

Hunters Help Drive the Mills County Economy

Local business owners agree — hunting has a very positive economic impact in Mills County.

Rodney and Ginger Spies, owners of the Mills County General Store, said their business increases from the norm by about 40 percent through the hunting season. They said the sales boom actually starts Labor Day weekend with dove season and continues through the winter holidays.

“The last three months of the year make up about 36 percent of our total volume for the year,” Rodney Spies said.

While they attribute a large portion of that to the hunters coming into Mills County from out of town — saying customers come from as far away as Hous-

ton, Austin, the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex and even Louisiana — they said local hunters and customers are just as important.

To capitalize on the surge in sales, the Spies’ attend the Shot Show and pick up new items before they hit the retail market.

As a result of the increase in sales, they say they spend more on payroll starting in September and running through the end of the year. The weekend of the opening day of rifle season, they may see between 350 and 400 customers, they added.

The General Store will often set aside a day to make lunch for everyone at the start of hunting season.

“You gotta give something back and make everyone feel welcome,” Rodney Spies



Local deer hunter Dr. Tom Cody Graves downs a nice Mills County whitetail buck. Photo by Steven Bridges

said. He went on to say that in these uncertain economic times at the national level, locally, the economy does well because customers can get whatever they need right here in Mills County.

Russell McCoy, co-owner of Ranch Land Feed & Fertilizer, agreed that the hunters have a huge impact on local business. During hunting season, on Fridays and Saturdays, the business done is — at 50 percent more — due to the hunters, mostly from out of the area, McCoy said.

Ranch Land’s hot items during this time are corn, protein, blinds, feeders and various other hunting supplies, he said.

To accommodate the extra customers, Ranch Land brings in extra help, especially on the weekends, he said, and tries to offer special extras like sausage wraps and drinks when they

can. Also, through rifle season, Ranch Land will give away door prizes for youth hunters that harvest deer, he said.

David Schwartz at Schwartz Food Store said his business increases through the hunting season by at least 10 to 15 percent.

“We will sell a whole truck load of deer corn,” Schwartz said, adding he also sells more meat through the season. “And we might see a couple hundred more customers on weekend days.”

Hunters might want to do some early Christmas shopping in Goldthwaite and take advantage of the sales going on. There are several local retailers who have great gift items, and most places will gift wrap these purchases at no additional cost.

The local restaurants also see an increase in business through hunting season, the owners said.

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