

Ivey makes campaign stop at gun show

BY ALVIN BENN • SPECIAL TO THE ADVERTISER • JANUARY 17, 2010

State Treasurer Kay Ivey brought her Republican gubernatorial campaign to a gun show in Montgomery on Saturday and made it clear that there are limits to her use of firearms.

"I'll shoot Bambi with a camera, but I won't shoot him with a gun," said Ivey, a firm believer in Second Amendment rights. "I do carry a gun, and I dang sure know how to use it."

Growing up in Wilcox County -- one of Alabama's most rural counties -- allowed her to hunt all kinds of wildlife. She said she became a pretty good shot with a .22-caliber rifle when it came to squirrels, turkeys and other small game.

Ivey was in her element Saturday when she dropped by the Central Alabama Gun and Knife Show at the Alcazar Shrine Temple and mingled with hundreds of hunting enthusiasts.

She mixed business with pleasure as she handed out campaign cards and talked politics when she wasn't admiring and holding a variety of weapons.

Asked about her official position on gun control, Ivey said there should be no doubts about where she stands on that matter.

"Oh honey, we've got to protect the rights of our folks to hold and bear arms and be responsible in doing it," said Ivey, who showed up in a leather jacket with a colorful National Rifle Association patch on it. "We've got to protect ourselves."

Ivey, who said she still has her grandfather's Remington shotgun as well as a .32-caliber pistol, said her father saw combat in World War II and returned home "a major who taught me safety when it came to handling firearms."

She said young hunters who shoot "their first buck" are taking part in a "growing up" process because "it's so healthy."

"You teach a child how to ride a horse and take care of it and how to hunt and they're going to be good citizens," said Ivey, 65. "You just mark my word on that."

One of the vendors she visited wasn't that familiar with her, but it appeared she had picked up at least one vote in her bid to become the GOP gubernatorial nominee this summer.

"Let me be your governor," she told Ronnie Lindsey of Marengo County which, like Wilcox County, is located deep in the heart of Alabama's Black Belt.

"Well, nobody who's run for that job ever asked me before," said Lindsey, who sold a variety of weapons, including a glistening 19th-century shotgun. "Nothin' wrong with me voting for you, either."

It wasn't all fun and guns for Ivey, who said a key to her campaign is promoting "jobs, jobs, jobs" as well as students learning at "high standards" and getting government "off our backs and out of our pockets."

She said employment is an important part of her campaign -- one that does not include developing or expanding any form of gambling throughout Alabama.

"If people are trained to handle a variety of jobs, you don't need gaming because we'll have quality jobs with steady incomes and good salaries to build communities," said Ivey, who added gambling represents an "unstable source of funding."

Ivey is a "Gold" member of the NRA, meaning she is among the most loyal supporters of the organization. As such, she said she never misses an opportunity to go out and crank off a few rounds with her trusty .32-caliber Smith & Wesson pistol.

"I try to do it at least once a year because you've got to keep your license up," she said.

When she finished shaking hands and pushing her candidacy, Ivey left to get ready to present scholarships at the Alabama Junior Miss competition.

Wilcox County's 1963 Junior Miss, Ivey said she'd be changing out of her leather jacket and slacks and into something a bit more appropriate for that occasion.

"I'm going to put on my high heels, my dress coat and my pretty blouse," she said.