

# Special Use Permit Application

## Project Summary

Brandon Terry and Rick Myers of Wrenco Arms, LLC are requesting a Special Use Permit and Site Plan approval to develop an indoor shooting sports range, small indoor archery range and public training facility while maintaining a small retail space. The property is within the rural zoning district of the City of Ponderay.

Wrenco Arms, LLC has been in operation for over 15 years. They have a positive relationship with local Law Enforcement agencies and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (BATFE). Wrenco Arms, LLC has recognized the need for a year round, climate controlled, safe indoor shooting sports range and training facility in the Bonner county area.

## 9-4A-4 Rural Zone Special Uses

Special Use Permits are allowed for athletic/sports facilities. We believe the development of a shooting sports, archery, and public training facility would fall under this criteria or under the guidelines for requesting a Special Use Permit. We tried to pursue industrial and commercial locations in Ponderay but were unable to find any that were suitable for the proposed project.

## Background

The recreational shooting industry in the USA has seen exponential growth over the last decade and is projected to continue growing over the future decade to come. Two interesting shifts in the demographics of the average shooter that are changing the future of the industry are:

- (1) Women now represent over 30% of the “target shooter market”, and
- (2) The 25 to 34 year-old age demographic now leads all other age ranges.

The sport of target shooting, as well as its frequency of participation, is near an all-time high as new shooters look to practice and train in safe, comfortable ranges, and current shooters look to hone their skills. As more and more women and the 25 to 34 year-old demographic move into the market (most of whom are also new shooters), the growth potential for an indoor shooting facility in our area is tremendous. People seeking out places to shoot can sometimes pick areas that are unsafe for them and others as demonstrated recently when a young girl was almost struck by errant bullets by a couple of target shooters in this area. As the population in this area grows, there are less locations large enough for people to safely shoot outdoors.

Wrenco Arms, LLC has a local market that realistically spans three counties, those being Bonner County, Boundary County, and Pend Oreille County. We also cater to part of Kootenai County north of Coeur D'Alene. The population density of the main three Counties is about 65,000 not including part of Kootenai County whose population is about 138,000. We also have customers from Montana on a regular basis that frequent our store and would use our indoor range. As of June, 2015 about 56.9% of Idaho residents are gun owners. That percentage is very similar in Montana and North East Washington which are the surrounding areas we will be catering to. Idaho has been forecasted to have a growth rate of 15.3% from 2015-2025. This is three times higher than the national growth rate. They predict that much of this growth will be retirees moving to Idaho. North Idaho is currently the third fastest growing area in the state. A recent stat shows that North Idaho attracts over two million visitors every year. Among these visitors are Canadian tourists who travel to this area for recreation which we believe has been an untapped market. Due to the restrictions related to firearms in Canada, we will be able to offer unique opportunities for them to rent numerous firearms that are either unavailable or too restrictive to

use in their home country. They will be able to have a fun and safe day at our indoor range using these firearms in a controlled environment.

The City of Ponderay has become known as the business hub for this popular tourist area. We believe that the addition of this proposed business will benefit the City of Ponderay both financially and recreationally during all seasons. The proposed location will attract visitors coming and going as they travel on Highway 95.

There is only one small indoor range in this area currently operated by the City of Sandpoint. It is very restrictive, only allowing for the use of .22 rimfire firearms, with limited hours from December to mid April. The other range in this area is an outdoor range that is only available from April until November and only during limited hours when range officers are available to be there. There are no climate controlled indoor ranges that are open year round that allow for all types of firearms to be used.

The nearest quality indoor range is Center Target Sports located in Post Falls, ID which is 48 miles from Sandpoint, ID. They are currently operating a very successful indoor range and retail store slightly larger to what Wrenco Arms LLC would like to operate here in Ponderay. Their business is located immediately behind a residential area in Post Falls with no evidence of negative effects. They cater primarily to the Coeur D'Alene area but we have had numerous customers come into our store saying that they are going to Center Target Sports for shooting as there is no comparable range available here. We have numerous customers every week that mention they would love to have an indoor range in this area.

As for retail-only firearm outlets worth mentioning in this area, there is North 40 and Walmart. While they are retail competitors, the NSSF reports that over 50% of handguns, and a third of shotguns/rifles, are purchased from "Firearm Retail Specialty Stores" who provide genuine care and knowledge. Bigger box stores usually provide cheaper quality firearms manufactured exclusively for their stores so they are not able to provide the same level of quality that we provide in our store. North 40 has similar firearms as Wrenco Arms, LLC but lack in the level of customer service, attention to detail, and Lifetime Parts & Service Warranty that we provide. Adding an indoor range would elevate the level of quality service we could provide as it would allow customers to "try before they buy" thus increasing customer satisfaction with their purchase.

Wrenco Arms, LLC key to success starts with the multiple business lines involved, each complimenting the other. The diverse lines will generate revenue from different sources throughout the year, aiding to insulate the facility from industry volatility, recessions, and the political climate. We will focus on providing a safe, yet relaxing, environment for new shooters and a one-stop-shop for firearm practice, archery practice, training, education, special events, retail purchases, Gunsmithing, Cerakote, and custom Kydex holsters. Whether a long time gun owner, experienced marksman, or someone who enjoys a day on the range with friends and family, Wrenco Arms, LLC will provide a no pressure environment to every client. Our team will focus on safety, education, and responsible gun ownership, all while creating an enjoyable experience for all skill levels, in our facility.

Currently several of the Law Enforcement agencies in the area are limited in their ability to qualify with their firearms due to the lack of a suitable facility. During the winter months it can be a challenge for officers to maintain proficiency with their firearms as shooting is a perishable skill. We would be pursuing contracts with our local Law Enforcement agencies at a reduced rate to give them a safe and regular location to sharpen their skills.

The range will be climate controlled, completely lead filtered, and have 10 shooting lanes and 5 archery lanes. As part of our facility, we will have two classrooms that will be used along with the indoor range for courses related to the safe and responsible handling of firearms. Whether attempting to obtain a concealed carry permit, a beginner looking for a general lesson in the basics of firearm ownership, home defense training, or a seasoned shooter in need of advanced training, we will have available instruction for all needs and skill levels. All of our instructors will be NRA certified to ensure the quality and safety of our courses.

### **The Owners**

Brandon Terry was a full time police officer for 15 years at which time he purchased Wrenco Arms with his wife, Abby. For the last ten years of his career, Brandon was a leading member of the Explosives unit. He has extensive training in officer safety, tactical firearms, explosives, and has carried a firearm professionally since 1997.

Rick Myers retired in 2015 after nearly 23 years in law enforcement. He spent the last 15 years of his career in investigations, with collateral duties as a tactical team member, specializing in high risk search warrants and witness/dignitary protection. Since 2015, he has been in health care administration and is currently the Executive Director of a skilled nursing facility, managing over 140 employees.

### **Parcel Details**

Legal Description: 478338 Highway 95 N

Parcel Number: RPP00000030026A

Size: 2.49 acres

Zoning: Rural

Access: Highway 95

Ownership: We have an accepted offer on this property pending approval of this application. The current owner is the Lewis Trust. See attached purchase agreement.

### **Current Conditions**

The property was used as both residential as well as a preschool. There is a 3380 square foot house on the west end of the property that is in a state of disrepair. The property has an existing approach off of the west side of Highway 95. The majority of the property has been cleared with a few mature trees on the west side of the property still present. The remaining portion of the property is landscaped with grass.

Currently there are two businesses located on the west side of Highway 95 immediately to the north of this property. They are Cedars of Idaho and Four Season Power Sports. Cedars of Idaho sells cedar products and Four Season Power Sports sells Yamaha and other motorsport vehicles. Across the highway to the east is an electrical substation. On either side of the property are two undeveloped, treed lots of approximately the same size.

### **Proposed Conditions**

The proposal includes the construction of a 9300 square foot building with the indoor range, retail space, classrooms, office, and gunsmithing/customization area. The parking area will be gravel.

The proposed use will be an indoor shooting/archery range, training center, and small retail space. This business intends to employ 4-6 local people initially with great potential for hiring more people in the future. The hours of operation will likely be Tuesday to Saturday from 9 am until 7 pm and Sunday from 11 until 6 pm. The building will be fully insulated with the range portion being encapsulated and

baffled to significantly decrease any noise heard from the outside. The noise from vehicles on the highway will far outweigh any noise heard from the range. Also, the fact that any operations will be during late morning to early evening will minimize any sound related impacts on neighboring properties. There will not be any fumes, smoke, odor, glare or other hazards that will disturb the neighboring properties. Traffic is estimated at 30 vehicles per day.

The building will consist of a tin exterior using natural colors that will be harmonious with the natural vegetation of the area. The front entry will also have natural cedar and stone.

As stated previously, the current house on the property is in disrepair and would require a significant amount of capital in order to make it suitable for a family to reside in as evidenced by the inspection report conducted by a local home inspection agency. It is unlikely that a family would want to invest this kind of money into the house to make it suitable given the listing price of the property alone. The structure itself is solid and safe to use but the interior of the house would need significant work. We are proposing to take advantage of this existing infrastructure by turning it into a training facility for the public during our courses as well as for numerous law enforcement agencies in the area. The house will be used for active training only, no classrooms will be in the house. All training utilizing the house will be indoors and will not involve live ammunition. When training firearms are used in the house, they will be simulated only using special simulation equipment. Training will include role playing scenarios that will be adapted for the general public as well as specialized for law enforcement. An example of this would be a "firearms safety in the home" class for the public, residence clearing training for police, or EMS/Fire training for medical emergencies.

#### **Access**

The property is currently accessed off of the south bound lanes of Highway 95 via the existing driveway. An application was submitted to the Idaho Transportation Department and we received a letter of approval to utilize the current access without revision. The actual approval can only be issued once we close escrow. See attached letter of approval from ITD.

#### **Snow Storage**

Snow storage will be handled onsite in a variety of locations including the south and southeast portion as well as mid center of the property.

#### **Services**

Sewer service is a very large septic field currently located on the west portion of the property. After speaking with the Panhandle Health District, they stated that this system is capable of servicing this project.

Water service is provided by an existing well that is located on the south central portion of the property.

Power and natural gas is provided by Avista Utilities. Natural gas is hooked up to the current residence. We have been in consultation with Northside Fire Department and have come to a conclusion as to the requirements for fire service to the location. As per our discussions with the Department, there are no issues with providing service.

#### **Stormwater Management**

A stormwater management and erosion control plan prepared by Tim Blankenship from James A Sewell & Associates, LLC is included in this application.

**Solid Waste**

Our current operation does not produce a large amount of solid waste requiring a collection bin. Even with the addition of the range, there will not be a significant change to the amount of waste. The owners will be responsible for the removal of any solid waste to the dump.

The lead that is accumulated during the operation of the range will be mined by a professional lead mining company on a regular basis. The lead mining company then recycles the lead. None of the employees or the public will be exposed to the lead at any time.

**Lighting**

The only external lighting will be mounted on the building in a downward facing position so as not to interfere with neighbors or traffic. There will be motion activated lights around the building for security after hours.

**Signage**

There is currently an existing sign on the east end of the property that was used for advertising the preschool. This sign was also on the property prior to the preschool permit. The City of Ponderay Planning and Zoning Department has informed us that the use of this sign will be grandfathered in to our proposed use as long as the existing measurements of the sign are not changed. We are planning to update the existing sign but not change the current measurements. We would like to add some natural décor such as either cedar or antlers to the poles and around the current sign in order to make it look less industrial and more esthetically pleasing. There is currently electrical at the base of the sign. We would like to attach downward shielded lights that won't interfere with the traffic on the highway.

**Landscaping**

Landscaping will consist of mainly natural grasses. We will be able to keep all of the existing mature trees on the property including any trees along the current property boundaries to provide a buffer between the adjoining properties.

**Green Space**

It is our understanding that a minimum of 10% is required for code. We expect to have around 40% with this project.

**Open Space**

85% open space is proposed for this project.

**Parking**

We will have the availability for a minimum of 19 up to a maximum of 30 parking spaces. ADA parking spaces will be provided as required by law.

**Dust Abatement**

Dust abatement will be handled via water truck or chemical treatment, as needed, during construction and after completion.