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Photo courtesy of Cruiser RV. Check out the appeal of single-axle travel trailers starting on page 20.

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A special look at more products and services offered by some of the leading companies in the industry.



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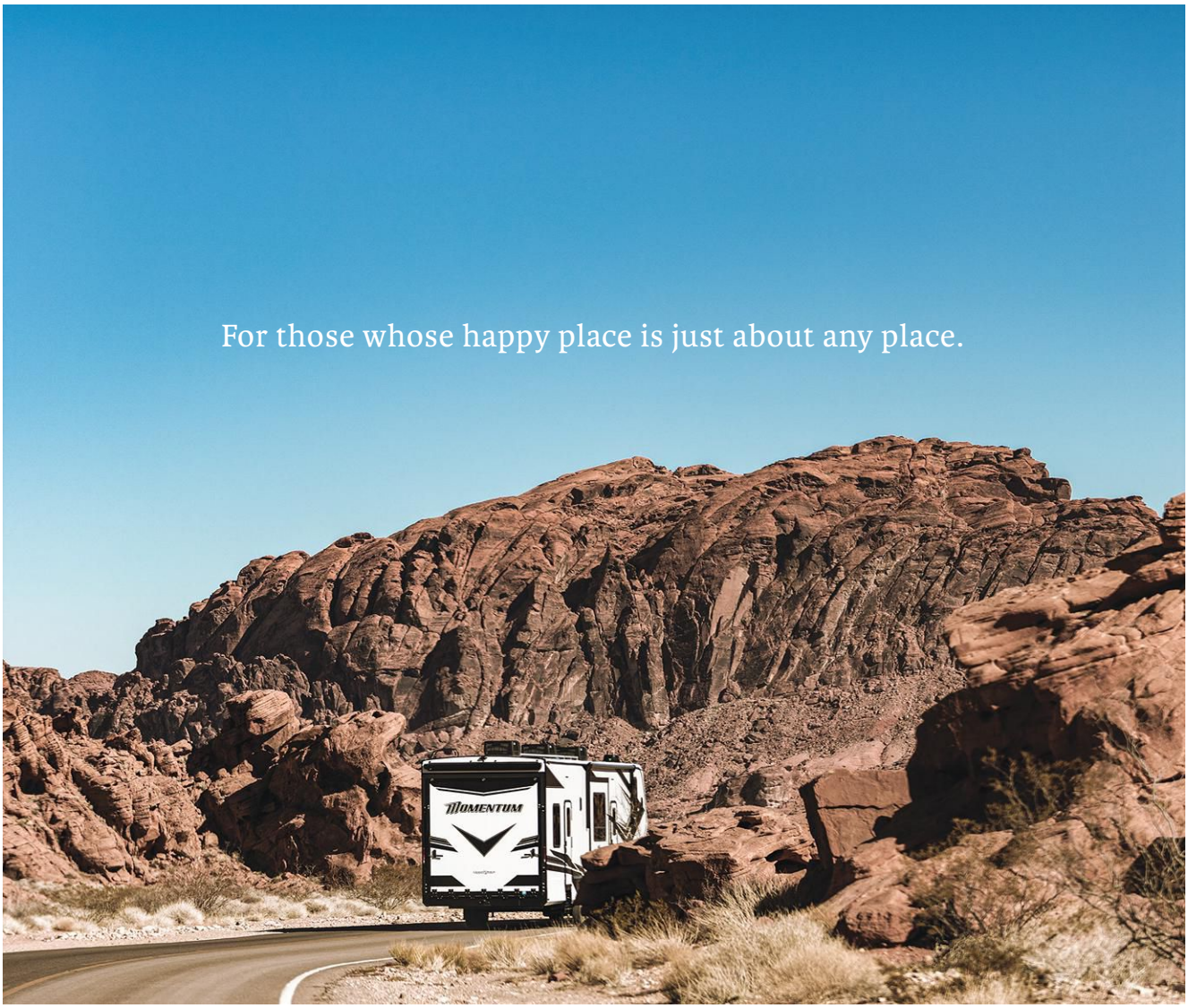
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MORE OF WHAT MATTERS

RV PRO



I recently moved my desk at home so that now – instead of staring at a wall – I can look out the window and see the trees across the street. The only downside is now I find myself daydreaming more, which isn't necessarily a bad thing when writing and editing articles for RV PRO. In this issue we highlight single-axle travel trailers from three manufacturers: Cruiser RV, Sunset Park RV and Riverside RV. Taking in all of the info and images of these appealing, innovative designs had me envisioning quiet time in the woods – solitude, fresh air and a great book. Sounds like a dream come true to me! And exactly the lifestyle the RV industry aims to promote.

Speaking of promoting, turn to page 14 to read about Airxcel's product showcase event held in December in Elkhart, Indiana. Inviting their business partners to see firsthand their latest and greatest has proved to be a successful venture for the company.

Another successful venture? Fuller RV Rentals & Sales in Boylston, Massachusetts. From lending units for hurricane emergency response efforts to renting them for movie productions, Sheri Fuller and her team have diversified the 39-year-old rentals and sales business. Read more on page 16.

Two must-reads in this issue touch on important subjects for every dealer: RECT and planning for selling your business (pages 30 and 36, respectively). Curtis Hemmeler, executive director for RVTI and senior vice president of operations for RVIA, and Garry Enyart, former director of RV Business at Cummins, Inc., and former chairman of the RV Technical Institute, explain why RECT is so important and what the industry can do to improve it. Whether you're considering selling your business soon or later down the road, understanding the basics of how a sale should be handled is crucial.

We at RV PRO hope you find each issue and edition of our magazine, newsletter and podcast informative and educational. If there's something you'd like us to cover on our platforms, please drop me a note at jdking@cahabamedia.com.

As always, thanks for reading!

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CHaSE Manufacturing Acquires Native Hardwoods

CHaSE Manufacturing has acquired Elkhart-Indiana-based wood component manufacturer Native Hardwoods, bringing together two of the most complete RV wood product suppliers in the region, the companies said.

Founded by Jim and Judi Edmundson and Rick Milanese in 1983, Native Hardwoods' reputation in the RV industry has long been the gold standard for quality wood components, according to its new parent company. Native's work can be seen in several of the top-selling Diesel Class A and Class C product lines.

"After 40 years it's time for the current ownership to retire," Jim Edmundson said. "The transfer of ownership to Zack (Nickell) and his team will provide a combination of talent and resources that is best for our customers, employees and suppliers."

This acquisition brings CHaSE Manufacturing to a total of nearly 250 employees across four production facilities that provide high-quality wood components to the RV industry.

"We appreciate Jim, Judi and Rick's confidence in us to continue Native in the same manner it has operated for the last 40 years, bringing high quality products and a great reputation to the market," Nickell said. "We now have two completely separate operations, each with their own strengths, that will have the ability to learn and grow from one another while not compromising any of the expectations of our customers. Both companies will operate autonomously and will focus on improving through identifying complementing capacities and experiences that can help better serve our customers."

Valterra Announces Retirement of George Grengs

Valterra co-founder George Grengs will retire at the end of this year, ending more than four decades as a fixture in the industry.

In 1981, Grengs and his partner started Valterra Products Inc. in a small warehouse in Pacoima, California, just north of Burbank, and started making and selling the Grentec line of waste valves and fittings. Later, those products were rebranded under the Valterra name, which is so well known today.

In the 1980s Valterra jumped into the skateboard business. Grengs ran the sales, marketing and product development during this period, and the brand struck a chord nationally among the skater crowd. Valterra brand skateboards became nationally recognized thanks to being featured in the 1985 "Back to the Future," with Marty McFly – Michael J. Fox – riding and holding a Valterra board in some of the early scenes.

Over the years Grengs' responsibilities covered all aspects of the business but his mainstay was in sales and marketing where he established a strong distributor-based business for both the RV aftermarket and OEM sales channels. In addition, he oversaw the Pool & Spa/Industrial divisions and directly managed the skateboard sales to chain stores in the '80s and '90s.

In 2013, the company did a recapitalization with Scott Capital, a private equity company, and Valterra became an LLC with Grengs as the CEO/president. With new capital behind the company, Valterra began an aggressive acquisition program including Phoenix Faucets, Rodale/Mighty Cord, Minder Research, Diamond Lighting, Go Power! and Monochem tank treatments. It was a busy time, the company said, and Valterra's growth was dramatic.

Most recently, Grengs was involved with the 2021 sale of Valterra to Dometic during the COVID-19 pandemic. Grengs said he's retiring feeling proud knowing that the transition over the last 18 months has been seamless with no impact to its customers.

In 2019, RVIA recognized Grengs with the Jim Barker Lifetime Achievement Award for his significant contributions to the RV Aftermarket.

Grengs will retire from full-time leadership of Valterra on Dec. 31, 2022, but will continue to function as an adviser to Valterra in 2023. Leadership for Valterra will move to Bryan Fletcher, who is general manager, and Hal Harvey, chief operations officer.

Brinkley Ships First Fifth Wheel to Indiana Dealership

Startup RV manufacturer Brinkley RV delivered its first fifth wheel, the Model Z, to Walnut Ridge Family RV Sales in New Castle, Indiana.

Brinkley RV was formed by five RV industry-manufacturing leaders in 2022 and is headquartered in Goshen, Indiana.

"It's been a lot of blood sweat and tears to get where we're at and we're really proud of our team," said Brinkley RV Managing Partner Ryan Thwaits. "We are excited to get our product out to the marketplace and let the customers see it and get their feedback."

Brinkley touts the Model Z as being designed by RV campers for RV campers. After it debuted the prototype, the RV went on a maiden voyage across the country and during that 30-day road trip, Micah Staley, Brinkley co-owner and Model Z lead designer, stopped at campsites throughout the 6,200-mile journey getting feedback on how to improve the coach's design and functionality. After the first road trip, the company made more than 250 refinements to the Model Z's design, functionality and durability.

The Model Z offers spacious living areas, residential-style appliances and plenty of floorplan options, the company said. Some fifth wheel models have up to six slideouts and practical features like separated bedrooms, outdoor kitchens and two bathrooms.

"It's great to see everything come together and the production people be so proud of what they've done," Thwaits said.

He said along with getting production rolling, the company has been busy assembling dealer partners around the country that will soon be receiving product.

"We've identified about 150 locations across the U.S. that we've committed our product to already and we'll roll it out as we can produce the units," he said. "From a supply standpoint I don't think we could have timed it any better. (The slowdown) gave us the opportunity to get some of the products that weren't so readily available before."

Blue Ox Partners With Dealer Resources Group

Blue Ox Products has struck a new partnership with Dealer Resources Group (DRG) to provide best-in-class industry sales support to its partner dealers.

"We are extremely excited to partner with Dealer Resources Group to enhance our team," said Alex Walker, director of sales. "Aligning our knowledgeable and experienced sales team with DRG will allow us to double our unrelenting customer sales support. We are excited to work side by side to continue the rapid growth for both of our companies and dealer partners."

Dealer Resources Group is entering its third decade in business and its coverage area includes the entire 48 contiguous United States.

"Dealer Resources Group is excited to represent the Blue Ox family of products. We have spent years developing strong relationships with our dealers and we carefully select supplier partners with that in mind. Blue Ox products, and the Blue Ox team, align with our standards of excellence in quality and the direction for growth we look for to continue to bring

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value to those relationships," said Bob Barber, president of DRG.

Added Mike Hesse, Blue Ox CEO, "DRG has long represented some of the largest and strongest names in the category. As Blue Ox expands our footprint, synergies between our companies keep surfacing in conversations. With our customers in mind, we took that feedback and created a partnership with Bob and his team. I continually reinforce that one of our greatest strengths at Blue Ox is the quality of our people, and I'm sure Bob would say the same for DRG. We want Blue Ox to be the first name you think of for aftermarket towing products and your most valued and trusted partner. This is another large step in that direction."

Alliance Co-Founders Named 2022 E&Y National Entrepreneurs of the Year

Coley and Ryan Brady, co-founders of Alliance RV, have been named to Ernst & Young's list of 10 Entrepreneur of the Year National Award winners.

The Bradys launched Alliance RV in 2019, not long before COVID-19 struck. Starting out with just one fifth wheel, the company found rapid success once RVing became the preferred way to vacation and travel, and they have continued to add models and now have multiple buildings on their campus in Elkhart, Indiana.

Its online membership group is approaching 20,000 members, and it boasts more than 200 dealers across the U.S. and Canada.

As E&Y noted in its press release announcing the award, "When it comes to employees, Alliance lives its motto: 'Do the right thing.' The company wants to facilitate long-lasting careers, so it pays a median hourly wage above $40 and offers a 401(k) program with a company match, which is unique in the industry.

"Alliance is also focused on doing the right thing for the planet, adding solar panels to its 120,000-square-foot lamination subassembly plant, incorporating electric forklifts into its operations and launching a cardboard and scrap metal recycling program."

Cummins' Acquisition to Propel Electric Drive System Development

Global power generation company Cummins announced that, through its subsidiary Meritor, it has completed its acquisition of Siemens' Commercial Vehicles business, a global supplier of high-performance electric drive systems for commercial vehicles. In May 2022, Meritor announced it had entered into an agreement to acquire the business for approximately €190 million enterprise value, or $195.9 million. Cummins subsequently completed its acquisition of Meritor in August 2022.

The company said the acquisition adds key capabilities in direct drive and transmission-based remote-mount electric motors, inverters, software and related services, which are critical elements in the next generation of electric powertrains. These capabilities, and their addition of nearly 200 employees primarily in Germany, China and the United States, will accelerate Cummins' ability to offer global customers a wider array of electrified product solutions across commercial vehicle applications.

"We are excited to welcome Siemens' Commercial Vehicles electric drive systems business into Cummins," said Jennifer Rumsey, Cummins' president and CEO. "By combining our collective, deep knowledge of our industry and how our customers use our applications, we will innovate and advance key technologies. This acquisition also reflects another key milestone in the execution of our strategy to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 in a way that is best for our customers and the planet."

"We are thrilled to join Cummins, which has a long history serving the commercial vehicle market," said Mart Verschoor, former CEO of Siemens Commercial Vehicles who will assume the role as vice president – Traction Systems within Cummins' New Power segment. "I know we will deliver technologies required to accelerate adoption of zero-emission powertrains that delight our customers and move our communities forward."

Velarium, a New Airxcel Brand, Debuts First New Product

Velarium, an Airxcel brand, made its debut and launched its first product at the Airxcel December Product Showcase in Elkhart, Indiana. The Velarium 12V Vertical Arm Awning marks the first offering of the new Velarium awning brand, which will expand to offer slide out awnings and a host of awning accessories.

"Our customers have been asking us to produce an awning and the December Product Showcase is the first opportunity our OEM partners have to see our initial offering," said Jeff Cowan, business unit manager of Velarium.

"Among other features, the new stylishly robust 12-volt awning features the largest pitch angle available and is held in place with a patent pending pitch-locking latch.

Sourced globally and assembled in Elkhart, Velarium's 12-volt awning will have limited quantities available for prototyping and evaluation in January while production volumes will be available in April.

Lightspeed Announces RV Dealer RECT Excellence Award Winners

Lightspeed has come out with its first-ever RV Dealership RECT (Repair Event Cycle Time) Excellence Awards.

"One of the key elements of goal setting is measuring progress," said RVDA President Phil Ingrassia. "When the industry task force identified R-E-C-T as a key measure, Lightspeed worked to develop R-E-C-T reporting functionality quickly to assure their dealerships had the reporting they needed to identify issues."

"Our valued dealers are a vital component to what makes us an industry leader," says Kris Denos, vice president of Lightspeed. "We are in awe of their commitment, grit, accomplishments, and the reductions in RECT that they've been able to achieve. In short, they simply are the best, and they inspire us to do better and be better."

The Lightspeed 2022 RECT Excellence award recipients were selected based on year-over-year improvement in reducing RECT time. Managing RECT helps dealers to spot service shortcomings and focus on making improvements. Additional benefits of understanding RECT include reducing employee burnout and delivering a better customer experience, the company said.

Lightspeed said it is committed to providing ongoing product innovations to ensure that its dealerships can service units more efficiently and get their RV customers out on the road faster. The winners span locations across the U.S. and represent a wide breadth of dealership size and RV expertise.

The Lightspeed 2022 RECT Excellence Award winners are:

- Bish's RV; Meridian, Idaho
- Black Hills Land and RV; Piedmont, South Dakota
- Bobby Combs RV Centers; Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
- Chesaco RV; Shoemakersville, Pennsylvania
- Country Road RV Sales and Service LLC; Cottondale, Alabama
- Kitsmiller RV; Mason, Michigan
- RCD RV Supercenter; Heath, Ohio
- Rich & Sons Camper Sales; Grand Island, Nebraska
- Sundowner Trailers; Auburn, California
- Texas Trailers Sales & Services; Gainesville, Florida

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Show 'em What You've Got

With a portfolio of more than a dozen brands, Airxcel uses a product showcase to market its latest products to OEMs.

BY JENNIFER KING

When you have dozens of innovative products to show off to OEMs in the RV industry, Airxcel has found the best strategy is to host a product showcase to bring everyone together at one time.

For the past nine years, that's how Airxcel has exhibited its brands' offerings, and it's certainly a big draw – more than 200 appointments in two days were scheduled, says Airxcel Group President Anthony Wollschlager.

"We've been doing the product showcases for the past nine years, but not to this scale; we started off nine years ago at a local facility but as we've grown and the product lineup has grown, it's expanded to an outside facility," he says. "This year was our largest by far – 200-plus pre-registrations for the event; by the end of day two, more than 300 people came through the event.

"I'm really thankful for our customers to come over and see us."

This past year has been a "tale of two halves," Wollschlager says. Airxcel's OEM customers have been running at an advanced pace, in addition to the industry dealing with supply chain challenges and then hyper-inflation.

"Once July hit, we started to see demand soften and we've taken that opportunity to challenge our teams and that challenge has come from our leadership team," he says. "We need to figure out how we can become comfortable with being uncomfortable."

Mark Brodie, senior director of marketing at Airxcel, says innovation is part of the company's culture.

"We saw that was an opportunity to step up our innovation and introduce a lot of new products and step into some areas we haven't been in," he says.

Wollschlager says they looked at the business units and core competencies and into places they haven't been historically.

In addition to Cleer Vision Windows and Tempered Glass, United Shade, Aqua-Hot, Velarium and Vixen Composites, Airxcel also has Coleman-Mack, Suburban, Dicor Products, Can, MCD, MaxxAir and ECI (Elkhart Composites, Inc.) in its family of brands.



As the company's website says: "Airxcel's brands create a safe, worry-free and memorable RV experience with products including cooking appliances, fans and ventilation devices, heat and cooling systems, window coverings, shades, tempered windows, sealants, cleaners and exterior systems."

What helps the showcase succeed is its hands-on nature.

"A big piece of it is our customers are ones that want to touch and feel the product and see how it will operate for the end consumer, and with our businesses being located across the U.S., it's important to come together in one place," Wollschlager says. "It's also a great event for us internally."

"It has a totally different feel – this is an amazing experience for people," Brodie says about the showcase. "I want to bottle this up."

For information about the latest products Airxcel introduced at its showcase, see page the News section starting on page 10 and visit rv-pro.com and search Airxcel, or airxcel.com/news. RVP





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A FULL HOUSE

Fuller RV Rentals & Sales in Massachusetts has been successfully balancing rentals and sales since 1984.

BY MIKE HARBOUR



Fuller RV Rentals & Sales is located off Interstate 90 near Worcester, Massachusetts – a convenient location for many travelers.

Rentals are an offering many RV dealers carefully consider at one point or another. After all, it seems fairly straightforward to build a successful business on sales alone, but renting towables and motorhomes has a different set of requirements. Accordingly, dealerships that started as rental stores are few, but Fuller RV Rentals & Sales is one such example.

Sheri Fuller and husband, Bobby, began their RV careers in 1984 in a small central Massachusetts town northeast of Worcester. The couple returned from a trip to Florida in a rented motorhome owned by Bobby's employer when Bobby asked to run the rental business. The owner – a longtime friend – agreed. After six months, the Fullers bought the name, West Boylston Motorhome Rentals, and managed the fleet of 13 coaches as their own enterprise.

That was during the era of leasebacks, so since the units were privately owned by individuals, the Fullers acted as brokers. As long as the motorhomes were used by their owners at least two weeks of the year, they could be offered for rent the other 50 weeks. It was an education, Sheri recalls almost 40 years later.

"A retail dealer and a rental dealer are two businesses. They need two sets of employees. You can't legitimately give 100% to both, so you have to give 50-50. Doing the rentals first, you have a good handle on the customer, so you learn how to listen to the customer. You learn how to find out what they want without hounding them," she says.

Today, Fuller RV – located on 2 acres at 150 Shrewsbury Street in Boylston that's been home since 1995 – is both a rental and retail store. Every unit in the fleet, usually numbering between 50 and 60 motorhomes and travel trailers, can be rented or purchased. It's a hassle-free experience, thanks to a method Fuller has developed over the years.

"I have a 15-page brochure. Every single unit is listed in it and every single unit is numbered on the front bumper and on the back above the license plate. On the door, there's a ticket tape with the unit number and price," she says.

Once visitors have the guidebook in hand, either received directly from Sheri on arrival or pulled from one of 12 info boxes on-site, they're free to roam for as long as they'd like without an escort.

"They have the whole fleet in their hand and they can go from one end of the property to the other and nobody's going to hound them," says Sheri, who even distributes four-color pens to help customers with notetaking. "People will be here, I kid you not, for four hours looking at every single unit."

It's a hands-off approach that might be considered unusual by her peers, but it has served Sheri well, especially because Fuller RV has what she calls a skeleton crew. Other than herself and her husband, there's only one other full-time employee; Sheri's son is the sole technician. There's a two-person, part-time cleaning crew, according to Sheri, as well as a daughter-in-law who helps with accounting – but that's it. Time management, accordingly, is crucial.

Another crucial component has been inventory management. Sheri quickly learned about that as the fleet grew to 58 units by 1988.

"By 1993, the last privately owned motorhome was gone and from 1993 to 1999 we had about 10 to 12 units," she says. "In 1998 or 1999, we went out to the Gulfstream factory and became a rental dealer. So now we didn't have to buy from other RV



PHOTOS: PETER "ZIP" ZIPFEL



Sheri Fuller and her husband, Bobby, have run Fuller RV for almost 40 years.

dealers. We could buy right from the factory, which was huge. That's when we started building our own fleet. So in 1999, we ordered five. By 2002, we're up to 35, and by 2008, we're up to about 70. From 2008 to now, we've averaged 50 to 60 units in the rental fleet, but they're for sale at the same time, so when we get them, they're for rent as well as for sale."

Another manufacturer once had an issue with that, Sheri recalls.

"When we bought brand new, we couldn't sell them until they were either six months past invoice date or 6,000 miles, whichever came first. With us, that was usually fine because it took us six months just to get the word out that we've got them or 6,000 miles to get someone interested in them at the right price," she says.

Fuller RV owes part of its success to being so close to a nearby spur of Interstate 90, an east-to-west turnpike that runs the length of the Bay State.

"The location does make a huge difference, there's no question about it," Sheri says. "We're a mile off the highway, you can't beat it. We're right on the other side of Worcester."

In the past, Sheri worked with overseas customers who flew into Boston Logan International Airport, where they were picked up, driven to a waiting RV, then driven back to Logan once their stateside trip was over.

"We had a lot of international business. I even had an operator's manual in five different languages," she says. While that business went away during the Great Recession more than a decade ago, there were enough U.S. renters that the fleet still averaged 50 units.

In addition to travelers, Fuller RV also has enjoyed a brisk commercial business with corporations, hospitals and even regional utilities.

"You wouldn't believe how many times we're in a blizzard delivering units for National Grid," Sheri says. "The blizzard would go by and they'd say, 'OK,

we're all done. We didn't need them.'"

An emergency response logistics company in Louisiana even hired Fuller RV to bring 25 units across New York and Connecticut during hurricanes Irene and Sandy, as well as 20 units for the 2011 Halloween nor'easter between the storms, Sheri says. The units were used as housing for the catering staff that fed the linemen working the emergencies.

"We've also worked with film studios and we've done commercials," she says. "In 38 years for rentals, we've hooked units up with customers in a lot of different scenarios."

Even individuals don't always use Fuller RV units for vacation. Several customers have rented motorhomes for transporting the sick or elderly between care facilities or homes; it's cheaper, Sheri says, than long-distance ambulance transport and definitely feels more comfortable.

Until 1999, Fuller only offered coaches, but a customer request changed that, she says, during a residential remodel. The family needed a place to stay on-site while contractors raised the roof, so Fuller introduced travel trailers into the mix for those who didn't need the mobility of a motorhome. Fuller RV even donated a unit for a day last September to a partnership between Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis and the RV Technical Institute (RVTI) to train inmates for a career after they've been released.

Today, towables account for about a third of the fleet and sell well.

"We've always had the longer ones for people that are going to be in them longer and the shorter ones for the people that are going from point A to point B. They've pretty much taken off. We've always had at least 10 to 15 at all times," Sheri says. "What we did was pick up the single-axle lightweights because now everybody's driving around in SUVs with six cylinders."

Like other dealers across the U.S. and Canada, Sheri was scrambling for inventory when COVID-19 crippled manufacturers and brought production to a screeching halt. Enter Facebook Marketplace.

"We bought more than 60 units from private individuals from all over. We went to Pennsylvania, we went to New Hampshire, we went all around Massachusetts, New York," she says.

The process was simple: she'd start an online conversation, negotiate a price, then husband Bobby would pick up the unit. Some of the units were purchased from former customers who only bought them a year or two before, as Sheri recognized the pictures they used because they came from her website when they first went on sale.

In addition to longtime partner Gulfstream, Fuller RV also offers THOR brands, recently adding Jayco products to the fleet.





Sheri Fuller operates with what she calls a "skeleton crew" – just her husband, her son and herself.

One thing Sheri has observed in almost four decades of renting RVs is the length of time a unit stays in the fleet before being sold.

"For the first 20 years, it'd be 10 years before we'd get into the happy price," she says. "It went from 10 years to five years to maybe not even a year now because of the fact some people just want brand-new. With a lot of these used ones, they're at the right price. Being older units, the price is right, right away. Even though the prices are crazy right now, we just reduced half the fleet by $3,000 to $5,000 in September when the new valuation book came out."

Sheri says she anticipates the next big price change will take place in January (RV PRO spoke with Sheri in December 2022). But she's been in the industry long enough to understand nothing's set in stone.

"Nobody really knows, either," she says. "Some go up, some go down, and some stay the same." RVP

"IN 38 YEARS FOR RENTALS, WE'VE HOOKED UNITS UP WITH CUSTOMERS IN A LOT OF DIFFERENT SCENARIOS."

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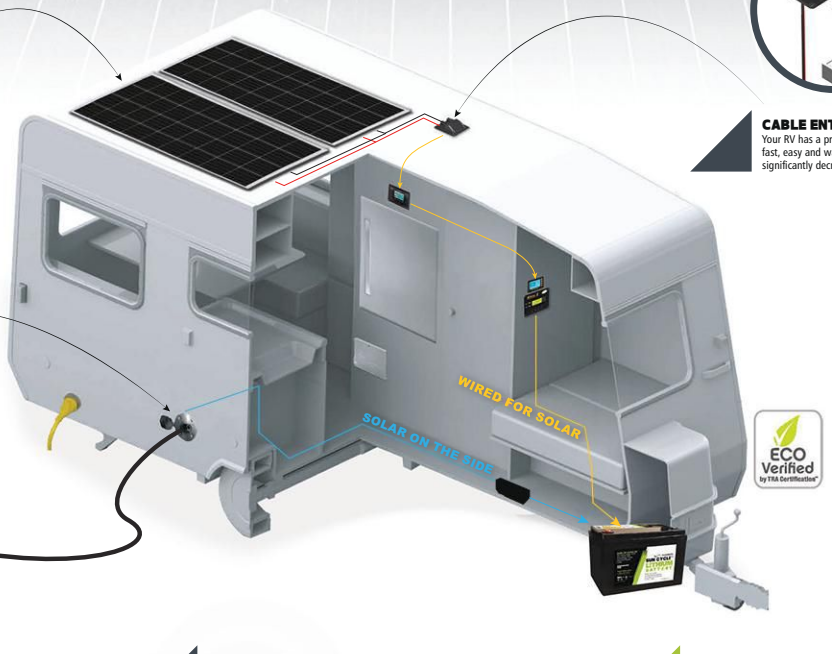
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SHOWCASING THE SINGLE AXLE

Cruiser RV reintroduced its single-axle trailer line to meet consumer demand for affordable, comfortable, lightweight and easy-to-tow travel trailers.

BY RONNIE WENDT



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CRUISER RV

The question of single-axle versus double-axle travel trailers might be considered a game of "this or that." The budget and personal preferences of the RVer determine the RV they choose.

But lately, single-axle trailers are rising in popularity, especially among new entrants to the RVing lifestyle, says Dave Burroughs, general manager of Cruiser RV, a Howe, Indiana, company known for its quality, lightweight travel trailers.

The single-axle RV has several advantages that make it attractive to buyers. Single-axle travel trailers are easy to tow, affordable and offer a decent amount of room for camping.

"They are larger than a standard teardrop RV but have a lightweight construction," he says. "They are more affordable than other recreational vehicles. They are very maneuverable and set up quickly. Most can be towed by a standard pickup truck or SUV. Buying a big tow vehicle isn't necessary to move them."

BUILT-IN AFFORDABILITY

There are many reasons that a single-axle traveler trailer is more affordable, Burroughs says.

First is their size. Because manufacturers build these trailers on a smaller platform, they are in a weight class of under 4,000 pounds. Besides costing less, being lighter weight means they need less power to tow. It is possible to save on fuel consumption and tow vehicle wear and tear by putting less strain on the engine.

But though the trailers are smaller, they still offer the same amenities as their larger double-axle counterparts. They are a step up from a popup trailer, which is where most campers enter the outdoors experience.

People also can get into more adventurous camping experiences with single-axle travel trailers. Burroughs says that single-axle travel trailers have a solid roof and do not have canvas sides, which keeps campers warm and dry in inclement weather.

"Having a solid roof and no canvas sides is a definite advantage, especially in some national parks," he says. "A popup camper doesn't work well with bears and other animals. And some parks have restrictions on RV size. These units are smaller and more mobile."

BUILT FOR COMFORT

Many single-axle travel trailers come with well-designed floorplans to ensure there is no sacrifice in amenities, Burroughs adds.

"You may sacrifice size, but you are not sacrificing comfort," he says. "Air conditioning and heating, queen-size beds, and even full-size restrooms are still available in these units. There are floorplans with bunks or slideouts, which make them perfect for a small family."

Most families do not want to camp in tents but do so because they lack the budget to purchase larger vehicles to pull heavier trailers.

"A travel trailer will allow them to adventure into camping and see this great country in an affordable, maneuverable and comfortable way," he says. "Is it a great big, 400-square-foot fifth wheel? No. But it will get you into the camping lifestyle and allow you to do everything you want without expensive vehicle upgrades. Once people get into the camping lifestyle, they will go from a popup trailer to a single-axle, tandem-axle all the way to fifth wheels and motorhomes. It's a progression."

Burroughs cites Cruiser's new Hitch 18MRB as an example.

"The single-coupled coach lacks nothing in terms of design and functionality," he says. "We have a full-size refrigerator. The coach has air conditioning and heating. It has everything you need, including full-size showers and dinettes you can stretch out on.

"There are a lot of features in our single-axle trailers. Cruiser's single-axle RVs are not the cheapest, nor are they the most expensive," he says. "But consumers get a lot of bang for their buck in the mid- to upper-30s price range."





CRUISER REINVENTS HITCH LINE

Cruiser reintroduced its entire line of single-axle trailers at the 2022 Open House in Elkhart, Indiana.

The line has two couples coaches and two family coaches with bunkhouse models. The units come with and without slideouts.

"There is a lot of flexibility," he says.

The biggest change to the line was its body, which the company expanded to 7 1/2 feet wide.

"We made it more spacious, but stayed within the single-axle platform," Burroughs explains.

The company also redid all of the interiors and exteriors for the Hitch brand and added a fiberglass cap with a windshield to bathe the RVs in light.

"The coach feels more open because of the windshield. The fiberglass cap also makes the coach feel more upscale. The fiberglass is easy to clean, looks nice and is functional because it brings light from the outside into the coach," he says.

Interiors also shine with sleek, simple, European-styled cabinetry in a bright, two-toned color scheme and solid surface kitchen countertops. The kitchen offerings include a 16-inch round, hand-built kitchen sink; a 12-volt refrigerator; and an ample dinette.



"We are making 12-volt refrigerators standard across the entire line," he says.

RVers also like to have outdoor kitchens on their RVs. The single-axle line from Cruiser RV does not disappoint. All Hitch units come with outdoor kitchens, which expands cooking options.

"Ours are fully equipped kitchens, with a refrigerator, so they do not have to run in and out of the camper when cooking outside," he says. "Today's consumers value outdoor kitchens more than ever."

Cruiser RV also upgraded the air conditioners on the entire Hitch travel trailer line. The company now offers 15,000-Btu air conditioners.

All coaches also come with marine-grade flooring to make cleanup a breeze. Floor plans also can include queen-size beds, bunkhouse options and slideouts. All coaches come with full-size bathrooms for greater creature comforts.

HITCH TECH AND SOLAR

Tech comforts are plentiful in the Hitch line of single-axle trailers. The rigs come with 360-degree HD antennas with Wi-Fi prep, 4G LTE prep, and 12-volt TVs with DVD players.

"You can even use these RVs to work remotely," Burroughs says.

Cruiser RV also improved solar packages across the Hitch line, which comes standard with SOL – Powered by the Sun prep. With three solar options to choose from, consumers can choose a solar package that supplements their typical energy use, or go for a higher-tier package that powers the RV when they camp off-grid.

"We start out with a 190-watt, roof-mounted, solid solar panel, then we prep that with the 30-amp controller," he says. "The solar package is tiered and extendable. If you want to go off-grid and do boondocking, we make it extremely easy for you to do that."

Burroughs says the upgrade made sense. Consumers had told









them they wanted to go further out to "just get away. Even if they don't do it that often, they want the ability to do it," he says.

Boondocking or going off-grid requires unit modifications, which come standard on Hitch RVs. The trailers come with standard off-road tires with good ground clearance. He says this allows RVers to go off-road.

"We also introduced a product called The Vault, which cleans up the wiring and puts it into one area near the hitch," Burroughs adds. The Vault provides central housing for 12-volt wiring connections. It allows owners to disconnect 12-volt power going from the battery to the RV, keeping the battery in the same charge state as when they cut the power.

USB charging ports are throughout the coach, as are conveniently located 110-watt plugs.

"We have them everywhere, even near the bed area, where you may want to charge your phone or plug in a CPAP machine," he says.

HITCH'S SUPER SETUP

The Hitch line of RVs also delivers the quick set up abilities consumers ask for, according to Burroughs.

"You have four jacks to put down, then you plug it in and hook up to water if you're at a full hookup site and you are good to go," he says. "There isn't much to it. Compared to a tandem-axle trailer, it takes a lot less time to set up.

"RVers want to set up quickly so they can enjoy the outdoors right away. That is what they are paying for. They are not paying for the experience of setting up a camper and tearing it down," he says. "So, we made it quite easy for them. All our units offer electric awnings with LED lighting, electric tongue jacks and easy-to-operate leveling jacks for fast and easy set up."

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

Cruiser RV has introduced MyCruiserRV, a tool that helps consumers manage their Hitch single-axle travel trailers from their phones.

The new mobile app lets owners store their RV information, monitor warranty statuses and access how-to videos on the go.

"They have a lot of flexibility in the app," Burroughs says. "They can find the dealer to schedule service, track parts orders, warranties and more. It also has a lot of checklists and how-to videos for them."

Burroughs believes the entire industry needs to move toward apps that connect them to consumers.

"Our app helps us connect with the end user," he says. "We have also introduced a new dealer app and portal that helps dealers connect with the customer on warranty work and service recalls, etc."

He says all of this has a single goal in mind.

"It is critically important that we take excellent care of the customer and help them feel more connected to the product," he says. "Consumers expect more from manufacturers and dealers than they did in the past."

The RV industry is dealing with a new group of consumers since the pandemic, he adds.

"Many new consumers have never camped before and need additional support," he says. "They also have elevated expectations. They want an app and a lot of electronics. They want flexibility and great service. As manufacturers and dealers, we need to elevate our games to make sure we provide consumers with the best products possible. Consumers who fall in love with camping will stay with us for a long time." RVP

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SINGLE AXLES BRING NEW BUYERS INTO RVING



Sunset Park RV and one of its dealer partners explains how this popular RV type allows for increased lot turnover.

BY LISA DICKSTEEN

"A BLOWOUT IS A BLOWOUT IS A BLOWOUT." Jordan Colabello, owner of Trailer World of Colorado in Henderson, Colorado, spends a lot of time explaining this seemingly simple concept to people considering purchasing a single-axle trailer.

"It comes up all the time," he said. Apparently, a major fear among consumers is that a flat tire or a blowout will be exponentially worse in a trailer with only two tires than it would in one with four. This logic makes no sense to Colabello and, usually, with some time, he is able help the customer see things more clearly.

He patiently points out that no matter how many tires you have, the response to a blowout is identical. Get to the side of the road and change the tire. And if you have to drive any distance to do so, you are going to damage the rim.

Then he reminds them that tandem owners actually have to replace their tires and service their suspensions more often than single-axle owners. This is all about turning.

"When you make a sharp turn pulling a tandem, like when you're trying to get out of a parking lot, there is no give, so you are either dragging the front or the back axle, which creates wear on the tire," Colabello says. "With a single-axle, you can chalk one tire and spin in a circle. One wheel won't move at all and the other will just go around in a circle. Less wear on the tires and the suspension."

Bob Fish, vice president sales and marketing for Sunset Park RV Manufacturing in Shipshewana, Indiana, could not agree more. They have eight single axles (Sunray 109, 109E, 129, 139T and 149, and Sun Lite 16BH, 18RD and 18TB) and they have always been the cornerstone of the 22-year-old business.

In 2023, Fish said they are launching the Volt 1200 and 1500, both of which will be solar-powered, lithium battery, off-grid trailers that fall under the Sunray Line.

"A lot of our customers boondock and they have groups on Facebook where they post beautiful photos from the middle of nowhere. They don't need formal campgrounds, so they can go to the more remote places that allow camping," Fish says. "There are lots of Jeep and small SUV owners and they're very outdoorsy. All RVers are outdoorsy, but our customers are even more."

He mentions the tight turning radius, overall maneuverability, and smaller footprint a single axle offers, and adds that another major issue is weight.

Colabello agrees. A single axle has about 1,000 pounds of carry capacity. A tandem has about 1,800. This worries some potential buyers, until Colabello or a member of his staff walks them through it.

"Sometimes people assume they need the larger amount of carry capacity, but, when you break down what they actually carry, they see they don't need the extra capacity," he says. "Most people travel with some clothes – not their entire wardrobe. Some kitchen gear – not the whole kitchen or the cast iron pans. Water, food and some miscellaneous items. It all usually comes in at about 500 to 600 pounds. And, when you think about it, it all comes down to tow capacity in the end – that's what determines what you can haul."

And, speaking of weight, Colabello is quick to point out that that second axle, and the suspension and tires that go with it, add about 600 extra pounds to the same size trailer, before you even start putting things inside.

Another issue Colabello says dealers need to be able to address is customers' fears about stability. Things have changed dramatically over time, but many customers remain stuck in old concerns.

"It's not like it was years ago," he said. "They don't weigh 5,000 or 6,000 pounds now, so there's no teeter-totter effect. Manufacturers are more conscious about what tongue weights are now, making them more able to adjust the placement of the axle so the camper tows good."

With so many people wanting price-point options, Fish is quick to point out that that is part of their niche.

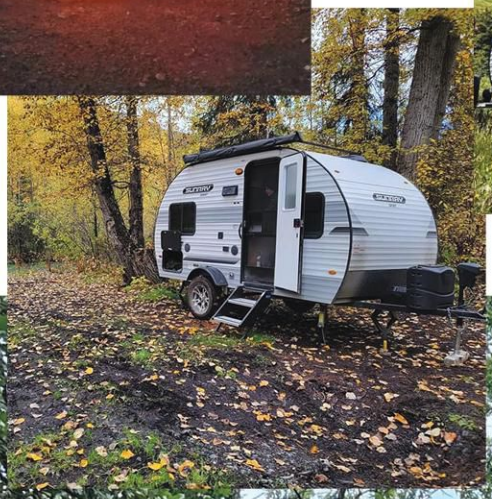
"With us, there's less sticker shock. A 16-foot trailer has a 16-foot trailer price instead of a luxury trailer price."

He stresses this to alleviate the concern voiced by some dealers and their sales teams that selling smaller, lower-priced units cuts into their commission. He argues that "it's just not true. Not everyone can spend $150K on a luxury vehicle; not everyone has a vehicle capable of towing a double axle; but lots of people can buy a single axle. When more people can buy,









PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUNSET PARK RV



you sell more, and your sales staff makes more commissions."

While price-point units bring people onto the lot, so do interesting options.

"Our units are colorful, quirky trailers that grab people's attention from the road," Fish says. "And when they come on the lot to see what's going on, they ask questions and let their guard down against the sales team, which allows them to talk more freely. More people on the lot who would not ordinarily be there can only lead to more sales."

And they are buying. Fish noted that, according to Statistical Surveys, the Sunray 109 has been a top seller in the 12-foot and under category.

In order to meet demand, and not keep dealers waiting, the company has dramatically increased its manufacturing capacity, going from producing two units per day in 2015 to between 15 and 20 units per day in 2022.

"More build capacity leads to more production, which leads to a need for more raw materials, which allows for volume-based pricing. Even with the increased costs of overhead for increased space and more employees, every year we buy better. And we pass those savings along to our dealers."

Colabello says about 20% of their sales are Sunset Park RV and he finds the company easy to work with. Their single-axle inventory also includes Ameri-Lite, Vintage, and Vista by Gulfstream and E-Pro by Flagstaff.

According to Colabello, Sunset "listens to their dealers and makes changes to better their product. For the price point of the camper, we feel that we don't have much warranty work and what warranty work we do have is easy to work with." RVP

PARTY OF THREE

Riverside RV offers three single-axle travel trailer options that serve a variety of customers' needs and personalities.

BY JENNIFER KING





PHOTOS COURTESY OF RIVERSIDE RV

Retro
Riverside RV's Retro units have a 1950s style with pops of red, aqua or seafoam green. They are also available in grey for a more neutral look.

When you look at the three styles of single-axle travel trailers offered by Riverside RV, you can picture who would likely be interested in purchasing each one.

As Riverside RV Sales Manager Andy Downton describes, the Retro is a vintage, old-school look; the Intrepid is more traditional; and the Xplorer is for the customer who's looking to go off the grid.

But no matter what style a customer is looking for, the benefits of a single-axle travel trailer remain the same – as Downton says, most customers opt for this type of RV if they plan to pull it with an SUV. This is a customer who doesn't want to have to upgrade their vehicle to increase towing capacity, but wants to get away on the weekend and hitch the travel trailer to their SUV.

A COUPLES COACH

Single-axle travel trailers are very appealing for couples, Downton says, though some floorplans do offer a bunkbed or a jackknife sofa that will fit an additional person.

"They are marketed for the couple who wants to go out on these trips," Downton says.

While owners of single-axle travel trailers may not necessarily be minimalists, they like the simple things in life, he says. Single-axle travel trailers typically don't offer a huge number of features, but Downton points out that with less flash, that also means fewer things that can go wrong.

Single-axle travel trailers are also much lighter – 2,500 to 3,500 pounds dry – plus additional weight for storage and hitch weight. This leads to much less wear and tear on a customer's SUV, as opposed to a double-axle trailer, Downton says.

Typically, the single-axle travel trailer is cost effective, he says, provided the mode of camping is going to be smaller excursions. While these trailers are usually meant for less time on the road, all the amenities are still available, with plumbing and an







Intrepid
The appeal of single-axle travel trailers like the Intrepid is the ability to enjoy the comforts of home on the road, without needing a larger vehicle for towing.

awning, and Riverside RV models also have a rear camera available that's prepped to go into the dash so owners can see what's going on behind the unit while towing.

FIRST-TIME BUYERS AND DIE-HARD FANS

As the industry has seen new buyers enter the RV lifestyle in the last few years, Downton says there has been a lot of interest in single-axle travel trailers from this group.

"There absolutely has – yes, people that want to dip their toe in the RV pool, this is appealing to them because they don't have to get a tow vehicle or it won't be hard on the tow vehicle, and it's more inexpensive," he says.

He adds that there's still a lot for first-time buyers to learn. Owners still have to learn how to dump the tanks and other tasks that are necessary when taking care of a bigger RV, it's just on a much smaller scale.

"It's much less maintenance because they just don't have all the bells and whistles," he says.

For buyers that have come out in the last four to five years, the teardrop trailers similar to the Xplorer have been popular.

Learning what their customers want, and using that knowledge to bring them floorplans and features they desire, is key to engaging with their owners and keeping up with their buying needs.

There are chapters of owners across the country, and Riverside RV tries to send a representative to those gatherings, Downton says.

"We try to get really good feedback from them on





Retro
The Retro's bunkhouse model can sleep additional people for families or guests.







Xplorer
RVers are looking to go off-grid, Andy Downton with Riverside RV says. The Xplorer is a rugged version of the company's other typical units.

their current experience, what could we do today to make your experience better than what you're currently in," he says. "They take pride in how they decorate their units after they purchase them from us."

Communicating with the current owners to determine what could be done better is valuable feedback, he says. While the length and weight of the units needs to stay the same, Downton says they learn about what could be done within those four walls.

The sales team also brings feedback back from its dealers.

TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF

Riverside was purchased by a new owner about two years ago, Downton explains.

"We're trying to develop a family culture here, where we're all involved in the decision-making," he says. "Communication is the key for us as we start growing in the marketplace. We're trying to do things a little different."

One thing that Riverside RV continues to focus on as they move into 2023 is the cleanliness of its plant.

"Our plant is about as clean as it could be in the industry. It's always ready for guests," he says.

This is part of the company's high standards for quality, Downton says, and Riverside means business, and their business is about its products. As a larger independent company, Riverside is able to perform to scale with other manufacturers out there, he says.

Learning to give customers – and potential customers – what they want has been successful for Riverside, especially when it comes to the Xplorer. Downton says it's a stripped-down version of what they're known for, but with a more rugged look. Customers are looking to go off the grid, and they want that experience in a small towable.

"And, quite frankly, everyone loves the name!" Downton says. "It's all about the name."

MOVING FORWARD

"The reality is there are people who don't want to travel the way they did before the pandemic," Downton says. However, those people still want adventure, and they want to connect with their families but not stay in a hotel room.

"COVID and the pandemic has generated more interest in RVs than in the 20 years that I've been in the industry," he says. With past experience at Forest River and THOR, Downton says he's eager to help take Riverside RV to the next level.

"I'm looking forward to that," he says.

One way Downton says he believes the company will grow is by retaining employees.

"You really have to forecast out what you think the market is going to do and build at a rate where you can maintain your plant staff," he says. "The key to achieving and maintaining quality is to retain your plant staff."

In June or July, Downton says dealerships were caught up – they had sold everything on their lots. Now, their lots are filled back up, and the economy turned with interest rates and gas prices going up, affecting blue collar workers.

But regardless what's going on in the economy, Downton says "it's always going to come back to quality and to maintain quality, you have to maintain your production staff."

Keeping those employees around when production is down is not easy – the industry loses employees to other industries, he says.

"You hate to lose all these people – it's something that's a little bit of a rollercoaster. That is not just a Riverside thing, but that's across the board," he says. "The employees are the biggest factor in this whole thing" RVP

6 BENEFITS OF A RIVERSIDE SINGLE-AXLE TRAVEL TRAILER FROM ANDY DOWNTON, *RIVERSIDE RV SALES*

1. Less maintenance required. Fewer tires, brakes, bearings and other parts to maintain and service.
2. More cost effective. With dry weights at 2,500 to 3,500 pounds, a single-axle is more cost effective for a customer and his/her tow vehicle.
3. 16-inch, on-center aluminum framed sidewalls.
4. Composite panels by Azdel. Weight matters and Azdel is half the weight of other materials, which means easier towing and better fuel efficiency. The material is also water and moisture resistant.
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How industry groups are using RECT data to improve service and technician training.

BY DARIAN ARMER

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Established in 1993

The Lynx Levelers® Original RV Leveling System uses orange interlocking plastic leveling blocks that configure to fit any leveling or stabilizing function.

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ALWAYS MADE IN USA

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TRI-LYNX

While the issue of Repair Event Cycle Time (RECT) has plagued the industry since its inception, part of the problem with long RECT times has been the inability to measure and track RECT on a dealership level and larger regional and national levels.

"It was one of those things where there weren't any legacy systems," says Garry Enyart, former director of RV Business at Cummins, Inc., and former chairman of the RV Technical Institute (RVTI). He's also the person who introduced the term RECT to the industry.

So, Enyart got to work developing a process, beginning with a definition.

The RVTI defines RECT as "the time when the customer engages with the service writer and 'hands over' their RV to the servicing entity and the time when the repaired unit is available for the customer to pick up their RV."

CREATING A MEASURABLE

In late 2017, Enyart launched a Six Sigma project, which is a set of process improvement tools used to identify problems and steps to take action and solve those problems, to tackle RECT.

"We brought together a broad spectrum of industry leaders and held meetings once a week for six months. That's how the term RECT came to be. It's a term Cummins used in their service centers across the globe," Enyart says.

Throughout this process, the group discovered some key components that impact RECT: brand, technical support, product quality, part identification system, parts stock, part lead-time/commodity type, warranty process, dealer training, diagnostic tools and preseason inspection.

What the group found is that RECT is measurable and can be tracked to reflect improvement or areas needing focus. The group also found that the importance of RECT has broad industry acceptance as a necessary initiative to gain and retain today's discriminating consumer.

"We found there were no tools to keep track of RECT. There were no dashboards, data wasn't being tracked or captured to try to find out what was going on, so that was an output of the project. There are now dealer management systems – IDK, CDK Lightspeed and Mobility – that have dashboards and tools for dealers.

FINDING GOOD HELP

A major impediment to improving RECT and overall dealership function was the lack of qualified RV technicians and the ability to retain them.

"One of the success stories of the RV industry is the entrepreneurial spirit that pervades it. You have the ability to start and be very successful without a lot of guardrails. A lot of prior technicians grew up wrenching, and as that era begins to retire or exit, we do not have a backfill of talent coming in," says Curtis Hemmeler, executive director for RVTI and senior vice president of operations for RVIA. "Not only do we not have the backfill or talent, we needed a structuralized program similar to ASC, which in auto is the gold standard of training and certification. It's

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recognized nationally, if not globally, and contributes greatly to the ability to speed up RECT and parts availability. Two big drivers that result in improved RECT."

Hemmeler says a primary issue with RECT has always been the ability to quickly identify and procure parts for repairs, as well as diagnosing the problem correctly.

"That was the primary impetus for us focusing on this. We started to refocus and had the committee on excellence back in 2006 and 2007 prior to the recession," Hemmeler says. "It's natural to think you go straight from auto tech to RV tech, but it's actually more carpenters and tradesman who become RV technicians. An RV is really a house on wheels, so it needs people who know all the systems that can typically be found in a home."

Hemmeler says the greatest change to recruiting RV technicians has been the heavy emphasis on industry-wide training. RVTI and RECT have created key metrics and the first standardized, professionalized institute that is created





and committed to training and certifying RV technicians of its kind.

OEMS STEPPING UP

Hemmeler says the industry is joining together and making efforts to improve RECT.

"We have all the leaders and dealers with us. That's what is exciting to me. Over the last two years everyone has started working on things. It's become a journey for each individual company. They've all stepped up and you will see a variety of announcements, from Jayco tracking RECT for their dealers to others adding service centers, service bays and more," Hemmeler says.

For instance, Hemmeler says Grand Design just built a new service center in Elkhart, Indiana.

"It's magnificent. There are many others following their lead and acting. And they're doing it in light of a potential slowdown coming. Not like the recession of 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010, but still a potential slowdown," he says.

OEMs like Jayco will send their dealers units to practice and replace a sidewall or put a new roof on. During a time of slow down, dealers have decided to put a bigger focus on service. More than 10,000 people trained in RVTI's program during the last two years, resulting in units getting fixed faster.

"We're not eating the elephant in one way. It's being eaten in many different ways. We've improved technician training, put price points on certification so even an RVer can afford to learn to do things and we have this mobile tech group that continues to grow immensely. We're attacking it from every angle. RVTI is a catalyst for making sure information is available to folks who want to invest in it and it's done in a standardized way," Hemmeler says.

RAISING AWARENESS

"The main thing is awareness of the issue. It starts with a discussion at the dealership. We run into some dealerships who say they talk about RECT every Monday morning as a standing item on their staff meeting agenda where they analyze these RECT reports and see how they can get better. Not everybody does that," Enyart says. "We have a newsletter coming out to raise awareness. Next year we'll be doing some regional training including all of the DMS providers. Whoever wants to be involved to share best practices and discuss what we as an industry can do to continue to improve."

Hemmeler says the need for awareness of RECT and training qualified and capable RV technicians has gained momentous industry support.

"A good example of the industry support behind this initiative is the fact that we're utilizing and subsidizing a good portion of funding internally and with RVDA, RVTA and Go RVing. Funds that were used for marketing for Go RVing in the past are now being used on the training side of things," Hemmeler says. "We're making accessibility easier for technician students by providing online, hybrid and e-learning partners across the country. Accessibility is there. Affordability is there. We have our newsletters providing examples and stimulating conversation. At the end of the day, it's about improving the end user's experience."

RVP

WHY IMPROVING RECT MATTERS

When the committee on excellence was holding meetings and hosting strategy sessions, Enyart realized they were missing a key component: data. So, they got 1,000 work orders from 50 dealers and analyzed the data.

"What we found really opened the eyes of everybody," he says.

What they found was that if parts could be readily available, a unit could come in, get processed, repaired and processed out in about four days. That becomes 23 days if there was a problem getting parts and supply chain issues that were typical prior to the problems experienced during the pandemic.

"Think about the impact this has on dealers with things like lemon laws and the potential impact on the industry," Enyart says. "If someone falls out of love with their RV and wants to use the lemon law trigger, then having a unit sit at a dealership for weeks and weeks is not a good thing."

Now that there are dashboards, there is a way to track RECT. Enyart says some OEMs already track RECT for dealers and are implementing changes to reduce the amount of preapproval time for parts to streamline those processes. That includes finding and implementing best processes.

While some OEMs have legacy systems in place, new startups may struggle to have parts readily available.

"They're doing everything you can to get going and parts may not be front of mind for them. Sometimes they bring products to market without the parts catalog out there. When something goes wrong, they have to have the dealership take a picture and send it so they can look and see," Enyart says. "Thankfully, while it's not completely behind us, but in the four years since RVTI's inception we've made significant progress. Although the supply chain has been a hot mess, we've improved at identifying parts and getting them there."

MOBILE TECHS IMPROVING RECT

While mobile technicians have been around forever, the industry has rarely regulated who can or cannot become an RV technician. Enter RVTI and its drive to professionalize and standardize curriculum for RV technicians.

Hemmeler says the increased need for RV technicians has been a result of the ability and amount of RVs that have sold over the years, creating a need for more units to be fixed and more technicians.

"With the pandemic, people started re-evaluating their lives and picking up side gigs. Being an independent mobile tech provides that for folks. With the dealer network and amount of RVs now on the road, we can leverage these people at certain times to help with RECT. Especially if a dealership is too busy or the bays are full. A luxury of the industry is that we don't demand or dictate how dealerships operate. Each is left to their own business strategy, which can include mobile technicians," Hemmeler says.



10 STEPS TO SELLING YOUR DEALERSHIP

Here's a road map to your destination from Jesse Stopnitzky of dealership brokerage firm Performance Brokerage Services.

BY JESSE STOPNITZKY

The sale of a business is often a pivotal and lifechanging event. A business may represent the majority of a family's net worth, and a sale represents the last opportunity for those assets to generate income for the family. Although the process is not difficult, it is highly complex and riddled with pitfalls.

Add to this the often-emotional aspect of selling a multigenerational family business, the concern whether the loyal employees and customers will be treated with the same care and respect, and the unfamiliarity with the buy-sell process. A sale must be handled with care and diligence by experienced professionals.

These 10 steps are a high-level outline of the buy-sell process for a traditional asset sale. It is intended to help maximize value and minimize pitfalls.

0. STEP ZERO

First, take a step back. Before taking action, identify and assess your personal and business goals. What would an ideal sale look like for you, your family, team, community, manufacturers and suppliers? This is critical in determining if the offer and specific buyer will accomplish those goals.

1. ASSEMBLE YOUR SELLING TEAM

We advise clients to surround themselves with a team of trusted advisors. This ensures that your best interests are protected, while you continue to focus on the day-to-day operations and maximizing the dealership's performance. Your team should include an attorney, accountant, financial planner and dealership broker. Each professional has a role in the process, and it is imperative that members of your team have experience in dealership transactions.

2. INFORMATION GATHERING

Provide the buyer with sufficient information to properly evaluate the opportunity, build a proforma or projection of earnings, and submit to you an offer that is well informed of the relevant facts. A typical request includes information regarding financial data, assets and inventories, real estate, manufacturers and vehicle sales, contracts to be assumed, and your organization. By demonstrating that you are organized, prepared and willing to share information, you will increase the buyer's confidence that engaging with you will be a smooth transaction. Remember, active and seasoned buyers are regularly evaluating acquisition opportunities and often more than one at any given time.

When working with a dealership broker, all the information should be packaged into a Confidential Information Memorandum and disseminated only after the buyer signs a Nondisclosure Agreement.

3. MARKETING STRATEGY

Prepare a custom-tailored marketing strategy that accomplishes your goals. An ideal sale may be price driven, though it may also include identifying a buyer whose values closely align with yours, who prefers to lease the real estate, who will exclude your family from your noncompete clause, etc. Also consider the number of disclosures required to reach those goals, as the higher number of disclosures, the higher likelihood for a confidentiality breach.

4. BUYER FILTRATION

The buy-sell process is lengthy, overwhelming, intimate and requires a certain level of trust and respect between the principals. There will be many opportunities for a buyer to attempt to renegotiate or "re-trade" the deal after you have given up leverage. A confidentiality breach early in the process can cause harm to your business. Not all buyers have the financial wherewithal and operational experience to secure a floorplan and agreements from the manufacturers. Therefore, filter your prospective buyers, rely on your advisory team and do not ignore red flags.

5. LETTER OF INTENT

Also referred to as an "LOI," this nonbinding agreement outlines the major components of the transaction as agreed upon between buyer and seller. A highly detailed LOI should serve as a framework for the attorneys to draft the Definitive Agreements. It is important to note that certain items in the LOI are binding, like the confidentiality and exclusivity provisions.

Even if the goodwill amount is the same, not all offers are created equal. Be sure to perform a total deal review, evaluating the various terms of the LOI, as well as the profile of the buyer, and consider how each LOI/buyer may accomplish your goals.

6. DEFINITIVE AGREEMENTS

Expanding on the LOI, the attorneys will prepare the Definitive Agreements, including an Asset Purchase Agreement (APA), Real Estate Purchase Agreement (REPA or RESPA), and/or Lease Agreement. Since the terms are binding and enforceable, and to ensure the agreements are fair and equitable for both sides, this requires multiple

rounds of revisions between the attorneys. By utilizing a comprehensive LOI and remaining involved in the negotiations, you will expedite this step.

7. DUE DILIGENCE PERIOD

The due diligence period may commence after mutually executing the Letter of Intent or the Definitive Agreements. You may also elect for a hybrid where some less invasive due diligence items occur after the Letter of Intent is executed, while those more invasive only after the Definitive Agreements are executed.

During this time, the buyer will be granted the right to inspect the books and records, assets, inventories, real property and facility, contracts to be assumed, etc. Certain documents will be ordered like an appraisal, environmental study, building inspection, surveys, title reports, etc.

Despite heavy involvement in the due diligence, do not let it distract from your dealership operation. Maintain strict control over your business and maximize its performance.

8. MANUFACTURER APPROVAL

Upon completion of the due diligence, you will notify the manufacturers of your intent to sell. Your attorney may also submit a letter to the manufacturers authorizing them to communicate with the buyer.

Following the buyer's approval by the manufacturers, you would then inform your employees and introduce the buyer, allowing the buyer to share the company culture, philosophies, systems and alike.

9. CLOSING

Although not necessary, you may choose to close the dealership for a day while you finalize the sale and the closing tasks.

In part, this will include final inventory adjustments, employee hiring, system integrations, contract and utility assumptions, removing excluded assets from the premises, signing escrow documents, securing lien releases, transferring funds, etc.

10. POST-CLOSING

Congratulations, you may finally exhale as the deal is closed! As an asset sale, certain items will remain your responsibility post-closing, including satisfying accounts payable, collecting receivables, managing the service and F&I chargebacks, and relocating business records that need to be maintained.

Reducing a highly complex process and the culmination of one's life work into this article only scratches the surface. So, a few key comments that may help you reach your destination: your advisory team is invaluable; preparation is paramount; patience, diligence and vigilance are essential; respect and transparency promote good faith negotiations; and always keep your eyes on the prize. RVP

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*Not available for Multi-Axle Tyre Gards

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Special Product Focus

NEW PRODUCTS FOR 2023



Representative kit image

AUXILIARY AIR TANK AND MOUNTING BRACKET

Air Lift Co., Lansing, Michigan, presents its WirelessAir Tank with EZ Mount. WirelessAir Tank with EZ Mount (PN 74100EZ) packs all the benefits of WirelessAir, but with the added convenience of a 2-gallon auxiliary air tank with a coiled hose for air on-demand. WirelessAir is a dual-path, wireless control system that includes a heavy-duty compressor. Air spring pressures are controlled with the included wireless controller or with a compatible smartphone. WirelessAir Tank with EZ Mount is built with Air Lift's EZ Mount bracket for quick installation.

airliftcompany.com/whats-new



MANUAL ROLLER SHADE

Auto-Motion Shade, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada, presents its Global Shade – a single manual roller shade for cockpit and passenger area of RVs, limo conversions and executive vans. Includes slow rise multiposition rotary clutch spring mechanism, easily adjustable shade speed and end limits and a powder-coated aluminum mounting rail. Available with external or fabric covered hem bar.

automotionshade.com



LIGHTER TOW BRAKE

Blue Ox, Pender, Nebraska, offers its Patriot Dinghy Tow Brake BRK2022 with a new, smaller profile that fits more towed vehicles (8 by 7.5 by 11.5 versus 9 by 10 by 12). The new, lighter design is 6.2 pounds versus 9.5 pounds with faster extension of the braking action. Electric and self-contained, the tow brake checks brake pressure to ensure proper setup. No tank to drain, no pumps or hoses to connect. In-cab controller monitors the brake and allows manual input. Works with hybrids.

blueox.com





FIFTH WHEEL HITCH

CURT, Elkhart, Indiana, presents its CrossWing 5th Wheel Hitch. New to the CrossWing family of products, the single-point model provides easy attachment to most industry-standard gooseneck balls. Although it is lightweight, CrossWing features superior strength with a 20,000-pound weight capacity. Its coupling system eliminates guesswork by offering a visible contact surface for easier hookup. This hitch also utilizes two bed protectors that install underneath the hitch, between the base and truck bed, to distribute forces and protect against wear and scuffing.

curtmfg.com/part/16051

LATCHING BAGGAGE DOOR

Creative Products Group, Elkhart, Indiana, offers its Rotary Pro – a two-stage, rotary-style latching baggage door lock featuring "secured" and "sealed" stages. The Rotary Pro features a durable die-cast metal faceplate, stainless steel latch and high-density UV-resistant plastic backplate. This global lock comes KeyALike ready and is an "exact fit" replacement for the Challenger Nova-style lock, making installation a breeze. The Rotary Pro comes with a faceplate gasket seal, mounting screws, strike catch and set of G391 keys.

cpgbrands.com/product/rotary-pro





OE PUCK HITCHES

Demco, Boyden, Iowa, offers its Demco 31K OE Pucks Series Hitches. The heavy-duty, 31,000-rated, OE puck hitches for Ram, Chevy and Ford are for those fifth wheel towers who want to maximize their towing capabilities. Built-in height adjustments and Demco's full wrap around jaw complement the product line. Made in the USA.

demco-products.com



DESIGNER SHOWER PANS

DUO FORM, Edwardsburg, Michigan, presents its new DUO Designer RV Replacement Shower Pan in Mythic. The company's most-trusted shower pans now come with new designer prints. Upgrade your RV bath today.

duoformplastics.com/product/new-duo-designer-replacement-rv-shower-pan-2436122931-mythic

BUTYL RUBBER SEALANT

Dicor Products, an Airxcel brand, Elkhart, Indiana, presents its Butyl Rubber Sealant. The new, gunnable butyl rubber sealant is a single component, solvent release butyl-based sealant specifically designed to provide a watertight primary seal between lapping substrates and joints ideal around skylights, vents, windows and termination rails. Gun-ability allows for a mess-free application, curing to a putty-like consistency with superior adhesion to a variety of surfaces (TPO, EPDM, PVC, glass, metals, aluminum, concrete, wood and some plastics).

dicorproducts.com





AIR CONDITIONER

Dometic, Elkhart, Indiana, offers its FreshJet 3 Series. The new Dometic FreshJet air conditioner conveniently upgrades your RV comfort with its smart design and powerful performance. This innovative design delivers greater cooling capacity and more airflow – all with less noise for greater comfort. Constructed with evaporator e-coated coils for durability and requiring less refrigerant, the FreshJet series offers quiet, cool comfort on every adventure.

dometic.com/en-us/outdoor



RV ROOF AIR CONDITIONER

Furrion, Elkhart, Indiana, presents its Furrion Chill HE Air Conditioner. The powerful, aerodynamic Chill HE RV roof air conditioner by Furrion has been engineered with dual fans to increase cooling efficiency by 40% and lower operating noise. It offers effortless control of the temperature and airflow in your RV. The dual-fan design works to move cold air into your RV while simultaneously circulating the air around the primary fan. This design reduces heat generated from operating the AC and increases airflow so you can stay cool and comfortable no matter where your adventure takes you.

furrion.com



12-VOLT GAS RANGETOPS

GE Appliances, a Haier company, Louisville, Kentucky, offers its GE Profile 12-V Gas Rangetops. Available in two burner (12 inches) and three burner (21 inches) configurations, GE Profile rangetops are designed to bring sleek and modern design to a variety of RV kitchens. Owners will love features like the spark ignition system, secure edge-to-edge grates and cast metal back-lit knobs. Operates with 12-volt DC rating and LP gas. Glass cooktop covers come in both sizes and are sold separately.

mwss.force.com/s



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OFFSET GOOSENECK BALL

GEN-Y Hitch, Nappanee, Indiana, presents its GoosePuck. The GEN-Y GoosePuck is the only offset gooseneck ball on the market that boasts 100% compatibility with the OEM Puck System. This product offers a 5-inch offset to help you gain additional turning clearance. Fabricated with heavy-duty steel and a towing capacity of 25,000 pounds. Available for Ford (2017-current), GM (2019 and 2021-current) and Dodge.

genyhitch.com

WASHER/DRYER COMBO

Pinnacle Appliances, Houston, Texas, offers its Super Combo – Model 22-4600 L W. A single unit that can be converted from venting to condensing, drying at the touch of a button. Winterize in two minutes. Allergen cycle kills dust mites. Sanitize and quiet cycle functions for better family health and convenience. Special features include self clean, pause, add a sock, child lock and end of cycle chime. Now with a new PET cycle feature – a special function to remove pet hair for families with furry members.

pinnaclecombos.com





SHOWER PANS

Icon Technologies Limited, Winkler, Manitoba, Canada, presents its Neo Angle Shower Pan NSB2727. ICON shower pans are constructed of durable ABS plastic with reinforced bottoms for extra durability. The drain is molded into the pan and ready to be drilled. Complete your ICON shower renovation with an ICON modular surround kit.

icondirect.com



CAMPING CHAIR WITH COOLER

Kuma Outdoor Gear, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, offers its Kozy Bear Chair. The product's central cooler fits a six pack and provides both you and your camping buddy easy access to drinks all night. The slightly curved chair design grants a little more shoulder space between each other and the perfect amount of heat around the campfire, it has zippered mesh pockets to store your valuables (no more lost phone!), has a padded back and armrests, and two beverage holders keeping you Kozy on all your outdoor adventures. Rated for 500 pounds.

kumaoutdoorgear.com/store/product/kozy-bear-chair-151



KEYLESS RV DOOR LOCK

Lippert, Elkhart, Indiana, presents its Lippert Keyless RV Door Lock with Bluetooth. Lippert's Bluetooth-enabled Keyless RV Door Lock allows you to lock and unlock your rig's entry door using a smartphone. It uses proximity sensors to register your location and will provide remote locking and unlocking access through the OneControl app. The lock also provides audible feedback for successful locking and unlocking functions. You can use the OneControl app to set different battery modes for your lock and the app tracks the door lock battery life, so you'll know when it's time to replace the batteries.

lippert.com

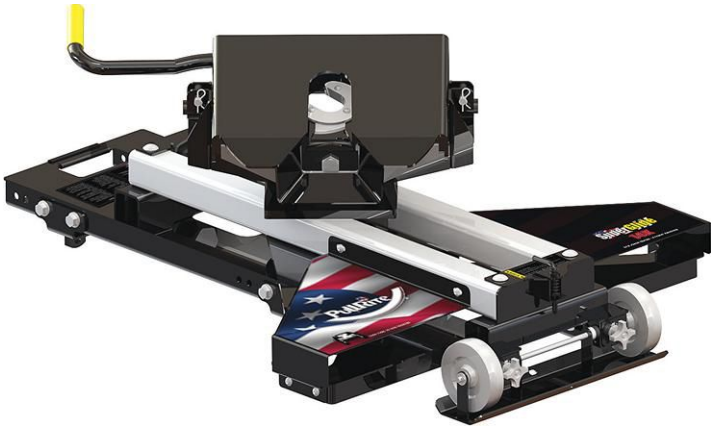


WI-FI THERMOSTAT

Micro-Air, Allentown, New Jersey, offers its EasyTouch RV WiFi Thermostat – GE Rooftop AC replacement. This thermostat provides 21st Century temperature control for a 21st Century AC unit. Micro-Air's engineers followed their earlier success and developed a smartphone app with Bluetooth and touchscreen functionality. Features include a 3.5-inch touchscreen, Wi-Fi/Bluetooth control via free smartphone app, two-year warranty and feature updates available over-the-air. This product only improves.

micro-air.net





HALF-TON TRUCK HITCH

PullRite, Mishawka, Indiana, presents its SuperShort SuperGilde #3200. The 14,000-pound SuperShort SuperGlide is designed specifically for half-ton trucks with beds shorter than 6 feet. This SuperGlide has 22 3/4-inches of travel and quickly moves the trailer away from the cab. The #3200 also features PullRite's first built-in wheels that make it easy to maneuver in and out of the bed or while in storage. The #3200 mounts to an industry standard-type rail. And like all PullRite hitches, it's made in the USA.

pullrite.com



BATTERY DECK MOUNT CONVERTER/CHARGER

Progressive Dynamics, Marshall, Michigan, offers its PD9300 series, a new selectable battery chemistry deck mount converter/charger for lead acid, AGM, lithium and constant charge. All four modes available in one package. Change battery type with just a push of the button. All modes optimized for best battery performance.

progressivedyn.com



COLOR TOUCHSCREEN TPMS KIT

Truck System Technologies, San Antonio, Texas, offers its newest 770 model Color Touch Screen TPMS kit. The offering is available in flow-thru and cap sensor configurations. The 770 was previously released as OEM equipment on many Forest River and THOR lines. The new touchscreen display makes programming a breeze and is compatible with recent 507 series legacy TST products, offering expansion opportunities of up to five trailers plus a power unit to customers who would like to expand their system. Flow-thru, RV cap, hybrid and internal sensors are in-stock and ready to integrate. The new display includes a GPS giving drivers current direction, speed, altitude and resettable trip odometer. Head to your nearest RV dealer and ask for a demonstration.

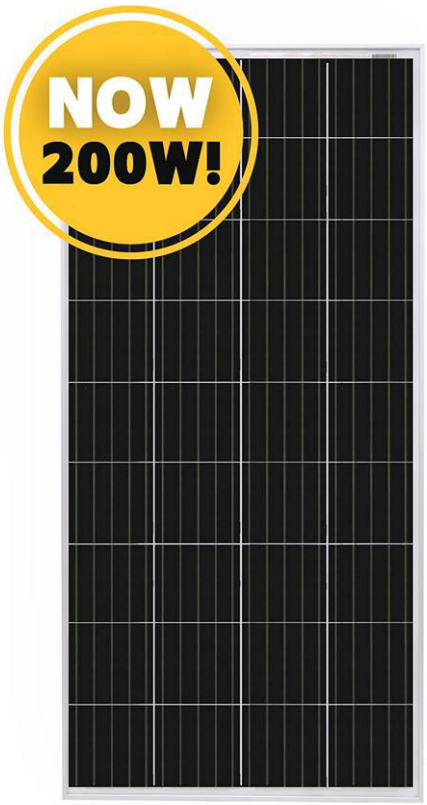
tsttruck.com



TRAVLFI ROUTER/WI-FI EXTENDER

Pace International, Rochester, Minnesota, presents its TravlFi JourneyXTR 4G/LTE Router & Wi-Fi Extender. Introducing the powerful and fast, road-tested JourneyXTR Router. The perfect travel companion for multiple users and devices – up to 32 to be exact. Users will have peace of mind knowing they are connected to a secure network with continually evolving live firmware updates from the cloud. The JourneyXTR automatically connects to the strongest signal among all major carriers with pay-as-you-go plans that start at $19. TravlFi LTE data plans are the most competitive and versatile in the RV market.

travlfi.com



200-WATT SOLAR KITS

Go Power!, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, offers its 200-watt Solar Kits. More power in the same footprint. Go Power! has improved the efficiency of their most popular solar panel. Now rated at 200 watts, or 9.6 amps, these panels are available in popular kits.

gopowersolar.com



SCISSOR JACK STABILIZER

RV SnapPad, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, presents its SnapJack by SnapPad – now for scissor jacks. Two models of SnapJack, 2500 and 5000, have been developed for most brands of scissor jack stabilizers. More grip, stability and convenience for each stabilizer foot from the makers of the World's Only Permanent Jack Pad.

rvsnappad.com

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SOLAR AND POWER BUNDLES

Samlex America, Burnaby, British Columbia, offers its SHARE 400W Solar + Power Bundles. Sell more solar by introducing customers to the Samlex SHARE 400W Bundle, which provides the freedom to use electronic devices while boondocking 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 your customer's lifestyle and swap out components if needed. The SHARE 400W Bundle includes everything a customer needs to get started with solar.

samlexamerica.com/bundles



REPLACEMENT SKYLIGHT PACK

Specialty Recreation, El Cajon, California, offers its Skybox – Five Pack. A retail-ready display box with an assortment of white, clear and smoke replacement skylights. The POP box comes pre-loaded with five skylights in the company's bestselling size, 14-inch by 22-inch. Made of UV-resistant thermoformed polycarbonate Specialty Recreation skylights they are easy to install and clean.

specrec.com



REPLACEMENT PIN BOX

REESE, Plymouth, Michigan, offers its new Gen 3 Goose Box. The next generation of towing is here. The REESE Goose Box is the best choice for those who want to tow their RV with the lightest hitch on the market – your goose ball. This premium replacement pin box attaches to your fifth wheel trailer and connects to the goose ball in the bed of your truck, giving you more space for storing, traveling or hauling. Now available with Lippert Rhino bolt pattern compatibility.

reesegoosebox.com



FIFTH WHEEL STABILIZING/LEVELING KIT

Stromberg Carlson, Traverse City, Michigan, offers its Fifth Wheel Stabilizing & Leveling Kit. Stromberg Carlson's new nine-piece Fifth Wheel Stabilizing & Leveling Kit improves the stability of your parked and leveled fifth wheel. Neatly packed in a convenient storage bag are four lightweight polycarbonate Base Pad Extremes that extend the life of the hydraulic leveling system by minimizing length of travel. The kit also includes four Wheel Chocks made of molded EPDM rubber that will not split, shred, crack or break. Made in the USA.

strombergcarlson.com



AIR FRYER OVEN/RANGE

Suburban, an Airxcel brand, Dayton, Tennessee, presents its Air Fryer Oven/Range. The Air Fryer Range is dual fuel featuring a gas cooktop with a cast iron grate and 120-volt electric element in the air fryer oven. The recirculating high-speed fan distributes high heat evenly throughout the oven cavity frying food without the mess of deep-frying and faster than conventional ovens. Backlit control knobs for safety; comes with mesh frying tray and drip pan. 17-inch or 22-inch models available.

suburbanrv.com



RV SURGE PROTECTORS

Valterra Products, Mission Hills, California, presents its Mighty Cord SurgeMinder RV Surge Protectors to protect your RV's 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, 4200 Joules.

valterra.com

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2023 RV PROFILES

A Special Advertising Section



In this continuation of our special advertising section from our January 2023 issue, RV PRO gives you a look at products and services offered by some of the leading companies in the industry. Learn more about your potential partners inside.

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DUO Form Plastics

For more than 50 years, DUO has provided shower walls and bath components for RV OEMS, and has grown with the business to include skylights, printed designer walls and wet-bath sinks.

With the average life of an RV being upwards of 20 years or more, it's important to have a partner with solutions to keep RVs running smoothly and hassle-free. DUO proudly serves customers with upgraded products and accessories that are well known in the industry. It's been rewarding to develop and launch new and exciting products specifically targeted to RV, camper and van customers.

DUO is proud of the work it does with its customers, end users and RV manufacturers alike, creating products that RVers want and need – from RV Slide Out Skis and RV Skylight Shades, to color-matching the perfect RV upscale shower wall. Whether it's designing wet bath solutions for camper van conversions, or perfecting sinks and shower pans for mass production, the teams at DUO are ready for any request.

DUO offers on-site design and engineering staff with an in-house tool shop. Our full-service product development center offers design, tooling and engineering services such as: color renderings, assembly drawings, CAD models, rapid prototyping, CNC wood patterns, high temp epoxy and ceramic tooling, cast aluminum tooling, and CNC and robotic trimming fixtures.

DUO's designers and engineers are ready to create customers' favorite color, pattern or design. Available now with etched grout lines, matte or glossy finish, and smooth or textured walls.

With our proprietary products containing 90% recycled plastic, DUO understands that its operations affect the environment. The company recycles everything it can in its process, from materials to final product.

DUO is more than RV showers, creating more than the small spaces in RVs. Its size





capabilities include sheets up to 104 inches by 128 inches. DUO can produce large parts such as front caps, medical equipment machinery housing, roof components, floor skis, sinks in a variety of shapes, backsplash pieces, shower surrounds, bathtubs, shower pans, underbelly, fenders, trim pieces and pet products.

DUO is committed to providing its customers with high-quality and versatile parts for any project. The company also offers robot trimming for higher tolerance, CNC work for flat cut parts and specialty coatings from antimicrobial, scratch resistance, high gloss, low gloss, antigraffiti and more, offering quick lead times with 3D formed parts and tools up to 50 inches by 50 inches by 72 inches. And, DUO can assemble parts and pack to a customer's specifications.

DUO was named 2022 Michigan Manufacturer of the Year. The company believes in the Duo Difference, combining exceptional customer service with 50-plus years of thermoforming experience, and transitioning customer's ideas into reality. The Duo Difference brings innovation and ingenuity through building strong teams and strategic partnerships along with a dedication to continuous improvement and learning. All made possible with an employee-centric attitude and positive work environment. Teamwork, culture and employees are at the heart of what we Duo.

duoformplastics.com



Exclusive Carefree Connects™ remote control awning app for mobile devices

Tap into the growing demand for smart RV technology. We've combined lifestyle-enhancing Bluetooth® control technology with the number one awning brand to add excitement and customer appeal to OEM and aftermarket sales.

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Carefree of Colorado



Carefree of Colorado was established in 1971, after introducing the first automatic roll-up awning for RVs. Since then, the company's exclusive focus has been on the design, development, manufacturing and innovation of awnings for the RV industry. Carefree remains the world's only full-line awning and accessories manufacturer for RVs. Carefree provides comprehensive and innovative solutions for vertical/lateral arm, small and big box, slideout, window and entry door awnings for the global RV market.

Carefree designs and manufactures its awnings from its headquarters in Broomfield, Colorado. The company's 200,000-square-foot production and distribution facility employs around 350 people and features state of the art technology, including automated machines to support quality and consistency in the finished product. Carefree also has a 40,000-square-foot distribution center in Elkhart, Indiana, which stocks and distributes awnings to Midwest RV OEMs.

Carefree is responsible for several RV awning "firsts," like the advent of powered awnings, One-Touch operation, motion-based wind protection, self-leveling retraction, Memory Pitch, independent arm pitch adjustments, closed awning pitch adjustments and the new Carefree Connects system with Bluetooth awning control.

Carefree has had millions of awnings installed worldwide on every type of RV and specialty vehicle imaginable creating a rich tradition of quality, value, performance and style. The company's history, experience and focus are why it is a leading supplier of RV awnings and offers the most expansive awning product line in the world.

carefreeofcolorado.com

MICRO-AIR LLC

Micro-Air products both start and control RV AC units. They are sold throughout the world by an existing dealer network of about 250 RV pros.

Micro-Air's manufacturing facility is in Allentown, New Jersey, one hour from New York City and one hour from Philadelphia. The company's American-made parts offer cutting-edge technology for the RV. Its small company attitude results in high-quality manufacturing. The company gets it right the first time and provides the finest in customer and technical support. In 2023, the company celebrates its 40th anniversary and its long history of marine, RV and HVAC circuit board designs.

The company's flagship products are the EasyStart 364 soft starters for RV, with 10 years of sales under its belt. EasyStart's softer, smoother, ramped starts allow AC units to start on small 2,200-watt generators – great for boondockers – or two units on 30-amp power in a campground, or one unit on as little as 15-amp power in a driveway without kicking off the breaker. Its RV soft starter is designed for American RVs and 110-volt capacity. The company also offers a 220-volt option (dual power) with Bluetooth diagnostics and Micro-Air's free app. EasyStarts are part of the solution for running AC all night on solar power, inverters and battery walls, and to reducing gas consumption, generator noise and skimming weight from an RV. With 80,000 units in the field, EasyStart is tried and true.

DOUBLE DOWN EXTENDED WARRANTY

Unheard of in any industry, Micro-Air will even warrant the AC unit compressor itself. If an EasyStart is installed on any RV AC unit six years or younger, the company warrants the customer's compressor for a new two-year period. Yes, the warranty is good on the product upon which it is installed, and the company hasn't found a similar offer in this or any other industry.

Its EasyTouch RV Wi-Fi smart thermostats are more recent, with three years in production and over 15,000 thermostats in the field. They are successful as drop-in replacements for the industry's existing OEM digital thermostats. The EasyTouch RV thermostat replaces standard AC units available from OEMs. These replacements perform every function of the original plus a touchscreen, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi control to an RV thermostat. The functionality of both the thermostat and the app are well loved by all.

Full-timers that want all the comfort that a residential smart thermostat provides are a big market segment. It is particularly popular with the 50% of RV owners who travel with pets and love the ability to monitor and control AC temperatures for their furry companions with the EasyTouch RV, at the same price as a simple temperature monitor.

INDUSTRY ACCOLADES

EasyStart 364 is a noteworthy product in categories for power solutions, Made in the USA, and camping and pets.

micro-air.com and microair.net



Progress Mfg.



The Original Equal-i-zer Sway Control Hitch has kept families safe on the road for more than 75 years. Manufactured from 100% American-made steel, the hitch has an Integrated 4-Point Sway Control. The result is superior sway control performance, weight distribution, quality and ease of use.

It is made with the high-quality steel from American steel mills and the most critical components are drop forged, making them stronger and longer lasting. Customers will not find American-made quality to match the Equal-i-zer's in any other hitch.

The Equal-i-zer hitch's Integrated 4-Point Sway Control system provides safer, more comfortable towing. Steel-on-steel friction – the same friction a locomotive uses to pull thousands of pounds of rail cars – acts to continually resist a trailer's attempts to sway. Progress Mfg. has measured up to three times more resistance to lateral trailer movement with the Equal-i-zer hitch over other hitch options. This gives customers a comfortable and stress-free ride during normal travel, and an added measure of safety when faced with hazards like passing semi-trucks, gusts of wind or evasive maneuvers.

The Equal-i-zer hitch gives customers a safer ride by providing superior weight distribution. Good weight distribution is a critical component in reducing trailer sway. The Equal-i-zer hitch transfers trailer tongue weight to all the axles and helps keep the front of the tow vehicle firmly on the road.

This provides better steering and braking control, which helps eliminate stressful driving situations and works to keep customers safe on the road.

The Equal-i-zer Sway Control Hitch has been awarded the Gold Trailer Life Readers' Choice Award for 11 years in a row, by trailer owners across America. Equal-i-zer hitch has received this award every year since the launch of the Trailer Life Readers' Choice Awards and is the only trailer hitch on the market to be awarded Gold.

Because of the quality components and workmanship that go into each Equal-i-zer hitch, the company offers a lifetime warranty. That means Process Mfg. will be behind its customers for a very long time.

Towing with America's Favorite Hitch gives you confidence, peace of mind and the best protection for your journey.

equalizerhitch.com

AMERICA'S FAVORITE HITCH

RV MAGAZINE Readers' Choice AWARDS 2022 WINNER GOLD

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MADE IN THE USA

Richloom Fabrics Group



Richloom, founded by Fred Richman in 1957, is a third-generation, family-operated and owned textile and finished goods company. While Richloom's headquarters are located on Fifth Avenue in New York City, the company has major operations in North and South Carolina, a domestic upholstery mill in High Point, North Carolina, an office in Shanghai, China, and an RV sales office and showroom in Elkhart, Indiana.

Richloom's centrally located Elkhart showroom is dedicated exclusively to the RV and manufactured housing industries. The strategic positioning of Richloom's Elkhart office allows it to efficiently and effectively service this key industry.

Richloom introduces its RV-dedicated Hit the Road collection twice a year, along with its performance polyurethane vinyl collection under the Richloom Tough brand. These exceptionally designed collections, along with Richloom's residential and decorative offerings, give the RV customers a plethora of products to choose from when designing their interiors.

The Richloom Tough Collection contains more than 300 SKUs (introduced annually) ranging in colors and different grains. Within the Tough Collection, Richloom offers Series 5 or Series 10 – a five- or 10-year guarantee against hydrolysis. Richloom's Hit the Road Collection is a curated assortment of upholstery, bedding and window fabrics. Many of Richloom's products are manufactured with inherent flame-retardant yarns to meet the industry's MVSS302 requirements.

Richloom's design and engineering teams work months in advance, researching the latest trends in the residential and automotive industries. Their design, engineering and quality control teams collaborate to ensure that all products meet or exceed industry and internal testing specifications.

Richloom prides themselves on quality, with their global supply chains bringing beautiful utility products to their customers. With a distribution center in South Carolina, Richloom provides quick service to its manufacturing customers and ensures production schedules are met. With a new weaving operation in High Point, Richloom can provide woven fabrics to the trade on demand, producing sustainable performance fabrics that are durable and easy to clean.

richloom.com



How to Convert Cash Buyers Into Finance Buyers

Many of you reading this article are being bombarded with cash deals. Many of those buyers are remote buyers and have never been into the dealership. Usually, the remote buyer only visits the dealership on the day of delivery. In many cases, the purchase order is completed by the sales manager and sent to the customer via the DocuSign platform. While this stream of business adds to the sales department's productivity, it often sacrifices the finance opportunity.

As we all know, "time kills deals." The file, in many cases, is not delivered to finance immediately after the commitment to purchase has been reached by the sales department and the customer. It may take minutes, hours and often days for the file to reach the finance department. The finance department is cut out of selling ancillary benefits to the remote customer.

What happens on the customer side of the deal in the meantime? The customer most likely secures their own financing from a local source. The sales department has already provided them with all the information they require. No referral to the finance department has taken place, resulting in a missed opportunity to add any ancillary products and services to the outstanding balance. A sale has occurred with only the front-end profit made.

I agree with the business rule that the sales department's profit is the "sacred king." It is never in a charge back position. That being said, the sales department's profit is protected by the finance department's actions and products. The ancillary products of the finance department are in addition to the sales department profits in any deal. During these times, every dealership must maximize every deal and every opportunity.

Dealership financing is a service for the convenience of the customer. It creates an environment of one-stop-shopping. Additionally, the service can provide a positive buying experience for the customer.

Presenting the Ancillary Purchase

Financing any deal is an opportunity for the sale of your ancillary products. These products build customer retention for the service and parts departments. The ancillary protective coatings products provide coverage for the coach itself against damage from the sun's rays and the environment in which the units are parked in. Clean units that have not oxidized are worth more money at time of trade in. Additionally, they are worth more at the time of resale to the next owner.

Cash conversions must be made with enthusiasm from the finance department representative. If the presenter is excited about the concept, the customers will want to listen more to the presenter.

I find that many times, the presenters simply are uncomfortable approaching the topic of financing with a buyer that has announced cash as a method of paying for the purchase. They may be placing their own buying habits into the wallets of their customers. Or they may feel defeated before they begin their presentation.

One of the first questions I ask finance personnel when the conversation of cash conversion comes up is this: "How do you enter into the payment of the balance conversation?"

The questions that are asked of the customer at the beginning of this conversation will determine the outcome, in most cases. Customers like



Jan Kelly is 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 www.jlkelly.com.

to be acknowledged for having the ability to pay cash. Most folks like to be congratulated for saving, for investing, for winning the lottery. You get the idea.

Let them know that many of your customers have the ability to pay cash. Since you have seen so many cash deals lately, that statement appears to be true. Then take the conversation one step further and let them know that many customers feel, in these times, that maintaining a strong cash cushion is also vital to their family's financial well-being.

We must realize that if the customer saved the money, it took a long time. If they invested in something, chances are the funds are still in an interest-bearing environment and will cost them added fees to liquidate.

If they won the lottery, they may need a loan to build or establish a credit history. In which case, you could use a local lender and use a portion of their money as additional collateral for the loan on the unit.

The value of having a retail installment contract to complete an RV, marine or automobile purchase is simply this: the payments that are made on time will increase the customer's credit score faster than having installment credit debt. Paying cash for any purchase does nothing to enhance the customer's credit score on the credit bureau.

Asking the Right Questions

Here is yet another great question to ask the customer: "Are you planning on replenishing the funds in your (interest-bearing) account?" If they are going to replenish the funds, how are they going to do so? How much are they planning to put away each month in savings? That amount could be their monthly payment, and they can maintain a cash cushion for emergencies if they choose to finance a portion of the balance.

The big question that should be posed to the cash customer is this: "If we need only a portion of your money at delivery, not all of it, and you could maintain that cash cushion and have the RV, would you be interested?"

With interest rates being what they are, the customer is not going to make any money to finance the purchase. The facts are it will cost them to finance the balance. It will cost them to liquidate stocks to pay cash for the purchase.

The question is, "Where is the customer best served?" The answer is having a clear title to a depreciating asset. Or having most of their money in an interest-bearing account, taking a loan out for some of the balance. Providing the customer with a monthly payment that fits into the customer's existing budget.

Some additional items for your consideration: Does the customer have an income stream? Do they have a credit score and credit history that is comparable to the balance of the RV? Are they full-timers? Did they sell their traditional home for an RV?

As I understand it, full-timers can be financed with Alliant Credit Union and Essex Credit. Once again, the direction the deal will go depends on the success of the first visit interview, either in-person or virtually. Knowing your customer and what is important to them is essential to maximizing the opportunity. RVP





The Importance of Service Department Metrics

You can't manage what you don't measure.

Any business associate who has known me for a short time understands my passion for the fixed operations side of our business. They will not be surprised that I'm thrilled with the focus recently placed on Repair Event Cycle Time (RECT) and on the redefining of terminology used to measure fixed ops.

The deeper and prolonged attention paid to measurements of service and parts departments' performance is long overdue. Understanding desired outcomes and the measurement elements is critical to shop growth. The recent efforts by industry leaders should be greatly appreciated, even celebrated by our industry as a means to tap into a vast market of service business that we've largely ignored.

I remember a magazine headline from decades ago: "Not the Back-end but the Backbone." The shop should be a strong component of the dealership's success. The point is well taken today. As we struggle to get the balance between inventory and demand sorted out, the shop has an even more important role in maintaining the dealer's viability through consistent profit and meeting the increasing demands to satisfy customers. Those customers are increasingly less tolerant of marginal efforts on the part of many service operations. I'll be careful to say the marginal efforts exist on both the retail and wholesale levels.

RECT takes some of those concerns on. It has become crystal clear, for example, that a major challenge has existed in the area of OEM replacement parts procurement. Industry leaders on the manufacturer side, and particularly IDS, have led in that initiative. When a 20-Group member brings RECT into the meeting discussion, I'm always delighted. We are finally focusing on a challenge that has deeply plagued our efforts for a very long time. We should all applaud and encourage these leaders in their further efforts to understand and address this issue.

Redefining Service Measurables

I see the redefining of the terminology as a critical first step. In the car business, the term cycle time has been used in shops as far back as I care to think. In our industry, having it further defined as Repair Event Cycle Time makes it even more clear. And now that we have some history and some data, we can draw some conclusions and begin to identify corrective actions so urgently needed.

I can say from personal experience as a fixed operations consultant in our industry for many years, that not having clear definitions and, by extension, unclear understanding of the metrics we use to evaluate shops has been holding us back. Lacking the precise definition of a metric results in its dismissal as less than valuable. This is why I see the document from the RV Dealers



Chuck Marzahn moderates virtual 20 Groups for RV dealers in the U.S. and Canada. He can be reached at chuck@rv-vdg.com.

Association (RVDA), "What Service Measurables Really Mean - Key Indicators, Description & Formula," as being so important. It is long past due that we settle on terminology to describe and measure the efforts of, let's say, our technicians.

Over the years, I have had countless discussions to redefine terminology at the outset of a conversation regarding tracking technician effectiveness. It's imperative to do that in order to have a meaningful conversation regarding that topic. I've found that unless you take the time to understand what the parties in the conversation mean by certain terms, the conversation quickly becomes mired in misunderstanding. We should all support the efforts that RVDA is taking to standardize that language.

An approach I've used frequently to clear up potential confusion is to take it away from the dealership context. I start with this premise: You've just started a construction company. You are about to hire your first employees. What's the first thing you want them to do? You want them to "show up." Alright, then. What's next? You want them to work while they are there. And finally, you want them to get increasingly more productive or efficient at the tasks before them. A shop isn't different. You want techs to come to work, work while they are there and to improve at their work. The most basic metrics have to track those elements.

Whether you call it efficiency, productivity or proficiency, those are the main points of tracking the tech's performance. Having a consistently applied set of definitions will serve to focus our thinking. It will give us common language and clean data to gauge more accurately the results of tech performance. And, as a result, it will help us to tighten up processes leading to industry best practices.

Industry Vitals

RVDA's document also identifies several other definitions. One in particular that I'd include would be the number of billed hours per customer labor transaction. Warranty labor comes because something needs repair. Internal labor results from the sale of a unit. Customer labor is driven solely by the choice a customer makes to do business with your shop. When you see an increasing number of hours per customer labor transaction (CLT), it means the customer is choosing to increasingly do business with you. Importantly, it's their choice. If they choose to do business with you, it means you must be doing something well.

There's another dimension to this thinking. When we have a clear understanding of the metrics used to evaluate the fixed ops processes, we can be clearer in the roles and responsibilities or the tech base. That should help immensely in identifying and recruiting top techs. When we no longer pay two hours of wages for an hour's worth of billing, we will be able to hire a much higher quality of tech. That will make the role of RV tech a more attractive position for future techs and should vastly improve the future quality of the customer experience.

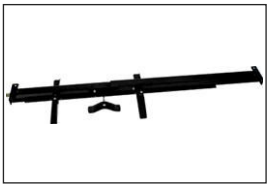
The words we use to describe and measure the results of our business efforts are critically important. Please support the efforts of these leaders as they work to improve and grow this vital segment of our industry. RVP



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Retract-a-Spare Tire Storage

BAL R.V. Products' Retract-A-Spare offers underframe spare tire storage, eliminating the need for an exposed rear bumper or receiver mount tire carrier. Its telescopic design allows for use on travel trailer, fifth wheel, and Class C frames from 52" to 72" widths.

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Give your bumper a break!

www.balrvproducts.com



This chicken wire heart was seen at Gubanc's restaurant in Lake Oswego, Oregon, many years ago. Today, you can buy warm LED lights with a clear wire for a cleaner look. Any shape can be created out of chicken wire. From a distance, this heart glows and the wire disappears. It's an effective, affordable and fun prop.

Love Is on the Road

Targeting what RV customers truly love can make for a memorable and lucrative marketing campaign – just in time for Valentine's Day.



Linda Cahan is the president of Portland, Oregon-based Cahan & Co., a consulting firm that works with retailers of all sizes and categories to improve their bottom line through creative, affordable and appropriate visual merchandising, store design and renovations. For more information, visit lindacahan.com.

Subaru tapped into the ultimate human emotion in their Love campaign that started in 2007. Their competitors were spending billions of dollars and Subaru couldn't compete dollar-to-dollar with the "big" guys. So, their advertising agency, Carmichael Lynch, looked at what their potential customer most wanted and needed, rather than touting the features of each Subaru.

I bring this up because many readers of this column don't have big bucks for advertising or in-store displays. Borrowing this idea just spreads the love, rather than stealing it. Subaru's concept was, and still is, "telling our story by *listening* to our drivers' stories." Without copying their exact promotion, you can easily morph it into a great RV story.

When I asked some friends and family what the first thing they thought of when I brought up RV ownership, they all said "freedom." What does freedom mean to your customers? Pull together love and freedom, and you have the beginning of an interesting promotion. One of the most delightful things I've seen in a RV showroom was a "brag board" – or in this case, a lecture-sized newsprint pad on a sturdy easel, with comments from customers handwritten on many pages.



I flipped through the pages and, unlike the internet where sometimes people are nasty and untraceable, the comments were highly positive. People shared short but sweet stories about how their RVs changed their lives. This pad of paper was social media before Google and Yelp reviews became ubiquitous. If you trust your customers – and that's only for you to know – consider adding this "old-fashioned" pad with several good markers to your showroom.

Imagine using oversized Post-It notes printed with "What I love about RVing is…." on top of each note. The notes could be attached to any blank wall once customers have written their messages. (Look for: Post-it Super Sticky Big Notes, 11 inches by 11 inches.)

Curating the 'Love Vibe'

Love is always associated with heart images. Adding hearts to your store displays can work for or against you depending on how they look. Balloons are the easiest way to create an instant Valentine's Day vibe. If you only want them to last for a few days, blow them up yourself. If you want them around for eternity (or eight months), buy them filled with helium.

Most dollar stores carry them, and I suggest the plain red or pink hearts. If you prefer, regular-shaped pink and red balloons work as well. If the heart-shaped ones come in other colors, that's fine, but stick with only two colors, and one should be red or pink. Pink opens the heart and offers a sense of well-being, while red encourages people to buy more, and more quickly. Don't go overboard on red as too much creates impatience and irritability. A little goes a long way.

Group odd numbers of balloons on any February specials you're having. If you have see-through windows into your showroom or parts area, have the helium balloons standing up at different heights in your window. Bottles of chemicals can act as weights for the balloons. Their movement will catch people's eyes as they walk or drive by.

When's the best time to get service sales, process, & customer communication training?

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Better Trainers! Bigger Results!

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DEALERPRO™ RV

results@dealerprotraining.com
rvdealerprotraining.com

Of course, if you have movement sensors in your store at night, those same balloons may set them off. That's always fun at 2 a.m.

Another idea is to use three balloons per RV – inside and out. Odd numbers are more interesting and dynamic than even ones. If you have a large selection, every other RV will work equally well. You can go down to one balloon each. Tie the long ribbons around the most visible side mirror or license plate. Different lengths of ribbon will make your showroom and lot look fun and magical.

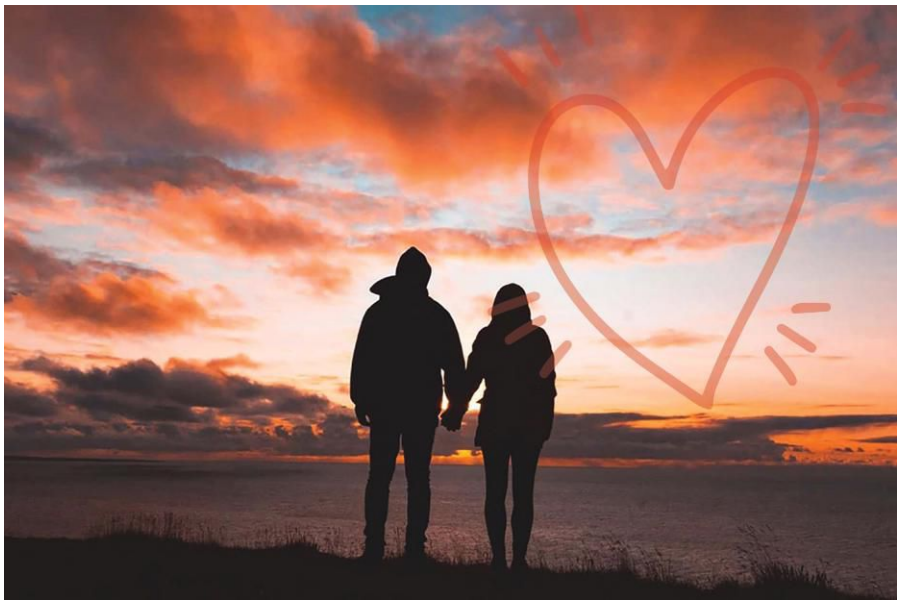
If you want to avoid helium, blow up a bunch of balloons and tape to hold them together. With more tape, attach them to foam core cut in a heart shape. This can be hung in a window or behind your cash wrap desk. Ideally, customers can't see the blank back of the foam core.

If you're hanging the display from the ceiling in the store, attach balloons to the back as well. The more it turns from the slight breezes in the store, the better! Movement attracts attention. Once again, remember the motion sensor issue!

If you're handy, construct a huge heart out of chicken wire. It can be flat or 3-D as seen in the photo on page 58. You can add warm white, pink or red LED lights to it, and/or fake pink or red flowers or paper hearts. Have fun with it but remember to use work gloves.

Placement would be either in your window or in a prime focal area of your showroom or parts area so that when people walk in, they get the love vibe. Try to find UL-listed or UL-approved LED lights, if possible.

Other heart-related displays are easy to find on Amazon or Etsy. Google "paper hearts garlands," "wedding garland party decoration" or something similar. If you have a suspended ceiling, consider buying ceiling hook clips from Amazon. They work perfectly for hanging anything lightweight, and a bag of 100 is only $11.99. These clips are



"How do you stand apart when your competition is spending literally billions of dollars? By connecting with what's truly important to your audience — not just features they might like, but the life that they love. Their families. Their pets. The great outdoors. Even the venerable old Subaru they've been driving forever. In 2007, we introduced the 'Love' campaign. In the years since, sales and market share have more than tripled and love has spread to every level of the brand."

Source: Carmichael Lynch

the only items in the display world that have gone down in price over the years and are worth their weight in gold.

Capture Your Customers' Hearts at Hello

Coming back to the love theme, when Carmichael Lynch (Subaru's advertising company) detailed what Subaru loved, the strongest themes were: "Subaru Loves Pets, Subaru Loves the Earth, Subaru Loves Learning, Subaru Loves to Help and Subaru Loves to Care."

What would your themes be?

"Cahan's RVs LOVES Our Community!" If you say so, then prove it. How do you (if you do) give back to your community? Are you sponsoring a sports team? Are you donating a used RV to a nonprofit organization that helps people in some way? Is there something positive you're doing regarding the environment? How are you loving your community, other than being thankful for sales? Put your money where your mouth is and get involved in some way. People notice and appreciate stores that give back.

> Ask your customers to share their stories, and find a way to share that love with the rest of your customers and your community.

When is the best time to put up a love promotion? As soon as possible after any January clearances you may have. Mid-January is a good time to get things going. But, if you're just reading this and it's early February, do it today!

The best time to take down a Valentine's Day promotion is Feb. 16. Not a day later. But, if you want your love theme to continue, think it through first. Don't print Valentine's Day or anything date-specific on your signage. For the V-day message, you can add paper/plastic/metallic hearts, flowers or balloons to anything, and remove them easily after Feb. 16.

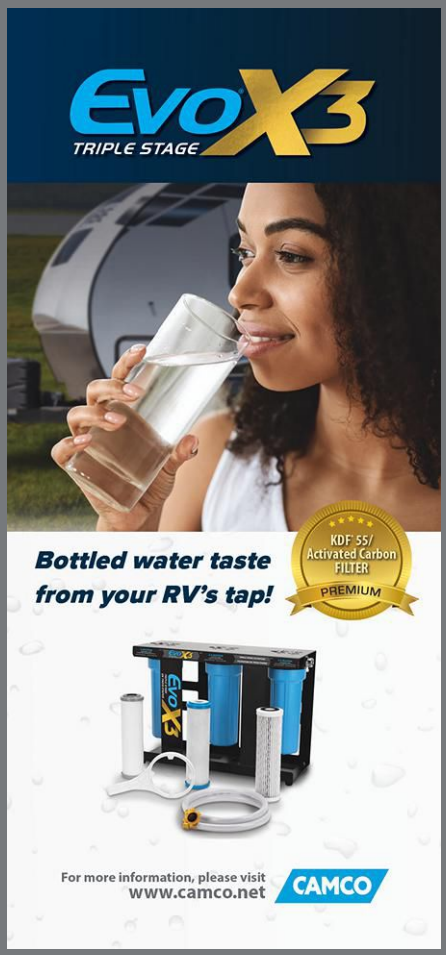
For me, I love my current Subaru and loved all five that I've owned over the years. I have friends who love their RVs and the freedom it affords them. Ask your customers to tell you their stories, and find a way to share that love with the rest of your customers and your community. RVP





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Pit Stop





Winter means camping season is over for many in the northern third of the U.S. However, that leaves 65% of the country with RV campgrounds still open for business – and many claim this is the best time of year for camping.

8.2 million households planned to camp this winter – up 19% from 6.9 million that winter camped in 2021.

NOVEMBER SHIPMENTS

24,445 TOTAL of November RV shipments

50.4% DECREASE compared to Nov. 2021

15.6% DECREASE through Nov. 2022 compared to same point last year

"RV shipments are continuing to normalize off of last year's record numbers and 2022 is looking to be the third highest year for RV shipments, in spite of challenging macroeconomic factors impacting the industry and economy at large," said RV Industry Association President and CEO Craig Kirby. "The industry remains focused on serving our existing customers, many who have entered the RV lifestyle for the first time in the past few years and expanding the pool of consumers interested in purchasing a new RV in the coming years."

Cooling Down

A slowing economy and signs of pay-off from the Fed's aggressive rate-raising campaign to fight inflation were indicated in November, with a cooling consumer price growth.

YOY, **inflation hit 7.1%** – a slowdown from October's 7.7% and lower than the expected 7.3%

This is the smallest **12-month increase** since December 2021 at 7%

Gas prices settled below numbers from a year ago, at **$3.28** as of early January

SOURCES: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, AAA, RVIA

Marketing for Love

"When I asked friends and family what the first thing they thought of when I brought up RV ownership, they all said 'freedom.' What does freedom mean to your customers? Pull together love and freedom, and you have the beginning of an interesting promotion."

Linda Cahan

Read more about marketing for what customers truly care about in our February column by Linda Cahan.

HONORED AT THE HALL

The RV/MH Hall of Fame in Elkhart, Indiana, unveiled inductees for the Class of 2023. On the RV side, the honorees are:

- Ron Breymier, Indiana (Association)
- Forrest and Jerry Bone, Florida (RV Consumers)
- Tom Manning, Jr., Michigan (Supplier)
- Karen Redfern, Virginia/South Carolina (RVIA/Go RVing)
- Tim Vuerink, Michigan (Dealer)









CAPTAIN MORGAN NAMED TO

RV PRO's 40 Under 40

Tim Morgan has been in the RV industry since he was 13 years old, when he washed RVs for the dealership at which his grandfather was a service manager and his father was a sales manager. He's been with Storyteller Overland for the last three years.

Andrew Cooley, Storyteller's Chief Revenue Officer, nominated Tim for the award. Andrew was recognized in RV-PRO's 40 Under 40 Class of 2021, making this a back-to-back recognition for Storyteller.

"Captain Morgan steers the ship of Storyteller Overland into the waters of profitability," Andrew said. "When he came on board, our retail velocity increased 78% over one month."

At events, Tim hangs out in a demo van and talks to people as they walk in. He fits the vibe, Andrew said, and as Tim answers their questions, they realize that a Storyteller Overland van is exactly what they need in their life.

> **" People can try to copy the things we do, but they can't copy our people,"** Andrew said.

We agree with Andrew, that this recognition was well-deserved. Tim leads by example and faces any challenge head on. Thank you for all you do, Captain!

– Team Storyteller

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