

Each piece of the collection is branded with the new John Wall logo; which incorporates Wall's initials "JW" and is designed with the "J" crossing-over to the "W" as a nod to his quick playing style and ability to cross over defenders.

The midsole features full-length adiprene+ cushioning for enhanced responsiveness, comfort, and heel-to-toe transition. A full-length lateral FitFrame allows for more controlled surface to enhance cuts. An air mesh textile upper offers comfort and breathability and is finished with rip-stop overlays for durability.

The outsole also features a map of the U.S. with "Wall" written across the left and right shoe, highlighting Washington, D.C. with lines connecting to every NBA city on the map. Details on the map include the Washington Monument, Statue of Liberty, St. Louis Gateway Arch, Golden Gate Bridge and Seattle Space Needle to represent Wall's fans in Washington, D.C. and across the country.

"We designed and engineered every aspect of this shoe to compliment John's quick style of play on the court," said Robbie Fuller, global design director, Adidas Basketball. "Our close collaboration with John allowed us to deliver a shoe that will help him improve performance while telling his unique, personal story through the John Wall logo and details throughout the shoe."

SPRING 2015

# SPORTSMAN'S GIFT GUIDE

By Scott Boulbol



With hunting season in full swing, fall fishing at its peak, and the holidays just around the corner, this is a perfect opportunity to show some of the hottest trends for sportsmen that are available right now, and will carry over into Spring 2015.

There are a huge variety of categories and gear in this field; however, so we've had to limit our scope a bit. This guide will focus on accessories for hunting and fishing including apparel, camping gear, electronics, etc., but will not include hardware like guns, ammo, rods or reels. This still leaves consumers a vast selection of gifts to choose from – whether for a loved one or for themselves.

As with the camping market in general, sportsmen are always looking for a combination of the lightest, most durable equipment, but they don't want to sacrifice comfort or livability. And that holds true for everyone from the decked-out campers to the most minimalist bow hunters and fly fishermen.

“We are constantly listening to our customers with regard to their needs and wants. [And they] are always looking for products that are lighter, faster, and perform at an extremely high level,” said L.L.Bean Senior PR Representative, Mac McKeever. “Our designers and developers are always searching for the next product or innovation, and perpetually searching for the most high-performance fabrics and materials, as well as the most cutting-edge technology available to manufacturers.”

Electronics are also a growing trend in the outdoor category. Sportsmen not only want the latest GPS and mapping technologies, but they also want their cell phones and tablets when they're back in camp and maybe some music, too. And they need to keep them charged without always depending on generators. Electronics and their charging systems are more accurate and easy to use yet always shrinking in size and weight while providing more services and power. In fact, some electronics are becoming obsolete with more and better cell phone apps.

But perhaps none of this improves the outdoor experience as much as the proper apparel for the conditions – and sportsmen often face the worst of it, from extreme cold to rain and snow, to humidity and bugs. And the right piece of clothing can make all the difference. Trends in apparel are focusing on lighter weight material with better fit and movability. Innovations like water-resistant down have moved over from the endurance outdoor category to keep sportsmen warmer and more mobile in any conditions, not just out in the field, but while lounging at the campsite, too. And true waterproof materials have also slimmed down in weight while improving breathability so that wading no longer requires donning bulky, sauna-like rubber. And these garments feature ergonomic storage and vents, more comfortable straps and shoulder harnesses, and other improvements.

“While the industry has always had pockets of innovation, especially on the hardware side, only recently have manufacturers started to invest time and energy into top-tier apparel technology,” said Eddie Bauer’s Damien Huang, VP of design and product merchandising. “We’ve cross-pollinated all of the relevant mountaineering technology from our First Ascent series into our Sport Shop products, and technologies are now flowing both ways.”

As we all know, if your feet are cold, you feel the cold more. The right pair of socks and boots can make all the difference especially when the weather turns ugly and wet. But staying warm and dry is just the beginning – fishermen and hunters can cover a lot of ground on an outing, and comfort and fit are just as important. The days of the heavy, oversized rubber boots are long gone. Boots like the new Bogs Mossy Oak Eagle Cap Hiker, \$150, can handle the elements as well as the miles. Born in the muck

and mire of gardening, Bogs has made a name in the outdoor industry, and this is their most versatile hunting shoe. It’s insulated to -40, they say, but remains relatively light and fast. Constructed with 4mm of Neo-Tech with mesh and a moisture-wicking lining, they’ll keep your feet warm but not overheated. The 100 percent waterproof, durable rubber upper protects against scrapes and branches, while a thermo-molded EVA midsole and lacing system provides solid support while trekking.

When hiking is minimal but the conditions are worse, try Bogs RealTree Bowman, \$200. This 16-inch, pull-on boot offers durability and protection for the nastiest days. Lined with 6mm of Neo-Tech along with mesh and wicking materials, the Bowman provides plenty of insulation and temperature regulation at a respectable 2.6 pounds per boot. There’s even a heel kick on the back for easy removal.

What’s inside the boot matters too, and no sportsman can have enough warm dry socks! They need to insulate, to be sure, but they also need to repel and wick moisture, stay snug to avoid blistering, and last more than one season. Lorpen’s PrimaLoft Hunting Extreme Over-The-Calf Sock, \$25, features a blend of natural and synthetic fibers – Primaloft yarn and Merino wool – and offers a great combination of the softness, moisture management, and durability of a synthetic, and the legendary insulation and hydrophobia of Merino. And Merino’s natural anti-microbial properties will keep the funk away too, after long days of hiking or hours in a blind. Also available in crew height for \$23.

Fits also combines the best of Merino and synthetic fibers in their Over-The-Calf Wader Sock, \$20. Fits signature deep heel pocket keeps the sock securely in place so it won’t bunch and cause blisters, and the nylon-reinforced achilles heel area means added durability in this most abused section of a sock. They’re 100 percent Made in the USA, and as with all their offerings, the Merino is exceptionally plush and soft to the touch. This is a perfect gift if you want to pamper your sportsman.

But when tracking game or trekking to the best fishing holes demands sloshing through creeks, puddles, or deep snow, nothing will protect your feet like the SealSkinz Country Socks, \$72. This British company knows a thing or two about wet conditions, and they are known for their truly waterproof outdoor accessories. This traditional “shooting stocking” has its history in the storied hunting tradition of the U.K. Knee length for maximum protection; these socks have a ribbed wool turnover top and soft, hydrophobic Merino pile against the skin. And yes, they’re 100 percent waterproof – you could stand in a creek while you cast with no waders necessary (not that we’re recommending that). But don’t worry, you won’t have to don your best “breeks” to enjoy the protection.



Bogs Mossy Oak Eagle Cap Hiker



Fits Over-The-Calf Wader Sock



SealSkinz Country Socks



Photo courtesy L.L.Bean



L.L.Bean  
Waterfowl  
Pro Waders

Of course the rest of the body needs protection too, and pants, waders, and jackets are ever lighter, warmer, drier, and more comfortable. Plus, ergonomics have become a major priority for most brands – features like pockets, zippers, stretch, and tear-resistant panels are not only ubiquitous on modern outdoor gear, they're also far more functional and cleverly located. And new innovations like water-resistant treated down means you can now have maximum warmth with minimum weight in all but the nastiest conditions.

When you have to go deep to find your prey, L.L.Bean has you well covered with products like their new Waterfowl Pro Waders, \$289, with boot feet and seamless construction. The four-layer waterproof microfiber is constructed using a super-adhesive instead of sewing; which they say maximizes waterproofing while improving strength at the seams to reduce leakage. This also lowers weight and improves flexibility so you can move around in greater comfort and fluidity. They feature a fleece-lined handwarmer pouch beneath a roomy, sit-over-chest pocket with right- and left-hand zippered entry for storing calls and other accessories. Lightly stretching Velcro closure belt means quick adjustment. 1200g of Thinsulate in the boots keeps feet warm in freezing water. Plus the clean exterior boot design eliminates catch points for evasive species.

Pair it with the matching Waterfowl Pro Jacket, \$239, with multiple waterproof pockets, a full adjustable hood, and a higher cut to keep gear out of the water for top-to-bottom protection from very harsh conditions.

They offer the same top-to-bottom, extreme-condition protection for hunting on terra firma with their Northwoods Extreme Weather Suit, \$279. Designed to be comfortably worn over your outerwear and footwear, it features 300 grams of PrimaLoft Sport insulation that offers superior warmth, water resistance, loft, and compressibility without adding bulk or weight. Quiet, brushed-polyester twill exterior is treated with a water-resistant finish; while a waterproof barrier built into the seat keeps you dry while sitting on frosty or snowy stand pads.



L.L.Bean  
Northwoods  
Extreme  
Weather Suit

It also features a detachable orange cape and integrated suspenders. A waistbelt in the interior provides support for lower legs when it's warm enough to open the top. There's even a slit for a tree tether allowing the harness to be worn under your suit.

Eddie Bauer's Immersion Wading Jacket



Another strong jacket option is Eddie Bauer's Immersion Wading Jacket, \$349. Surprisingly soft, supple, and movable, this full-featured, waterproof jacket is another great gift for the serious weather-be-damned angler. It features a durable 75-denier Cordura nylon, fully seam-sealed shell,

with a DWT finish and three-layer construction for 10k/10k waterproof/breathable performance. It also features pleated, secure zip-chest pockets with hidden tool attachment points, and handwarmer pockets with knuckle-side fleece. Neoprene cuff gaskets seal out water from sleeves, and the removable hood keeps water out from above. And your net will always be handy attached to the D-ring on the back.

If your sportsman wants to look great and stay warmer at the campsite – but would also love a gift that works well in the field or the café – their Sport Shop MicroTherm StormDown Jacket, \$229, looks as great as it works, wherever your adventure takes you. The fit is sleek and modern, but the flex panels in the shoulders allow for natural movement, and Cordura reinforcements on the arms, shoulders, and chest add protection against branches and shooting protection. And with tech borrowed from their alpine jackets, like water-resistant, 700-fill StormDown, and a ripstop nylon shell with a DWR coating – all at under a pound – this jacket is a perfect go-to as an outer layer in cool conditions, or a mid-layer when things get really ugly.

And following another big trend in the industry, it comes in a women's model too, specifically designed for women's bodies and needs. "Women are rapidly embracing field sports and manufacturers have woken up to the opportunity as their participation rates continue to rise. Eddie Bauer has always offered a full line of technical apparel for women dating back to the early days when Eddie and Stine Bauer spent their free time hunting, fishing, and skiing around the Pacific Northwest," said Huang.

Of course, staying warm is all about layering, and nothing has more momentum in the

industry than Merino wool, thanks to its unique combination of temperature regulation, outstanding insulation, and natural anti-odor properties. Smartwool, who arguably started the merino trend for outdoor pursuits has a new line of merino for sportsman called the Field Edition versions. The Men's Field Edition NTS Mid 250 Zip T, \$100, and Men's Field Edition NTS Mid 250 Bottoms, \$95, are great for all of your outdoor adventures. Made from 100-percent Merino, the form-fit tee features a 10-inch center front zip. Shoulder panels eliminate top shoulder seams. Both feature flatlock seam construction

Smartwool Men's Field Edition NTS Mid 250 Zip T and the Field Edition NTS Mid 250 Bottoms



designed to eliminate chafing, and the bottoms offer a covered elastic waistband and traditional fly.

Another category that borrows the latest innovations from the alpine and mountaineering worlds is camping, and it's an ideal category for gift giving with loads

of accessories and necessities to choose from. While camping equipment has certainly seen its own improvement in weight and portability, not everyone hikes in. Sportsmen often have some motorized or hooved help, so they can get away with more creature comforts and even downright luxuries. Both groups will enjoy the improved functionality, ergonomics, all-weather

toughness, and versatility of the latest camping gear.

No matter what type of camping your giftee enjoys, tents and bags are a great place to start – nothing can make or break an outing like these two items. For car/ATV campers, look no further than the Eureka! Taron Basecamp 4 or 6, \$320 (11lb 4oz); \$400 (13lb 14oz). While certainly not hiking weight, these freestanding, two aluminum-pole dome tents won't break your back loading or unloading – or when moving around inside – thanks to side brim poles for increased headroom and interior volume. There are front and back doors, and Eureka's new Eluminate System featuring removable reflective ceiling fabric panels which, when installed, reflect the light from a hanging lantern back towards the floor increasing floor-level lighting brightness by up to three times. Full rainfly keeps water off the top, and to keep rain out of the tent, Eureka! has added a reflective dry-entry marker to alert consumers where to stop unzipping the fly upon entry. The spacious rear vestibule can also be configured as an awning for shade. And don't forget the Compact Cot, \$60, for folks under 250 pounds who prefer sleeping above ground. It's lightweight and includes a mesh and foam pillow insert.

Backpackers also have a great option in their new Down Range 2, \$300 (7lbs 14oz), based on its heritage of building military tents. This one is based on the Marine's Combat tent featuring a front vestibule with two straight zips, allowing for more vestibule configurations, including awning and high/low venting, and they say increases

Eureka! Down Range 2



Eureka! Taron Basecamp 4 or 6



durability. The fly openings feature side-release buckles that lock the fly in place to eliminate a wind-driven opening in stormy situations. And while not quite ultralight, it's plenty packable and its low-slung design is secure and sheds water well while remaining easy to set up.

Once inside the tent, cozy up inside L.L.Bean's new Katahdin CT Mummy 0°, \$250 (5lb 2oz), sleeping bag with Celliant technology. These new fibers, sewn into the liner and impregnated with heat-reactive minerals, actually promote muscle healing and recovery, they claim. The PrimaLoft Synergy insulation is warm and has excellent loft, is highly compressible for backpacking, and still keeps you warm if it gets wet – it's also more breathable than most insulations. Both exterior and interior shells of the bag are constructed of a ripstop nylon that has a silky feel.

If you prefer traditional bags at a much more affordable price – and the ability to cozy up with your favorite hunting/fishing partner – try Coleman's Big Game sleeping bag, \$110. It, too, is rated at 0-degrees – yes a cotton bag that's 0-degree rated – but with a cotton canvas



L.L.Bean  
Katahdin CT  
Mummy 0°

outer and flannel liner. It offers old-school looks with new-school performance. Full-cover construction helps eliminate quilting cold spots. But what sets it apart is its roomier design. It fits campers up to 6' 5". And unlike mummy bags, it can be zipped to another bag for couples (even really tall couples!) who want to double up on the body heat. It's also machine washable and comes with a matching flannel pillow.

Nothing's better than kicking around the campfire after a long day, but you need the right gear to maximize your pleasure. Gas lighting is more reliable than ever and easier to use, while LED technology has improved dramatically of late, allowing for more and better light for far longer than early



Coleman' Northstar  
Dual Fuel Instastart  
Lantern



Bushnell Rubicon  
H250L AD Headlamp

\$30. Lightweight and compact, the 200-lumen lantern features folding legs that allow for creative positioning and a carabiner handle that makes it easy to hang. It offers three levels of brightness, a red halo light, and a spotlight feature that instantly focuses the beam.

Or light up just what you need with the Rubicon H250L AD Headlamp, \$50. At 250- lumens, this thing is plenty strong for most tasks around the campsite or on the hunt, and it has a 312 boost option when you need an extra burst. An advanced auto dimming feature automatically adjusts from long distance brightness to dim light for close viewing based on your point of view, and it has a spot setting for long range or flood for wide proximity lighting. The red halo, low-lumen mode is designed to enhance sight without compromising natural night vision. A 150-lumen option is also available for \$30.

Sometime it's distance not light that impedes your sportsman's view, and binoculars are a great gift to solve that problem. As with LED technology, lenses have improved considerably even at lower price points. And weights have plummeted, resulting in ultralight, easily portable binoculars offering impressive clarity and power.

"The 10x42mm footprint has been the top-seller for many years in the hunting industry," according to Kittery Trading Post's Bryan Hurst, shooting sports buyer. One of his favorites is the Nikon Monarch 3, \$250. "They have evolved over the years thru several improvements including improved coatings, light transmission, and ergonomics." They're just a hair over two pounds and feature a full rubber armor for grip and durability while also being waterproof and fog-proof.



Nikon Monarch 3

Like it or not, more and more folks are bringing their electronics into the outdoors, and for those who do, chargers and apps make a great gift. Solar chargers have taken off in the marketplace lately with outstanding output in ever-smaller packages. Bushnell has made a mark in the category with its PowerSync line of chargers. The SolarWrap Mini, \$60, is a perfect gift for the sportsmen's crowd, with its simplicity of design and very small pack size. Just unroll the scroll-like panel, hang it from a backpack or your tent, and let the sun charge up its battery - then hook up your favorite electronic toy and charge it. Ten hours in the sun provides a full smart phone charge. Multiple larger sizes are also offered.



Bushnell  
SolarWrap Mini,

Once charged, phones can become fully functioning GPS devices for hunting and fishing with Trimble's Hunt or Fish Apps priced at \$30/year. The apps can find the best nearby hunting and fishing spots, track wildlife, check the weather and the moon cycles, etc. While there are less feature-packed free options available, your sportsman will want all the bells and whistles that will turn a smartphone into a fully functioning handheld GPS device. They'll even see color-coded land boundaries and lake maps.

Finally, some gifts don't fit neatly into a category, but they'll still be every bit as treasured. Take for instance the groundbreaking Vestergaard LifeStraw, \$20. Voted *Time Magazine's* "Best Invention of the Year." This tiny potential lifesaver enables users to drink water safely from contaminated water sources. Simply insert a straw and drink – the units' filters do the rest. Its super light (only two ounces) and compact (think rolled up document), yet surpasses EPA guidelines for E. coli, Giardia, etc. While hunters and fishermen should still carry alternative water sources,



Fish Apps





Vestergaard LifeStraw and LifeStraw Go



in an emergency this could literally save a life. Now that's a great gift! Over its lifetime it can filter up to 1,000 liters (264 gallons) of water without iodine or iodized resin and there's no shelf life. It will last as long as you do. And if space isn't as much of an issue, try the LifeStraw Go, \$35. It's like a traditional water bottle with a filter straw inside. Just scoop a bottle full, cap, and drink.

Every campsite needs a cooler – especially if it's a long trip, or you need to store some of the trip's precious rewards. Enter the Esky Series 55 Cooler, \$340, with catch-free latches, integrated hinges with stainless steel pins, antimicrobial liner and integrated cutting board, bombproof outer shell, and non-skid feet. This cooler leaves nothing to chance when it comes to your camping supplies or rewards of the hunt. It holds almost 60-quarts, and will keep ice cold for almost a week.



Esky Series 55 Cooler

Every waterborne expedition should include a floatation device, so why not one that doubles as a fishing vest like the Stearns Hybrid Fishing Vest, \$90. This USCG-approved PFD is custom made for flyfishing as well, with multiple, expandable chest pockets with tabs for pliers and tools. It even has a clever middle pocket that, when folded



Stearns Hybrid Fishing Vest

out, has a flat removable tray. Plus the thicker buoyant foam is placed higher up the back for more comfortable sitting.

Your sportsman probably has a knife and multi-tool already - if not many. But Buck Knives offers something they probably don't have but they should – Splizzors, \$100. This new multi-function

scissor/plier combo conveniently combines the functionality of both to create a versatile tool designed for any fishing task. Offering edge-to-edge pressure 10 times that of normal scissors with micro serrations, they cut braided and high performance fishing line with ease, and the blades are replaceable. They're also good for trimming, shearing, bending, crimping, and hook removal (and of course there's a bottle opener). The tool also comes with a sheath. But you will also want to throw in the



Buck Knives Splizzors and EdgeTek Fishing FlipStik

interchangeable systems on the market. The uber-sharp blade is designed to mimic a surgical knife to cut through the cape of your game with ease. A large finger choil provides control and confidence. It uses the industry standard #60 razor blade and comes with six replacement blades.



Gerber Vital Pocket Folder

Camp coffee is the stuff of legend, not always for the right reasons. But the legend ante has been upped with Stanley's new Mountain Vacuum Coffee Systems, \$50. Serious coffee drinkers will appreciate the ease of use and quality of the brew. This nesting system houses everything you need, including the dry coffee grounds, for true French-press coffee in a convenient and durable stainless steel vacuum mug that will keep coffee hot for 15 hours – there are even two cups if you want to share. Comes in two sizes, 1L or 500ml.



Stanley Mountain Vacuum Coffee Systems

One word - Beer. Every campsite needs some. But how can you pack in beer if you're heading miles into the bush? Pat's Backcountry Beverages, that's how. Their Carbonated Bottle Starter Kit, \$50, along with their Pail Rail and Black Hops 4-pack, \$10 each, provides your camper with all the fixins to make real, fresh beer wherever they may go. Plus the kit comes with a variety of soda mixers too. And the whole package can store easily in any pack – it's just a typical outdoor water bottle and small packets of concentrated beer mix. Basically you just fill the bottle with cold water, add the mix and a packet of carbonator, and shake. About 2 minutes later, voile – fresh carbonated beer. You can even

Pat's Backcountry Beverages Carbonated Bottle Starter Kit (left) and Pail Rail and Black Hops 4-pack (right)



personalize the brew – the longer it sits the more carbonated it'll get (but not more than 10 minutes or so). And don't be fooled. This stuff is for real – 5 or 6 percent alcohol, and rich, robust flavors. ■



## The Firearms Industry In 2014 ... and Beyond

By William F. Kendy

**T**he retail business, regardless of what industry you are in, is tough. You put in long hours, have to deal with all kinds of details, service customers, manage staff, and are not laughing all the way to the bank.

Still, selling firearms at retail is even tougher. Not only do you have to deal with all of the above, but firearm dealers, i.e. Federal Firearm License holder (FFLs) dealers are one of the highest regulated and supervised retail businesses in the country (not including liquor, cigarettes and marijuana).

If you don't dot every "i" and cross every "t" then you have the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), along with state law enforcement agencies, on your doorstep. That means doing a National Instant Criminal Background Check (NICS) on every customer that wants to buy a firearm, filling out official required purchase forms (4473), and keeping up-to-date records on every transaction for years - or you could literally be out of business.

Not Quite Like Selling Footwear, Backpacks, Football Helmets Or Apparel.

The firearms industry is big business. The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA), in a 2014 intelligence report, estimated that rifle, shotgun and handgun sales for 2013 were approximately \$5 billion. That is a 47.4 percent increase over the 2009 sales level of a little over \$3 billion.

According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) Firearms and Ammunition Industry Economic Report 2013, U.S. companies that manufacture, distribute, and sell firearms, ammunition, and hunting equipment employ as many as 111,895 people. Those sales also generate an additional 133,850 jobs in supplier and ancillary industries for a total of 245,745 jobs.

The NSSF study shows that, in terms of wages, those jobs add up to \$11,724,199,400 with an estimated total economic impact of \$37,696,519,100.

That revenue just doesn't go into someone's pocket. The Pittman-Robinson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937 imposed an 11 percent excise tax on the wholesale price for long guns and ammunition and a 10 percent excise tax on handguns.

Those funds are deposited by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) into the Wildlife Restoration Trust Fund, which it administers. The monies are earmarked for use for conservation purposes, hunter's education, shooting projects and programs to the states. The states appropriations are based on a formula that takes into consideration the area and number of hunting licenses sold. Since 1939 over \$8 billion has been collected.

It is no dark, hidden, or well-kept secret that the boat of the U.S. firearms industry, at least in part, rises or falls on the political climate tide regarding firearm ownership, availability, and ammunition.

When there is government/political sentiment about restricting firearms or ammunition purchases and/or a public shooting occurs, people get concerned about that threat to their second amendment rights and access so they go out and buy guns and ammo - sometimes to the point of hoarding.

Once the buying furor (sometimes based on fear) subsides, things get back on an even keel and the market will return to "normal". According to industry players, that is where the industry is presently in 2014 and, while not as healthy as in 2013, it is alive and well.

One of the monitors as to how the firearm industry is doing and the market activity is to look at the volume of mandatory NICS background checks. In its recently released report, "Gun Industry Sales Reflect a 'New Normal'" the NSSF looked back at adjusted NICS data and found that the firearms industry has shown an almost uninterrupted rise over the past 10 years with the exception of 2013. The report also showed that, once again with the exception of 2013, firearm sales for the first seven months of 2014 ranked the highest in the last decade.

NSSF cites that multiple factors accounted for the 2013 sales surge including a fear of additional firearms-ownership restrictions, which happened in New York, Connecticut, and Maryland,

as well as an increasing interest in owning firearms by women and former servicemen and women.

"Those who are hostile to firearms ownership are trying to suggest sales are off in 2014 because people are no longer interested in owning guns, which is contradicted when you consider sales have risen for ten years," said NSSF President and CEO Steve Sanetti.

"The sky certainly is not falling," said Sanetti. "To me, firearm sales data through the first seven months is saying our industry is experiencing a 'new normal.' Like a rocket ship, we've returned to Earth, but we haven't gone back in time. With 2014 on track to be one of the highest sales years in a decade, I call that a sign of a healthy industry serving a passionate, growing customer base."



NSSF President and CEO Steve Sanetti



SportScanInfo, the weekly retail point-of-sale data reporting solution managed by The SportsOneSource Group, measures the U.S. sports and active lifestyle market and provides a "snapshot in time" for the different aspects of specific sporting goods categories.

For this article, SportScanInfo drilled down into their database and showed units sold at retail by firearm type (rifle, shotgun, handgun) for 2012 and for 2013. While the data is an indicator of retail transactions in the industry, of which they collect data from a significant number of retailers, SportScanInfo does not record or measure all retail transactions in the industry; however, the information is indicative of trends.

For 2013 SportScanInfo shows that there were 2,527,921 firearms sold in the U.S. versus 2,420,656 in 2012, an increase of 4.43 percent. Of the total number of firearms sold, centerfire rifles had the largest gain, posting 524,390 units, a gain of 8.36 percent over 2012. Of all the categories, centerfire handguns were by far the leader in sales volume with 1,078,029 units sold, up 7.62 percent.

All firearms categories showed an increase in sales in 2013 over 2012 with the exception of .22 rimfire handguns that showed a 20.23 percent decrease. Part of that downturn can be attributed to the lack of .22 rimfire ammunition.

This is critical in that it is a given that most shooters started out with .22 firearms. The recoil is almost non-existent which makes it easy to shoot, the price points are generally lower (especially for entry level firearms), and ammunition was relatively inexpensive and easy to get. Not any more.

Those are the measured official figures and statistics. What do the people in the industry see, think and say, and what is their view about the state of the industry today and moving forward?

#### The Market And Politics

Lawrence Keane, senior vice president and general counsel for the National Shooting Sports Foundation (the industry trade organization representing the firearm and ammunition



Lawrence Keane, Senior VP & General Counsel, National Shooting Sports Foundation

industries), observed that the market reached unprecedented levels that were unsustainable and while sales are down from their peak in 2013, they are on par with 2011 and 2012.

“Everyone knew that sales would recede and more accurately reflect retail demand,” said Keane. “There has been a pretty consistent increase over time in the number of guns sold and it’s been up steadily since 2009.”

What is the fallout from Newtown and New York City mayor, Michael Bloomberg’s anti-firearm initiatives? “Because we are headquartered here (in Newtown), the shooting in Newtown was like being struck by lightning,” said Keane. “The Second amendment rights issue is very important in Connecticut and our physical presence has made politicians and policy makers more aware of who we are and what our function is.”

What about Mayor Bloomberg? “Mayor Bloomberg is committing \$50 million and that is daunting, challenging, and a real threat to our second amendment rights and all of the hunting and shooting rights in America,” said Keane. “His motives are transparent; he wants to restrict the right of law abiding citizens to own firearms for legitimate purposes like shooting and hunting. He believes that he can use his vast financial resources to effect policy and achieve his desired outcome on wanting to deprive civilian firearm ownership.”

### On The Manufacturing Side

Ken Jorgensen is director of media relations and shooting sports for Ruger Firearms. He pointed out that 2013 was not a normal year and that the industry is settling at a new, more realistic business level. “We have come off some very high years and we are getting back to a more reasonable market level,” said Jorgensen. “The positive news is that we are seeing a lot of new people shooting in competition and there is an increase in enrollment in shooting schools.”

Jorgensen pointed to the NSSF Rimfire Challenge, which is .22 rifle and pistol program created to introduce new people to the shooting sport and provide a route to shooting competition. “We started the Ruger Rimfire Matches and it grew to the point where we could no longer handle it and then we turned it over to the NSSF,” said Jorgensen. “NSSF is seeing a lot of women and families participating along with more young people.”

While everyone across the firearm board agrees that the market for the Modern Sporting Rifle (MSR) category, which includes firearms based on the AR-15 semi-automatic military style rifles has slowed down, Jorgensen isn’t throwing in the towel at all for that category. “Definitely ARs have slowed down and the



Ken Jorgensen, Director Media Relations & Shooting Sports, Ruger Firearms



crazy prices have gone away but they are always going to be sold, especially at the value-priced and top levels,” said Jorgensen. “Even though we have a loyal customer base, what really drives Ruger is new product development and we’ve added a large number of engineers to make that happen,” said Jorgensen. “We are not talking about simple line extensions or some cosmetic changes. We are talking about totally new products and our goal is to give customers an excuse to add a new gun to their collection”

“Things have definitely slowed down and specifically in certain categories such as the AR-15 platform,” said Tom Taylor, Mossberg senior vice president of sales and marketing. Taylor uses the number of NICs background checks as an indicator of the health of the market. “One of the first things that we analyze is the number of NICs background checks conducted and what we are seeing is that 2014 is under 2013 levels but it is still significantly above 2011 and prior to that,” said Taylor. “The numbers for 2012 and 2014 are similar and consistent.”



Tom Taylor, Senior VP Sales & Marketing, O.F. Mossberg & Sons

### The Question Of Inventory

Due to the heavy demand, manufacturers geared up for higher production during the peak times and that caused some excess inventory and a concern about erosion of margins by dumping too much merchandise in the market.

“We are hearing that the problem of excess inventory issue is improving and we are looking for a really solid hunting season for fall of 2014 and that will help clear out inventory and in the next year we can move to normalcy,” said Taylor.

Taylor agreed with Jorgensen that the introduction of new products is very important to the viability of the firearms industry. “Even though there are some inventory issues, the introduction of new products generate business for everyone,” said Taylor. “We are positive in going forward in a robust market and, to that end, we are introducing a number of new products. On the other hand, we are realists and realize that sales may not be at the 2013 level but there is no reason for the excitement to change,” he said.

## From The Buying Groups

"We believe that the front line in the firearms business is the independent- owned, stand-alone stores, ranges, and small chains," said Houston, TX-based Nations Best Sports (NBS) Vice President, Merchandising Dave Nacke. "They are great local dealers that customers go to for expertise, to kibitz, their kids all know each other, and the retailer's help people get what they want and need."

For the future, Nacke feels that the shooting sports industry level of business is balancing out. The positive news is that there is an increase in interest and demand from women, young shooters, and first-time participants. "The number of women customers, primarily in the defense and the protection area, is up and there is increased participation in shooting for kids at places like local 4H clubs," said Nacke.

In terms of industry hurdles, Nacke feels that anti-shooting/firearm legislation, be it statewide or national in scope, is an issue as is the hard-to-get supply of ammunition. "Legislation is the biggest hurdle, whether it is on the type of firearm, or traditional or non-traditional ammunition," said Nacke. "Look at what California is doing to lead ammonization and think about what if other states follow suit."

When it comes to ammunition availability, Nacke believes that supply will soon equal demand. "Overall .22 long rifle rimfire ammunition is recovering but not yet fully and allocations seem to be done fairly," said Nacke. "Calibers like .243, .270 and .30-30 are freeing up. "Yet, in my opinion, we are only one global crisis away from a military shortage of .223s and .308s."

Seattle, WA-based World Wide Shooting Sports Buyer Myron Merkel thinks that the shooting sports industry is on firm ground. "We've seen a softening of the business in the last few months but the new normal is still higher than what it was before," said Merkel. "Business is still trending up against 2013 for all segments of the shooting sports industry."

Merkel has some opinions about the shortage of .22 ammunition. "I don't think there is an ammunition dealer in the market today that is happy with delivery, but most ammunition manufacturers are selling everything that they can build and inventories are low and that level will continue for a while," said Merkel."

".22 long rifle rimfire ammunition is an intensive round to manufacture and there are not that many companies producing them," said Merkel. "Manufacturers are concerned about investing in new machinery and personnel and worry about what happens if the demand drops. Nobody is happy."

## Distributor Insight

Steve Crow, general manager and founder of distributor Crow Shooting Supply in Brooklyn, IA is very positive of the shooting sports industry and has distinct opinions about the business. "I am very bullish on the industry and our business and think that 2015 will be very bright and we, and our dealer base, are growing," said Crow. "Of course, we face all the political stuff, the shortages, the over-and-under supply, and I think that the price of products have been inflated. In 2009 the price of some things went up over 24 percent and makes it hard for people to spend their hard earned dollars."



Matt Buckingham  
President & COO  
Brownells

"When it comes to ammunition, we try to help all of our clients from big to small retailers to make sure that we allocate ammo fairly," said Crow.

Matt Buckingham is president and COO of Brownells, a firearm and outdoor accessories supplier said he is optimistic about the future of the industry. "When we look at 2015 we see a pretty modest growth year and think it will be slightly up but it won't be the same kind of growth

that we have seen in the past few years," said Buckingham. "I think that the new normal term is true. We monitor NICs checks, gun sales in general, and we are finding that there are a lot more people owning firearms, shooting, and there is a new level of firearm ownership in the U.S."

"Growth will be more modest and not like the hyper market that we've seen in the past, and there isn't the emotion, fear, and panic of legislation right now," said Buckingham. "Regarding the shortage of some ammunition, we've been at the plants and have seen the manufacturers producing product, and it is a supply and demand issue that will correct itself."

## The Other Side Of The Fence - Ammunition Manufacturer

Hornady Manufacturing is located in Grand Island, NE and started out as a two- person operation and is now one of the leading ammunition manufacturers in the country. While they do not produce .22 rimfire ammunition, they offer a broad range of cartridges. "We are coming off of extremely high demand and the new normal is stronger than previous levels. We are in a strong industry and while we are ramping up production, we still need to be careful, too, and watch what we make and not add to the particular sku's and products that may flood the marketplace," said Hornady Communications Manager Neal Emery.

To meet the immediate, pressing need of retailers and shooters, Hornady temporarily





suspended the production of some cartridges to meet demand and to try to keep as many people happy as possible. “We suspended 300 sku’s at the height of the 2013 demand so we could make and ship more overall product by minimizing downtime by re-tooling,” said Emery.



Neal Emery,  
Manager, Hornady  
Communications

### In The Trenches... Retailer Feedback

Duncan’s Outdoor Shop in Bay City, MI has been in business for over 50 years and is a retailer and shooting range facility. Regarding the future of the shooting sports industry, president Glenn Duncan believes that independent retailers have to be on top of their game to survive. “Much of the attention is going to the box stores because the attitude on the part of manufacturers and distributors is that those stores are where more people are going to buy so they commit more products to them. Plus they are bigger buyers and large bread and butter accounts” said Duncan. “That makes it harder for independent retailers to get the inventory we need and means we have to watch our market closer with special attention to our ranges to survive.”



Glenn Duncan,  
Owner, Duncan's Outdoor  
Shop

“Specifically we have a lot of young hunters and women and some of the big calibers like 300 Winchester Magnum, 454 Casull, and .45-70’s are going down in

sales,” said Duncan. “.243s and straight-walled cartridges like the .44 magnum, .357, and other cartridges that can be used to deer hunt in Southern Michigan are selling well.”

Duncan also feels that the larger box stores are getting more ammunition than he is. “Big box stores are getting ammo that we’re not getting and they are selling it in bulk to get it out the door” said Duncan. “We would sell a lot more .22 rimfire firearms if we just had the ammunition to go with them.”

The Blackwing Shooting Center in Delaware, OH offers not only a retail operation but also outdoor shotgun sporting clays, skeet, trap, Five Stand,



Rex Gore,  
Owner &  
President  
Blackwing  
Shooting  
Center

and an archery range. Blackwing Owner & President Rex Gore has some issues with the excess merchandise situation and advises retailers to concentrate on inventory levels to prosper and be cognizant of what manufacturers are doing to reduce inventory.

“Dealers have more inventory than they would like to have and that results in cash flow issues,” said Gore. “Last year manufacturers got caught with excess product and moving them caused the market to be flooded out at cost.”

Gore is adamant about drawing females and families to the facility. “Women and the family unit have always been important to us,” said Gore. “Not a day goes by that we don’t have 15 percent of our customers who are female and families and we have a lot of things going on for them. They are two of our main focuses,” said Gore.



Miles Hall, Owner,  
H&H Shooting  
Center

Miles Hall, owner of H & H Shooting Center in Oklahoma City, OK agreed that introducing new products is vital to drive customer firearm demand but also has very strong feels on one issue - the lack of ammunition.

“There is no question that new products are important to drive demand in the firearms industry and, at the mature stage of our industry, all of the products have to be aggressively supported by marketing and advertising by manufacturers,” said Hall. “But the real issue that needs to be addressed is the lack of ammunition for independent retailers, especially in the .22 rimfire category,”

“Retailers are sitting on a lot of .22 rifles and handguns that they can’t move because ammunition is so hard to come by,” said Hall.

Hall also noted that younger customers were prepared to buy firearms but got frustrated by not having any ammunition to shoot with and believes that the industry needs to work together to bring them into the fold.

“Right after 9/11 we, the younger people, showed up and bought with a vengeance and they were driving everything,” said Hall. “We’ve seen a lot of these people who wanted to get into the sport and shoot but couldn’t get ammunition, just move on in their lives. Why



buy a firearm if you can't shoot it? "The challenge for retailers and manufacturers is to connect with them and get them back."

Hall thinks that the shortage of ammunition is due to a combination of manufacturers shipping to big box stores and customers either hoarding or buying large quantities from the large retailers to make big money selling ammunition of their own. "People are buying a lot of ammo but not shooting it and putting it in the trunk of their cars and selling it in parking lots. We've seen them," said Hall. "That meant the audience who had the customers didn't have the ammo."

"As an industry we need to know who is doing the buying, where, and how," said Hall.

When it comes to demand for specific types of firearms Hall thinks that even though the demand for Modern Sporting Rifles (MSR) has declined, that type of firearm still has great appeal. "The AR-15 product is pretty much static right now, but the opportunity to customize those firearms is still there," said Hall. "There are all these cool things available to add to them, and the gun is never complete," said Hall. "It's like a Transformer for adults."

So while the firearms industry has been in a state of expansion, like water, it is returning to more reasonable levels and some of the shortages experienced, like ammunition, will also become more available. Of course, all of this is predicated on nothing occurring in the political arena that will trigger an anxiety-driven purchasing frenzy. ■

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# CALENDAR

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## OCTOBER

7-9 OIA Rendezvous  
Asheville, NC

## NOVEMBER

3-5 NBS Fall Athletic Market  
Ft Worth, TX

15-16 A.D.A. Fall Show  
Palm Springs, CA

23-25 Sports, Inc. Fall Team Dealer Show  
Las Vegas, NV

## DECEMBER

2-4 EORA Southeast Market  
Asheville, NC

3-5 FFANY  
New York, NY

9-10 EORA Southeast Market  
Ellicott City, MD

10-11 Atlanta Fashion Shoe Market  
Atlanta, GA

## JANUARY

8-10 ATA Show  
Indianapolis, IN

8-10 Surf Expo  
Orlando, FL

14-16 Sports Licensing & Tailgate Show  
Las Vegas, NV

15-16 NBS Winter-Specialty Market  
Ft Worth, TX

16-18 Imprinted Sportswear Show (ISS)  
Long Beach, CA

20-23 SHOT Show  
Las Vegas, NV

20 Outdoor Retailer Winter Market  
All Mountain Demo Day  
Salt Lake City, NV

21-24 Outdoor Retailer Winter Market  
Salt Lake City, UT

29-1 SIA Snow Show  
Denver, CO

## FEBRUARY

2-3 SIA On-Snow Demo/Ski-Ride Fest  
Copper Mountain Resort, CO

3-5 FFANY  
New York, NY

5-8 ISPO Winter  
Munich, Germany

8-12 Worldwide Spring Show  
Reno, NV

## TRADE ASSOCIATIONS | BUYING GROUPS

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

**National Shooting Sports Foundation**  
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Newtown, CT 06470  
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f 203.426.1087  
[nssf.org](http://nssf.org)

**National Sporting Goods Association**  
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f 847.391.9827  
[nsga.org](http://nsga.org)

**Nation's Best Sports**  
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f 817.788.8542  
[nbs.com](http://nbs.com)

**Outdoor Industry Association**  
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t 303.444.3353  
f 303.444.3284  
[outdoorindustry.org](http://outdoorindustry.org)

**Sports & Fitness Industry Association**  
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f 301.495.6322  
[sfia.org](http://sfia.org)

**Snow Sports Industries America**  
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[snowsports.org](http://snowsports.org)

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