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Triune Shooting Sports targets area gun enthusiasts

By **Steve Campbell**

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Times Photo/Adam Goings
Pictured from the left are Triune Shooting Sports co-owners, Andrew Losee of Culpeper, Brian Parrish of Warrenton and Perry Hecker of Manassas.

A Manassas businessman has jumped into an already crowded market for guns in the area as Triune Shooting Sports opened last Saturday at its new Warrenton Towne Center location.

The 2,229 sq. ft. retail store in the shopping center anchored by Food Lion turns a passion for shooting sports into reality for owners Perry Hecker of Manassas, Brian Parrish of Warrenton and Andrew Losee of Culpeper.

The three combined resources to raise the estimated \$500,000 to outfit the space, as well as stock it with a wide variety of weapons, accessories and apparel.

Parrish and Losee are licensed gun dealers who came to know one another while working at gun shows.

Parrish began selling weapons out of his home in Warrenton Lakes in 2012. But the number of customers over the past two years has almost surpassed his zoning allowance. "I always wanted to get into a store, and I had to find the right pivot point," he said.

Both Parrish and Losee labor as IT professionals during the day. Parrish also teaches business and IT courses at Northern Virginia Community College. Both are retired military, as is Parrish's wife Patricia.

Triune enters a market already filled with about two dozen licensed firearms dealers in Fauquier County, according to a 2013 analysis by the "Richmond Times-Dispatch."

Using 2012 numbers, the analysis reported 8,561 firearm sales for that year, compared with 5,201 sales in 2011, or a 65.6 percent increase year over year. Those sales included pistols, revolvers, rifles and shotguns.

The lion's share of gun sales were through larger dealers, such as Clark Bros., as well as Anthony Wilcox LLC.

Steve Clark, owner of Clark Bros. in Opal, said guns sales have been strong

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for the past few years, but fell off this year about four or five months ago. "It slammed the brakes on pretty hard, but it's picking up now because of hunting season," he said.

He recommended that new entrants to the market pick a niche and become experts in that area, say a particular type or brand of firearm, before branching out into other areas.

For Clark Bros., the shooting range has been "a lifesaver," bringing in customers year round, who have to buy their ammo at the store before being allowed to use the range.

Triune Shooting Sports, according to Parrish, plans to rely on retail sales for about two-thirds of its sales.

Gun prices range from \$200 to \$4,000, with the top price tag going for a rare Henry Repeating Arms deluxe engraved rifle.

The manufacturer only made 1,000 of the rifles and Triune owns one of the rare guns with the low serial number of 34.

"That's going to be a centerpiece and some day somebody's going to walk in and want to buy it," Parrish said.

While Triune lacks a real shooting range, the store offers the next best thing, a virtual shooting gallery at the back of the store based on the MILO Range interactive simulation training program.

Hatfields Gunsmithing in Manassas offers a MILO range as well. The benefits of the MILO range include safety, cost savings and the ability of owners to offer shooting practice at locations that aren't zoned for live ammo.

MILO at Triune projects some 700 different shooting scenarios (some limited to law enforcement).

Customers using a gun with a laser shoot at targets, or almost live action scenarios, some including zombies. The simulator's guns use a CO2 cartridge to provide a realistic kickback of an actual weapon.

With a classroom that can seat 18, Triune will offer classroom training for NRA basic pistol and safety courses; defense inside and outside the home; and training for Virginia and Utah concealed handgun permits. "My wife and Andrew's wife will work here will and offer women-only classes," Parrish said.

Parrish, who has a son, 14, and a daughter, 12, said, "I like to brag that my daughter knows how to field strip an AK 47."

Another way Triune hopes to stand out from the crowd is by offering 5.11 Tactical apparel designed "to enhance the safety, accuracy, speed and performance of law enforcement, military and firefighting professionals," according to the 5.11 website. The company makes tactical clothing, uniforms, outerwear, footwear, eye wear, duty knives, tactical gear, and holsters.

Triune will provide gunsmith services, but the main focus will be on customer service. "We want to make everybody comfortable. We want to make it so this is an extremely clean family friendly, women friendly, customer focused."

- Steve Campbell can be reached at scampbell@virginianewsgroup.com.

Triune Shooting Sports

Address: 571 Frost Ave, Warrenton

Hours: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tuesday through Friday by appointment only. Open to general public: Tuesday through Friday 3 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Sunday and Monday.

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