

RANGE

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the importance of treating the virtual range and the equipment as if it were real. The training sessions offer the opportunity to learn and improve firearm techniques.

“We’re basically going to let people have fun with it, but if they want instruction, training or advice on how to shoot we’ll help with that,” he said. “We can analyze their shooting and they can also book private training sessions with us as well.”

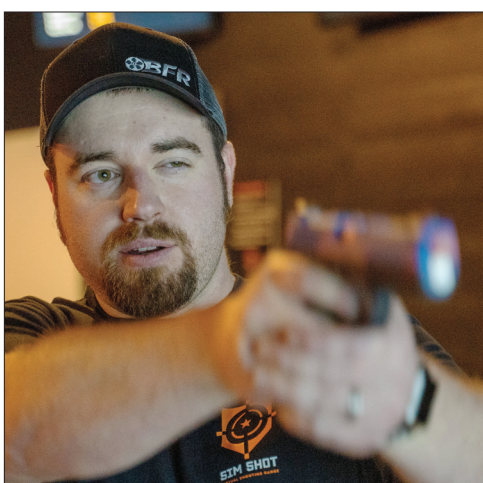
Sim Shot currently offers concealed carry classes, private training sessions and judgmental training sessions. These drills put the individuals in a real-world scenario, involving anything from a traffic stop to a school shooting — and the instructor can control the simulation in order to analyze the user’s instincts and shooting skills.

“It basically puts you in a real-life environment, where you’re looking at the screen and we put you into that environment and see how you respond to it,” Minarich said.

Other simulated shooting sessions include a virtual shooting range, which will allow Sim Shot to replicate the actual training and tests involved in attaining shooting qualifications — including a planned simulation that emulates the International Defensive Pistol Association’s training model.

“We’re going to be holding concealed carry classes here,” Minarich said. “Once they get done with the class, we can actually put them in a simulated range environment and they can do their qualifications and get familiar.”

Minarich also stated that Sim Shot would be more than willing to offer its



Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group
Robert Minarich, co-owner of the new simulated gun range, Sim Shot, in Island City, demonstrates a boar-hunting simulation on Friday, Jan. 21, 2022.

services to law enforcement for training purposes.

Sim Shot is currently offering bookings, with walk-in sessions available if a bay is open. Sessions are sold in 25- or 55-minute increments. One person can book a half hour session for \$35, two people can book an hour for \$65 and three to four people can book an hour-long session for \$80. The range is open Tuesday through Sunday.

Sim Shot is the only range of its kind in the region, and the owners are open to possibilities moving forward. With few shooting ranges in Eastern Oregon, Sim Shot is looking to become a popular entertainment and firearm safety venue for Union County and surrounding areas.

“We want to serve the entire Eastern Oregon community,” Minarich said. “If people want to come in from Pendleton, Baker, Wallowa County, come on down.”



Duncan Gans/Contributed Photo

Duncan Gans works from a coworking space called The Haven in Bend. Gans moved to Bend from the Washington, D.C., area in August 2020 with four friends after he was able to transition to full-time remote work during the pandemic.

REMOTE

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Nathan Bergfelt had worked for a small creative marketing agency in Portland for several years before the pandemic.

The company had an active office culture that managers believed spurred creativity and collaboration. Bergfelt said he couldn’t have envisioned working remotely.

But that changed when offices closed in March 2020. Bergfelt and his colleagues soon learned that they could do their jobs effectively while working apart. Even Bergfelt’s boss is in the process of buying a home in Idaho with plans to work remotely at times from the new house.

Bergfelt’s partner, Sarah Roundtree, was admitted to Penn State University for a Ph.D. program in counseling last year. Since July, Bergfelt has been working remotely permanently from State College, Pennsylvania.

Roundtree’s aspirations in academia may dictate where the couple will live. But Bergfelt doesn’t have to give up his Portland-based job.

“The most important thing to me is to be with my partner and my dog, but both me and my partner also want to feel

satisfied in our careers,” said Bergfelt, 27. “Now that I’ve realized through this that I can be really satisfied with not necessarily being in the office, I can be much more flexible on where her job takes her.”

Cost-saving benefits

A report from LinkedIn last fall found that more than 30% of workers who applied to paid U.S. job postings on LinkedIn in August 2021 were applying for remote work, an indication that more workers are seeking out flexibility in their work setups — and that more employers are offering it.

Damon Runberg, the Oregon Employment Department’s regional economist for much of Central Oregon, said remote work could benefit smaller metropolitan areas that have sufficient housing for remote workers and don’t have as many large companies with big office footprints. However, he said, if there is a scarcity of housing and not enough new construction, an influx of remote workers could drive up housing prices, already a challenge for Bend and other state metros.

The LinkedIn report found that applicants in Bend were more likely to apply for remote work than applicants from any other

city in the country. Eugene ranked fifth on the list.

“Yes, people are searching out Bend for remote work,” Runberg said. “But also, local people are looking for these remote jobs because there are a lot of benefits there — the biggest being that remote jobs tend to pay significantly higher than the average wage from local employers.”

Gans is among many remote workers who have sought out Bend.

A year and a half after leaving Washington, D.C., he now owns a house in Bend and has no plans to leave. Two of the four friends he moved with to Central Oregon remain in the city as well. Gans travels often to visit friends and family across the country while working remotely.

When he’s in Bend, he works from a coworking space called The Haven that overlooks the Deschutes River. There, he has met numerous other remote workers, many of whom came to Bend during the pandemic as well.

“I think I would be hesitant to ever go back to a job that needed me in person,” Gans said. “Working remotely has just made me realize that the location is more arbitrary than I thought.”

OPENINGS

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“There are now more job openings than there are unemployed people,” said Gail Krumenauer, economist with the employment department.

The state had just seven unemployed people for every 10 job openings. Oregon’s experience mirrors what happened nationally.

“There’s just simply not enough available workers for this record, or near-record, level of job openings,” Krumenauer said. “This is head and shoulders above where we’ve been before.”

The turnaround is testament to the speed and scale

of the economic recovery. But the worker shortage created problems of its own.

Builders, factories, hotels, pubs and restaurants all struggled to meet customer demand for the simple reason they couldn’t find enough workers. Hospitals, nursing homes and clinics have struggled to find staff, too.

Health care was the largest category of job openings last fall, according to the employment department’s survey, with about 28,000 vacancies. Construction, retail, manufacturing and hospitality jobs were next, each with around 10,000 openings.

The worker shortage produced a big spike in wages. The state’s survey said

vacant jobs were offering an average hourly wage of \$21.22, up about 14% from a year earlier — even after adjusting for inflation.

Higher wages are, of course, great for workers. But as employers bid up what they’ll pay their new hires, and consumers bid up what they’ll pay for products in short supply, that feeds into the inflationary cycle.

And with prices rising at an annual rate of 7% annually, according to the latest federal data, most Americans are more worried about inflation than they are about job security, according to the latest survey of consumer sentiment by the University of Michigan.

JOBLESS

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The December jobs report presents a snapshot in time, measured before the full impact of the omicron wave hit workers and employers. And that wave has been powerful. Infections have spread at breakneck speed, shuttering classrooms, childcare facilities, and temporarily sidelining employees.

In early December, roughly 46,000 adults in Oregon didn’t work because they were afraid of get-

ting or spreading COVID-19, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey. Another 34,000 Oregonians didn’t work because they had COVID-19 or were caring for someone with symptoms.

That’s about 80,000 people sidelined by pandemic health concerns in early December, and that doesn’t include people out of work because of layoffs, business closures, or childcare duties.

By early January, that number had shot up. More than 104,000 Oregonians

weren’t working because they either had COVID-19, were caring for someone with symptoms, or were afraid of getting infected.

The Census cautions that Household Pulse Survey data is experimental, and sample sizes can be small.

The Employment Department says any impact of the omicron surge on employment won’t be seen until the jobs report covering the month of January. In the meantime, the agency is urging employers to make use of the state’s Work Share program to reduce layoffs during the surge.

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HOROSCOPES

by Stella Wilder

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2022
YOUR BIRTHDAY by Stella Wilder

Born today, you are nothing if not independent in thought and action -- and you will not allow yourself to be hemmed in by anyone's rules, regulations, expectations or instructions. It is this last, in fact, that may get you in a good deal of hot water in your lifetime, for if you're not able to follow instructions then how are you ever going to work for those who are in positions of authority? Fortunately, you have been endowed with such tremendous charm that you are able, more often than not, to win forgiveness for doing that for which you did not first get permission.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 28

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) -- You may be pulled in more than one direction today by someone who doesn't understand the inherent difficulty in what's currently going on.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) -- The "impossible" isn't quite impossible today -- but know that you'll be getting into something quite complicated if you proceed as planned.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) -- You are ready to give something a try that wouldn't have been possible as recently as yesterday. Let others know what you're doing.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) -- You are confident that you'll come out ahead today, even if you have to pay more than usual for something that is usually available for less.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) -- You're treading a difficult path at this time, but you're not about to stop and think about it too much -- or you'll surely reverse course!

CANCER (June 21-July 22) -- Questions come your way rapidly today, and you must do what you can to answer them as honestly as possible, no matter how personal they may be.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) -- Conceal from others what you're planning and you'll be setting yourself up for a difficult time in the days to come. Transparency is key.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- Accept a challenge from a rival today and you may be getting yourself involved in something that is much more complex than it may seem.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) -- No matter how many times someone tells you what you're facing is actually quite simple, you recognize difficulties not apparent to others.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) -- You must move quickly to get a new plan up and running today, for this may be your only truly viable opportunity for quite some time.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) -- You have more choices available to you today than you may be aware of, and decisions you make early in the day can make subsequent ones easier.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -- You must be clear about your desires and expectations, especially when working closely with others. Leave no one in the dark today.

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