November 2022

RVPRO

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2023

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PAGE 18

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L to R: Rick Deisler, VP Service Operations; Jeff Wagner, General Manager; Colin Dechant, General Manager; Jeff Runels, President & CEO; Josh Miller, VP Sales; Matt Christensen, General Manager; Tabatha Holmes, Channel Marketing


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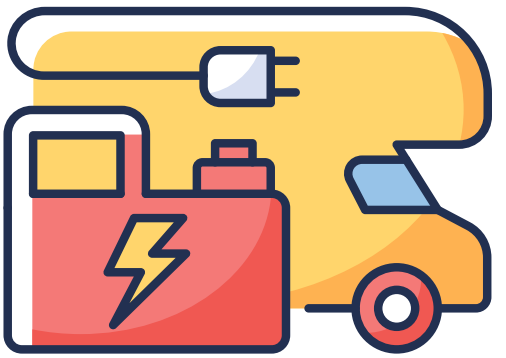
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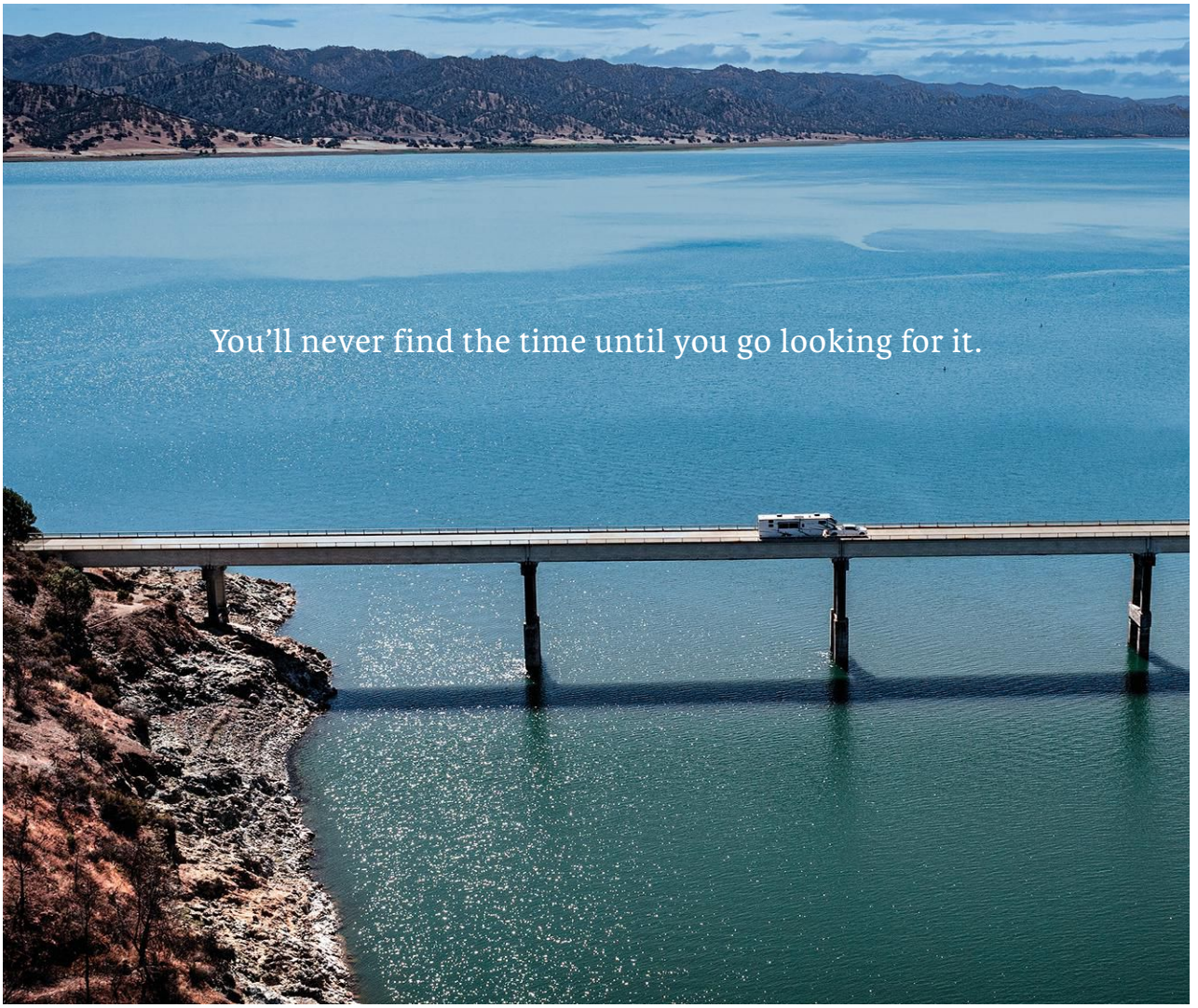
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MORE OF WHAT MATTERS

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I have been home from my first visit to Open House for a little more than a week as I write this note for the November issue, and I am still not sure how to describe my experience. Besides a little wet and chilly, the words that come to mind are: impressive, welcoming, enthusiastic and energetic.

I can't compare it to the past events, but there was an energy in the air this year—a clear excitement at being back with a full-fledged, in-person Open House for the first time since 2019. Despite the rain showers and fall chill, the visitors to various manufacturers appeared enthusiastic and plentiful. Although some dealers closed up shop by Wednesday evening—a day earlier than expected—business seemed good overall.

One of my favorite points of the week was the RV Women's Alliance (RVWA) breakfast outside the Lippert headquarters and showroom on Tuesday morning of Open House Week. Hearing Lauren Stockli of ITR Economics give a presentation on the economic outlook for the RV industry was insightful and eye-opening. Stockli said that, despite inflation, consumers are still spending. So, while growth is slowing, it's still occurring—just not as quickly or as aggressively as was seen in 2021.

Another important indicator for the industry to pay attention to is the price of commodities. Stockli says these prices are coming down because things are slowing down globally, so there may be pockets of relief.

Stockli's advice, which at the time came as the industry headed into Q4 with sights set on 2023, was to take this opportunity to reach out to new audiences and think creatively on how to gain market share.

"Conduct that market research and find out what's important," Stockli advised.

Speaking of new audiences, flip to page 74 to see how Black Folks Camp Too is working with North Carolina dealerships to reach diverse communities with the joy of RVing.

One way of appealing to new customers will certainly be through the amazing new units we saw at Open House this year. The RV PRO team is excited to bring you our picks for the "Best in Show" for 2023. Turn to page 18 to take a closer look.

Finally, we hope you'll read what the companies and organizations who participated in "The Future of Power" article on page 66 had to say. It's exciting to see what's to come for the industry, and the future looks bright.

As always, thanks for reading!

Jennifer King



The RV PRO editorial and sales team at Open House (left to right): Managing Editor Jordan Benschop, Associate Publisher Chris Cieto, Managing Editor Tony Kindelspire, Account Executive Rebecca Tittel, Associate Editor of THE SHOP (RV PRO's sister publication) AJ Hecht, and Executive Editor Jennifer King.

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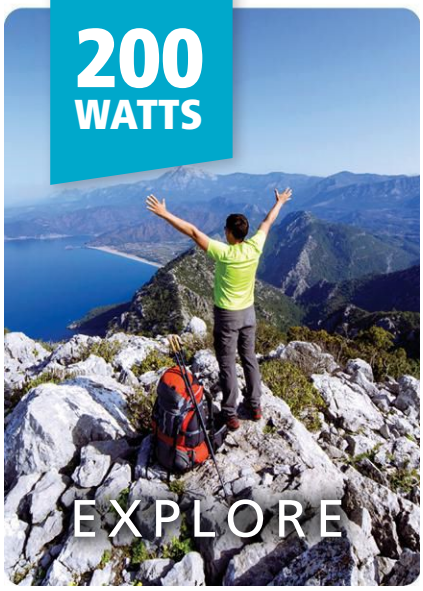
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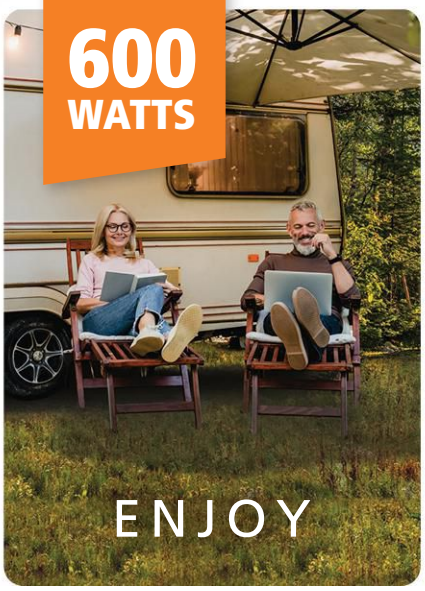
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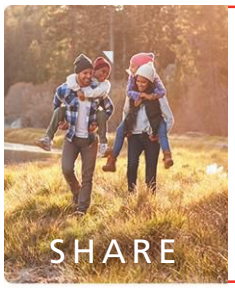






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RVIA Announces Results of 2022 Board Election


Matt Carboneau


Jeffery Sather

Voting for the 2022 RV Industry Association Board of Directors election closed Sept. 26 and Matt Carboneau, district manager for Wesco Distribution, and Jeffery Sather, president and CEO of Freightliner Custom Chassis Corp., have been elected to serve. Official representatives from member companies cast their votes during the Sept. 5-26 voting period for the two open seats announced in August, both from the supplier segment of the industry.

The board of directors is the highest level of authority in the association's organizational structure and is responsible for setting and overseeing strategy and policy related to critical topics such as standards, marketing, government affairs, events, industry education and association finances. The new 2022 board will hold an organizational meeting to elect officers for the next year following the board of directors meeting at the RVDA Convention in November.

Bill Fenech Joins Brinkley RV as Co-Owner

(Report courtesy of Yahoo News)

Brinkley RV has added an additional owner to its lineup of industry executives. Bill Fenech, formerly of Grand Design RV and Barletta Boat Co., will join Ron Fenech in an advisory role for the company. The founders and co-owners of Brinkley RV now include five industry natives with Ron Fenech, Bill Fenech, Micah Staley, Ryan Thwaits and Nate Goldenberg.

"I am so happy to be with this incredible team and not just the owners," Bill Fenech said. "I love the energy and passion in startup companies. Everyone is pumped and working hard to see Brinkley bring its vision to reality. We are on the verge of creating something great here, and I'm excited and honored to be a part of it and look forward to helping make Brinkley RV great. Watch out RV industry, here we come!"

Ron Fenech is equally enthusiastic about Bill joining the team: "It's exciting to have Bill join Brinkley RV. He brings a tremendous amount of knowledge and energy to the company. We all look forward to working with Bill."

As the 252-acre Brinkley RV campus located near the Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds continues construction, the team has added a fourth production facility to its initial build plan. The first completed production facility will be home to the Brinkley RV corporate office and the mid-profile Model Z product line. Production of the Model Z product line will begin in January 2023.

Brinkley is a manufacturer of premium fifth wheels and travel trailers.

LKQ Corp. Announces New Leadership Appointments

LKQ Corp. announced the following leadership appointments, effective immediately:

- Varun Laroyia, executive vice president and chief financial officer, has been appointed as CEO and managing director of LKQ Europe. Laroyia succeeds Arnd Franz, who is leaving the company to join Mahle Group as its CEO, where he spent 18 years prior to joining LKQ Europe.
- Rick Galloway, chief financial officer of LKQ's Wholesale – North America and Self Service segments, has been appointed as LKQ's senior vice president and chief financial officer.

"Varun has been a driving force and passionate change agent for LKQ the past five years," said Dominick Zarcone, president and CEO. "With his tremendous leadership and knowledge of the company and our European markets, I am thrilled that Varun is taking this role. Varun has been my trusted partner in the transformation of LKQ. He has brought tremendous focus to our operational excellence program, establishing important performance metrics and reviews, dramatically improving our working capital efficiency and cash flow, rigorously reviewing our portfolio of businesses and thoughtfully driving capital allocation decisions. This experience and his strategic vision will play a critical role in taking LKQ Europe to an even higher level of success. Importantly, this leadership transition comes at a time when the European business is on track to deliver on its long-term operational and financial targets."

Laroyia added, "I am excited by the opportunity to take on the role of CEO of LKQ Europe and lead the largest distributor of automotive mechanical parts in Europe. I look forward to working with all our key stakeholders, including our customers, vendor partners and talented team across Europe, to accelerate progress on the tremendous opportunities that exist within our European business. My priorities will be to deepen our competitive position, grow the business faster than the market, continue the earnings momentum and generate free cash flow."

"Rick has been a key contributor to the achievement of the record-level EBITDA margins in our Wholesale – North America and Self Service segments the past few years, having generated significant operational and financial efficiencies," Zarcone said. "He is a natural fit and will provide continuity as we execute on our strategic priorities to deliver value for our stockholders. We believe Rick's wealth of operational experience and clear understanding of our returns-focused strategy will serve LKQ well."

"It is an honor to take on this new position at an important time for the company," Galloway said. "LKQ is well positioned for long-term success, and I look forward to driving our financial and strategic initiatives, as well as continuing to execute on our balanced capital allocation strategy, alongside our outstanding finance organization."

LKQ Corp. is the parent company of NTP-STAG and Keystone Automotive.

RVTI Graduates Massachusetts Inmates

Inmates at the Worcester House of Correction in Massachusetts will leave jail with a marketable skill that is in high demand nationwide after recently completing training to become Level 1 RV service technicians. These inmates, who are scheduled for release this fall or later next year, completed their Level 1 training las a result of a partnership between Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis and the RV Technical Institute to train inmates for a career after incarceration.

"Our goal is to recruit, train and certify RV service technicians," said RVTI Executive Director Curt Hemmeler. "The RV Technical Institute's hands-on training and instruction, created by top RV industry experts, provides students with the experience and expertise needed by manufacturers, dealerships and repair shops nationwide. Our curriculum is available through partnerships like this that allow local educators provide the hands-on training. When they're ready for work, we will also help them find a job."

The instructor for the program was RVTI Level 4 certified technician Chris Dougherty of Dougherty RV Consulting. Dougherty will also be available to train the graduates after release on the RVTI Level 2 curriculum, which covers basic diagnostics, troubleshooting and repairs.

Bob Zagami, executive director of the New



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England RV Dealers Association (NERVDA), is working with New England-area RV dealerships to place the graduates with jobs.

The 40-hour course included work with propane, electrical, water, appliances, generator and chassis systems, including four and a half hours of hands-on practical training with a travel trailer donated by Fuller RV Rentals and Sales in Boylston, Massachusetts.

"The RVTI program creates opportunities for participants to secure high-paying jobs. Nothing is more important than the dignity and self-respect of earning a paycheck," Sheriff Evangelidis said.

Spader Business Management Sold to NCM Associates

NCM Associates has acquired Sioux Falls, South Dakota-based Spader Business Management and its subsidiary, A World of Training, effective Aug. 31.

With this merger, NCM, the originator of the first automotive 20 Group in 1947, said it will further expand its footprint of products and services into several nonautomotive industries while maintaining North America's largest database of financial data and operational metrics.

"Building off the foundation established by his father and Spader Business Management founder Duane Spader, John Spader has built an enviable business built on a culture of trust," NCM President and CEO Paul Faletti said. "The employees of NCM are honored to have the opportunity to partner with their talented associates and their outstanding roster of clients."

Spader Business Management, with 45 years of experience, has established itself as the premier 20 Group and training provider across several industries, including RV, powersports and marine.

"Merging the resources of Spader Business Management with those of NCM will allow for us to accelerate the execution of many of our planned strategies," said John Spader, president of Spader Business Management. "We feel the combined organizations will bring many great resources and offerings to our clients that would not have happened independently."

John Spader will join the executive leadership team of NCM Associates and its corporate office and training facility will continue to be in Sioux Falls.

Tecnoform Selects West Michigan for North American Headquarters

Tecnoform USA, a recently formed subsidiary of Tecnoform S.p.A. Italy, a manufacturer of furnishings for RVs and boats, is opening a new North American headquarters in Cascade Township, Michigan, in the western part of the state near Grand Rapids.

The parent company, which was founded in 1969, currently employs about 175 people but the multimillion investment into its new site will result in the creation of "numerous" high-skilled jobs, the company said.

The facility will house production lines to manufacture the company's RV furniture, it said. Financial support for the investment came from The Right Place, an economic development organization serving western Michigan, which is affiliated with the Michigan Economic Development Corp. The company chose the Michigan location over competing sites in Indiana and Iowa.

"The project will strengthen Tecnoform's presence and future growth in the North American RV industry," said Renzo Kerkoc, CEO of Tecnoform. "We will be closer to our American customers, offering a high-quality product with fast response times for dynamic industry needs. Design and engineering will still be driven together with the Italian R&D teams, while the product will be proudly Made-in-USA."

The Kerkoc family founded the Italian company more than 55 years ago and it continues to be owned and managed by the family today, and its customer base for its furnishing products is now international.

Grote Industries Adds Three to Leadership Team

Grote Industries has added three to its leadership team as it continues to refocus on creating and leading safety-related innovation.

Kent Bode has been promoted to vice president of sales and marketing for the U.S. sales team, while Cesar Perez-Bolivar transitions to take over leadership responsibilities of Grote Electronics and Mel Mendoza has been hired as the new vice president of operations for North America.

Bode started at Grote in 1997, serving in various engineering capacities as a product manager, regional manager and director of OEM Sales. Bode's leadership was instrumental in Grote Industries winning several prestigious business awards. Bode will lead the U.S. sales team, the marketing team and the business development team in his new role.

Perez-Bolivar has been with Grote for nearly a decade, working on research, engineering and development, while focusing on Grote's focus on safety, productivity, security and cost savings. He most recently served as the director of engineering, leading Grote's headlamp engineering and manufacturing division in Madison, Indiana.

Mendoza is new to the Grote team, bringing more than 35 years of experience as a global business leader working for a diverse group of manufacturing companies. His track record of leading and building teams at Plymouth Tube Co., Acuity Brands Lighting, Emerson Electric, Danaher Controls and Zenith Electronics, positions him as an expert to lead the manufacturing and supply chain for all of Grote's North American facilities in Madison, Waterloo and Monterey, Indiana.

Way Interglobal Opens Massive New Headquarters

Way Interglobal, an industry leader in RV appliances, power solutions, electronics and furnishings, cut the ribbon on its new global headquarters in "The RV Capital of the World," Elkhart, Indiana, on Oct. 5. The 800,000-square-foot warehousing, showroom and office space will consolidate and expand Way's 360,000 square feet of warehousing across five locations. Way plans to grow its workforce by 30% to manage the larger facility and better service its customers.

"We have been building toward this moment for years and are eager to get comfortable and make ourselves home in this beautiful new space," said Wayne Kaylor, CEO and founder of Way. "We are happy to introduce our new facility to the public eye and proud to be a focal point in Elkhart Country. This marks a new milestone for Way as we continue our tremendous growth."

The new headquarters is one of the largest buildings in Elkhart County and makes Way Interglobal a prominent fixture in the continually expanding RV industry.

"The time and effort put in during the early days of Way to get us to this point have proven to me that a remarkable team and concept, along with customer acceptance, support and execution, can allow for great things to happen," said Kaylor.

Way was founded in 2010 and now has product category brands including Everchill, Greystone, Elite and Drive that provide RV components including fridges, coolers, cooking ranges, portable griddles, fireplaces, water heaters, electronics and power solutions including solar panels, lithium batteries and generators. Way's upward trajectory and growth were driven by its flagship product, the industry's first 12-volt RV fridge under the Everchill brand, in 2017.

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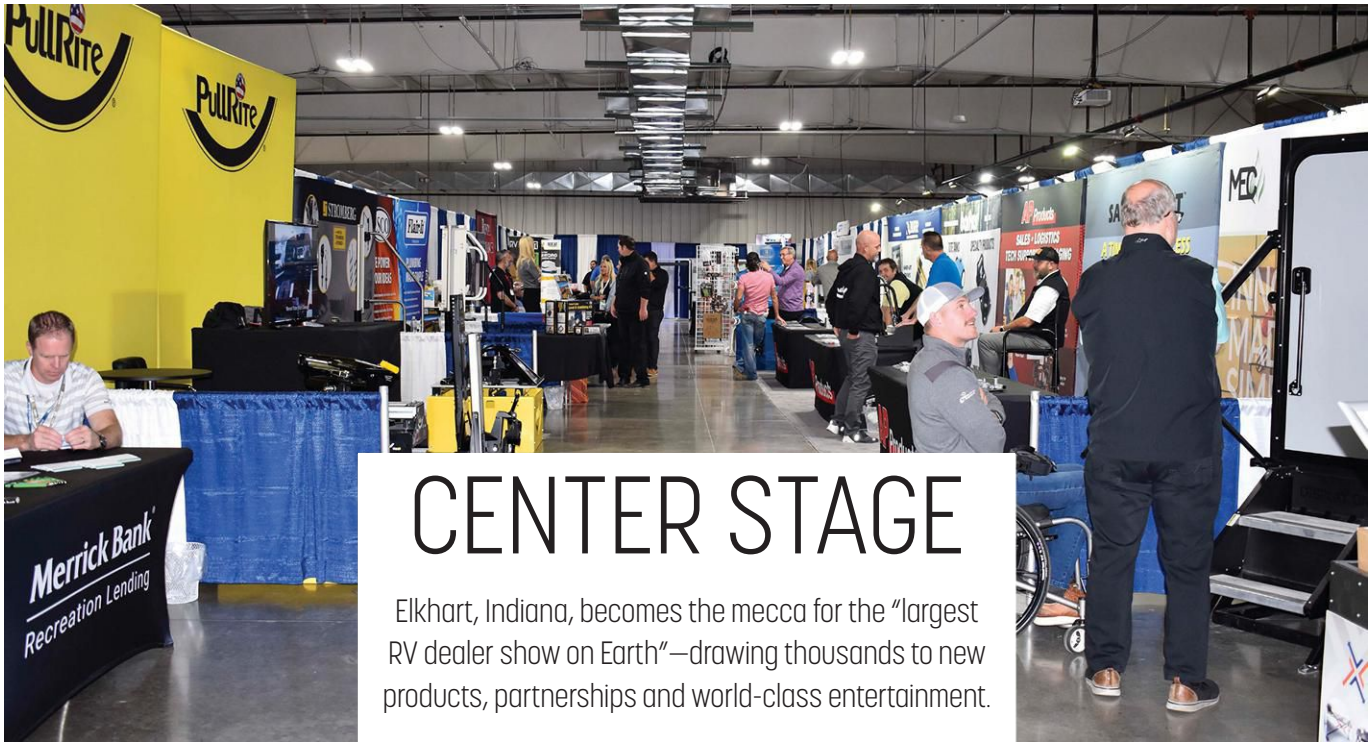
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CENTER STAGE

Elkhart, Indiana, becomes the mecca for the "largest RV dealer show on Earth"—drawing thousands to new products, partnerships and world-class entertainment.

BY RV PRO STAFF

How much might one suppose the Elkhart region missed Open House Week the past two years? "Millions much" might be a good way to put it. The annual event—postponed in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic—brought the RV industry flocking back to the region in September, easily garnering an economic impact in the millions of dollars.

Fall was in the air for this year's event, with crisp and rainy days giving way to rare moments of sun and changing leaves. Dealers accompanied by families and colleagues visited expositions to see what's new from brands under Forest River, Winnebago Industries and THOR Industries—which covered 1 million square feet of blacktop. Independent manufacturers such as Ember RV showcased new models in a "campground" next to its headquarters in Bristol, Indiana. Visitors at the Airstream exhibit were able to peek inside the new eStream electric concept vehicle, and other independent RV makers welcomed dealers to see their new-and-shiny.



The RV/MH Hall of Fame was home to this year's Supplier Show, where OEM and aftermarket suppliers unveiled new products and services. The first of its kind in Elkhart was held in 2019; before that, in Louisville, Kentucky, for some 50 years.

This year's show wasn't quite a sellout, but Darryl Searer, president of the Hall of Fame, says it was double the size compared to two years ago. About 197 suppliers and 240 booths occupied the hall's main floor.

"Everybody is excited to be back," Searer says. "Not just to see potential customers, but to share with other suppliers who may or may not be competitors. They get a chance to compare notes and check in. And we're hearing they can't wait to come back next year."

Vendors were excited to return after the hiatus, with some offering a last or only chance to see new offerings in-person.

"This year the show has really turned out to be quite an event. I remember when there were only three of us here with our booths behind registration," said Bert Alanko, chairman of MBA Insurance and a vendor at the show. "I don't think any of us could have imagined it would become what it is now. This is kind of what Louisville used to be back in the day. It is a lot of fun being here, and it's fun to be able to support the Hall of Fame and support its success."

One roundtable talk at the RVWA breakfast was led by Tracy Anglemeyer and Curt Hemmeler of the RV Technical Institute, who announced five classes after the successful launch of the industry's first all-female tech training. The 2023 ladies-only courses will be held:

- Dallas, TX–March 6-10
- Portland, OR–May 15-19
- Indiana–July, date TBD
- Jacksonville, FL–Aug. 14-18
- Pennsylvania (PRVCA)–Oct. 23-27

Read more at rv-pro.com.



Breakfast Means Business

Nearly 130 people gathered outside the Lippert showroom on Tuesday morning for the second annual Open House Breakfast hosted by the RV Women's Alliance (RVWA). Attendees networked, gained insight on current and future economic outlooks from ITR Economics' Lauren Stockli, and joined roundtable discussions covering industry hot topics.

The event was emceed by Jessica Rider, RVWA managing director, and John DiPietro, co-host of the show RVing in New England.

"It was awesome to have everyone back in-person for the Open House Breakfast this year. Lauren's presentation provided some incredible insight and context to the current economic conditions and what we can expect as an industry in the near future," Rider said.

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- 3-year limited warranty



Patriot Brake

- New smaller, lighter profile fits more vehicles
- No tank to drain, no pumps or hoses to connect
- Controller monitors braking & allows manual input
- Works with hybrids
- 2-year limited warranty

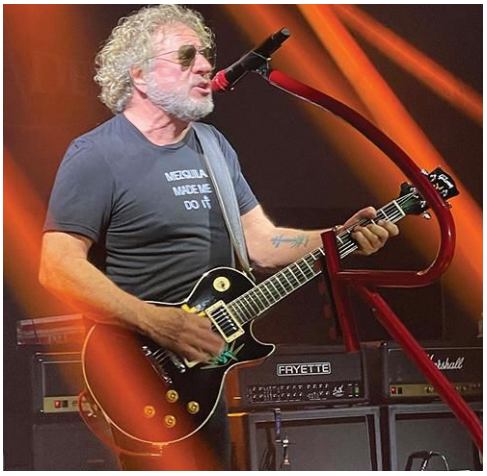
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HEADLINERS AT THE HALL

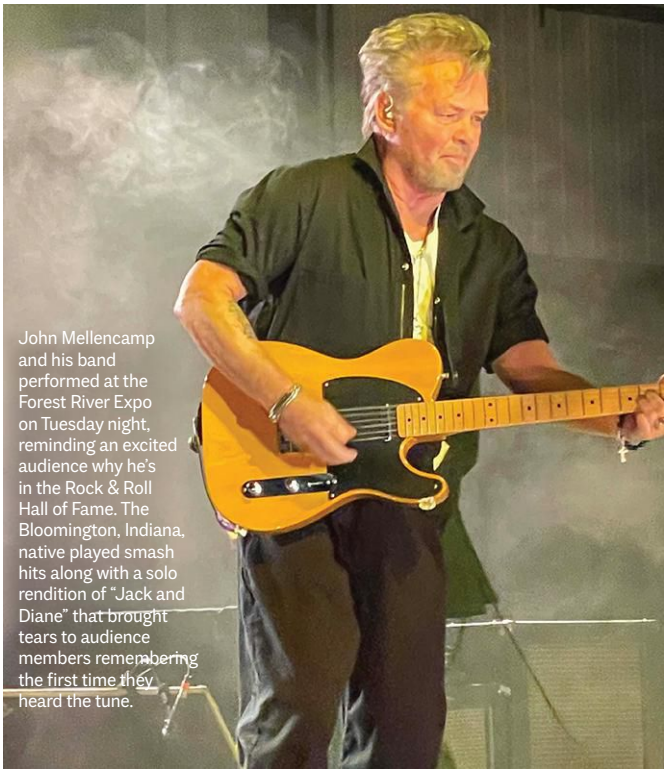
Besides a never-ending sea of RVs, Open House is known for its world-class entertainment hosted by the industry's biggest manufacturers after hours.



Country band Florida Georgia Line performed Tuesday night, drawing an entry line that wrapped the circumference of the THOR Pavilion. The band was rumored to have split recently yet came together to perform top hits such as "This Is How We Roll" and "Cruise" for Open House attendees at the THOR exhibit on a rainy night.



On Monday night, Sammy Hagar entertained dealers at a concert put on by Grand Design. The Rock & Roll Hall of Famer played hits from his solo career and even a few Van Halen favorites from his days as the band's lead singer. Grand Design CEO and co-founder Don Clark introduced Hagar and thanked dealer partners for a great 10 years in business.



John Mellencamp and his band performed at the Forest River Expo on Tuesday night, reminding an excited audience why he's in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. The Bloomington, Indiana, native played smash hits along with a solo rendition of "Jack and Diane" that brought tears to audience members remembering the first time they heard the tune.



Cheers to the Xtreme

On Monday and Tuesday, actor John Ratzenberger joined the Xtreme Outdoors display to greet dealers. Known for his iconic character Cliff Clavin on the sitcom "Cheers," and for his voice talents in Pixar films such as "Toy Story" and "The Incredibles," Ratzenberger owns a Little Guy Max trailer and touted his support for the brand.

Ratzenberger grew up sailing since he was 14 and has always enjoyed overseeing his own travel, he said in an interview with RV PRO. He is also a journeyman carpenter and as such, he can tell the difference between quality in products and shortcuts.

"When I opened the drawers of the Little Guy units, the joints were dove-tailed. They could have used staples to bring it together, but that would only last two or three years. Little things like that made me fall in love with the Little Guy," Ratzenberger said.

After "Cheers" ended, he moved to the Pacific Northwest and built an estate. His first RV was a Class C that he used to take his kids on numerous camping trips.

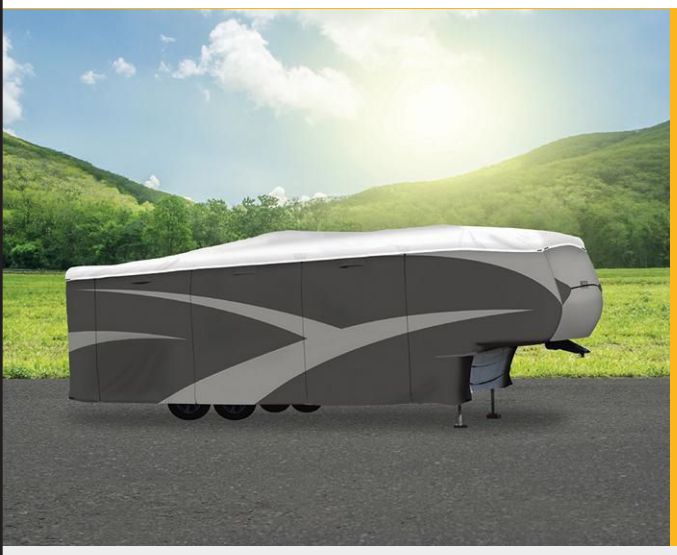
"We bought an RV and hit the road every chance we could. I truly believe it changed the trajectory of my children's lives, and mine, for the better," Ratzenberger said.

Joe Kicos, president of Xtreme Outdoors, was excited to have Ratzenberger at the display during the week.

"To have someone who is in the RV Hall of Fame and who uses our product was fantastic. Dealers got a chance to meet John and hear him share some stories and just enjoy conversation with a great guy," Kicos said.

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ALL CLIMATE + WIND DESIGNER SERIES OLEFIN HD™ RV COVER

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NEXT GENERATION RV FABRIC OLEFIN HD™



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Allows for easy covered access, regardless of door position

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Conforms cover to the shape of the RV and minimizes wind impact to cover



AIR VENTS
Help the cover to breathe and prevent mold & mildew



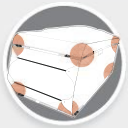
FRONT AND REAR CINCHING SYSTEM
Removes slack & reduces billowing



WEIGHTED BUCKLE TOSS-UNDER
Makes installation a breeze



STORAGE BAG INCLUDED
Protects RV cover from punctures



REINFORCEMENTS TOP & BOTTOM
Protect RV cover from punctures



(4) RV GUTTER SPOUT COVERS
Protects RV cover from punctures

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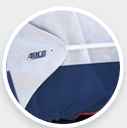




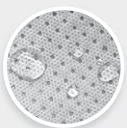
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Removes slack & reduces billowing



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Promotes cleanliness and reduces moisture build-up on the RV



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WEIGHTED BUCKLE TOSS-UNDER
Makes installation a breeze



(4) RV GUTTER SPOUT COVERS
Protects RV cover from punctures

ALL CLIMATE + WIND

3 YEAR WARRANTY

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OEMs rolled out the red carpet in recent months, allowing onlookers to view impressive new models at every turn. Now, RV PRO cordially invites you to the premiere of the 20 Best New Models for 2023.

THOR – Keystone RV

Cougar 320RDS



Product Manager Scott Taylor

Cougars are hot! At least, that's how Product Manager Scott Taylor describes the new mid-profile fifth wheel to join Keystone RV's best-selling Cougar brand, celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

The 320RDS isn't a normal rear-den floorplan. The focal point of its true living room is a giant L-shaped lounge that incorporates a king tri-fold sleeper sofa and two theater recliners, surrounded by nine oversized windows for campsite views. An adjacent free-standing dinette sits near an entertainment center with a TV on a motorized lift and an electric fireplace.

The floorplan's kitchen debuts solid surface countertops that expand when the slide is pulled out, along with pantry storage that tucks into a shelving area suitable for a coffee bar. A 16-cubic-foot refrigerator sits across from a stainless steel undermount sink, paired with a high-rise chef's faucet and sprayer.

The bedroom suite features an optional king bed, large walk-in shower, full height wardrobe and closet with stackable washer/dryer prep. A barnwood-style accent wall behind the bed complements the 320RDS' lighter Amy Gray Signature interior design.



"With the Driftwood décor, the design team took everything owners love about Cougar interiors and brightened it up. Upholstered seating and window valances move to a light stone gray for a refreshing take on Cougar's classic style," the company said on its website.

The 36-foot, 4-inch half-ton model also got an exterior facelift—touting a new front cap and graphics—just in time for Cougar's anniversary. Owners will have Keystone's SolarFlex 200 power solution as a standard with options for higher power, paired with two 100-amp hour Dragonfly lithium batteries.

The Cougar 320RDS has an MSRP of $93,368.



What impressed RV PRO: Lounging is no joke with this floorplan. The impressive living area is a new spin on rear-den layouts. In addition to the innovative use of space within the kitchen and living room slide, attention to detail is seen throughout the unit that shows the Cougar brand's love and enthusiasm for its product. ★

Best New Model

THOR – HEARTLAND RV

DRV Luxury Suites Orlando





Full-timers looking for a true home on wheels can't miss the latest bunkroom floorplan from DRV Luxury Suites—Heartland RV's residential-level brand. The new MS Orlando hit the company's Mobile Suites line with a flipped layout for the new model year.

The front-bunk floorplan features two beds and a desk with space on either side, for RVers traveling with children, homeschooling or working remotely. Toward the unit's rear are hardwood steps leading to the main bedroom with a king-size bed and large bathroom. Downstairs, a living room and gourmet kitchen—complete with a 20-cubic-foot residential French door refrigerator, stainless steel appliances and solid surface countertops.

Coming in at 46 feet long, the Orlando has a GVWR of 24,000 pounds and a dry weight of 20,860 pounds. The company touts its top-selling features as a 15-inch Triple Stacked Box Tube frame and a 3-inch-thick floor, along with thick walls, slides and Gelcoat Azdel fiberglass with a wood back.

RVers will have all the comforts of home full-time with the floorplan's 100-gallon freshwater tank and water filtration system for the whole house. A 125-gallon grey water and 100-gallon black water tank each have power-flush, with SeeLevel monitoring on all tanks. A 40,000 BTU furnace paired with 15,000 BTU air conditioner keep the unit's interior at perfect temperature, backed by a residential five-duct heating system and forced heat ducting to tanks and water systems.

Another new offering in Heartland RV's towable lines is a 360-degree view provided by a camera system from ASA Electronics. The company told RV PRO in September that similar to a Ford F-150 pickup truck, new units will be able to produce the same 3D image on top of the vehicle. The camera system is plug-and-play in GMC trucks, and compatible with a separate monitor in other brands.

"It's a really neat system," said DRV General Manager Shawn James in RV PRO's Open House preview. "At Heartland, we've always been very innovative, so we always want to be that first kid on the block to be the latest and greatest."★





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Visit DRVSuites.com for more information and to view floorplans.



RVPRO Best New Model 2023

Congratulations to DRV Luxury Suites for Winning Best of Show for the New Orlando Floor plan.







Best New Model

THOR - Jayco - Highland Ridge

Roamer Light Duty 234RLS





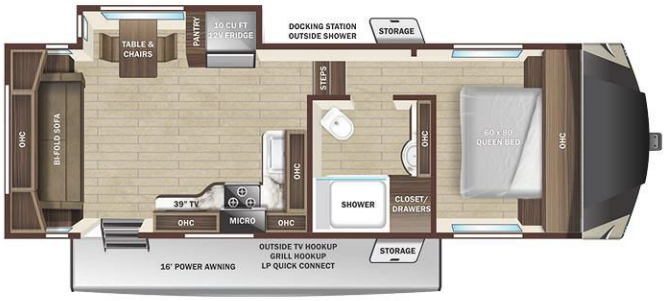


There is heavy interest in lightweight fifth wheels, and Jayco's esteemed Highland Ridge brand is coming out swinging with its new Roamer Light Duty (LD) 234RLS.

The first floorplan to hit Open Range's newest lineup, the unit is a 100-inch widebody build with an impressive pin weight of just 1,210 pounds and a dry weight of 6,900 pounds. Adventurers who frequent national parks and seek the off-grid vacation are who the 234RLS is made for, said Product Manager Jason Martin, who oversees Jayco's Highland Ridge and Starcraft brands. The floorplan's size, with an overall length of 27.5 feet and a GVWR of 8,900 pounds, is designed for the long-haul to those backwoods destinations.

Other features such as 4-point automatic leveling and triple sealed slideouts and corners—with 42-inch deep main slideout rooms—add to this layout's convenience in the great outdoors. Owners will also find home comforts with the unit's 15,000 BTU air conditioner, and in the front bedroom, a residential queen bed. Other features include attic vents, brass hanger bushings with wet bolts and PVC roofing membrane that comes with a lifetime warranty.

The kitchen debuts powder-coated countertops and a 10-cubic-foot, 12-volt refrigerator, which sits near pantry storage and a dinette with plenty of natural light. A bi-fold sofa couch offers additional seating adjacent to a 39-inch TV with overhead cabinets for living area storage. The unit's flush floor slides blend seamlessly with residential vinyl flooring.



On the exterior, TV and grill hookups plus LP quick connect are covered by a 14-foot power awning for outdoor activity enthusiasts. An outside shower and docking station are available on the opposite side.

The floorplan offers even more convenience through Jayco's TravelLINK smart system, which allows RVers to control the awning, lighting, slideouts, heating/cooling and more via Bluetooth from their smartphone.

What impressed RV PRO: With its gadgets, residential features and deep slideout spaces, the weight and size of this fifth wheel is impressively nimble. RVers still get the feel of home with a beautiful kitchen and ample living space, paired with a comfortable queen bed in the front room. Plenty of storage and numerous outdoor hookups will make this unit a hit among national park goers. ★

ROAMER LIGHT DUTY
FIFTH WHEELS

NEW FOR 2023



Our Lightest and Shortest Fifth Wheel to Date

TOP FEATURES

- 100" wide body
- ACCU-SLIDE™ slide system (42" deep 4-corner compression)
- TravelLINK® - Smart RV system that allows for Bluetooth® control of awnings, lighting, slideouts, heating, cooling and more
- PVC roofing membrane
- 15,000 BTU roof mounted A/C

RVPRO
Best New Model
2023

OPENRANGERV.COM

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Open Range
by Highland Ridge RV

Best New Model

THOR – Keystone RV

Passport SOLO Series 15FK



Adventure-ready travel trailers are all the rage these days—and RVers are often used to sacrificing certain amenities in smaller, off-grid units. But for Keystone's new single-axle, that couldn't be further from the case.

The Passport SOLO Series 15FK features a masterful use of space and the unique layout targets a segment somewhat absent from Keystone's portfolio. The lightweight 15FK is the smallest of the new line's three floorplans at 19 feet, 7 inches in length and is expected to be a hit on the road, said Product Manager Chandler Tenney.

The unit's sleeping arrangement is the first impressive use of space, with a road-side Murphy bed built into a slide room. By day, it's a sofa couch with a stored dining table and two drawers underneath, and by night, the couch jackknifes down to a queen-sized bed. Across the way is a mounting bracket for a TV, which doesn't come with the unit, but is built into a "door" that opens to the floorplan's large hidden pantry. Additional shelving offers extra storage space.

A wrap-around counter and Furrion 8-cubic-foot, 12-V refrigerator make the unit's kitchen a focal point, paired with a front windshield for more natural light, a two-burner stove and pull-down sink faucet. Outdoor cooks need not worry—the 15FK also features an outside kitchen with a pull-out griddle, which sits near the 10-foot awning's LED light strip.

The floorplan's large, rear wall bathroom debuts residential-style countertops, a skylight above the shower and a foot-flush toilet, with a medicine cabinet for storage.

True off-griders will love the unit's standard solar/inverter prep, complete with Keystone's 400-watt solar package and 200-amp hour Dragonfly lithium batteries. A tankless, on-demand water heater, ducted AC system with residential filter and 20,000 BTU furnace bring home comforts on the go. The 15FK has 37-gallon freshwater and 30-gallon grey and black water tanks.

Owners of the new Passport Solos can expect a memorable weekend or extended getaway, especially with the series' all-terrain tires, power tongue jacks and four electric stabilizer jacks.



Product Manager Chandler Tenney

What impressed RV PRO: A clever use of space for the sleeping area, paired with an unexpected hidden pantry, large bathroom and big kitchen countertops, aren't the only draws to this lightweight floorplan. The 15FK takes details to a new level in every space, offering families, couples and solo travelers the best, and Keystone a true winner in this segment. ★



Big Adventures

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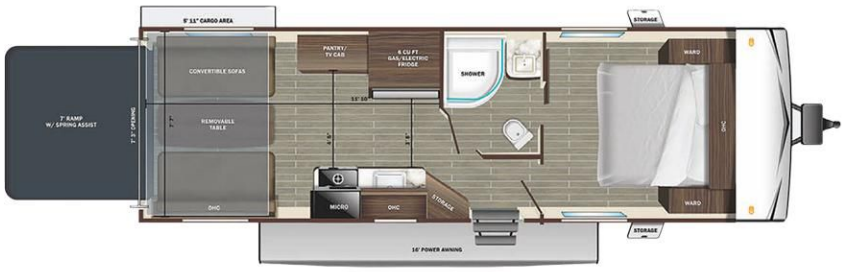
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DEMAND THE BEAR

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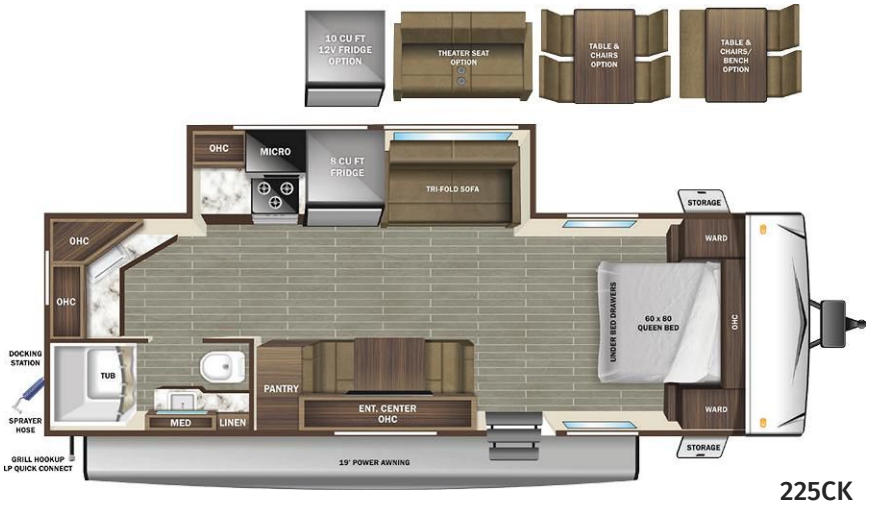
THOR-Jayco
Starcraft



233TH



28BHS



225CK

Jayco's sister brand Starcraft has increased its floorplan offerings for 2023, including the 233TH and 28BHS for Autumn Ridge, and the 225CK for Super Lite

"Everyone is looking for small, especially with gas prices these days. Something you can tow with your F-150 or GMC Yukon," Jason Martin, product manager for Starcraft and Highland Ridge, told us for RV PRO's September issue.

For Starcraft, the new 28BHS will offer a larger stick-and-tin floorplan on the heavier side. The unit boasts a double-over-double bunk separated from the main bedroom, an outdoor kitchen, big U-dinette and jackknife sofa. The floorplan has a gross GVWR of 7,500 pounds and a dry weight of 6,000 pounds, measuring in at 33-feet, 8-inches long.

"It's a little longer for a typical conventional, but it gives you flexibility with more area for movement, storage, wardrobe, entertainment center—its all-around a good unit for a family," Martin said when we spoke with him prior to Open House in September. "If they hit some rain, they can be inside without it feeling cramped. It has a slide-out."

The 28BHS starts at $40,000 MSRP and has a carrying capacity of 1,400 pounds.

The 233TH has an 11-foot, 10-inch garage length with residential-style vinyl flooring throughout and solid, swing down steps at the main entry.

The brand will debut its new 225CK in the Super Lite lineup, offering a lighter-weight coach measuring 26-feet-8-inches long.

Designed as a couple's coach, Martin says the floorplan provides "a lot of floor area and a nice kitchen layout," with a starting MSRP of $43,000.

"Starcraft, on the laminated side, went through exterior changes this year. We went from a silver-gray-brown to more of a white with a new graphics package," Martin says.

The 225CK features an 80-inch residential queen bed, rear and side camera prep roller blackout night shades and the JBL Aura Cube stereo with Bluetooth and miZone technology. ★

Autumn Ridge



3 YEAR LIMITED STRUCTURAL WARRANTY

Similar model shown

Autumn Ridge 28BHS

FEATURES

- PVC roofing membrane - limited lifetime warranty
- Residential vinyl flooring throughout including flush floor slideouts
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- Seamless pressed membrane countertops
- Magnum Roof™ System
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RV PRO Best New Model 2023

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Best New Model

THOR – KZ-RV

Durango Gold G360REQ





While some want a unit for the off-grid adventure, others crave the luxury of a spacious full-time home on wheels. KZ-RV's high-end Durango Gold line is designed to be anywhere at any time, and the new G360REQ doesn't miss a beat on the comforts of home.

The latest Gold floorplan sleeps six people and comes in at 37-feet, 1-inch in length, with a UVW of 11,860 pounds. The unit's flip-up solid steps lead owners from outside straight into a gourmet kitchen, complete with a giant 18-cubic-foot refrigerator, 24-inch oven with a four-burner range, convection microwave, farmhouse sink and a stainless dishwasher. Modern farmhouse cabinetry is seen throughout the unit, paired with three new interior designs for 2023: Barista, Cobblestone and Cher Oak/Hoppy Ash—each complementing the unit's ample lounge space.

Booth seating is situated in the kitchen behind the living room's two theater seats and two hide-a-beds on either side. A 65-inch TV and 48-inch electric fireplace tie the space together, making it perfect for families and couples to settle into.





Upstairs, the main bedroom's electric tilt, king-size bed is a focal point, with drawers underneath and an optional queen-size mattress. A dresser and TV sit overhead across from the bed for optimal views, next to a deep walk-in closet, built-in hamper and washer/dryer prep. RVers will stay cozy with a second fireplace in the bedroom. Nearby, the unit's bathroom dawns a 48-inch by 30-inch residential shower with a built-in seat and glass doors, sitting adjacent to a large linen closet and porcelain foot-flush toilet.

Full-timers will enjoy the floorplan's comfortable 40,000 BTU furnace and on-demand tankless water heater, which keeps temperatures steady to reduce cold spots and scalding.

The new G360REQ, along with other Durango Gold models, comes with many options for RVers wanting more out their travels. KZ's Boondocker Solar System adds eight 220-watt panels to provide 1,760 watts of power, plus a 5,000-watt Victron inverter/charger that "powers everything in your fifth wheel," the company said. The option also includes two 200-amp hour lithium batteries and a solar charge controller.

In terms of modern amenities, KZ was thinking about its end-users with an option for the Durango Desk—a workspace that replaces the legless dining table and chairs. The company also debuted its new pellet smoker and table at Open House.

What impressed RV PRO: This fifth wheel garners the "nicer than my house" recognition with its residential kitchen, spacious bedroom space and a living room fit for full-time travel. The large shower and electric tilt bed make for ultra-lounging, with ample room for storage throughout the unit and many optional packages to make full-time RVing even more memorable. ★

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WE STAND OUT FROM THE REST...

RVPRO Best New Model 2023











KZ is proud of the Durango Gold family, with its luxurious amenities that boast first-to-the-industry options, like the Boondocker Solar System, smoker, and full-timer's desk:

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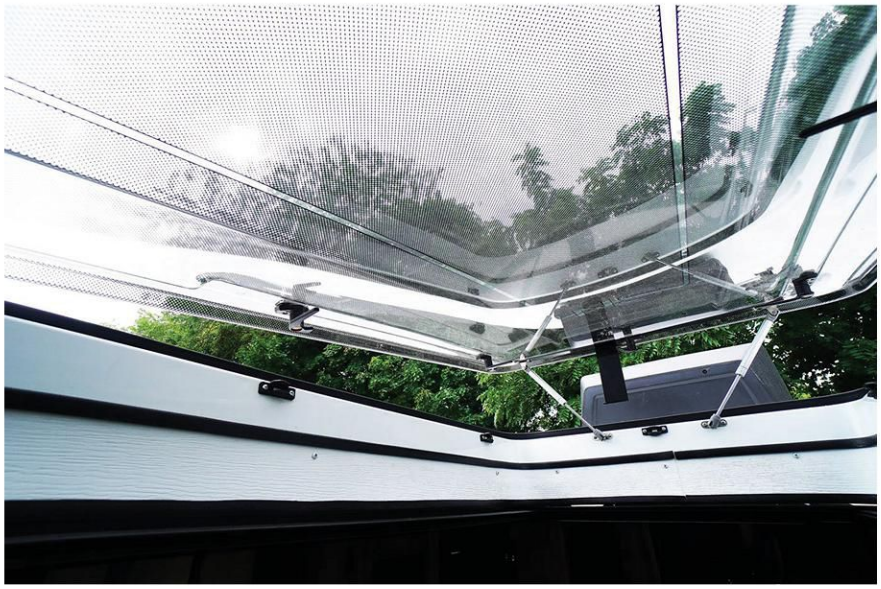
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Best New Model

Forest River - Coachmen

Northern Spirit XTR's Star-Gazer



Now a standard feature for all Northern Spirit XTR floorplans, the Star-Gazer is Coachmen's brand-new skylight.

Measuring 48 inches in length and 26 inches long, the Star-Gazer—developed by Lippert—adds an extra bit of sunlight and fresh air to help open up the interior of the unit.

"The all-new Star-Gazer skylight is a huge and exciting new feature from Northern Spirit that will take the camping experience to the next level," said Coachmen Sales Representative Jake Miller.

"Often times with smaller campers the interior can feel congested with little natural light, but the Star-Gazer will allow you to open up the living space like never before."

In addition to its size, the Star-Gazer's glass is tinted, opens on two built-in struts, and comes equipped with a screen, blackout shade, grab handle and five locks to secure the skylight.

"[The] size of the Star-Gazer will allow you to bring in plenty of natural light, and the two struts will allow the skylight to open and let in a fresh breeze," added Miller.

"For those wanting to keep out insects, or sleep in on the weekends, the Star-Gazer will also feature a screen and a blackout shade that are very user friendly. With the unique features, clean look and simple design, the Star-Gazer will connect you to nature more than ever before."

Standard on all Northern Spirit XTR floorplans, the Star-Gazer will also be an option on Apex Nano floorplans. ★



NORTHERN SPIRIT by Coachmen XTR

STAR-GAZER





RVPRO

Best New Model

2023







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Best New Model

Forest River - Cherokee

Arctic Wolf 3910SUITE





The Forest River Cherokee Arctic Wolf is one of the most popular mid-profile fifth wheels in the country. The 3910SUITE floorplan makes it easy to see why. The 3910 is a large couples coach with a bath and a half and front living room area floorplan. Geared toward a more experienced buyer, the 3910SUITE offers a comfortable living space while at the same time maximizing storage capacity with its unique dual upper deck design.

With a full outdoor kitchen area, the Arctic Wolf allows dealers to show off an icemaker, griddle, fridge and sink all in one area on the entry door side.

"We're the only brand in our segment and price point that has a full outside kitchen with all of the components of an icemaker, fridge, griddle and sink," said Jeff Cripe, product manager.

"The unit comes with a 12-volt residential fridge. We switched all our units over to 12-volt technology years ago to stay well ahead of the demand curve," Cripe said. "Also, new for this year, we have a Girard ondemand tankless water heater, which is typical in higher end segments and was a change driven off customer demand."



Product Manager Jeff Cripe

The front living area is spacious and raised above the kitchen to create a separate living space and a large underbelly storage. It includes theater seating with heat and massage and two tri-fold sofas. The bedroom suite includes a 72-inch by 80-inch king sized bed and adjacent is a Jack-and-Jill style bathroom with a stackable sized washer/dryer prep closet. The rear third of the unit is also on a raised platform, creating an even larger cavern than the front area.

"Privacy to this buyer is paramount," Cripe said. "We utilize our industry changing 'Zebra' shades for light control and have now added RV-45 Eclipse windows.

"The amazing thing about these windows is that they let more than two times the amount of natural light in than traditional privacy glass, while at the same time, reflecting three times more UV light."

The GVWR of the Arctic Wolf 3910SUITE comes in at just over 14,000 pounds with a hitch weight of 2,110 pounds. Dry weights will range close to the 11,200 pounds mark.

"This is a collaborative effort from production, engineering, purchasing, service, design, and sales to create such an amazing coach. It goes without saying that without everyone's attention to detail, this would not have been possible," Cripe said.

What impressed RV PRO: The versatility of the unit at a great price point. The outdoor kitchen allows and extra cooking area and everything about the interior is solid from the floorplan to the décor. Dealers can point buyers to this unit again and again. ★

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Best New Model

Forest River - Palomino

Pause Hiatus XC20.2/XC20.3







Pause, a new division of Palomino, does not take its name lightly.

Intent on providing a rejuvenating retreat away from it all, the new 26-foot Hiatus XC20.2 and Hiatus XC20.3 are designed to help its user take a true break from the daily grind.

With 25 inches of ground clearance, a MORryde articulating hitch (developed specifically for Pause), a MORryde Independent Air Ride suspension and two Bilstein shocks per wheel, the Hiatus XC20.2 has no shortage of capability. Paired with a standard 200-watt Renogy Solar system; 400-amp hour (Ah) lithium battery; and 3,000-watt inverter (available solar upgrades max out at 1,000 watts); plus a Thule legless awning; exterior lighting; and an outdoor kitchen with a fridge, sink, microwave, outdoor pantry, Truma cooler and grill/griddle combo, the new unit from Pause is made for going off the grid.

While the focus is on making the most of the outdoors, the fully insulated interior is designed for efficiency and reliability. Made from a waterproof TransCore composite material, the frame is seamless and built without wood to reduce rot and mildew, a theme that is carried out through to powder-coated, all-aluminum cabinets and solid surface countertops. A full-size bathroom and folding queen bed complete the interior.



Out back, 63 cubic feet of storage is provided and an A-frame storage unit hides two 30-pound LP tanks.

Accessed through a portable tablet and standard for all Pause floorplans, the Garmin O.N.E. Control System monitors and controls all operations, including battery power, tank levels, lighting, heat, A/C, inverter, suspension, leveling, entertainment, navigation and more.

The Hiatus XC20.3 shares many of the features of the XC20.2, including its 26-foot huck bolted aluminum frame, but has been rearranged to accommodate an indoor kitchen, as well as a bar top that converts into a 24-inch by 69-inch bunk for guests.

Aiming to have units commercially available by the end of November, the Hiatus XC20.2 and Hiatus XC20.3 will hit the market with an estimated MSRP of around $132,000. ★



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Best New Model

Forest River

Ozark 2800THX Toy Hauler

New for 2023, the Ozark 2800THX toy hauler punches above its weight.

Thoughtfully designed to maximize its capacity, the travel trailer can carry up to 3,000 pounds and has the garage space to accommodate everything up to—and including—a four-seat side-by-side. Finished with a torture-tested Congoleum flooring and nine tie-downs, durability and cargo security will be an afterthought for most customers.

Taking full advantage of its 84-inch ceilings, a quick folding bunk system offers comfortable seating or accommodations for four, while a standard king-size bed slide and a walk-in closet with washer-dryer prep highlight the front sleeping quarters.

But the key to the design is the kitchen, which still offers ample space while providing the needed area for large cargo. Back-built cabinetry and a rear-facing, dual-swing refrigerator (an Ozark exclusive) free up the area for easy transport.

Outside, Lippert Quick Drop Stabilizers come standard on the 2800THX, a new feature for Ozark's line of toy haulers. Underneath, an AccessiBelly provides easy access for maintenance, which can be further bolstered by a cold weather package, which includes a 12-V, tank-mounted, R-38 heating pad running the length of the tank. ★











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Best New Model

Forest River

Cottage by Cedar Creek 40CDL



A true home away from home, the 40CDL Cottage by Cedar Creek is designed with family in mind.

Accessed through a sliding glass door, the 40-plus-foot fifth wheel will impress customers with its spacious interior and premium finishes.

Perched above the rear of the unit with a view of the kitchen, the destination trailer's signature loft provides space (and some privacy) for three bunk mats, as well as plenty of extra storage.

Below, a sizeable island with an optional dishwasher extends even further for additional eating space, thanks to its fold-down counter, while a hide-a-bed sofa, power theater seats and a swivel-mounted TV and fireplace round out the living room. Residential appliances—the oven is large enough for a standard cookie sheet, according to Cedar Creek—and a full pantry provide ample storage and prep space for home-cooked meals.



A full-size shower, available double sinks and a porcelain toilet highlight the bathroom, while a separate entry leads to the king bed with slide, built-in storage, and available washer and dryer. ★





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Best New Model



Winnebago - Grand Design

Imagine AIM

Debuting first at the RV show in Hershey, Pennsylvania, and then at Open House Week in Elkhart was Grand Design's Imagine AIM—Adventure in Motion. It's the company's first single-axle trailer and has been in the planning stages for a "significant amount of time," according to product manager Eric Landis.

Most of that delay was caused by COVID-19, which forced manufacturers to double-down on production of existing RVs of all types and push development of new products to the side. But a single-axle was never an idea that was going to go away, Landis says.

"We need to have floorplans that range from 3,500 up to about 4,000 pounds," he says, with the intent of attracting the mid-size SUV owner.

The company very deliberately made the decision to put its single-axle under the "Imagine" nameplate, Landis says, adding that it's a name with an outstanding reputation among both consumers and dealers, and the AIM unit fits in with Grand Design's goal to keep first-time customers in the brand for life.

One thing the company did while the AIM was in design phase was to look closely at everything in it—all of the standard features, amenities, everything—and put weight as a priority. Putting weight in front of cost-to-build is not something the company typically does, Landis says, but in this case it was necessary to do exactly that. Too many travel trailers on the market say they're targeting that mid-size SUV owner but in reality, aren't.

"There is zero point of trying to force something into a market if you can't hit the weight requirement," he says.

In large part that starts with the walls. The interior, sidewalls and rear walls are all built with Azdel, which is about half the weight of wood at the same thickness. Not only is it lighter, which then increases fuel efficiency, but it doesn't allow for mold, mildew or warping at all. It also has superior sound absorption and thermal insulation.



And the AIM takes the "Adventure" part of its name seriously, with a 200-watt solar panel and 30-amp charge controller that will serve campers well who decide to go off-grid for a time.

One of the first things potential buyers will notice in getting in the AIM is its 8-foot width—standard for a Grand Design trailer. Wider than the industry standard, the extra space allows for someone to be cooking at the stove, for example, and people to be sitting comfortably at the dinette table behind the chef.



And the galley sink in the AIM is noteworthy, Landis said.

"It's been a norm in the industry for single axles that you wouldn't have a dedicated sink and a lav," he says, which is exactly what the AIM has.

The AIM's kitchen also features a double-door, 12-volt refrigerator.

Other highlights include a four-seasons protection package with a double-insulated floor and underbelly, double-insulated roof and insulated slideroom floors; an Evenflow heating system; real-time diagnostics through Compass Connect; an all-in-one utility station; tankless water heater; an outdoor griddle and a power tongue jack.

This particular model—the 15RB—had a Murphy bed in the front, while other floorplans featured a queen bed up front and, for the bunkhouse, a smaller bed and flip-top bunk in the back.

Expect a fourth floorplan by January of '23, Landis says.

Now that the AIM's delay is in the rear view, Landis says he's excited for Grand Design's dealer partners who didn't get a chance to come to Open House.

"It better not be that one item that separates us," Landis says. "It better be those 20 or 30 little things that create value." ★

Best New Model

WINNEBAGO

Solis Class B

The family-friendly Solis camper van from Winnebago recently added an exclusive, limited-edition floorplan to its Solis lineup. The Solis NPF with a variety of exclusive features continues the brand's partnership with the National Park Foundation.

"This is a great chance for us to show them off to the industry and to vendors and suppliers and other dealers," Kelli Harms, marketing manager for Winnebago, said in RV PRO's September issue.

In addition to the custom exterior graphics and an exclusive interior, this 19-foot, 9-inch camper van comes standard with the pop-top sleeping and FROLI Sleep System (option to remove pop-top available).

The Solis NPF edition, available for consumers this fall, also features a variety of backcountry features like an overland-style drawer system, upgraded stylized wheels, all-terrain tires and suspension to round out the exterior enhancements.

The floorplan includes Solis staples like the removable pedestal table, wet bath, murphy+ bed and plenty of storage.

The Solis NPF also features extensive insulation, surf-to-slope inspired zipped air barrier window coverings, interior coach waterlines, a simplified water panel and the Eco-Hot water system. The one-panel solar system is fitted to the roof to help campers stay fueled with power while off-grid. ★



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WINNEBAGO
GO WHERE YOU FEEL

Best New Model

Winnebago - Newmar

Dutch Star Class A



Dealers need to prep their customers before allowing them to walk inside Newmar's new floorplans for the Dutch Star as "breathtaking" is the first word that comes to mind.

The 4071 and the 4370 include a standard Euro-booth dinette facing the patio and an HWH slide-out mechanism above the floor. One available option in some floorplans is a convertible dinette with a rotating table. The kitchen includes a three-burner gas range or induction cooktop, a residential-size refrigerator, and an optional dishwasher. A washer and dryer are also optional.

The four décor choices, furniture packages, window treatments, bedding and exterior graphics are all new, with input from its dealers and users taken into consideration.

The interior features upgraded Lappato floors that have a semi-gloss look. The new models also feature redesigned backsplashes, slide out fascia and new window and ceiling treatments.

For the Dutch Star, the lithium-ion battery by Lithionics offers a battery system with two 320-amp battery packs.

Flashy new features include a 9-inch monitor screen and radio in the dashboard, and the exterior front and rear caps also have new designs, in addition to new exterior graphics and color schemes. The seals on the baggage doors have been changed to make them come down easier. ★







RVPRO
Best New Model
2023

A MEDIA DARLING, TOO.

The Dutch Star is the #1 best-selling Class A diesel coach on the market today. More than that, 4370—a forty-three-foot rear-bath floor plan—was just awarded Best New Model by RV Pro magazine. All-new for 2023, the Dutch Star has freshly designed interior and exterior styling and innovative technology like Apple CarPlay® and an optional lithium-ion battery system. Ready for a closeup? **Get a look at newmarcorp.com.**

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Best New Model

REV Group - Renegade RV

Valencia Class C 36SB

When RV PRO spoke with Dwayne Kazmierczak, Renegade RV's director of sales and marketing, for the September issue, he told us: "Our Valencia is getting a facelift inside and out, plus a new floorplan. That's really going to be our showcase." And he wasn't wrong. The 36SB floorplan has a front entry design with a cabover feature, attention-grabbing exterior graphics and updated interiors.

"It's much more sleek, and more aerodynamic, it has the window in the front, and it looks more high-end," Kazmierczak told us in September.

"The rear cap is new as is the exterior paint. Our matching interior décors have a fresh look and are more contemporary, too."

While touring the Valencia at Open House, Kazmierczak said many younger customers have been interested in their units lately, whereas they used to see mostly customers who were 55-plus. With the upgraded furniture, lighter wood and trim accents, the Valencia is attracting people of all ages.

The estimated MSRP for the Valencia 36SB will be about $320,000.

In addition to a king-size bed, the bathroom is configured with a separate and private toilet and shower, with an accessible sink for others. There is an area for a washer and dryer or that space can be used as additional closet space.

"It's laid out very proportionally for everyday living," Kazmierczak said.

Buyers can upgrade to a lithium battery instead of the standard 12-V AGM battery. There is a 3,000-watt inverter and a second alternator for the engine. There is also an 8 kilowatt (kW) Onan quiet diesel generator, and a 12-V high-capacity ondemand water pump. ★



Director of Sales and Marketing Dwayne Kazmierczak

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Best New Model



REV Group - Fleetwood RV

Frontier GTX Class A

Two years since the pandemic started, more people than ever are still working remotely or homeschooling children—hence the introduction of "the corner office" in the Fleetwood Frontier GTX, Don Gephart, marketing manager for Fleetwood, said during a tour at Open House.

"We took half of that walk-in closet at the back and put in a big window in the sidewall, made a place for a 24-inch monitor on a swing arm, added plenty of outlets, and created a wonderful desk area for a laptop and a printer," Doug Miller, Fleetwood RV's product and inside sales manager, told us for the September issue.

"Drawers are large enough for files, and we've got overhead cabinets for other office or teaching supplies. Sliding barn doors allow The Corner Office to be closed off from the rest of the coach, too."

The GTX is available in two floorplans, the 37RT and the 39TA.

"There's nothing we've seen that's ever been done like this," Miller said. "The 37 has a full master walk-in closet at the rear. That's the standard. It's absolutely fantastic for those who want to full-time and want to take everything plus an extra kitchen sink with them. It even includes a hamper."

The 39TA has a single slide on the road side of the coach for the sofa and then a wardrobe slide on the same side. The patio side was left with no slide outs, Miller said, to put focus "on true resort and campground experiences, so the awning stretches out almost the entire length of the coach with plenty of space for chairs and tables underneath."

On the inside, there is plenty of seating room for four people with the Adap-Table dinette, Gephart said, which is offered standard.

"That allows that dinette to do a bunch of different things, including the ability to be stowed, giving you a lot more floor space inside the coach," Miller said.

There is also a full bathroom in the middle of the coach for guest access and a north-south facing bed, plus doors that open for the washer and dryer that can be tucked away, Gephart explained. ★



Marketing Manager Don Gephart





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The Corner Office™, exclusively featured on the Frontier GTX 37RT

FLEETWOOD RV

Best New Model

Ember Overland 221 MSL Travel Trailer



One look at Ember's new 221 MSL and the RV PRO staff knew it was a sure-thing for the Best of Open House list. The flex space is awe-inspiring with its single over single bunk beds held in place by an E-Track system. Move the top bunk up and lock it in place, pull up a chair and the bottom bunk can become a desk—with a view. At the rear of the 221 MSL, a baggage door can be opened to reveal an open-air option, which can also be screened, so that a remote worker or homeschooled child can enjoy the outdoors and the breeze while at work in the flex space. And, when the space isn't being used, a kayak can fit along the floor of the rear space.

In addition to this sleep area, the improved murphy bed space is a residential-size queen with cubbies tucked in the back that feature lighting and storage for sleepers. Other features, such as light dimmers and an optional rooftop tent, take the travel trailer to the next level for campers.

"We want to build you an RV that lasts, that continues to let you make memories," said Ember co-founder Ashley Bontrager Lehman during a tour of the travel trailer in Ember Trails, a "campsite" next to the company's headquarters in Bristol, Indiana.

This was Ember's second Open House Week, and Bontrager Lehman and Chris Barth, vice president and chief operating officer, told RV PRO for the September issue they were excited to be able to get their products in front of dealers who hadn't had the chance to see them.

"Our product has kind of been in continuous development since we began," Barth said in the September issue. "We were really in the mode of—this year so far—continuing our launch and getting to the first floorplans that we planned out; that took quite some time."

Both industry veterans, Barth and Bontrager Lehman set out ahead of opening day in 2021 to build what they call a different kind of RV company. ★



Ashley Bontrager Lehman and Chris Barth



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Best New Model

Alliance RV Paradigm 395DS







Alliance RV introduced a new Paradigm fifth wheel floorplan at Open House at their campus just down the road from the RV/MH Hall of Fame.

The 395DS is a double suite floorplan that made its debut at the Hershey show and received a strong response, according to General Manager Jeremiah Dumka.

"It's our first double suite floorplan. It's going to be popular with couples with in-laws or couples with older children that don't want to put them in a typical bunkhouse," Dumka says. "There are double suites out there but no one else has this one. Dealers have come in and say this is the best unit they have seen at the show so far."

"We have an all-new look on the interior with the wood grains. We have had overwhelmingly positive feedback from dealers, and we are really excited about it. MSRP will be [in the] $105-$120K range. Nobody has done this floorplan with what you get at this price point," Dumka says.

The 395 DS has a 20-cubic-foot, 12-V fridge by Thetford, and it comes with a super solar-plus option that has 320-watt panels and a 20-amp charge controller.

Alliance also added full-body exterior paint to capture a particular price point.

"We limit our options, so dealers don't have to worry about which options to get, so if they have one on their lot, they don't have to worry about the consumer coming on their lot and wanting the other version," Dumka says.

The GVWR is 16,800 pounds, but the axles and tires can be upgraded to give the 395DS a total GVWR of 18,000 pounds.

The cross-sectional seating area lends itself to conversation and the entertainment comes with a huge TV. Finally, the 395DS comes with a queen bunk above the queen suite.

What impressed RV PRO: The Paradigm DS395 not only provides a king and queen suite on opposite ends of the unit, but there is also a ladder leading up to a queen-sized bunk. The interior is spacious, and the living room area allows folks to visit while watching a movie or game and not be so spread out. The full-body paint on the exteriors has this unit looking sharp. ★



General Manager Jeremiah Dumka

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Best New Model

Gulf Stream Coach Ameri-Lite


Chairman of the Board, President and CEO Dan Shea

Gulf Stream Coach decided it would do something special for Open House Week this year. Not only was it the first Open House since 2019, but it also happened to be the manufacturer's 40th anniversary of doing business.

Jim Shea started the company and, today, his son Dan Shea is the company's chairman of the board, president and CEO.

"He is here every day," says Paul Campbell, director of marketing for Gulf Stream. "Still makes all the decisions on design, still very hands-on, very active."

What better way for the company to celebrate its ruby anniversary than to create a special 40th Anniversary Edition of its popular Ameri-Lite line? Some of Gulf Stream's models date back farther, Campbell said, but the Ameri-Lite is a perennial best-seller because of its shelf life, its heritage and its resale value when owners decide to sell.

"It's built on conventional construction," Campbell says of the 40th Anniversary Edition. "But we've taken that further [with] components, accessories and features that would normally be ala carte options."

Those include theater seating; solid-construction countertops; a free-standing dinette; stainless steel appliances; laminated floors; a farm sink with swivel faucet; a TV wall with fireplace and surround sound; roller shades, instead of blinds, for privacy; and an enclosed underbelly.

"We tried to go for a very family-style look," says Dan Shea, who attended Open House. "We looked at this and said, 'Let's do something that's very broad-based, that people can look at and afford to buy.' We have pushed this 40th anniversary [package] into smaller units as well."

As the founder's son, Shea's ties to the company run as deep as they possibly could. In fact, one of his earliest professional memories is from when he was in college and one summer he towed around the second trailer Gulf Stream ever built. He took that 33-footer to dealers all over, he says, seeking input and gauging their reaction.

"We didn't have any dealers at the time," Shea says. "The industry was a lot smaller back then."

The feedback he got on that trip still matters a lot to him today, he says, referencing a recent Gulf Stream owners rally at company headquarters in Nappanee, Indiana, this year.

"I always have enjoyed that part of the business," Shea says. "Getting feedback from our customers, getting to know them and then bringing those ideas back to the design team."

To say Gulf Stream Coach is fiercely independent would be an understatement, according to Campbell.

"Gulf Stream has found a real successful position as an alternative to the corporate giants," he says. "We don't share designs across companies like the big boys do. We don't share salespeople, customer service, any of those things."

Campbell also notes that Gulf Stream makes all of its own laminated walls and all of its own cabinetry.

"Because of demand, we've just doubled our laminated wall capacity," he says.

The travel trailers getting the limited-time 40th Anniversary Edition upgrade range from 26 feet to 40 feet and will encompass at least a dozen floorplans, the company says. ★





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Best New Model

NuCamp Barefoot



After a COVID-caused delay of two-plus years, the nuCamp Barefoot Camper is finally on the cusp of coming to market.

The Barefoot is the creation of English businesswoman Cathy Chamberlain, who is managing director of British-based Barefoot Caravans, which began producing the compact towables in 2015. In 2019, nuCamp announced an agreement with Chamberlain in which nuCamp would have the exclusive North American rights to manufacture and sell the Barefoot in this country.

"We have had thousands of inquiries from the U.S.A. and Canada and wanted to find a partner to meet that demand," Chamberlain said at the time the agreement was announced. "We are delighted to be working with nuCamp—they share our same work ethics and quality standards. We know they will do a great job."

The Barefoot's core is a seamless one-piece solid fiberglass shell, unlike other fiberglass campers traditionally manufactured in multiple pieces. For nuCamp, it's a perfect fit between its popular teardrops, for which the company has long been known, and its relatively new Cirrus line of truck campers.

When the prototype shells for the Barefoot were sent across the pond to the U.S. in early 2020, they were sent to nuCamp's fiberglass manufacturer in Michigan to begin the reverse engineering process as there were no CNC files, according to Nathan Wagler, nuCamp's chief operating officer. The Barefoot, after all, was designed to be sold in the U.K., and "everything was on the wrong side."

"We had to go through the process of mirroring the unit manually through the fiberglass process," Wagler said.

Unfortunately, those first shells arrived in Michigan in April 2020, just weeks after COVID-19 turned the world upside down. It wasn't long before Sugarcreek, Ohio-based nuCamp, like all manufacturers, was doing all it could to supply its dealers with product, as having a bed on wheels quickly became a newly discovered pleasure for tens of thousands of Americans.



Meanwhile, mandatory shutdowns in Michigan caused work at its fiberglass partner there to stall. While that delayed the progress of the Barefoot, the company stayed plenty busy keeping up with demand for its other towables.

When its fiberglass partner eventually got rolling again, prototypes were built and shared with select dealers and industry professionals. The company's engineers had basically redesigned the unit backwards from the English version; but that wasn't the only change. Aside from the door being repositioned, air conditioning and electric brakes were added.

nuCamp made the decision to open a sister fiberglass company in Ohio nearer its headquarters to manufacture the Barefoot. That decision also led nuCamp to convert all of the open molds to closed molds—which results in uniformity both in shape as well as weight.

The end result was the cute-as-a-bug, seaglass-blue colored unit that the company brought to Open House Week.

It falls in the low-2,000-pounds weight range, Wagler said, so it can be towed by a mid-sized SUV. It comes with the Alde hydronic heating system, which is a staple of all nuCamp products, he added.

The final product also comes with real-wood cabinetry with soft-touch laminate; a wet bath in the rear of the unit; a glass-top sink and stove to add extra counter space; and dual-pane acrylic windows, another standard across all nuCamp lines.

Production is expected to begin within a matter of weeks, Wagler said.

"It's exciting to see the finish line because it's a project that's been with the company, with the team, for nearly four years," he said. "The end of what's been a marathon of a process."★



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Lighting That's in Your Control



With different color options, dimmers and the ability to light up every nook and cranny, ITC has taken RV lighting to another level.

BY JENNIFER KING



Controllable lights, such as those with dimmers and color options, have recently been very popular.

The best way that ITC employees have found to remain innovative in competitive markets is to put themselves in the end user's shoes.

"If I was an RV owner, what would I want," James Nowak, ITC's RV business manager, poses hypothetically.

With a long history in the RV and marine markets—ITC was founded in 1982—the company is known as a place where someone can come in with a concept or specialized need and the ITC team will collaborate with the customer to make it happen.

"We're the ones people come to in the RV and marine industries when they want something different," Nowak says.

ITC's core products include RBG(W) lighting, light control, DC power and charging solutions, vehicle components and accessories, global manufacturing and distribution, and design and engineering.

"We do everything from courtesy, flexible, exterior and overhead lighting to controllable RGBW and addressable lighting along with the control systems to operate these," Nowak says.

ITC works with many OEMs in the industry; there

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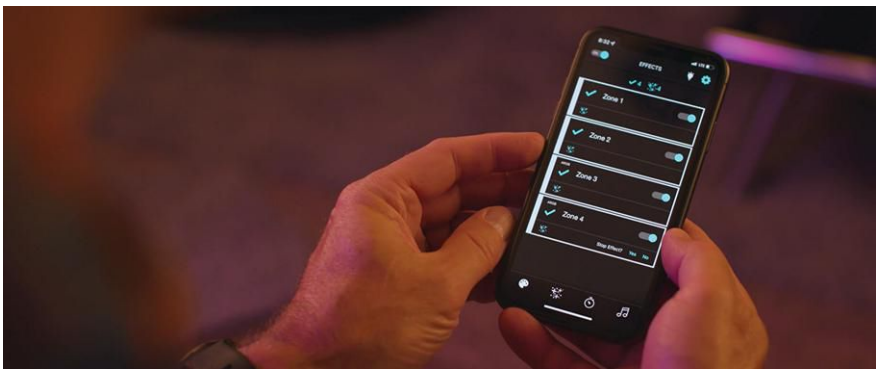
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are approximately 200 RV customers the company works with in the United States, Canada and beyond, Nowak says.

"You name a well-known RV manufacturer, and we are most likely working with them," he says.

Recently flexible lights, such as those used around bed frames or the toe kick areas under kitchen cabinets and more, have been very popular. This lighting emits a warm atmosphere when, for example, it is used on upper cabinets behind the crown molding to create ambient lighting on the walls, Nowak says. The popularity of being able to control such lighting with dimmers or with varying colors has had mass appeal.

"You can use your imagination and do nearly whatever you like with the controllable light options available today," he says. "We've been doing this for some time in marine, and it's been wildly popular."

Nowak says there's been a change from OEMs that have been building with the use of decorative lights such as pendant lights and sconces.

"We've watched it over the last four or five years, and a lot of OEMs have looked into putting overhead lights in those spots," Nowak says. "It's about cost savings overall."

While decorative lights are still desired in the high-end Class As, Nowak says it's the costs associated with tooling the lights, storage space, and shipping costs and/or delays that have made them harder for OEMs to use.

Putting the User in Control

What is incredibly popular right now is controllable lighting—specifically technology that allows users to control lighting from their fingertips.

"We are seeing a lot of end users these days looking for technology—they want the same options as they may now have in their residential homes and vehicles," Nowak says. "It's the control—setting timers, dimmers, colors.

"They want it available on their smart devices so they can control it outside the unit or away from the unit. They want what they have at home."

Nowak says this level of control used to be seen as a luxury item in the RV industry, but now it's become part of the norm—it's a standard feature that customers expect. ITC has a lighting app, but they are working with OEMs and other groups in the industry to standardize the communication between the smart systems that are used in each unit across the board.

"There are already a large number of OEMs and suppliers such as us that are working on this," Nowak says, "Making all the lights and the central control system speak the same language."

ITC has already been a part of making this standardization—or one common "language"—a reality in the marine market and Nowak says they have seen a lot of success there.

"By 2023, we'll be well on our way to have these plug and play," he says.

More Than Just Lights

In addition to overhead, courtesy, reading lights and more, ITC features a number of products for the RV industry outside that arena including drink holders, cabinet hardware, multiple solutions for charging phones or other smart devices, assist handles and table systems. The ability to maneuver a table in a unit is an added convenience for any RV owner. The company's Rectangle Tabletop, for example, can be removed easily and comes with illumination capabilities and different colors/finishes.

Nowak says articulating tables systems that allow users to swivel and rotate a table as needed have been very popular—as have the color and light control options for these table systems. Next year the company will introduce an additional MOD table system that not only articulates and swivels, but can mount on the wall and floor, and can be tilted in 15-degree increments all the way to 90 degrees.

"You can lock it in place, so it won't swing around during transit," he says. "There's a lot of convenience options these days." RVP

Company Facts

ITC

Headquarters: Hudsonville, Michigan

Founded: 1982

Focus: RBG(W) lighting, lighting control, DC power and charging solutions, vehicle components and accessories, global manufacturing and distribution, design and engineering

Industries: RV, marine, automotive, specialty vehicles, workplace, architectural

Interesting fact: Automotive lighting is a growing market, with Nissan and Subaru as current customers, says James Nowak, ITC's RV business manager.

Sustainability at ITC

ITC's website includes information on how the company seeks to reduce energy use in a number of ways. Those include:

- Using energy-efficient LEDs in offices and warehouses
- Hosting a robust recycling program for employees that includes glass bottles, cans, paper and plastics
- Transitioning from foam dishware to biodegradable paper products in offices
- Reusing label paper and packaging in the China production facility to recycle approximately 3,500 pounds of material per year
- Installing a water recycling system in the testing facility, reducing water consumption by approximately 40,000 gallons per year



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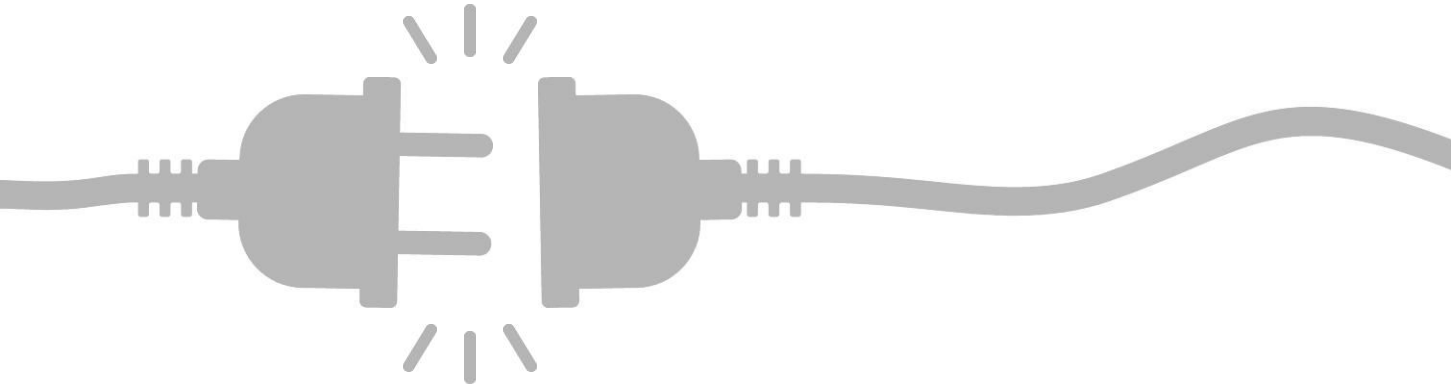
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PLUGGING IN TO THE POWER OF THE INDUSTRY

POWERMAX CONVERTERS got its start as an aftermarket product, and then caught the attention of OEMs.

BY MIKE HARBOUR

DOING SOMETHING RIGHT often does mean doing it yourself, so that's exactly what Errin Tribble did when he founded PowerMax Converters more than a decade ago. Today, with a presence in 20 different industries and thousands of customers later, it's clear the company is indeed doing something right.

The majority of the Florida-based company's business comes from the RV aftermarket and OEMs, perhaps not surprisingly as Tribble was born and raised in Middlebury, Indiana. Growing up in the center of the RV universe meant it was almost inevitable he'd be involved with the industry one way or another.

"As soon as I got out of Goshen College, I went to work for a company called Todd Engineering in 1999. They made converters and transfer switches back in the day," Tribble says. "They started having some issues and a company called IOTA came in and bought Todd Engineering. IOTA actually kept me on, so I worked for them doing converters for about 10 years.

"That's when I decided I had been doing converters long enough that I could give it a shot to do it myself. I started my own company, PowerMax, in 2010 and moved down here to Florida."

While escaping northern Indiana's gray winters isn't uncommon, the way PowerMax grabbed market share is, he says.

"I actually went after the aftermarket before we even had any OEM business. We kind of went the opposite way of most companies because most go out and pick up the OEM business and that catapults them into the aftermarket," Tribble says.

"We did it backwards. We went after the RV dealers and then the dealers got back to the OEMs and said, 'hey, this company makes a pretty good product and you guys might want to spec them in.'"

PowerMax offers a broad line of electronic products, including converters, inverters, battery chargers and even an innovative wireless power center. The key, according to Tribble, was finding a proper distribution method, but in those early days, PowerMax was a latecomer to the converter game, so working directly with wholesale customers was the only avenue.

> We went after the RV dealers, and then the dealers got back to the OEMs and said, 'Hey, this company makes a pretty good product, and you guys might want to spec them in.'

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"We sent a lot of emails, mailed flyers, made a lot of phone calls and really started to grow our aftermarket business dealer direct. Derema Group got ahold of us a couple of years back and said, 'Hey, we're starting to see your product more and more. Is there a reason you're not going through distribution?' We said, 'Well, when we tried, they basically said thanks, but no thanks.' Derema said, 'Well, we can help you with that.'

"Derema took our line on and now they've got us into almost all of the distributors and Derema's done a heck of a job for us," Tribble says.

With no lack of competition, Tribble and his team of 11 strive to make innovation a PowerMax hallmark.

"In the last 22 years, a converter has really worked the same way all along," he says. "All of our converters can charge any type of battery, so whether it's lithium, AGM, flooded lead acid or gel, you can actually adjust our unit to match any battery type. With a lot of our competitors, you would have to buy a new charger if you got a lithium versus something else.

"We're always trying to stay ahead of the curve and see what battery technology is coming out and work with the battery acturers to find out exactly they think is best to charge their eries."

ince PowerMax products are made rseas, the challenges that came th the COVID-19 pandemic were a rude awakening.

"When China shut down right after t happened, we didn't really know when they were coming back, and with the way you buy stuff from China, obviously, you don't just place an order and get your stuff a week later. It's months out," Tribble says.

"That showed how us how vulnerable we are to China because there's so much stuff here in the U.S. hat we import from there.

"What we ultimately did was—because we started to run super low on inventory waiting on them—increase our stock levels that we keep in the U.S. Before COVID, we would keep about a two-month supply here; now we're actually keeping about an eight-month supply just in case anything happens."

PowerMax contracts with two plants, one in China and the other in Taiwan, but Tribble wants to decrease his dependence on Asian manufacturing.

"COVID did teach us a pretty valuable lesson about what we're keeping in inventory and then that actually made us think about trying to bring some stuff back to North America, so we're actually in talks with a couple of factories in Mexico to build stuff there," he says. "We would love to build stuff in the United States, but it's just so expensive with our type of product to actually build it here. Bringing it to Mexico is definitely on our mind right now."

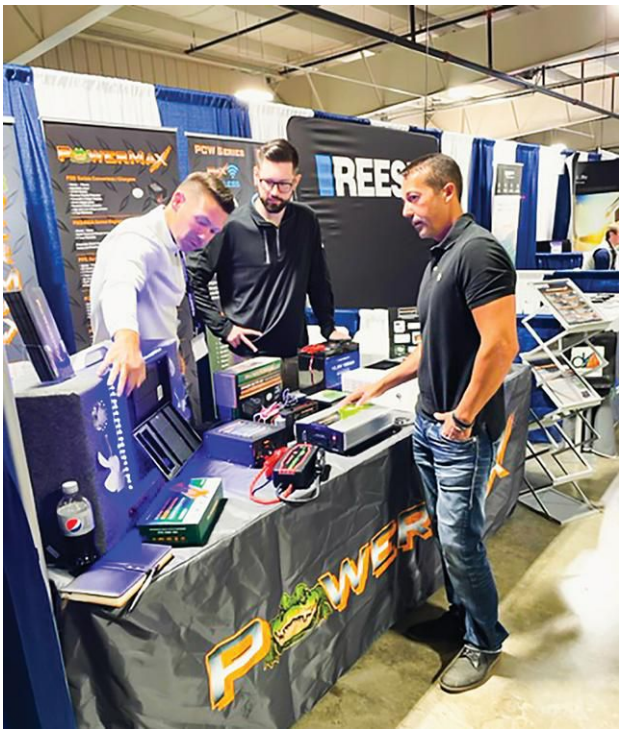
COVID notwithstanding, Tribble has been happy with the products coming across the Pacific.

"Quality is our biggest thing. At the end of the day, nothing will kill you faster than warranty claims. We stay on top of the quality," he says.

"If you would ask some of our customers, especially in the RV aftermarket, what the biggest and best thing about PowerMax is, I think they would talk about our customer service. We take care of our customers and we stand behind them 100%. If someone has a bad unit of ours, we make sure they have a brand-new one within two days."

PowerMax can do that, according to Tribble, because its quality is excellent.

"We just don't have a ton of failures. I'm not going to say we don't have our



PowerMax's products were on display at the RV/MH Hall of Fame Suppliers Show in September in Elkhart, Indiana.

> Before COVID, we would keep about a two-month supply here; now, we're actually keeping about an eight-month supply just in case anything happens.

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share of problems. It's an electronic product, so of course you'll have some failures, but at the end of the day, we stand behind it 100%," he says.

It's no wonder, then, the PowerMax PM3-55LK converter is so popular. Tribble says dealers often choose the company's 55-amp model in the aftermarket for its cost, quality and PowerMax's customer service, in place of some standard models.

Another big seller is the new PCW, another OEM replacement product but with a neat twist.

"What that does is it ultimately will allow some of the lower-end stick-and-tin travel trailers to have Bluetooth capabilities at a very reasonable cost," he says. "This is patented technology that we're bringing to the OEM and to the aftermarket."

Once installed, the PCW allows owners to run awnings, slides and lights through an app on their smartphones. That's a convenience once found only on higher-end units.

"We're trying to help out those customers at the lower end where the volume is and give them a great product that's inexpensive but can help upgrade their RVs.

"Again, especially now with the state of the economy and everything else, people aren't wanting to go out there and spend all this money on a brand-new unit. They're going to upgrade what they've got, and this would be a perfect way to make a stick-and-tin more relevant again by adding a Bluetooth power center," he says.

With the economy slowing, Tribble believes new RV sales are going to drop off, but PowerMax is well positioned to take advantage of the situation.

"We have a wide range of electrical products that will help owners upgrade their current unit, and they've got more features and more functions than what the OEM put in there in the first place at a better price," he says.

"Ultimately, I believe that fixing what you have is going to help us more than what new sales would have going forward." RVP



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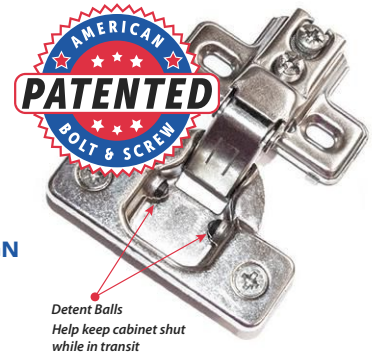
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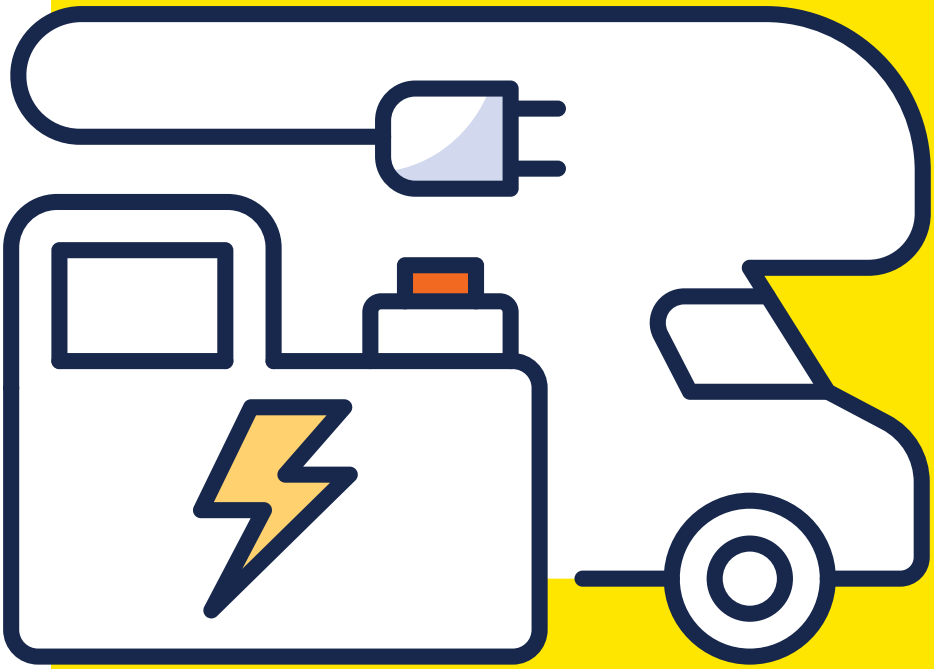
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THE FUTURE OF POWER

Input from seven companies and two organizations on what's next in power, plus insight on how California's EV legislation may affect the industry.

BY JENNIFER KING



What is new and innovative in power solutions for the RV industry right now?

Dragonfly Energy: The RV industry is in the midst of a revolution for power solutions, and it starts with solar and lithium-ion batteries. RVers look for an efficient, cost-effective, and reliable way to bring the luxuries of everyday living to their travels off the grid, and that requires ideal power solutions. At Dragonfly Energy, we're working on power solutions for RV and towable units that expand the way customers can use their units. Dragonfly Energy lithium-ion battery technology offers a 10-times longer life span, three-times the power, five-times the energy density and five-times the charging speed compared to traditional lead-acid batteries that are currently standard in most RVs and travel trailers. This means customers can stay off-grid longer and still have the comforts they desire.

Go Power!: Panel efficiencies are improving, as well as solar charge controller efficiency and connectivity.

Connectivity is getting easier to adopt, which aims to not only improve end user experience but tech support as well with at-the-ready diagnostics and over-the-air firmware updates.

Danielle Ferguson, Brand Marketing Director, RELiON Battery: The RV industry has been one of the quickest to adopt lithium batteries due to the many benefits specific to the RV lifestyle. As the usage by RV users has increased, the technology available within the world of lithium batteries, especially when it comes to how they integrate into the overall power management system, has increased as well. Lithium power solutions that offer the ability to communicate with multiple components are catching the attention of RVers because they're much more capable than your common lithium battery. For example, RELiON's InSight Series batteries are an innovative drop-in lithium solution that can communicate to a common network (RVC) providing the user better visibility into what is happening with their power management system. Another popular solution in the RV industry right now are lithium generator replacement solutions. Many manufacturers had a challenging time getting generators over the last year and had to look into alternative power solutions. As a result, we are seeing complete lithium-ion power management systems being developed that eliminate the need for traditional generators.

RV Industry Association (RVIA): Similar to other motorized industries, the RV industry is currently experiencing varying levels of power systems solutions in our market from packaging of lithium-ion storage systems to the introduction of high-voltage electrified chassis. As with any innovation facing the RV industry, our focus on self-regulation will drive development of standards in these areas. The RVIA routinely participates in committee work with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), American National Standards Institute (ANSI), and Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) on development of codes and standards, to identify a roadmap for new power solutions of industry vehicles.



THE RV INDUSTRY IS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING VARYING LEVELS OF POWER SYSTEMS SOLUTIONS IN OUR MARKET, FROM PACKAGING OF LITHIUM-ION STORAGE SOLUTIONS TO THE INTRODUCTION OF HIGH-VOLTAGE ELECTRIFIED CHASSIS.

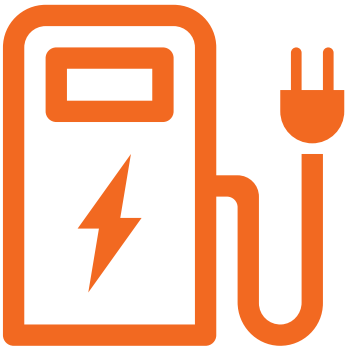
Samlex America: With the increased demand for campgrounds, we're seeing more and more RV customers adding solar to their rigs so they can explore dry camping locations that are more private and secluded. Higher wattage panels are the way to go if you want to maximize your time dry camping—when it comes to solar, bigger really is better. Dealers should make sure they're offering the biggest solar power systems available that can be expanded in the future. We're also seeing power inverters becoming more popular in RVs of all sizes. Everyone has a mobile device, tablet or camera that needs to be charged nowadays, so pure sine inverters are the way to go to ensure you're getting clean, efficient electricity that matches your outlets at home.

Schumacher Electric Corporation: There are quite a few new innovative products being used for alternative power and power solutions in the RV industry right now. Something we are just starting to see is EV chargers for electric RVs. Electric RVs are a relatively new phenomenon, but as car manufacturers are ramping up their development of electric vehicle options, RV developers will likely not be far behind. Products like Schumacher's EV chargers are powerful enough to power and charge an electric RV on the road and can also connect to additional hookups as a power source. In the next few years, we anticipate more EV options for RVs and campers, and we will see advanced EV chargers being used in concert with those. Additionally, another innovative power solution that is trending is the use of lithium as an alternative power source. Lithium battery power technology allows customers to use 100% of their RV battery capacity and offers a clean, quiet, efficient power source for RVs. And with the reduction in the price of lithium power technology, manufacturers can now make it standard in RVs and are starting to. External lithium technology devices are also being used as an innovative power solution in RVs. Lithium-ion battery jump starters and chargers can be used to not only jumpstart or charge RV batteries when they die but they can be used to power additional items such as lights, stoves, grills and other camping equipment. DC to DC dual battery systems also are trending as an innovative power solution for RVs and RV camping trips. Camping is generally done without access

to main power, but modern camping isn't the camping we used to know. Many people have come to expect that modern conveniences are a must, so having cold beverages and modern luxuries like being able to charge phones and laptops is a necessity. All these modern conveniences require power, though. Thus, there is now a massive market for DC to DC chargers that are able to effectively charge and power these devices. For example, Schumacher has two of these dual battery systems, SDC370 (DC to DC 25 amp) and SDC371 (DC to DC 40 amp), that can be used to recharge a second battery to run accessories in an RV/4x4. These are especially handy for vehicles that run a compressor fridge in the back. DC to DC chargers have evolved and have overtaken isolators as the preferred method of dual battery charging. Their innovative design is allowing RV owners to camp and travel without losing access to modern luxuries, and we expect their use to continue rising in popularity.

Bobby Raatz, Managing Director, WFCO Electronics: We are seeing demand for off-grid power systems and components increase significantly over the past two years. As the industry navigates a shortage of campsites due to record-setting RV sales and usage, RVers are finding alternative locations to set up camp with limited hookups to the power grid. This trend is leading to increased energy storage needs and access to the stored power, creating demand for larger inverters, use of lithium-ion batteries, and larger solar power systems. We expect this trend to continue to grow, especially with the RVing experience the younger generations of RV owners prefer.

Winnebago Industries: Enhanced consumer expectations are driving the RV industry toward fundamental technology changes, and the industry needs to keep pushing forward to ensure future RV consumers can continue to enjoy the great outdoors on their terms. Currently, the focus is on alternate power solutions driven by growing interest in electrification, as well as recent and pending legislation. The RV industry needs to consider power solution improvements holistically, including electric propulsion, "house" power generation, and overall connectivity and energy management. Winnebago Industries continues to innovate in this space, producing all-electric commercial vehicle solutions for Winnebago Specialty Vehicles since 2018, and, earlier this year, launching an e-RV concept vehicle, the first all-electric zero emission motorhome from a major RV manufacturer. As the industry introduces more systems, OEMs and their suppliers will need to innovate on the integration of multiple general use components that consolidate ecosystem control and improve the customer experience. More specifically on power solutions, there will need to be innovation around centralized energy (power and load) management and optimization of power and energy consumption. Consumers are starting to expect high-efficiency systems, higher voltage, and larger energy sources as they desire to boondock further and as electrification becomes the norm.



Future innovations around rapid charging will need to be developed to support the overall electrification transition.

How do you see the new ruling in California (to allow electric vehicle sales only by 2035) impacting the RV industry as a whole?

Dragonfly Energy: As for RVs, the regulations require all operations of medium- and heavy-duty vehicles to be 100% zero-emission by 2045, where feasible. The RV industry has work



to do on feasibility determinations, innovations, and, potentially, making a case that electrification is just not feasible for RVs. As for Dragonfly Energy, to ensure needed infrastructure to support zero-emission vehicles, the order requires state agencies, in partnership with the private sector, to accelerate deployment of affordable fueling and charging options. Our business has partnerships to provide convenient stored energy that's ready for use at any time; our batteries are capable of storing energy from solar or other sources to provide charging stations with affordable and ready power.

Go Power!: This will have an impact, but the more recent ruling of banning generators in California 2024(25) is having a more short-term impact. This is leading the OEMs to look at high DC system voltages and working on creative ways to make the RVs more efficient and less reliant on fossil fuels. By 2035, I hope that the technology has advanced enough that we could have a Class B or C or even a Class A be all electric and be able to travel a decent distance when fully loaded.

Danielle Ferguson, Brand Marketing Director, RELiON Battery: The ruling is going to push battery manufacturers to innovate more. It's clear as more states and countries consider and implement these types of rulings, batteries are going to play a pivotal role. This certainly creates opportunity for RELiON, especially given we're already focused on the safest lithium-ion chemistry, lithium iron phosphate.

RV Industry Association (RVIA): The RV Industry Association would always oppose any legislation that would negatively impact only the RV industry. The current law applies to all motorized products. With RV OEMs working directly with the automobile and trucking industries on the chassis they produce, if motorized vehicles are able to meet the target, RVs will as well. Used internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and new ICE vehicles sold in other states would still be allowed to visit California. Our biggest challenge as an industry is how quickly 2035 will be here. As a nation we are not even close, via the national grid or EV recharging infrastructure, to being able to handle an overwhelming number of EVs, and EV RVs that would require extensive infrastructure into the back country.

Samlex: This will be a good thing for the RV industry long term and will drive a lot of innovation in all industries to support this legislation. Samlex products have always empowered our customers to have electricity anywhere and anytime without the use of fossil fuels. We're excited to see more states and nations working together to make positive change in emission reductions.

Bobby Raatz, Managing Director, WFCO Electronics: The key impact we see for the RV industry resulting from the ruling in California will be in the type of RV that will need to be developed to allow EVs to functionally tow travel trailers and fifth wheels. Today's towable RV is not at all suitable for towing behind an electric vehicle. While there is development currently in process to address the needs of electric tow vehicles, a major question for the future of the industry with the affordability of a towable RV that will allow electric vehicles to not sacrifice battery range while towing. While the 2035 effective date is significantly down the road, we are keeping a pulse on the developments and direction the industry is moving in to address the change in landscape. Power systems will become even more critical with the shift to electric vehicles as the need for energy storage and conversion will need to increase. We expect traditional power system components to be part of the industry, however, there will be an overall growth in this category.

Winnebago Industries: The recent California Air Resource Board (CARB) announcement regarding a ban on new gas-powered cars by 2035 is specific to light duty vehicles with gross vehicle weight ratings (GVWR) under 8,500 pounds. Medium (8,501- to 14,000-pound GVWR) and heavy duty (above 14,001-pound GVWR) are currently not planned to be subject to CARB zero emission vehicle (ZEV) standards until 2045. While our current motorhome product offerings are considered medium and heavy duty, certain vehicles commonly used to tow our nonmotorized products will be impacted. Currently 15 other states are anticipated to mirror the CARB-based standards, and these established target deadlines will drive the automotive industry to further develop and refine platforms that comply and meet consumer expectations and demands. The associated acceleration of componentry and technology improvements will be driving factors for the RV industry, ultimately accelerating the growth and commercial viability of electric RVs. It will also accelerate the needed charging infrastructure to support consumer demands of an electric RV experience. As everyday vehicles transition to electric, the prevalence of this power source will become the standard expectation of consumers; an electric lifestyle, regardless of auto or RV, will be the status quo of consumer expectation.

Where do you see this type of legislation heading in the future, in California and beyond?

Dragonfly Energy: California has always been a trendsetter in environmental legislation, and there is no doubt these regulations will serve as a model in other jurisdictions. Just like we saw with catalytic converters,



once manufacturers are producing California-compliant products, it's easier to make those cleaner products available in other jurisdictions.

Go Power!: Well, hard to say, but since I know the OEMs are already looking at California's ruling on generators it could mean a revolution in the way they manufacture and work on making the RVs more efficient. All technologies will need to import. Air conditioners will need to be more efficient. Maybe this is a combination with RV roofs being flat to allow more solar to help recharge batteries. Then the batteries need to be more powerful and more affordable, but hopefully these will all come soon.

RV Industry Association (RVIA): Look for a legal challenge or adjustments to the implementation schedule in the years to come. However, it's clear the conversation around and push towards alternative fuel vehicles is not going away. There are about a dozen or more states that typically mirror what California does in the area of environmental policymaking, especially motor vehicle emissions and overall clean air policy, and some of those states would be expected to follow suit should the legislation carry through. Others will likely reconsider California's somewhat extreme policy and determine what works best in their own state.

Samlex: Similar initiatives are being pushed forward in other states and countries and I think we'll start to see changes happening a lot more quickly now. A lot of innovation and infrastructure development can happen in 13 years with the right support behind it.

Bobby Raatz, Managing Director, WFCO Electronics: The writing is on the wall that the ban on combustion engine vehicles will spread well beyond California into many other states, perhaps even a majority of states. Car manufacturers are quickly moving in this direction to address the expected future of vehicle drive systems. With that being said, there is a critical component to all of this and it lies in the power grid being able to support a mass transition to electric vehicles. There is a need for a substantial investment in the infrastructure of the power grid, charging stations, and campgrounds in order to accommodate the transition.

Winnebago Industries: The electrification transition is one of the largest pivots of technology in a hundred years; there are a significant number of unknowns, and the RV industry needs to be prepared with flexibility and agility as we support a sustainable future.

Already, 15 states are anticipated to follow California's CARB ruling and based on the large percentage of new vehicle sales in these states, zero emission vehicles will likely become the dominant offering. The real question is the overall ability to support the transition; not just EV supply chain considerations on batteries, semiconductors and raw materials; but even more importantly, the country's infrastructure and power grid.



What is a challenge for RV manufacturers, dealers or customers for adopting alternative power sources?

THE ELECTRIFICATION TRANSITION IS ONE OF THE LARGEST PIVOTS OF TECHNOLOGY IN A HUNDRED YEARS; THERE ARE A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF UNKNOWNS, AND THE RV INDUSTRY NEEDS TO BE PREPARED WITH FLEXIBILITY AND AGILITY AS WE SUPPORT A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

Dragonfly Energy: The biggest challenge in adopting alternative power sources is often cost. The investment in lithium-ion batteries is significant, but the benefits surely make that investment worth it. A lithium-ion battery can last more than 10 years, while traditional lead-acid batteries must be replaced every few years. Not only this, but lithium-ion batteries provide more power and allow users to camp off-grid using their rig as much as they would at home or while plugged in to power at an RV site. That freedom and flexibility doesn't have a price.

Go Power!: Weight is a big issue. RVs are also not the most aerodynamic, so trying to build an all-electric Class A with multi ACs, with some actual usable driving range, is going to be a challenge.

Danielle Ferguson, Brand Marketing Director, RELiON Battery: Although the first commercial lithium-ion battery was developed over three decades ago, the use of lithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteries in high-power applications, such as RVs, is still relatively new. Until they're the standard power solution in the industry, dealers and end users are going to naturally have questions or hesitation. Lithium systems contain much more sophisticated technology than lead-acid and require specific components to ensure the battery maintains safe operational conditions. With this comes the need for all customers—dealers and consumers—to be educated on the technology in order to adopt it themselves. Especially when it comes to understanding the application and the lithium battery system needed to support. For this reason, customers should work with lithium battery manufacturers with longevity and expertise. Designing, engineering, testing and manufacturing high-quality lithium batteries requires niche and highly technical expertise,

A MIXED BAG OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE INITIATIVES

BY PHIL INGRASSIA, President of the RV Dealers Association

Changes in tax incentives for electric vehicle (EV) buyers in the Inflation Reduction Act that President Biden signed into law, combined with the recent California Air Resources Board (CARB) decision to eventually sunset sales of gasoline powered vehicles, are significantly changing the business environment for automakers.

Industry Split on Revised EV Tax Credit

General Motors CEO Mary Barra raised eyebrows in Washington by supporting the Inflation Reduction Act, while the Business Roundtable, a corporate research and advocacy group that she chairs, lobbied against it. Some in the auto industry say the new tax incentives in the bill won't apply to many people who would potentially purchase electric vehicles (EVs) or be applicable to many EVs available right now.

The law includes a tax credit of up to $7,500 for buyers of new EVs and hybrid plug-ins through 2032. The bill would also create a separate tax credit worth a maximum $4,000 for used EVs. The credit would be worth either $4,000 or 30% of the auto's price — whichever is less — and the price cap would be $25,000.

For new vehicles, the MSRP sedans must be below $55,000 to be eligible for the tax credit. For SUVs, trucks and vans, that price cap would be $80,000. With these price points, it's unclear how many of today's popular tow vehicles, or for that matter electric motorhomes, would qualify for tax credits.

Another factor in all this is the requirement that the final assembly of the car would need to be in North America. There are also restrictions on where materials for batteries are sourced, and a mandate that a specified portion of battery components must be manufactured or assembled in North America.

CEO of the Alliance for Automotive Innovation John Bozella, which represents nearly all domestic and foreign automakers, outlined the good and the bad parts of the law, from his members' point of view. "The manufacturing tax credits and grant funding will help accelerate the domestic industrial base conversion currently underway," he said. "Unfortunately, the EV tax credit requirements will make most vehicles immediately ineligible for the incentive. That's a missed opportunity at a crucial time and a change that will surprise and disappoint customers in the market for a new vehicle."

New CARB Rule on Emissions

The RV industry heard first-hand in a CARB hearing on gas/LP powered generators late last year that the agency sees its role as pushing industries to go electric. The new CARB regulation will ban gas/LP engines traditionally used in RV generators, starting with the 2028 model year.

The latest CARB rule goes beyond small generators and bans the sale of new internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles by 2035. It's important to note that the CARB rule isn't an outright ban on cars that run on gas. After 2035 people can keep their existing cars, buy used ICE vehicles, and 20% of sales can be plug-in hybrids that run on batteries and gas.

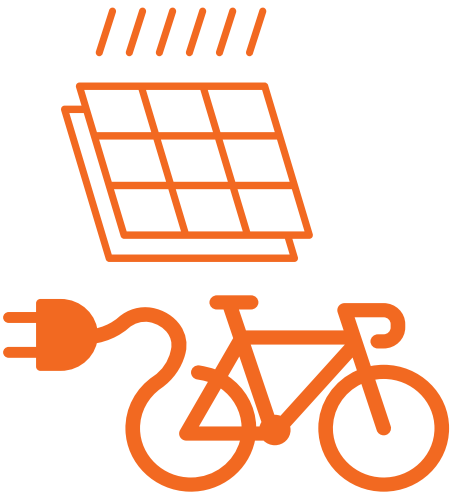
The major automakers, who used to fight California's right to establish its own emissions standards, have changed course and indicated they will do their best to operate under the new rule. However, "automakers could have significant difficulties meeting this target given elements outside of the control of the industry," KIA's Laurie Holmes said. Securing enough raw materials for battery production is just one of the external obstacles that could impact the automakers' plans to increase electric vehicle output.

Over the past year, RVDA's Jeff Kurowski has written extensively in RV Executive Today on how manufacturers and suppliers are developing both EV motorhomes and electric trailer chassis to extend tow vehicle range. With the quickening pace of change in the passenger car and light truck segment, it will be interesting to watch the RV industry's own EV evolution.

skills and experience. As lithium batteries have become more abundant in the marketplace, so too have the manufacturers offering products without the expertise or know-how, making it even more challenging for customers to implement alternative power sources, such as lithium.

RV Industry Association (RVIA): There are many challenges the country faces in adopting to alternative energy sources, but one of the biggest is infrastructure. The issue of EV charging infrastructure was a centerpiece of our Advocacy Day efforts in Washington, D.C., during RVs Move America Week, and continues to be one of our biggest policy pushes. While we recognize and support the move to alternative fuel sources, there is a major need for robust EV charging infrastructure—especially in more rural areas and our national and state parks. Our members are already developing zero-emission RVs, and we need the administration to support the establishment of grant and incentive programs for state and local governments, as well as the private sector, to build a national network of EV charging stations to ensure electric vehicles of all types can effectively be used in private and public campgrounds across the country.

Samlex: The challenge is always to make sure the customer gets an RV and power system that is right for the kind of camping they plan to do now, and in the future. Samlex products are designed to provide electricity and charging while away from shore power, and with the right battery bank and energy storage system RVers can stay off-grid as long as they like.



Schumacher Electric Corporation: There are a few challenges of note that the RV industry is facing when it comes to adopting alternative power sources. In terms of the EV industry and electric-powered RVs, range anxiety is one of the biggest issues that customers face. Range anxiety is essentially the fear that the EV won't have sufficient charge to complete its duty or trip, and it is perceived to be one of the greatest barriers preventing fleets and RVs from going all electric. This is even more prevalent within the electric RV industry, as many consumers fear that electric RVs won't be able to stay charged long enough to handle the longer trips that tend to be taken in RVs. Much more planning is required when routing a trip to ensure one gets from point A to point B in an electric RV. It is likely that this anxiety is part of the reason that we have not seen RV manufacturers coming out with electric RV options at that same rate as other vehicle manufacturers. However, this does provide an opportunity for RV manufacturers and alternative power source providers to educate consumers around solar and how it works for EV charging, specifically how long it takes to charge and recharge items. Further education on this could help solve for customers perceived range anxiety and make electric RVs more feasible. Additionally, the EV infrastructure must be further developed in order for more alternative power sources to be adopted. While alternative power sources, namely lithium ion and DC to DC batteries, are trending because the technology offers clean, quiet, efficient power, there are issues related to cost, chemicals and performance in certain environments.

MANY CONSUMERS FEAR THAT ELECTRIC RVS WON'T BE ABLE TO STAY CHARGED LONG ENOUGH TO HANDLE THE LONGER TRIPS THAT TEND TO BE TAKEN IN RVS. MUCH MORE PLANNING IS REQUIRED WHEN ROUTING A TRIP TO ENSURE ONE GETS FROM POINT A TO POINT B IN AN ELECTRIC RV.

Despite these challenges, it is likely that the industry will continue the adoption of alternative power sources as they do offer environmental benefits, diversify the energy supply and reduce dependence on imported fuels.

Bobby Raatz, Managing Director, WFCO Electronics: The primary challenge currently within the alternative energy segment is the inefficiency of generating energy from wind and solar with a secondary challenge of providing enough space for energy capture and energy storage to maximize the utilization of alternative energy sources. Like all technology, we anticipate there to be improvements in both of these areas moving forward. In order for the industry to be able to take a step forward within this space, there needs to be more education, training, and awareness of not just the individual systems and components, but also on how all of it works together within the RV.

Winnebago Industries: There are multiple hurdles for full adoption of alternative power sources, but Winnebago Industries is committed to clearing those hurdles within its control. Three of these challenges that the RV industry is facing for adopting alternative power sources include: near-term affordability—no different that automotive companies, in the near term, price for such technologies will be higher than ICE/LP counterparts. Regardless, Winnebago Industries has completed significant EV research, which highlights a growing set of early adopters that are comfortable with paying a premium for new technology and who will lead the way, with a larger set of consumers potentially adopting new, alternative house power solutions; infrastructure—infrastructure currently is a significant challenge for all players, not only the RV industry. While recent legislation supports significant investment, the ramp cycle to support EV charging at a similar level to gas stations is years, if not decades, away. Many of the solutions today and those planned are focused on everyday automotive use versus specifically focused on development to support an RV lifestyle. Fortunately, most RV parks have 50-amp chargers, though this still would limit some RV use cases; holistic solutions—Winnebago Industries' research indicates that those consumers that look to buy EVs are not simply looking to purchase electrical propulsion. Their expectations include integrated technology solutions on par with Tesla, Ford and the automotive OEMs. Those RV companies that look to win will need to focus on building an overall ecosystem of technology solutions. RVP





BLACK FOLKS CAMP TOO SIGNS FIRST STATE RV ASSOCIATION AS PARTNER

By Tony Kindelspire

Training will be provided to North Carolina RV Dealers Association members on how to appeal to a diverse community of customers.

North Carolina-based Black Folks Camp Too (BFCT), a company that strives to connect the outdoor industry to what it says is a vastly untapped market—Black people—announced that for the first time, it is partnering with a statewide RV dealers association.

The North Carolina RV Dealers Association (NCRVDA) has signed with BFCT founder Earl B. Hunter Jr. to allow each of its 27 members to sign up to receive training from BFCT to become what's called a "Unity Blaze partner." The Unity Blaze is the campfire image that is at the heart of the BCFT logo, and Hunter said it's intended to be a powerful symbol that translates to, "Treat everyone, everywhere, equally."

"We've had several dealers in the past that have come on board with our Unity Blaze message, but the North Carolina RVDA made it a point to make sure that all of its members know about the Unity Blaze, know about Black Folks Camp Too, know about what we're doing to unify the RV community as we are, and they signed on to be our first RVDA regional partner," Hunter said. "All 27 dealers under the NCRVDA have the potential to be Unity Blaze partners."

To earn that distinction, the dealerships must go through a three-part training exercise with quizzes at the end of each part, and those who pass receive a Unity Blaze flag they can fly outside their dealership, a banner they can display in their showroom and a window decal saying they are a member for that year—similar to a chamber of commerce sticker.

Hunter notes that as a group, Black people have approximately $1.3 trillion in disposable income, so for RV dealers to not be marketing to them is like leaving money on the table. But it's not



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enough just to throw advertising their way—Hunter, as a Black man, said it's messaging that must be delivered the right way, and it needs to overcome stereotypes and beliefs that have been formed in the Black community over time. Like it or not, he said, many people who look like him think that "camping is for white people" or "Black people don't buy RVs."

"Black folks—you don't see us trail running, mountain biking, kayaking, canoeing, etc. … These are things that we as a company are going to combat as we get more Black folks out into the outdoors. It's all-encompassing," he said.

And, he stresses, although "Black" is in the company name, the core message of its mission is one of inclusion.

"When you first look at our company and see the words Black Folks Camp Too, most people assume that all we're talking about is just being inclusive to Black folks, and that's not the truth. We are a very inclusive company in regards to everyone," he said. "We just know we need to get some more Black folks in the outdoors. … The RV dealer needs to understand why that consumer has not come into the outdoors."

That's where BFCT comes in. Hunter and his team have spent a few years gathering statistics and data so they can demonstrate to dealers why many Black people are not RVing. Once they understand the why, then they can formulate a plan, with BFCT's help, to reverse that thinking using the power of the Unity Blaze.

While that's a positive message, Hunter said, taking that message to heart is good for the outdoor industry's bottom line.

"This is not a 'Kum Ba Yah' moment, this is an ROI moment—return on inclusion," he said.

Travis Creech, president of the North Carolina RV Dealers Association and the operations manager at Rex & Sons RV in Wilmington, North Carolina, his family's dealership celebrating 25 years in business this year, said he has known Hunter for years. The two met when the latter worked for SylvanSport, where he got the idea to found BFCT.

"He's a great speaker and the message that he's got here—Black Folks Camp Too and the Unity Blaze—I know it's powerful to him and it's all true stuff," Creech said.

Born and raised in a Southern state, Creech said he's aware of what a delicate topic race can be to some people, but his parents raised him to have a live-and-let-live attitude, and he feels that the Unity Blaze is just a stand-alone campfire symbol and does not mention a specific race on the flag or the sticker to make it more inclusive to everyone.

"I think it's difficult (for some people), but it's only as difficult as you make it," Creech said. "If your dealership is open to everybody, then it shouldn't be difficult for you," Hunter said. "Bringing everybody together at the campground—we all have that goal as an industry." RVP



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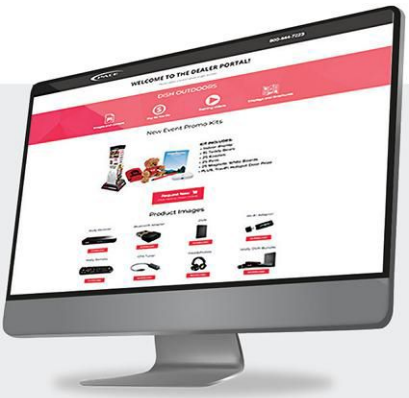
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Special Product Focus

Power Solutions

One thing has taken center stage for weekend warriors and full-time RVers alike: power solutions that support a lifestyle on the road. More end-users are seeking products that help power remote jobs, businesses, homeschooling and extra-long vacations. From lithium and solar technologies to battery monitors, surge protectors and portable power, this month's special product focus highlights what RVers need to power the amenities that keep them going.

For more information on the products in this section, type the web address that appears below a respective product into your browser. Viewers of the magazine's digital edition can click their mouse on any listing to be taken directly to the respective company's website.

SURGE PROTECTORS



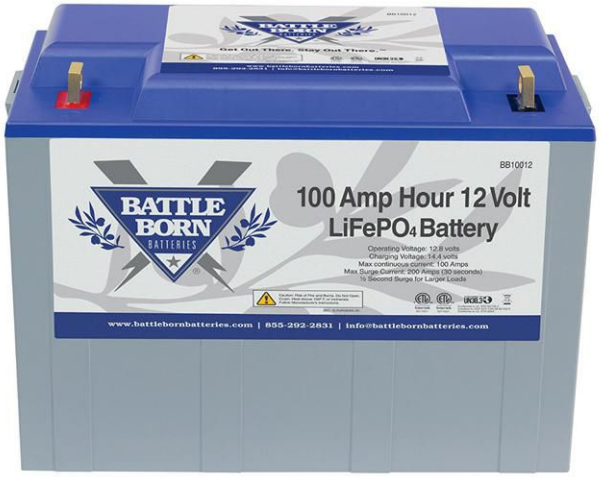
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Battle Born Batteries, Reno, Nevada, presents its 100Ah 12V lithium-ion battery. Battle Born's 100Ah 12V LiFePO4 battery is powerful, reliable, long-lasting and the ultimate drop-in replacement for lead acid. With 100% depth of discharge, 3,000 to 5,000 deep discharge cycles, zero maintenance and two to three times the power, this 31-pound battery is here to take every RVer's experience to the next level. All Battle Born Batteries are backed by a 10-year warranty and an in-house team of technical sales experts who specialize in helping customers build out their ideal lithium power system.

battlebornbatteries.com





ADVANCED LITHIUM BATTERY

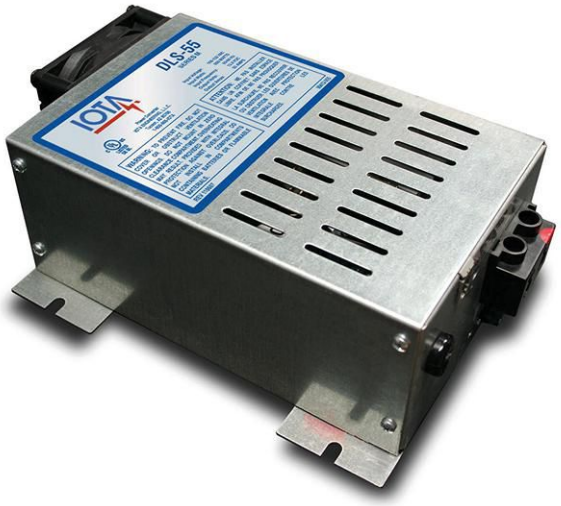
Go Power!, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, presents its 100Ah Advanced LiFePo4 Battery. The new Sun Cycle Advanced 12-volt 100Ah Lithium Battery features enhanced safety and communication. This lightweight, Bluetooth-enabled LiFePo4 battery has an advanced battery management system (BMS), temperature management system, a built-in DC heater and auto-cell balancing for larger battery banks. It can be wired in series or parallel. Electrical Testing Laboratories (ETL) listed to Underwriters Laboratories (UL) specifications and U.K. Conformity Assessed (UKCA) certified. Weighs 28 pounds and features built-in carry handles and mounting options. Comes with a 10-year warranty.

gpelectric.com/advanced-lithium

CHARGERS AND CONVERTERS

IOTA, Tucson, Arizona, presents its DLS Series chargers and converters. IOTA DLS Series chargers/converters are designed for simple installation within an RV to confidently handle RV battery maintenance from plug-in pedestal power, as well as power conversion to DC current to cleanly and safely operate radios, fans, pumps and other DC equipment. DLS models are available to match AC input power and DC output requirements. Optional IQ smart charging accessories provide automatic, enhanced battery charging control for additional protection of an RV battery investment.

iotaengineering.com/products/dls-power-converters-battery-chargers





BATTERY DISCONNECT

Intellitec Products, DeLand, Florida, offers its Battery Guard 1000, an intelligent battery disconnect designed to prevent an RV's battery from draining past the point of operation. The BG1K monitors the battery's voltage levels. Before the voltage level drops too low, the BG1K will automatically warn and disconnect the loads from the battery, saving it for critical functions such as starting the vehicle. The BG1K is available with a push button LED switch that allows for connection status and easy access for manual disconnection.

intellitec.com



LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES

Xantrex, Elkhart, Indiana, offers its Lithium-Ion Batteries. Xantrex Lithium-Ion Iron Phosphate (LiFePO4) batteries use UL1973 certified cells. Equipped with redundant safety features, these batteries are the safest in the market today. Specifically designed to withstand the harsh operating environments of mobile and marine applications, these lithium-ion batteries last up to 6,000 cycles compared to a traditional lead acid or AGM battery, which typically lasts 400 to 500 cycles. They offer exceptional power density and are also available with a heating blanket option if installation is outside the main cabin.

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SOLAR POWER SYSTEM

Renogy, Ontario, California, offers its REGO Series specifically designed for first-timers, DIYers and experienced solar users. The REGO Series is a true plug-and-play power system, where all of the components are made to work together seamlessly, saving users time and stress. REGO Series products make it easier for anyone to add a solar power system to their van, RV or other mobile application, eliminating the hassle of researching multiple components and the complications of a faulty setup.

renogy.com/rego

MOUNTED DUAL USB CHARGER

Magnadyne, Compton, California, presents its AUX-USB-SMACRC—a stylish, black, surface-mounted dual USB charger designed to be mounted on all types of vehicles. This single port type-A and single port type-C USB charger has a power input of 12- to 24-volt and output of 5V/4.8A. Feel protected while charging with the following features: reverse polarity protection, over-charge protection, over-voltage protection, short-circuit protection and overload protection. The cover plate snaps on to cover the mounting screws and there are two blue LED strips that run alongside the inputs.



magnadyne.com



AC SOFT STARTER

Micro-Air, Allentown, New Jersey, presents its EasyStart 364-X20 and X36. The EasyStart 364 is the proven RV AC soft starter that permits two AC units on 30-amp power, one AC on driveway power (15- to 20-amp power) and boondocking on small 2,200-watt generators. With sales approaching 100,000 units, both DIY consumer and OEMs love this product. Now includes the Double Down Extended Warranty: install this product on your AC (six years or younger) and get your customer a free warranty on your compressor motor.

microair.net

TRAILER SIDE CONNECTOR



Pollak, Long Island City, New York, offers its Overmolded Trailer Side Connector. The 14-227, recommended by OE manufacturers, avoids error messages caused by repetitive signals being transmitted via the original units' V-shaped terminals. This connector is a complete solution that features wires enclosed in PVC, built to withstand high temperatures and corrosion from harsh environments, and a flat blade, single-swipe design. It meets or exceeds SAE J560 standards.

pollakaftermarket.com

WIRELESS POWER CENTER



PowerMax Converters, Bradenton, Florida, presents its PCW Series Wireless Power Center, an easy-to-install upgrade that allows the operation of most 12-volt functions, such as lighting, awnings and slide-outs, with the user-friendly app. The PCW installs into any manufacturer's existing Power Center cut-out, and can be installed by the OEM, dealer or end user. The PCW also features eight AC breaker positions, 11 DC circuits, three-stage Smart Charging with over temperature, short circuit and high voltage protection, and is lithium compatible.

powermaxconverters.com



SOLAR AND POWER BUNDLE

Samlex America, Burnaby, British Columbia, presents its Samlex Explore Solar + Power Bundle. Sell more solar by introducing customers to the Samlex Explore Solar + Power Bundle, which enriches adventures by providing the freedom to explore more and stay off-grid for longer. These new Bundles are easy to sell, as a step-by-step guide that takes the complexity out of designing a solar system is provided. Confidently recommend a system that fits a customer's lifestyle, and swap out components if needed. The Explore Bundle includes everything a customer needs to get started with solar.

samlexamerica.com

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BATTERY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

REDARC, Lonsdale, South Australia, offers its RedVision Manager30 Kit that features the RedVision TVMS and Manager30 Battery Management System. RedVision allows control over multiple onboard devices, such as turning lights, inverter, water pumps and other loads on or off. While the Manager30 operates like six separate products, it's both a DC and AC 110-volt charger, a solar regulator, a battery isolator and load disconnect controller. When paired, it allows live battery data, state of charge and storage through the color display or smartphone app.

redarcelectronics.com

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4-STROKE ENGINE

Yamaha OPE, Kennesaw, Georgia, offers its EF2200iS engine that delivers 2,200 watts of power to meet the demands of today's popular RVs and trailers, built with Yamaha premium inverter technology and delivering clean power for sensitive electronics. Yamaha's high-output, MZ80 4-stroke engine delivers a maximum of 2,200 watts of AC output with a maximum AC current of 18.3 amps at 120 volts. Yamaha's Twin Tech parallel function allows two units to connect for a combined power output of 3,600 watts or 30 amps. Retails at $1,349.

yamahamotorsports.com/generator



ADAPTERS



SmartPlug Systems, Seattle, Washington, offers its SmartPlug Adapters. Vehicle owners know they'll always be prepared for any electrical mismatches from the park side pedestals with SmartPlugs' diverse assortment of 4-foot adapters. The SmartPlug adapters are the only adapters on the market that are ETL approved and are designed for a safe, secure and simple ease-of-use experience. All adapters are equipped with a Reverse Polarity Indicator Light System that alerts you if there is an unsafe condition or if the pedestal is improperly wired.

smartplug.com



LITHIUM PORTABLE POWER STATION

Schumacher Electric Corp., Fort Worth, Texas, presents its Schumacher SL1562 Lithium Portable Power Station. Don't get stranded with a dead battery or a flat tire. With the Schumacher SL1562 1200 Peak Amp 12-volt Lithium Jump Starter, users will have all the tools needed to get back on the road. The SL1562 also features a 150-pounds-per-square-inch (psi) air compressor and pressure gauge. It is compact, easy and safe to use. The unit allows you to charge your electronic devices via the 2.4A USB port and includes built-in LED light and heavy-duty booster cables.

schumacherelectric.com

RV SURGE PROTECTOR



Hughes Autoformers, Anaheim, California, presents its Power Watchdog Smart RV Surge Protector. Patented and award winning, the Power Watchdog brand of smart RV surge protectors are now Edison Testing Laboratories (ETL) certified and have a limited lifetime warranty. They have industry-leading joule protection, real-time Bluetooth data and fault alerts, a patented replaceable surge module, and many other features customers are asking for. It also has a replaceable surge module and optional global remote access, so a user can monitor power from miles away.

hughesautoformers.com





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RV SURGE PROTECTORS

Valterra Products, Mission Hills, California, offers its Valterra's Mighty Cord SurgeMinder RV Surge Protectors to protect RV electronics and appliances from power surges, voltage or wiring issues. SurgeMinder analyzes circuits to verify correctly wired pedestal power and identify up to five faulty outlets, with a convenient finger grip. The portable surge protector's indicator lights illuminate power status and alert you to electrical issues, including overheating. ETL listed for safe, outdoor use. Includes an anti-theft lock. Available in both 30-amp, 120-volt, 2,100 joules; and 50-amp, 120/240-volt, 4,200 joules.

valterra.com



100-WATT SOLAR PANEL

Furrion, Elkhart, Indiana, presents its Kickstand Solar Panel. This 100-watt panel comes ready to use. Connect the solar panel to the desired energy bank, find a place in the sun and enjoy the day. The Kickstand Solar Panel makes powering 12-volt devices while camping with clean, renewable energy easy. The company says its solar panels were designed with the highest quality technology available. The high efficiency monocrystalline solar cells optimize sunlight in all environmental conditions. The built-in diodes also ensure high energy output in low light environments. Durable, low iron tempered glass is made to last through weather-related impacts.

furrion.com



PORTABLE REFRIGERATOR

Camco Manufacturing, Greensboro, North Carolina, presents its Portable Refrigerators. Keep your food and drinks cold while on-the-go with Camco's Portable Refrigerators. Just plug them into a standard 120-volt AC outlet or 12-volt DC vehicle outlet and set them to chill between -4 F to 68 F. An LED control panel provides a digital display that is easy to read and adjust. The coolers are smartphone compatible. An easy-to-use mobile app provides remote temperature control, cooling mode selection and more. Three-mode, low voltage protection helps prevent dead car batteries/deep draws.

camco.net



EXTREME DENSITY LITHIUM BATTERY

Expion360, Redmond, Oregon, offers its E360 Extreme Density 120Ah Lithium Battery. Engineered with LiFePO4 chemistry, an advanced lithium technology that optimizes power and performance, the e360 battery strikes the perfect balance between price and performance. Group 27 is available in 100Ah and 120Ah. Users will be able to charge faster, stay longer and go further with this essential RV/marine power upgrade. Capacity is 120Ah, weight is 30.8 pounds and dimensions are 11.93 inches by 6.81 inches by 8.82 inches.

expion360.com



PORTABLE POWER STATION

Southwire, Carrollton, Georgia, presents its Southwire Elite 500 Series Portable Power Station. Southwire's Elite 500 Series runs a 32-inch LED TV for more than nine hours and is perfect for emergency backup power, camping/RVs and remote power. It charges from 0% to 100% in as little as 2.9 hours. Its pure sine wave ensures electronics run properly and are protected with a clean power output.

southwire.com/new-products/southwire-elite-500-series-portable-power-station/p/53252



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Sunflare, La Verne, California, offers its Flex 60 solar panels. Whether looking to go exploring for a weekend, an adventure for a few days or a long expedition to another planet in an electric truck, XPLOR solar panels provide a dependable source of power. Made rugged tough to endure even the most technical trails.

sunflarexplor.com

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LITHIUM BATTERY REGULATOR

AIMS Power, Reno, Nevada, offers its Lithium Battery Regulator 12VDC. The regulator protects batteries by disconnecting the DC source when voltage is out of operating range, preventing over charging when charging with an alternator. If the voltage is within the operating range, power will be supplied to the output terminal allowing power to the loads and if voltage drops below operating range, the power is cut off. The regulator also performs as an isolator by disconnecting loads when the voltage is outside of operating range, protecting the main battery. 100/200A available.

aimscorp.net



12-VOLT BATTERY

RELiON Battery, Rock Hill, South Carolina, presents its InSight 12-volt Low Temperature Series (LT) Battery, a 120Ah powerhouse lithium battery that outputs 160A continuous and offers higher peak discharge. Built specifically to meet the power and energy requirements in RV and marine deep-cycle applications, the InSight 12-volt battery delivers unmatched power and performance. With its higher continuous capabilities, users can run multiple appliances at the same time with just one battery. Featuring RELiON's LT technology, the InSight 12-volt battery can safely charge at temperatures down to 4 F.

relionbattery.com



CUSTOMIZED RV SOLAR SOLUTIONS

Briter Products, South Bend, Indiana, offers its RV Solar Solutions. The future looks Briter with an optimized solar system customized for your RV and travel needs. Because the company makes its own solar and power solutions, they are optimized to work together seamlessly and help users get back on the road quickly. With a power package from Briter, users can boondock all night and still brew morning coffee. Enjoy a Briter future with the freedom, quality and reliability of Briter Products' custom solar solutions.

briterproducts.com/solar



190-WATT SOLAR PANEL

Zamp Solar, Bend, Oregon, presents its Zamp Solar Legacy Black 190-Watt Solar Panel. Perfectly designed for all mobile rooftop solar applications. The Legacy Black Series 190-Watt panels are engineered to be compatible with all 12-, 24- or 48-volt battery systems. Experience a new spin on the company's traditional panel design with increased efficiency providing more output within a smaller footprint. This made-in-the-USA panel also features a sleek anodized black frame, bypass diodes for shade resistance, waterproof quick lock electrical connections and 360-degree Omni-rail mounting system.

zampsolar.com

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Employee Engagement and How To Reduce Turnover

Use 6 key indicators to determine how your team is operating and what barriers to productivity should be addressed.

BY PETER KRAMMER

Countless studies conclusively link leadership behavior to engagement, and engagement to business outcomes. It stands to reason that the greatest effect a leader can have on a team is through the leader's behavioral agility. Even while the notion of leadership styles goes in and out of favor in business circles, one concept has remained constant: leadership style is highly situational.

For the sake of this article, we will focus on two areas. First, "style" will be used as a descriptor of those situational moments, not a leader's comfort zone. Every leader works in a dynamic, fluid environment. On top of that, leaders lead people, and anything can happen with people. A truly successful leader continually experiments, learns, changes and improves their craft and behaviors.

Second, we will discuss leadership "behavior," not vision and strategy. Research strongly suggests leadership behaviors are far more influential on engagement, retention and productivity.

How do you effectively apply the idea of agility to leadership behavior and outcomes, and what can you do about it?

START WITH DATA

The best place to start is to assess the environment, and you should do it through the eyes of your team members because they are the recipients of leadership practices.

The following six key indicators are based on large-scale research and market validation conducted by Vivo Team Development. Assessing these indicators will reflect how the team is operating and what the barriers and strengths are relative to productivity. Within these indicators are measures of competence, motivation and collaboration.

1. Communication—Clear and open communication reduces misunderstanding, minimizes work delays and enhances productivity.
2. Interactive feedback—Ongoing interactive feedback between team members is a basic, essential requirement for improving team effectiveness and performance.
3. Accountability—Holding one another respectfully accountable drives innovation, trust and productivity.
4. Emotional intelligence—Self-awareness and management, empathy, leader assertiveness and social skills are required for building psychological safety among team members, which leads to more collaboration.
5. Structures—Unifying and streamlining work processes builds the foundation for teams that are efficient and successful.
6. Cohesion—Team cohesion increases satisfaction, engagement and collaboration, resulting in increased success and productivity.

ANALYZE THE DATA

What do the measures of these indicators tell you? First, the leader gains a clear picture of how effective and productive the team is, and perhaps where to focus team leadership. For instance, a team with deadline or output challenges might score poorly on work processes and communication. This will guide the leader's behavior to help the team address that particular set of problems.

However, much of leadership is one-to-one, so deciding which leadership style to apply requires an understanding of an individual's competence and motivation on a per-task basis.

DIAGNOSE COMPETENCE & MOTIVATION

Competence and motivation are very different and require different approaches. You must first answer the question: Does this person or team have the competencies required to build on and sustain their motivation?

Competence is about skill—the ability to carry out a task to consistently produce the desired result. But skill is not universal. A person can be highly competent at his or her job skills but have low competence at managing people. An effective leader deals differently with the same person based on their different levels of competence relative to a specific task. Competence is determined by:

- Technical skills that a performer can apply successfully
- Emotional intelligence (self-awareness; self-management)
- Job knowledge that a performer can clearly explain to others
- The ability to collaborate with colleagues and get their cooperation

An individual's technical skills, emotional intelligence, job knowledge and organizational power and/or ability to do the task consistently and well determine the needed supervision. Motivation is task-specific and can be observed by a person's willingness to keep going despite setbacks. It's determined by interest shown in actions, not words; willingness to take calculated risks; a willingness to take individual responsibility; willingness to be accountable to the team.

How an individual meets or exceeds expectations on a specific task, as shown in their interest, risk taking, alignment with company goals, individual responsibility or team accountability determines their level of motivation.

By assessing the six key indicators, competence and motivation, a leader can apply the most effective leadership behavior, or style, to support and direct the team or individual. This is very difficult to do "on the fly." Regularly assessing teams and individuals before problems appear is preferable.

FINDING THE BEST BEHAVIOR

In "Leadership for Einsteins," Dr. Jim Sellner defines two universally applicable sets of leadership behaviors.

1. Showing outlines how to do it, who will do what, by when and how it will get done. This also allows for feedback throughout the process to increase the individual and team sense of achievement and competencies.
2. Encouraging individuals and teams helps to improve their performance to leverage their competencies into higher value to the company.



These are further broken down into four practical applications:

1. Showing—To develop and support people and teams whose task-specific competence and motivation levels are low, leaders are most effective when they concentrate on showing while providing some encouragement.
2. Focusing—To develop and support people and teams who have moderate competence and motivation in a specific task, leaders are most effective when they concentrate on showing and encouragement.
3. Facilitating—To develop and support people and teams whose task-specific competence is moving into the higher zone, but their motivation varies, leaders are most effective when showing accompanied by measured encouragement.
4. Delegating—To develop and support people and teams who are self-reliant achievers to a specific task, leaders are most effective with a small amount of showing, some encouragement, and the leader should be open to influence.

OUTCOMES

Statistics from Gallup's State of the American Workplace survey demonstrate how effective leadership can influence success:

- Highly engaged business units realize a 41% reduction in absenteeism and a 17% increase in productivity.
- Highly engaged business units achieve 24% lower turnover. In low-turnover organizations, highly engaged business units achieve 59% lower turnover.
- Highly engaged business units experience a 28% reduction in shrinkage (the dollar amount of unaccounted-for lost merchandise) and a 40% reduction in quality defects.
- Highly engaged business units realize a 70% decrease in safety incidents.
- Highly engaged business units achieve a 10% increase in customer metrics and a 20% increase in sales.
- Highly engaged business units result in 21% greater profitability.

While we do not discount the critical need for strong leadership vision and intelligent strategy, teams experience and react to the leader through the leader's day-to-day behaviors. Data insights coupled with leadership agility is the one style everyone should adopt if they want to see noticeable improvement in performance and collaboration. RVP

Peter Krammer is a senior partner of Okos Partners. Okos Partners helps businesses create and implement world-class training and planning solutions that allow leaders to connect and execute their business, operations, market and people strategies. Okos Partners features Vivo Team's training and coaching programs, including the award-winning Vital Statistics Report used to measure and analyze how teams and leaders are performing. For more information, visit okospartners.com.

Time to Dust Off the Compliance Manual

Review policies annually and make sure to update your employees.

The change of seasons also brings light to the task of updating a dealership's compliance policies and procedure manual. Some still have not completed the task of creating a manual that is germane to the size and scope of its operation. Some have only one manual at the corporate office and not at every location.

Procrastinating completion of the manual only invites federal audits and business disruptions, plus multiple fines. I have spoken to some who tell me that they have done great at the cash reporting audit, or the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) audit, or even the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) audit. How will you fare in an audit that encompasses the Safeguards Rule, the Red Flags Rule, the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) rule, the disposal rule, fair risk-based pricing and privacy notice regulations, in addition to the adverse action notice part of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (Regulation B)?

All of these regulations require a written risk assessment, written policies and procedures for employees to follow, designated managers to have compliance duties incorporated within job descriptions and annual self-audits to test your policies and procedures.

Only the Facts

Your policies must be reviewed at least annually and be adjusted to reflect any changes in procedures and personnel, in addition to any breaches of security either electronically or physically. Document what happened, how you discovered it, what was done and the corrective measures taken. I refer to this as an incident report. Do you have an incident report? As Detective Friday on the old Dragnet series used to say, "Only the facts, Mr./Ms. ____."

Incidents reports will be completed if they are only one page and easy to fill out. Make them electronic and place a printed copy in the compliance manual. This will make annual reporting much easier.

The Red Flags Rule and the new Safeguards Rule require an annual report on the performance of the policies and procedures. This report must be signed by the dealership's president or CEO and placed into the corporate minutes. Are you doing this?

Many of you reading this article will think, "I have a small dealership; we are running under the federal auditor's radar. No need to worry. We will get around to doing something about this later." Does this sound familiar to you?

The problem is that nothing ever gets done. The dealership personnel do not know where to start. The senior managers do not want the expense of having anyone come into the store and complete the documentation.

Then, one day, out of the blue, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) agents arrive and ask to chat with the compliance officer, and no one knows who they are asking for. Customer files are in a wall rack in the finance office or sales manager's office, and the doors are wide open with no one in the office.



The alphabet group—the FTC, DMV, IRS, FBI, CIA, NSA—can disrupt your business for months doing an audit, and if they find something—anything—they may invite other agencies to join them. Audits can be spurred by a number of reasons and businesses need to be prepared.

The new cybersecurity part of the Safeguards Rule had a deadline of



Jan Kelly is the president of Kelly Enterprises. She is an educator and consultant, convention speaker and writes frequently for industry publications. For information about educational venues or joining an F&I 20 Group, call 800-336-4275 or visit jlkelly.com.

Oct. 31, 2022. Did you meet this deadline? Do you have your compliance manual updated and the cybersecurity protocols added to the list of compliance issues?

Do you have annual compliance meetings with your employees? These meetings should be documented: What is covered and who was in attendance? Also, the agenda and notes should go into the compliance manual under employee education.

Protect Your Business

Many hands make light work. All of the managers at your business have a role in the compliance web. Just as the dealership has a chain of command, so do the compliance protocols.

Take care of the documents in your dealership. What items might be found lying about the dealership that can be used to steal someone's identity such as credit applications, copies of driver's licenses or insurance policy numbers? I have seen credit card numbers written on worksheets used by the sales department in negotiating the figures for a sale lying around. I have seen old employment applications thrown into the trash without being shredded first.

Some dealerships are still using ribbon shredders in lieu of confetti or have a secure recycle box with a shred service that does a mass shredding of files that they are no longer required to maintain.

All of these things are huge red flags for any auditor. The goal should never be to strangle a business or make things so tight that employees are afraid to breathe and enjoy their job. But start with the minimum protection for customers and the business, and tighten up things as you need to.

The goal is to be respectful of everyone's nonpublished information. While doing business with customers and employees, do what you can to protect the information given and to prevent identity theft from occurring at your business.

The key is to document how you



are going to achieve that goal. What protocols are you going to put into place? Do all the employees who work with sensitive information know what you expect from them in order to protect the information?

Before you think "identity theft cannot occur here," identity theft can and does happen everywhere. Hopefully, not at your place of business.

I am not an attorney, so this article is not meant as legal advice. It is meant solely for an educational purpose. RVP



Having Tough Conversations With Employees

Recognizing how employees react to feedback can help you select the best style of communication.

BY MARGARET MORFORD



As managers, we've all been faced with the need to have tough conversations. When it comes to difficult issues like an employee's poor performance or an employee who is not promotable, managers must show courage. One tough demand a manager can face is addressing performance issues with an employee who has been overburdened by staff shortages. This employee may believe they deserve a higher rating because of the volume of work they have been assigned, but there are also areas in their performance that need improvement, regardless of the company's workforce challenges. If you only give this employee what they want, you are withholding honest feedback they need to advance in their career.

A foundational principle of management courage is to be the most honest you can be without being brutal. But that doesn't mean everyone needs to receive feedback in the same way. You must learn not only to be courageous in delivering the feedback, but also to deliver it in a way that the employee can hear and make use of.

Let's look at an example of two different employees. Mark and Sarah both work for you and both are receiving a lower performance rating than last year. Your department has had a tough year due to a hiring freeze, and both Mark and Sarah have been working hard but not producing the results you need. Mark is the kind of employee who apologizes profusely when he makes a mistake and who is far harder on himself than most others are ever inclined to be. Sarah, on the other hand, is an "in-your-face" employee who has no filter on her own communication and expects you to be direct with her. How do your conversations with each of them differ?

With Mark, take a gentle approach and let him find his way. "Mark, you know how valuable your work has been to the team and the organization, and I recognize that staff cuts have made this a tough time for you. I think we would both agree that your performance this year has not been as strong as it could be, though. What are your thoughts? Can you tell me what areas you think you need to focus on improving?"

With Sarah, however, an approach like that will allow her to believe the issue isn't as serious because she needs a much more direct conversation. She will fall short again next year because you haven't communicated to her in a way that is meaningful to her and likely to change her behavior. Instead, you need a very firm, no-nonsense approach, such as, "Sarah, your performance really slipped this year. I know staffing levels are down, but we knew that when we set your goals last year. You committed that you could accomplish those goals we agreed upon in your last performance review, but you haven't delivered the results you promised. Even if the staffing levels changed in the middle of the year, you needed to assess the situation when it changed and come to me to let me know you were going to miss your goals if they weren't reset."

Continue with, "I want to make sure that you hit all the goals we set for you in the coming year because I want this next year to be a much better example of the level of work you are capable of and the results I know you can deliver."

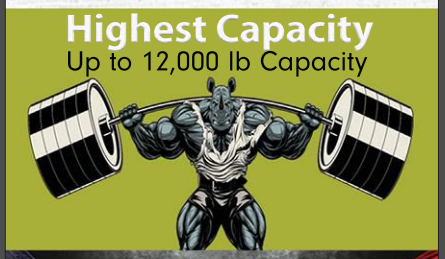
Whatever the issue at hand, good leadership involves knowing and understanding how your employees will best receive constructive feedback or respond to a tough conversation. How much do you know about what makes your employees tick? RVP

Margaret Morford is CEO of The HR Edge Inc., an international management consulting and training firm. She is the author of "Management Courage—Having the Heart of a Lion" and "The Hidden Language of Business—Workplace Power, Politics & Influence." She can be reached at 615-371-8200 or mmorford@thehredge.net. For more information, visit thehredge.net.

Resources

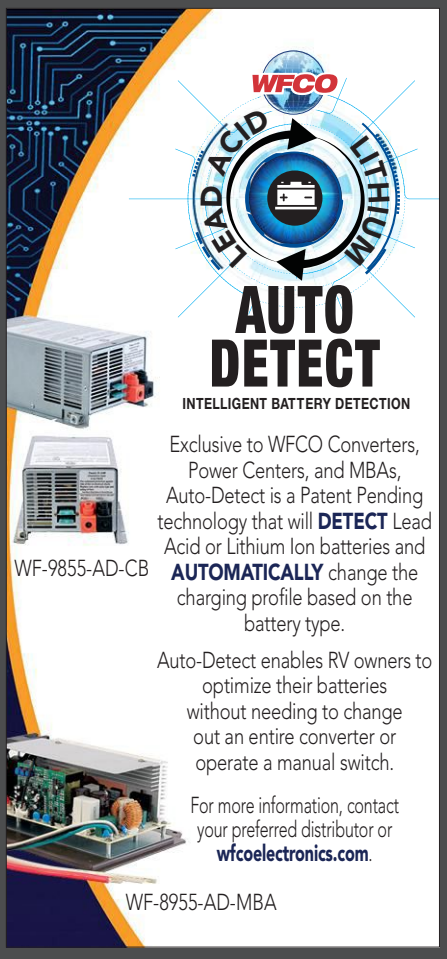
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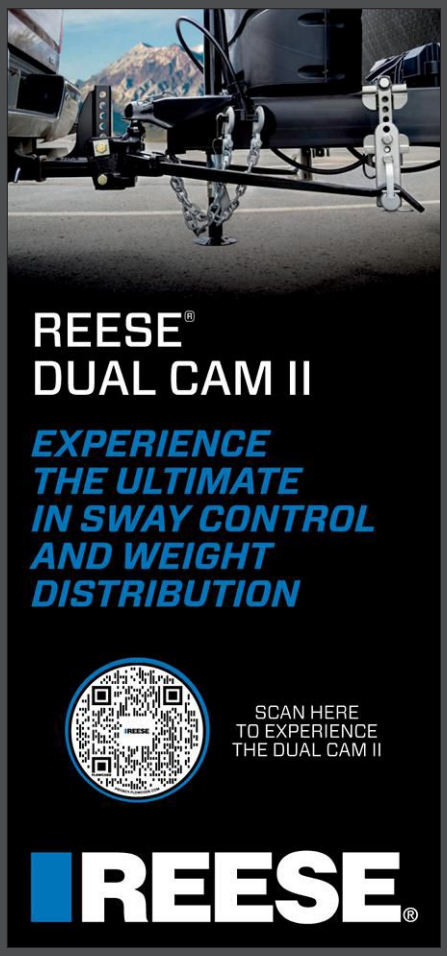


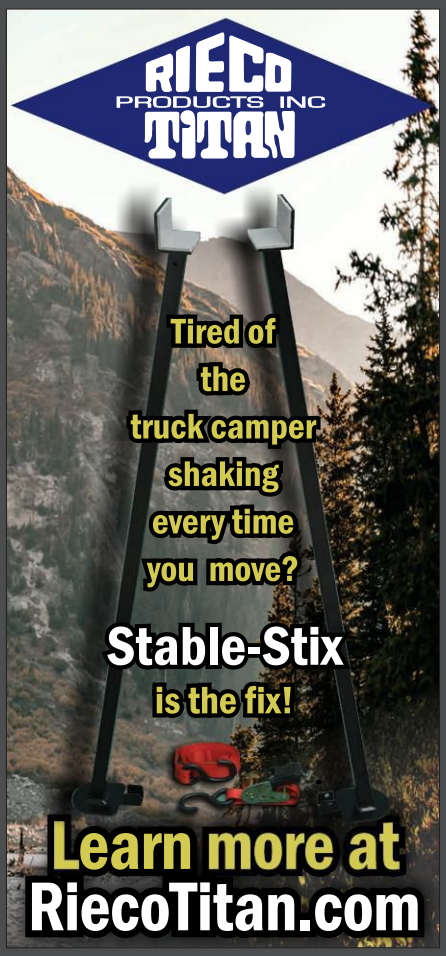






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Pit Stop







'Tis the Season

The name "tailgating" was coined at the first-ever college football game, between **Rutgers and Princeton** in 1869, where spectators gathered to drink beer and grill meat near the "tail end" of a horse.

(from sportblurb.com)

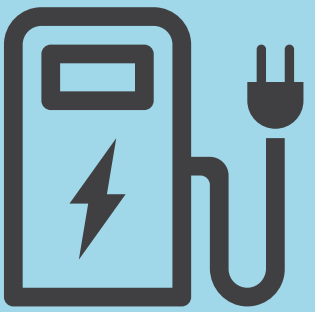
An estimated 20M people tailgate each year in the U.S.

The 'New Norm'

(from the Outdoor Foundation)

The 2022 Outdoor Participation Trends Report, which analyzed trends in 2021, revealed:

- **Outdoor participants increased by 6.9%** since the pandemic began in early 2020, with new and returning outdoor participants up 26%
- **Overall, 164.2 million (or 54%)** of Americans ages 6 and older participated in outdoor recreation at least once in 2021, up 2.2% YOY—the highest number of participants on record



Historic Steps:

The Biden-Harris administration approved infrastructure plans for more electric vehicle (EV) charging networks. All 50 states plus D.C. and Puerto Rico now have access to more than $1.5 billion to help build EV chargers—covering 75,000 miles of U.S. highways.

AUGUST SHIPMENTS

33,783 TOTAL of August RV shipments

36% DECREASE compared to August 2021

2.6% DECREASE through July 2022 compared to same point last year

"While below last year's record numbers, this new report shows RV shipments are normalizing back to where they were prior to the pandemic," said RV Industry Association President and CEO Craig Kirby. "RVing remains a very popular choice for millions of Americans as we head into the fall camping and tailgating season."



AUTHENTIC

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