



## North American Hardware and Paint Association

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## TJ Colson Receives 2023 Top Guns Award From NHPA

March 27, 2023, *INDIANAPOLIS*—With a love for the land and the people who live on and work it, TJ Colson has built a successful career in the farm and ranch industry. Colson's successes in business and his community over the past two decades have led to him being named a 2023 Top Guns Award honoree by the North American Hardware and Paint Association (NHPA).

For the 17th year, NHPA has chosen its Top Guns honorees, home improvement leaders who are making a difference in their operations, communities and the industry, focusing this year on those who have implemented game-changing technology solutions in their operations.

"These Top Guns Award winners exemplify what it means to be a successful home improvement retailer, especially when it comes to utilizing technology in their operations," says NHPA president and CEO Bob Cutter. "We are excited to honor their accomplishments and the ways they positively impact their operations and communities."

Colson currently serves as president of Wilco Stores, part of Wilco Co-op, a farmer-owned cooperative made up of 3,000 farmers and ranchers, operating stores in Oregon, Washington and northern California.

With a longtime affinity for the farm and ranch business, Colson has spent the last 20 years growing with the industry and expanding beyond feed, ranch and farm and into hardware, paint and other home improvement categories, always with the focus of helping customers pursue the rural lifestyle they love. He says he has had the unique opportunity to work in nearly every retail division or business unit with Wilco, which has helped increase his knowledge and his connections with employees.

Just as his roles with Wilco have been varied, Colson's duties within his current role cover many areas of the business, including merchandising, marketing, e-commerce, technology and more. He says he appreciates the ability to continually learn, grow and develop, honing his skills and taking on new opportunities.



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“This organization believes in investing in our people, evolving our human capital and growing our teams. It is such an important portion of our culture and one of the reasons we found great success,” Colson says. “I’m very fortunate to have had the opportunity to be invested in by leadership at Wilco, and I want to continue to make sure that our organization passes that forward and continues to invest in our teams.”

Company culture has set the foundation for Wilco’s success, but technology has helped achieve many of the company’s objectives and goals. Colson says Wilco’s vision when it comes to technology is to make significant investments every year from a capital expenditure standpoint to stay relevant.

“We invest where it makes sense, where we’ll see a return and where it supports the needs of the business and the objectives of the strategic plan,” he says.

The company accomplishes these objectives by implementing technology that supports customer privacy and security, e-commerce, communications and infrastructure. Currently, Wilco is utilizing hand-held communications technology, including iPads, iPhones and two-way radios, and is consistently updating its wireless technology.

Colson says his success has come through a long list of family members, fellow employees and mentors who have guided him over the years. He’s been fortunate to be part of a team of leaders who have contributed to his career, including current CEO Sam Bugarsky, who had the vision to encourage Colson to participate in NHPA’s Retail Management Certification Program.

Others who have played a role in Colson’s professional life include former Wilco CEO Doug Hoffman and former Wilco district manager Will Barnhart, who both provided guidance through his early development. In his personal life, Colson gives credit to his wife Samantha. At their farm they raise cattle together, a difficult job, but one that both are passionate about.

“She’s been my rock, sticking through the long days, working weekends and traveling, and I appreciate so much what she does to take care of our home and farm,” he says. “I’m also grateful to my parents and my friends and mentors—Scott Jerousek, Ryan Ringer and Scott Wright.”

As a Top Guns honoree, Colson looks forward to advocating for the industry and bringing awareness to the many people and businesses that make up the industry.



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“I want to share the good stories of this industry, of the vast number of dealers, cooperatives and owners and managers out there who get up every day, unlock the door, turn on the lights and serve their communities,” he says. “I want to share that passion and let people know that this is a great opportunity and a wonderful career.”

In addition to Colson, two other retailers were named Top Guns Award honorees: Eric Hassett, president of Hassett Hardware, which operates five stores in the San Francisco Bay Area, and Scott Sommers, president of Hartville Hardware & Lumber, the largest independently owned hardware store in the U.S.

Each of the honorees will be featured in upcoming issues of *Hardware Retailing* and *Paint & Decorating Retailer* magazines. Top Guns honorees will also participate in a panel presentation at the 2023 NHPA Independents Conference on Aug. 2-3 in Dallas to discuss their technology strategies. During the conference, they will also be honored at an awards reception sponsored by STIHL and the National Hardware Show.

For more information on the Top Guns Awards, visit [YourNHPA.org/top-guns](http://YourNHPA.org/top-guns). To learn more about the 2023 NHPA Independents Conference and register to attend, visit [YourNHPA.org/conference](http://YourNHPA.org/conference).

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### About the North American Hardware and Paint Association

Founded in 1900 by a group of retailers, NHPA is a not-for-profit trade association whose mission is to help home improvement, paint and decorating outlets in the U.S. and Canada become better and more profitable retailers. Governed by a board of independent hardware and paint retailers, NHPA fulfills its mission by providing how-to management resources, product discovery, training programs and networking opportunities for the industry it serves. Learn more at [YourNHPA.org](http://YourNHPA.org).

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