



## FEATURE STORY



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### South Dakota's Bar-Sto Precision Isn't Rocket Science—Or is it?

*Editor's Note: This is the first in a 2-part series on South Dakota's firearm company cluster.*

When Irving Stone III, owner of Bar-Sto Precision Machine in Sturgis, South Dakota, is asked about his business, he can't help but reminisce about his parents.

That's because long before Stone was born, his dad, Irving Stone II, had a passion for machining. When his parents married, his mother, Barbara, was introduced to the art of machining. Before long, Irv and Barbara opened their first machine shop in Burbank, Calif., in the early 1950s, calling it Bar-Sto Precision.

Over the next several years, the elder Stone began doing experimental work for the aerospace industry in southern California. But when the industry fell apart in the 1960s, his work was put on hold and he needed to find something to fill his spare time.

He wound up at a shooting tournament and discovered he could easily make many of the parts and pieces to the barrels the machinists were welding at the tournament.

"My father had leftover material in his shop from his work in the aerospace industry. The material was actually the hydraulic units for the thruster adjusters used for the Apollo moon rockets. He machined the centers out of the leftover material and the scraps became the first ever barrels produced at Bar-Sto Precision," Stone said.

"He made 25 barrels to begin with, sold those almost immediately, and made another 25, selling those right away, too. So it's funny because everyone always says, 'well it isn't rocket science,' but in my dad's case, it actually kind of was," laughed Stone.



*Irv Stone, owner of Bar-Sto Precision Machine in Sturgis, works in his shop. "It's really a no-brainer, doing business and owning a firearm business in South Dakota," Stone said. "We have an unbeatable quality of life here. If you live for the outdoors, you live for nature; this is the place for you."*



## SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Although Bar-Sto didn't relocate to Sturgis for another 50 years, when Stone made the move in September 2010, his decision to do so wasn't rocket science.

"Being in the firearm industry, you develop relationships and connections with other companies in your industry. While we were at the SHOT (Shooting, Hunting & Outdoors Trade) Show in Las Vegas 15 years ago, I ran into Peter Pi, CEO of COR®BON," Stone recalled. "I told him once my kids graduated and were out of high school, we wanted to get out of California. Peter had recently made the move to Sturgis, and almost by coincidence, a few hours later, I met with the folks from South Dakota."

Ten years later, Stone relocated to the Black Hills in western South Dakota and brought his business with him.

What's so unique about Sturgis is the cluster of firearm companies situated literally only feet apart from one another. It's something everyone agrees benefits the firearm industry.

"We're surrounded by like-minded people, so our opportunities to network and bounce ideas off one another, and support each other are literally at our back door," said Stone. "We're constantly working with Dakota Arms, Horizon, COR®BON and LongRifles, creating synergy within our industry and that's invaluable."

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For more information on the firearm industry in Sturgis and in South Dakota, visit <http://sdreadytowork.com/Key-Industries/SHOT.aspx>.

The South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development will be exhibiting at the 2016 SHOT Show once again. Look for our booth, #2950. Connect with us on social media—@SDGOED via Twitter and South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development on Facebook.



*Irv Stone of Bar-Sto Precision Machine in Sturgis, S.D.*