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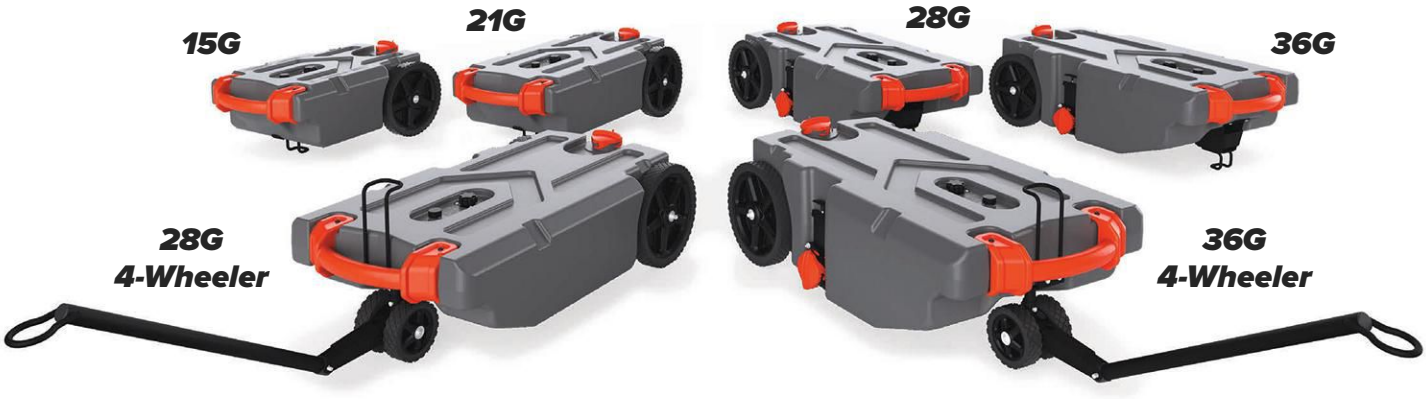


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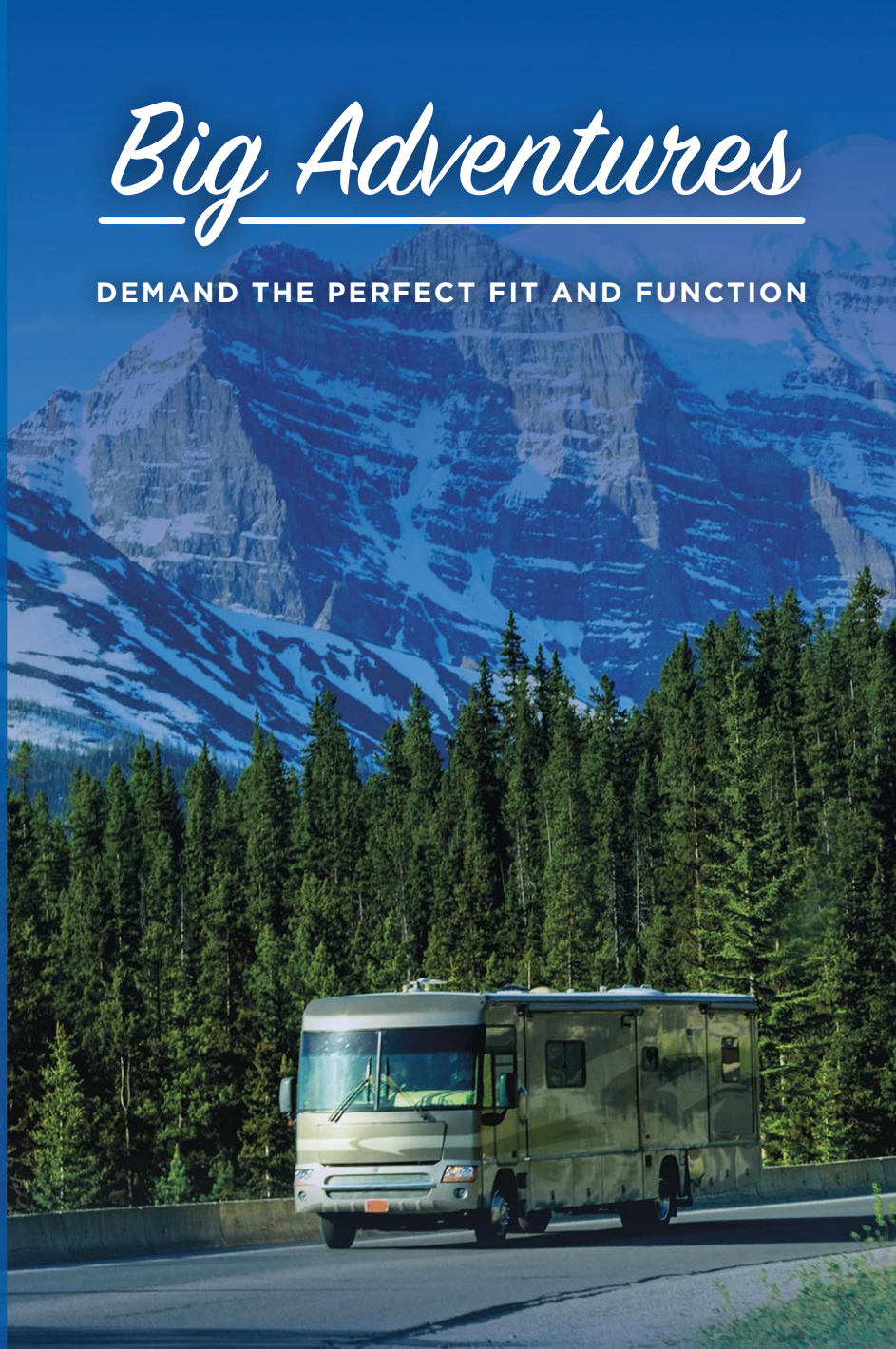
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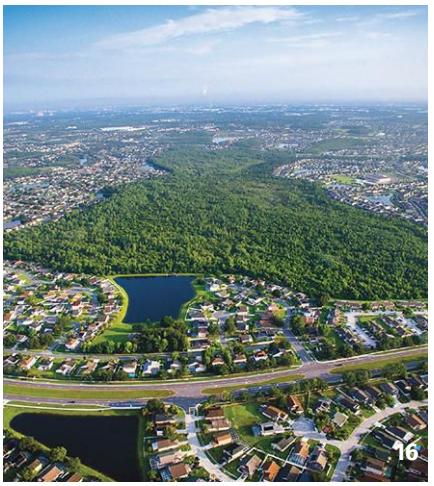
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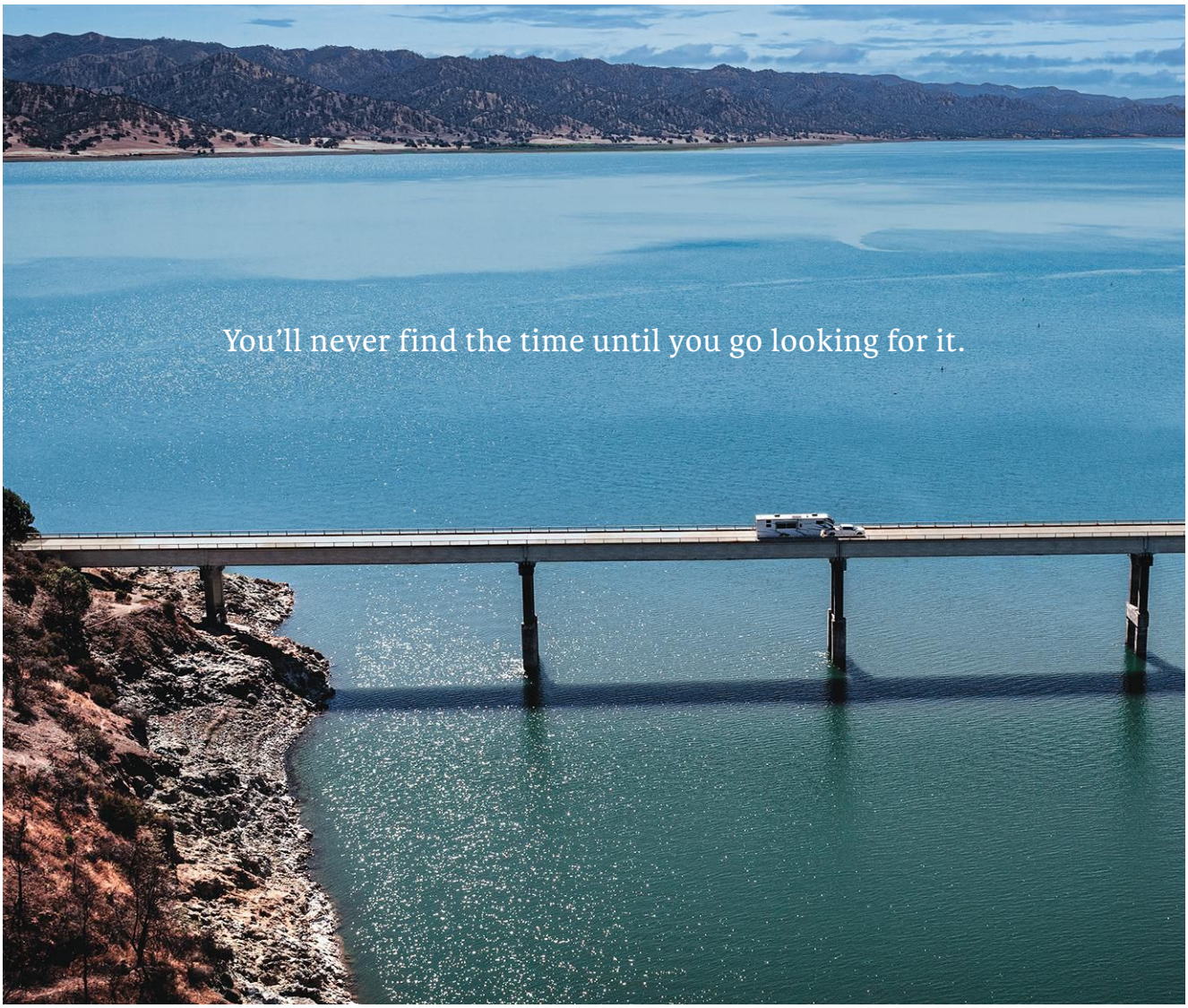
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MORE OF WHAT MATTERS



From left: Cassidy, Tony and Shannon Kindelspire





There's no doubt about it – one thing I will remember most about my colleague Tony Kindelspire is his rich, booming voice. When I first met him, I was not surprised to learn that he had had a long career in radio because his voice is simply meant for that medium. I was happy to learn that he was also the voice of RV PRO's podcast because, of course, that voice still needed to be heard, even after Tony had switched to mainly writing. But not only that, Tony had a talent for interviewing people, weaving stories and bringing all types of subjects to life in colorful ways.

Sadly, I am speaking about our beloved managing editor in the past tense because he unexpectedly died Oct. 24. The news was a shock to us all, and as we try to continue his work producing a robust and informative daily newsletter, and we discuss what the future will hold for the podcast, we are focusing on who Tony was as a person, and the laughter and joy he brought to our days.

Tony is survived by his two daughters, Cassidy and Shannon, who he spoke about with joy and pride. You could visibly see him perk up, and his smile grow, as he spoke about his daughters' adventures, who are both in their 20s. Any time he was anticipating spending time with them, you could tell he was just itching to be in their presence.

We at RV PRO extend our condolences and warmest sympathies to his daughters and any family and friends who will miss Tony as we will. We encourage any of our audience who has ever spoken with Tony to reach out to us and share your stories.

To Tony, we will do our best to carry on our daily work, remembering fondly the nicknames you gave us (me, the Sage; Jordan Benschop, the Eagle Eye; and our digital production designer Shelby Dempsey, the Wiz). We'll keep in mind his reminders about AP Style, and anytime I have a hiccup with technology, I will laugh as I think of the colorful way he described those types of trials and errors.

Rest in peace, Tony. We will miss you.

Jennifer King, *Executive Editor*

Having worked closely with Tony – known as T-man or TK by the RV PRO team – over the last couple of years, I don't have many funny stories to share (and I know there are many), but he did teach me a simple truth: life is way more fun when you can fully be yourself.

Whether it was his art (like creations made entirely of beer can labels), poetry, sense of humor or courage in his words, Tony truly did his best to make life more interesting and beautiful. He was heavily involved with his community in Longmont, Colorado, where he previously worked for the local newspaper, was broadcast on multiple radio stations with his larger-than-life voice, and helped establish the LeftHand Artist Group. He often invited the RVP team to his art group's events and encouraged us to bring our own creations, reminding us that "art is whatever you want it to be."

Tony was the voice of RV PRO. If you've heard "In Tow With RV PRO," the podcast he hosted, you know exactly what we mean. When the mic was on, he commanded the space with confidence and true interest in the stories of the people he interviewed. He was an excellent listener, storyteller and confidant to share life's curiosities with. RV PRO was lucky to have such an iconic host.

Beyond his hobbies and interests, Tony spoke most often and most proudly of one thing – his two daughters, Cassidy and Shannon. He often shared about Shannon's international travels and his awe for her courage, along with Cassidy's brains and success in being accepted into medical school. It was very clear that Tony considered being a father one of, if not his greatest, accomplishment.

As for us here at RV PRO – we are holding Tony's family and community in our hearts and grieving a very sudden loss ourselves. We hope those he knew, interviewed or simply had a good chat with in the RV industry can remember him in good spirits, as we'll forever do here at RV PRO.

Jordan Benschop, *Managing Editor*

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ORR Highlights Outdoor Recreation Careers

The Outdoor Recreation Roundtable released statistics that show 4.5 million Americans work in the outdoor recreation economy. The roles range from guiding and outfitting to sustainability, finance, marketing, land management, advanced materials manufacturing, environmental science, and more.

In addition to a video highlighting outdoor careers, the Recreation Roundtable provides an Outdoor Workforce Hub, which debuted on the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable's new website this year. The workforce hub features interactive tools to help employers, educators, and those interested in joining the outdoor recreation industry, as well as those looking to expand their careers in the sector. The tools include, among others:

- A new Roadmap for a 21st Century Outdoor Workforce
- A map of nearly 250 higher education, trade and training programs for outdoor careers
- A primer on outdoor recreation-related jobs and existing research to help prospective talent, industry leaders, educators, and policymakers alike understand the breadth and depth of outdoor careers.

Visit recreationroundtable.org and learn more about how people are turning their passion into a career.

Go RVing's October Report Highlights Buying Power of LGBTQ+ Americans

The October 2023 Go RVing report takes a look at the increasing LGBTQ+ presence in the outdoors. According to the report, there was a 55% increase in TikTok posts about LGBTQ+ travel over the past year. Also, the estimated spending power of LGBTQ+ consumers in the U.S. is $1.1 trillion.

As more LGBTQ+ people seek community in the outdoors, it's important to proactively remove barriers to the world of RVing, Go RVing states. This includes demonstrating genuine empathy for this underrepresented demographic and continuing efforts to make RVing safe and inclusive at all levels.

The October Report also showed that 70% of non-LGBTQ+ Americans believe companies should support the community through hiring and advertising.

Go RVing's partnership with companies such as Q.Digital promotes equal access to RV experiences through diverse representation across communication channels and partnerships with media networks that cater to LBGTQ+ audiences. This continues to be important as the industry continues to grow, becoming more diverse than ever before, Go RVing said.

The October trends report also noted that brands big and small are shifting to community-centric product development – co-creating with the public so everyone gets what they want. Examples include:

- Skincare brand Bubble's successful launch after collaborating with 6,000+ consumers to develop and refine their products.
- Gaming title The Sims' new in-game content voted on by players.
- Coca-Cola's "Create Real Magic" campaign that called on digital creators to craft branded visuals using AI.

For more from Go RVing, visit gorving.com.

Gulf Stream Coach Vista & Vintage Cruiser Earn RVDA DSI Recognition

Gulf Stream Coach announced that its popular Vista and Vintage Cruiser laminated travel trailers have been honored with the DSI Quality Circle Award from the Recreational Vehicle Dealers Association (RVDA) for 2023. This year's award adds to a long line of DSI awards earned by the brands in previous years, the company said.

"The Quality Circle Award enables RV dealers to rate the quality of manufacturers' products, sales support, parts availability and customer service. These are fundamental pillars in the way we run our business, so it is gratifying to be honored yet again by the RVDA," said Phil Sarvari, company president. "We offer our heartfelt thanks to the dedicated and hard-working dealers who join us in the pursuit of quality."

The two "Cruiser" brands differ in style, with the Vista Cruiser offering a refined, stylish way of delivering the luxury living experience of larger trailers in a smaller package. The Vintage Cruiser captures the fun vibe and fond memories of all things retro. Despite the stylistic differences, though, all Vista Cruiser and Vintage Cruiser travel trailers feature welded aluminum frames, vacuum-bonded laminated fiberglass walls, a layer of Azdel synthetic wall substrate to guard against moisture and mold, a seamless laminated fiberglass roof, and state-of-the-art amenities. These key construction features are also used in many other award-winning Gulf Stream Coach travel trailers and motor homes.

For more information, call 800-289-8787.

Specialty Products Co. Appoints Vice President of Sales, Marketing

Brent Berman, a highly accomplished executive with more than 25 years of experience in the automotive aftermarket, has been appointed vice president of sales and marketing of Specialty Products Company, a manufacturer of vehicle alignment tools, suspension components and oil/fuel system products.

Berman, who joins Specialty from First Brands Group, manufacturer and marketer of a broad range of replacement components sold under leading brands, will oversee sales, marketing and other key functions across Specialty Products Company, SPC Performance and Peterson Fluid Systems.

"We are thrilled to welcome Brent as our new VP of sales and marketing," said Ben Bigelow, president and CEO of Specialty Products Company. "Brent's aftermarket experiences and deep technical expertise will help Specialty Products Company and all of its product lines advance into the future with key product development and technical training to connect more technicians and consumers to our brands."

Berman began his aftermarket career in the mid-1990s as a technical trainer for Cooper Automotive. Most recently, he served as vice president of enterprise/commercial support and cataloging at First Brands Group in Cleveland, Ohio. Previous roles have included: developing and managing the award-winning Garage Gurus technical training program at Federal-Mogul, Southfield, Michigan, as well as creating and managing its digital content and data program; and group director of repair products, Trico Products in Rochester Hills, Michigan.

Jellystone Locations Named 'Park of the Year' Finalists

Seven Jellystone Park locations have been named finalists in the Park of the Year awards competition, hosted annually by the National Association of RV Parks and

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Campgrounds (ARVC). Three Jellystone Park locations are finalists for ARVC's Large Park of the Year: the Jellystone Park in Bostic, North Carolina; the Jellystone Park in Mt. Gilead, Ohio; and the Jellystone Park in Larkspur, Colorado. Campgrounds in this awards category have between 251 and 499 sites.

Three other Jellystone Park locations are contenders for ARVC's Medium Park of the Year: the Jellystone Park in Carver, Massachusetts; the Jellystone Park in Harrisville, Pennsylvania; and the Jellystone Park in Williamsport, Maryland. Campgrounds in this award category have between 101 and 250 sites.

The Jellystone Park in Fremont, Indiana, is a finalist to become ARVC's Mega Park of the Year, which is for parks with more than 500 sites.

ARVC's Park of the Year winners will be announced Nov. 8 during the association's Awards of Excellence Luncheon in Kansas City, Montana.

Recently, Jellystone Park locations were ranked among the top six RV parks in the United States in USA TODAY's 10 Best 2023 Readers' Choice competition. The Jellystone Park brand has also received honors and recognition from national media outlets such as Good Housekeeping, the Travel Channel and U.S. News & World Report.

For more information about these and other Jellystone Park locations across the U.S. and Canada, visit jellystonepark.com.

THOR Named Official RV Partner of Speedway Motors

Speedway Motorsports and THOR Industries announced a new partnership designating the global RV company as the "Official RV Partner of Speedway Motorsports."

The agreement, which includes 10 Speedway Motorsports facilities hosting NASCAR events plus Circuit of The Americas during its NASCAR event week, will elevate brand recognition for the THOR family of companies and their dealer partners with avid race fans across the United States.

Through the new partnership, THOR will help deliver exceptional camping experiences to RVers at 15 Speedway Motorsports NASCAR Cup race weekends in 2024, ensuring that NASCAR fans enjoy the RV lifestyle. Fan engagement will include camper appreciation event activities, promotions, sweepstakes and RV support.

"NASCAR race fans are extremely loyal, energetic and engaged RVers and are a key part of our customer base across the THOR family of companies," shared Matt Zimmerman, THOR's North America RV group manager. "We are excited to partner with Speedway Motorsports to provide best-in-class camping experiences at their preeminent venues across the country."

Representing 20 RV manufacturers and more than 200 North American brands of travel trailers, fifth wheels, toy haulers and Class A, B and C motorhomes, THOR is the world's largest RV manufacturer, spanning nearly 400 operating facilities across six countries, inspiring and empowering people to "Go Everywhere. Stay Anywhere." The company is also recognized as the global RV leader in innovation and sustainability and was named by Newsweek as one of "America's Most Trusted Companies" in 2022 and 2023 and one of "America's Most Responsible Companies" in 2023.

"With more than 25,000 camping spaces at our venues across the country, we are committed to providing best-in-class experiences for NASCAR fans that stay on property with us for a weekend or the entire race week," said Speedway Motorsports Chief Sales Officer Kevin Camper. "Speedway Motorsports partners with world class brands, and this new relationship with a global leader like THOR will showcase the commitment from both companies to further enhance on-site camping experiences during our NASCAR races. We are honored to welcome THOR Industries into their first major league sports marketing partnership."

THOR's partnership activation and marketing will take place in 2024 at the following venues on NASCAR race weekends: Atlanta Motor Speedway, Bristol Motor Speedway, Charlotte Motor Speedway, Circuit of The Americas, Dover Motor Speedway, Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Nashville Superspeedway, New Hampshire Motor Speedway, North Wilkesboro Speedway, Sonoma Raceway and Texas Motor Speedway.

Campers Inn RV Announces GM Transition, Seeks Successor

Campers Inn RV of Louisville, Kentucky, announced the impending transition of its general manager, Paul Cunningham, who will be taking a new role with the company.

Cunningham has been a "trailblazing figure" with a 45-year career in the RV industry. His departure from general manager will open a coveted role at the Louisville dealership, which serves as a Keystone RV location for the Midwest.

"Paul Cunningham is synonymous with excellence in the RV industry. A former co-owner of Derby City RV and a business partner at Tom Stinnet RV, Paul has earned an enviable list of accolades and made monumental contributions to the sector," the company said.

During his career, Cunningham was the recipient of many awards and accolades including the Top 50 Dealership Award, Newmar Gold Awards, numerous sales certificates and multiple manufacturer awards.

"Throughout my 45-year career, I have been privileged to work with some incredible people," said Cunningham. "Together, we have weathered storms and celebrated many victories. It's been a privilege to work with so many amazing customers and employees."

With an expansive 100,000-square-foot facility offering marquee brands like Newmar, Entegra, Grand Design, Rockwood and Keystone, the dealership operates the largest service facility in the market and has consistently led sales in the Louisville area for decades.

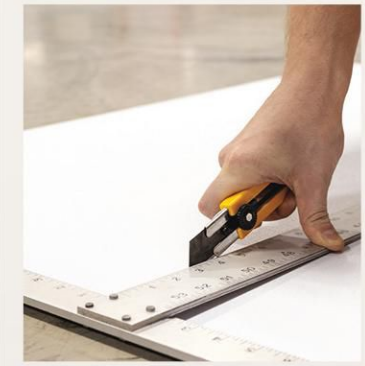
"If you possess an unwavering commitment to quality, a flair for problem-solving and the ability to lead a cohesive team to new heights, we urge you to consider this extraordinary opportunity," Campers Inn said.

Founded in 1966 and headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida, Campers Inn RV operates 36 locations across the East Coast, Mid-Atlantic and Midwest regions.

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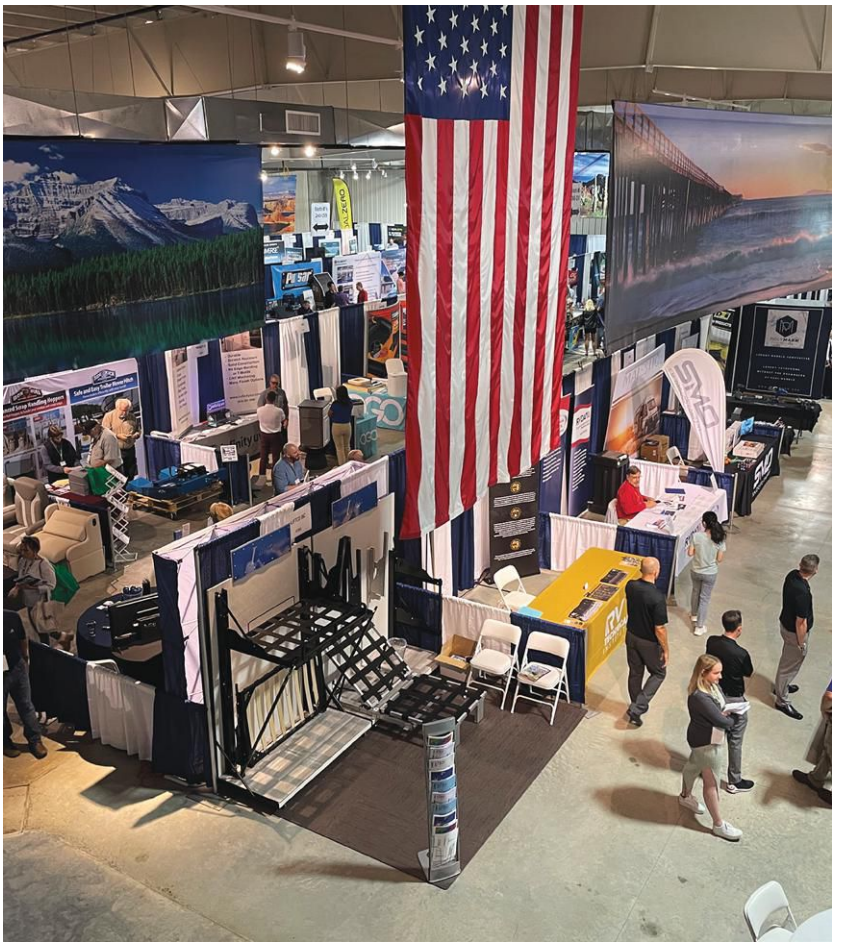
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Suppliers Show a Success

BY MIKE HARBOUR



It may not have been as visible as the hundreds of new RVs on display outside, but the third annual RV Hall of Fame Supplier Show was a big hit for many vendors serving the industry.

"It's been a little less attended than what we expected, but at the same time I think the conversations and the traffic that we have had have been quality," says Trim-Lok's Nick Godfrey, key account manager. "For us, it's been good to catch up with some existing OEM-level customers and also to have some good conversations with guys we are doing some prototyping with."

The three-day show, held mostly indoors at the RV/MH Hall of Fame during Open House in Elkhart, Indiana, featured dozens of companies displaying everything from CNC quilting machines and composite marble surfaces to lithium battery systems and dealership lending services.

For Trim-Lok, a California-based maker of plastic and rubber seals and trims, Godfrey says the show also was a chance to spread the word about the company's manufacturing and warehouse facility in Elkhart. The 150,000-square-foot facility was built about a year ago.

While weather for the first day of the show was excellent, rain drove many attendees indoors on the final day, and that was just fine with Godfrey.

"That's why you come to these events. You never know when you're going to make your best connections. It could be at the beginning, it could be at the end," he says.

Other suppliers, such as SEAFLO, use the show to introduce new products, according to Jimmy Kosowski, business development representative.

"We actually debuted our new line of RV and portable toilets, which have been doing really well, and we're truly excited about that," he says. "We haven't gotten to do a lot with the OEMs on the toilets, but that's something we're expanding into. Some suppliers just don't make plastic toilets; they do porcelain. We do porcelain on the marine side, not the RV side, but people are really interested in it."

SEAFLO, formerly based near Chicago but now headquartered in nearby South Bend, Indiana, is known throughout the industry for its pumps. Kosowski says nearly 60% of all RVs made today are equipped with SEAFLO units. Like Godfrey, he agrees the show is perfect for spreading the word about the company's new offerings.

"The RV industry is pretty small. Everybody knows everybody, so connections are everything in this industry," he says. "It's a great way to get a lot of people introduced to it in the same place."

Mike Beyersdoerfer, RV market specialist for Design Engineering Inc. (DEI), wholeheartedly echoes that sentiment.

"We've been doing quite well. This is our second year. Last year was our first attempt, and we were shocked. We just got into the RV sector about three years ago," he says. "It's a great show, I was blown away on the industry contacts that I've received here."

According to Beyersdoerfer, the key to a successful show is first doing some homework.

"We were busy Monday with the manufacturer's engineers who came because I sent emails out to everybody beforehand," he says. "I also get connected with new manufacturers, so I've got a list of five major companies now."

Second, Beyersdoerfer, who's been at DEI for almost 20 years, believes it's important to come prepared for anything. That's why he brings along a product development engineer to answer technical questions and plenty of product samples for visitors to see and feel.

As for the show itself, Beyersdoerfer says it's a homerun for DEI.

"The word's getting out," he says, "and we're doing incredibly well with it." RVP

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NTP-STAG Expo Kicks Off 2024 in Florida



What better place to be next month than somewhere warm? Thankfully, on Jan. 15-16, the NTP-STAG Expo 2024 will be in Kissimmee, Florida – the perfect time of year to escape the snow and cold.

The event will be held 19 miles from the Orlando International Airport at the Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center, which features a newly expanded meeting facility and room tower and more than 480,000 square feet of event space. And, of course, entertainment options such as Disney World and Universal Studios Florida are a short drive away.

"As the leader in RV aftermarket distribution, we take a great amount of pride in providing our customers a best-in-class experience with Expo," said NTP-STAG/SeaWide President Bill Rogers when announcing the expo location in May. "We continue to expand our marine business, and with Florida being one of the hubs of the industry, bringing Expo to Kissimmee for the first time is a tremendous opportunity to produce an event that aligns these exciting outdoor recreational activities in one fantastic location."

The 2024 Expo will feature prominent SeaWide Distribution marine suppliers in addition to the RV industry's premier product manufacturers, marking the introduction of marine products and accessories to Expo and providing both RV and marine distribution customers the opportunity to engage with both NTP-STAG and SeaWide suppliers under one roof.

Also, day one of the Expo will feature a kick-off breakfast and PRO (Professional Retail Organization) educational speakers in addition to supplier product presentations followed by an opening reception on the show floor.

The second day will start with a keynote breakfast, and NTP-STAG and SeaWide customers from across North America will participate in a full day on the exhibit floor, followed by a closing reception.

"Expo is the place where the aftermarket gathers to network, engage with suppliers and have some fun," Rogers said. "There aren't many places with the variety of available opportunities to have a great time than Central Florida. And with the addition of SeaWide and their roster of suppliers alongside NTP-STAG's RV manufacturers, we are excited to showcase the best of everything Expo has to offer to the RV and marine industries."

The Expo is a "wholesale only" annual event exclusively for existing and prospective customers, according to the NTP-STAG website. Attendees will have opportunities for one-on-one access with suppliers, premier educational and product training sessions and the season's best deals.

In addition to buying opportunities and the chance to meet your salesperson, new products will be on display, marketing support will be available and there are chances to win prizes. RVP



NEED TO KNOW

What: NTP-STAG Expo

When: Jan. 15-16, 2024

Where: Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center, Kissimmee, Florida

Find out which exhibitors will attend the 2024 show by visiting expo.ntpstag.com/attendees/attending-exhibitors.

Learn more about what the show has to offer at expo.ntpstag.com/attendees/agenda and also expo.ntpstag.com/faq.

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CONQUERING THE MARKET



Cortes Campers uses molded fiberglass to create lightweight, durable travel trailers that are energy-efficient.

BY DARIAN ARMER

Cortes Campers emerged out of the 2020 COVID-19 crisis and subsequent demand for a safe and fun way to continue taking vacations. CEO Anthony Corpora says the whole goal in starting Cortes Campers was to create the ultimate RV.

The company is named after Hernán Cortés, who Corpora says was very innovative in the conquest of the Aztecs.

"We want to bring innovation to the industry. We wanted to bring people something indestructible made of ultralight-weight and strong materials," Corpora says.

"The RV industry is a multibillion-dollar market and it's built on high-volume and low quality. You see 'beware' videos all over YouTube. Not all RVs are created equal. Not to bum rap our competitors, but it fueled us to put together the ultimate camper," Corpora says.

Although a new company, Cortes Campers has a solid background in working with molded fiberglass and other innovative composites. Cortes Campers is a subsidiary of US Lighting Group (USLG), which is headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio. Cortes Campers operates out of Euclid, Ohio. USLG "integrates intelligent design with advanced technology to create game-changing products."

The subsidiaries of USLG include Futuro Houses, Cortes Campers, MIG Marine Corporation, Fusion X Marine and RVTronix. RVTronix designs appliances and accessories for RVs. "These devices will be multifunctional in nature and conserve energy," Corpora says.

"Our engineers have experience building boats out of the same material. It's the same takeaway as what Airstream did 100 years ago," he says.

A UNIQUE OFFERING

What's unique about Cortes Campers is that the units are made of 100% fiberglass – they are lightweight, hypoallergenic and contain zero wood. "Except for the cutting board," Corpora jokes. There are currently two offerings from Cortes Campers – the Cortes 16 and Cortes 17. The Cortes 16 travel trailer is a 17-foot, single-axle unit that sleeps two to three people. It features a king bed, bath with shower, two-burner cooktop, microwave and 2-cubic-foot refrigerator and freezer. Its total length is 18 feet, 2 inches and dry weight is 2,220 pounds (starting weight before options).

The Cortes 17 travel trailer is also a 17-foot, single-axle unit that sleeps two. It features a double bed, bath with shower, three-burner cooktop/oven, microwave and 8-cubic-foot refrigerator/freezer. Its total length is 18 feet, 2 inches and has a dry weight of 2,680 pounds. Color options include two-tone, solid color and metallic flake.



"Anything you build out of super fiberglass is going to be super rigid and light. When you know this type of manufacturing, you can build very efficiently," Corpora says. "We came out with the 16; we changed the floorplan to have a full king-size bed in it, which made a little smaller kitchen. The bathroom is well designed and spacious. The 17 has a







double-bed, which is what you typically see, but it has a bigger gourmet kitchen and a pretty big bathroom. You can prioritize sleeping or having a gourmet kitchen."

Corpora says that the Cortes 16 and 17 should both be able to be towed by any vehicle with towing capabilities. He also says they are constructed with an outer and inner shell with air in between.

"Fiberglass is very energy efficient. It cools off quickly and heats up quickly. In the summertime, you run the A/C and it gets cold really fast. In the winter, you turn the furnace on, and it heats up really fast. Double-pane acrylic windows come standard. It's a very capable four-season camper," Corpora says. "There's zero wood in our product except for the cutting board in the kitchen. We use a durable, marine-grade gelcoat with UV inhibitors and a polypropylene core."

Cortes Campers have a wiring harness that is plug and play. Even the fasteners are stainless steel, so there's nothing that will corrode, rot, mold, smell or deteriorate, the company says. Cortes Campers has an optional axle-less independent suspension from Timbren Axle, which provides smoother rides, off-road capability and easy maintenance.



Other options include built-in Furrion appliances, including a three-burner range with oven and hood vent, 8-cubic-foot refrigerator/freezer, built-in microwave and Ruvati stainless workstation and sink. There is an optional entertainment center with a 19-inch smart TV and/or marine-grade audio system.

"We use anti-skid flooring, like the shower floor, throughout. We put a drain plug in our camper so you can literally mop it and drain the water out the drain plug," Corpora says.

LOOKING AHEAD

The latest offering in the Cortes Campers lineup is the 22, which Corpora says they have aggressively been working to complete.

"The 22 is going to have everything. It's a monster. It's the biggest fiberglass camper ever created. It's 8 feet wide. It's going to be fantastic," he says.









The 22 travel trailer also has a 17-foot single axle, but sleeps up to four people. It features two single beds or a California king and one twin bed, a bath with shower, three burner cooktop/oven option, microwave option and 8-cubic-foot refrigerator/freezer. Its total length is 21 feet, 9 inches.

The next product Corpora says they plan to work on is the Cortes 27.

"It will be very advanced. We're excited to be actually starting it in R&D. It's going to be like a F-22 fighter jet. Very cool and very futuristic. Something the market's never seen," he says.

Corpora says they're also working on a truck camper concept.

"Our dealers want them. Especially our Canadian dealers. We feel there's enough demand for a camper designed for a half-ton truck. We're confident they can sell enough for us to put it through R&D."

RECEPTION & DEALER NETWORK

Corpora and his team recently took Cortes Campers to the Hershey RV Show where he says they received great feedback and heard a lot of, "Whoa! What is this?"

Being made completely out of fiberglass, Corpora says cost can be one of the drawbacks of this particular market. The Cortes 16 starting MSRP is in the $30,000 range, while the Cortes 17 MSRP is in the $40,000 range.

"I guess you could say the only drawback in this market is the higher cost. But it also has a higher resale value. You get what you pay for," Corpora says. "We may not be your first camper, but we might be your second or third...It's the next level camper when you don't want to continue to fix rotted parts."

Corpora says the next step in growing Cortes Campers is building a robust dealer network, which they are well on their way to doing.

"We're about halfway there. We're looking to have 80 to 100 dealers in Canada and the U.S. Our manufacturing is very methodical. We want to meet the demand of our dealers, so the goal is to get 250 units out until we can grow and expand. The goal is also to make bigger units, like a 32 and 37. It just depends on demand and feedback," Corpora says.

Cortes Campers works intimately with their dealers. The sales team works with dealers to help drive retail, assist at shows when necessary and give factory tours.

"We're more than willing to help educate people about what Cortes is. We take our customer's happiness very seriously," he says. "We're not going to be the biggest, but we want to be the best quality. We may never be a THOR or Airstream, but we build a really good camper that people want."

For more information about Cortes Campers, visit cortescampers.com. RVP

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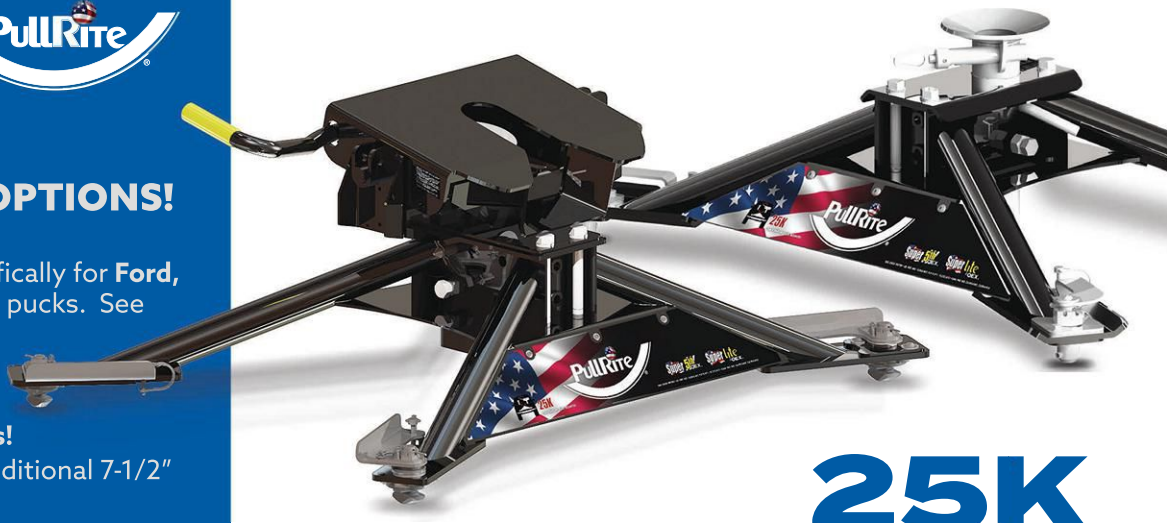
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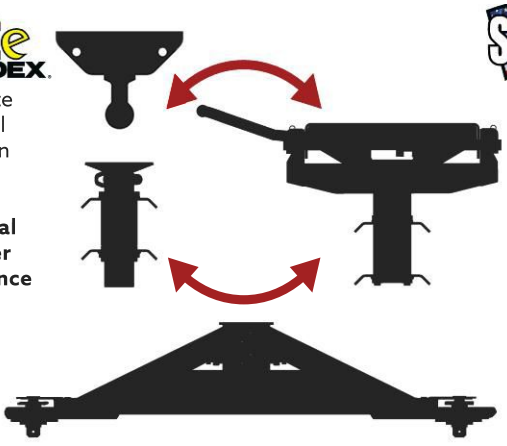
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#4715	#4715 25K OEX SUPERLITE FOR 2010-2023 FORD	85 lbs.
#4800	#4800 25K OEX SUPER 5TH FOR 2013-2023 RAM	116 lbs. (head rmvd.)
#4815	#4815 25K OEX SUPERLITE FOR 2013-2023 RAM	100 lbs.
#4900	#4900 25K OEX SUPER 5TH FOR 2020-2024 GM	94 lbs. (head rmvd.)
#4915	#4915 25K OEX SUPERLITE FOR 2020-2024 GM	78 lbs.

Going Off-Grid with WESTERN FLAIR

BY JOHN MCCURRY



Off-road camping enthusiast Matt Reichel wanted something better than the camper offerings he found several years ago. So he decided to create his own company, Boreas Campers, in Pueblo, Colorado, in 2015 and went to market with its first camper in 2016.

Reichel studied the available campers at that time and figured he could build something better. That was around the time smaller, towable, teardrop-style campers were gaining popularity. He opted to pursue an off-road teardrop.

"I built the first one in my garage, while I was spending my time skiing in Breckenridge and living on Boreas Pass Road, which is where the name of the company ultimately came from," he says. "I looked at what was available out there and looked into markets outside the U.S., like Australia, where they have been really into the off-road caravan for much longer than North America has. I took some cues from their experience and from my own personal use."





BUILT IN-HOUSE

Boreas is a relatively small firm, building 100 to 150 units a year. All are built at the company's factory in Pueblo. The units are sturdy, built from steel and composites. This is a major differentiator for Boreas in a competitive market.

"We do all of our own chassis in-house and all of our own welding and composites," Reichel says. "We go from raw materials to finished goods. We have a steel chassis, then the camper body is either going to be a metal or composite. We have zero wood in any of our campers. We moved away from wood products in 2018 and never looked back."

Reichel describes the XT model as the company's "bread-and-butter" product.

"The XT is a fully loaded, turnkey, ready-to-camp, square-drop trailer," he says. "There is a queen bed inside, so it sleeps two people. Then you can add a rooftop tent to bring the kids along. Then we have the EOS 12, which is our hybrid, so you have a pop-up roof. That can sleep four adults and has a bathroom in it and the four-season capability. It is the Rolls Royce of our lines."



Boreas' customers typically range from 35 to 75. This includes remote workers living full-time in campers, hunters, hikers, photographers and retirees.

"We certainly are not the only one in this market, but what really sets us apart is not only the all-metal and composite construction, but the specs," Reichel says. "We lead the industry in specifications. Whether that is the 30-gallon water capacity on the XT, or the components we use, such as the Zamp solar panels, Battle Born batteries and Victron solar-charged controllers and inverters. We are really using high-end products across all of our models."

A HIGH-SPECIFICATION BRAND

Being a small manufacturer, Boreas just has two dealers: one in Idaho and one in North Carolina. Reichel plans to add more dealers, but "they won't be on every street corner." He plans to maintain Boreas' status as a high-specification brand. Reichel hopes to find dealers in California, Texas and the Midwest.

The East Coast has been a good market, although it doesn't have as many off-road trails and wide-open spaces as the West. But there is plenty of adventure to be had in the East, in addition to its population density providing a foundation for sales.

"You do not have many off-road-style manufacturers in the East," Reichel says. "They are typically in the West. To get our product to the East Coast, without asking customers to spend three days in a car just to come look at our line, has been very beneficial to us and to our brand."

The dealer in Boise, Idaho, is well positioned to cover the Pacific Northwest and other Western adventure camping areas, Reichel says.

Boreas' experience in 2023 mirrors the RV industry as a whole. Business has slowed somewhat due to high interest rates and inflation. Reichel describes the last four years as a roller





coaster period with ups and downs. He has adjusted production to meet market demand.

Reichel notes Boreas has been quick to make improvements in its short history. The company averages a big overhaul nearly every year.

"We are doing a pretty significant one for 2024 XT, coming out with a 12-volt rooftop air conditioner, also an option for 500 watts of solar power on the roof, and a digital control system. We are always working to have the best product in this competitive market. We have to be on the ball to be in the top tier of off-road campers."

Up to now, Boreas hasn't displayed its vehicles at the Open House in Elkhart, Indiana, but Reichel hopes to do that in 2024. The company does exhibit at shows in the West. Its primary show is Overland Expo.

OFF-ROAD OPTIONS

Boreas offers options to help any off-road enthusiast. For the DIY crowd, a rolling chassis is available that has a Cruisemaster Australian suspension.

"We also sell our composite panel systems that we use on our campers to the do-it-yourself crowd. You can start at the bare bones and do your own thing, or you can get a shell model of the teardrop, which is the chassis and the box, plus the electrical system, if you want to outfit your own kitchen and your own water system. We give you a great platform to finish the build," Reichel says.

At the other end of the spectrum is the XT, a ready-to-go camper. The EOS is a newer model, in production for over a year.

"That (EOS) is a really high spec system. It has a Garmin operating system, and everything runs off of the Garmin touchpad. You can outfit it with up to 1,080 hours of lithium batteries and 1,000 watts of solar on the roof, so it is a very capable off-road, off-grid camper."

Customer loyalty and repeat customers have fueled Boreas' success.

"These trailers are large investments, and we have had many come back and get newer versions of the XT model. And we have had many go from the XT to the EOS 12," Reichel says. "They are expanding their camping experiences right along with us. We are really pumped whenever that happens." RVP



RV PRO webinar

Tuesday
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Aubrey Amborn
Director of Sales for Interact RV

Aubrey Amborn brings over 20 years of experience in dealer sales and marketing. She is passionate both about her teams and the dealers they serve. While at Interact RV, she has lead teams within several verticals including RV, powersports, marine, used auto and tire and service dealers as well as auto aftermarket. Amborn has built strategic partnership programs with companies like NTP Stag, Keystone, Land N Sea and US Auto Force, which have allowed dealers and jobbers more turnkey online solutions to service their customers with more ease. Under the LeadVenture umbrella, Amborn has lead teams for Interact RV, TCS Technologies, ARI Network Services, Auction 123 and Net Driven. Her exposure and experience in different verticals over the years has allowed her to maximize what works and what to avoid. Amborn lives in Duluth, Minnesota, with her husband, teenage son, two adult daughters, and a new granddaughter as of 2022.

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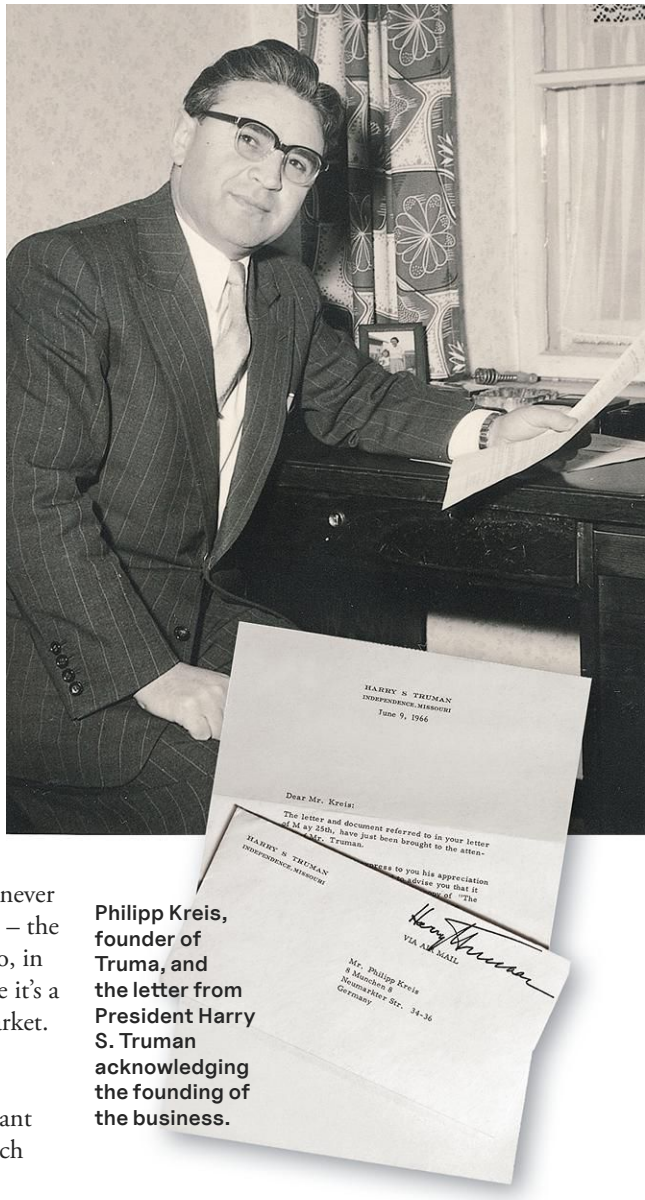
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A DECADE OF GROWTH

Truma reflects on 10 years in North America, pinning its success on three significant values.

BY JENNIFER KING



Philipp Kreis, founder of Truma, and the letter from President Harry S. Truman acknowledging the founding of the business.

"America was not built on fear. America was built on courage, on imagination and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand."
– President Harry S. Truman

It is easy to see why Truma chose to name itself after United States President Harry S. Truman when the company was founded in 1949 in Germany. As noted on the company's website, Truman was a critical factor in helping Germany to become an industrialized nation after World War II, and thus Truma's founder, Philipp Kreis, named his company after the president, launching a brand that 65 years later is both successful internationally and still family owned.

While the company got its start with a gas lamp that the founder assembled in his own living room, Truma is now a supplier of heaters, air conditioners, hot water generators and more for the RV industry.

Gerhard Hundsberger, Truma North America president and CEO, says a lot of work went into launching the brand in North America in 2013. "Truma is a really big player in the European market with a tremendous market share – in some areas 90%, especially on the heating side," he says. "Our entire DNA is RVing.

"Post financial crisis in 2008, 2009, the European RV market suffered tremendously. And so did Truma. We lost, in some months, 50% market share revenue, and it took relatively long for the European market to recover.

"And so, we said, 'what can we do to offset that risk?' And we always looked at the U.S. market. [As] such a huge player in the European market, we were never really involved in the U.S. market – the largest RV market in the world. So, in 2011, 2012 – [we thought] maybe it's a good time to get into the U.S. market.

"This is when we conducted a market study," Hundsberger continues. "We brought a consultant on board …We wanted to approach this in a very strategic way.

"We interviewed manufacturers. We interviewed dealers and, most importantly, we interviewed more than 800 end users. And we asked them: What could Truma bring to the table? What would you as an end consumer like to see from a European quality supplier? What could we bring better to the table than what is already existing on the appliance side? [Our answer was] water heaters, furnaces, air conditioners.

"And so that gave us a huge insight and optimism that we could be very successful in North America."

The first product brought to the North American market was the AquaGo – a water heating system that keeps temperature consistent, gives a continuous supply of hot water and an "easy drain lever" to aid in winterization, among other features.

One of the first employees brought on board was Mark Howlett, now the COO. "Mark came on board, other people came on board and really started rolling out our approach to North America," Hundsberger says.

"I remember the first meetings with manufacturers and the expectations were, 'We appreciate you coming to the North American market. Can you offer something less expensive than we buy today?'" he says with a laugh.

"That was a little bit eye-opening for us. Obviously, we did not come to the market to undercut existing suppliers. We knew that our systems would be

more expensive. We wanted to create a premium brand … [and] we really built that story about Truma being a premium supplier."

As for establishing Truma's North American presence in Elkhart, Indiana, Hundsberger says it just made sense.

"It was kind of natural for us to come to Elkhart, not only because our future potential customers would be here, but we also felt like the heart of the RV industry is here," he says.

The company's current headquarters in Elkhart opened in 2019.

"We have 10,000 square feet of office space and approximately 40,000 square feet of warehouse," Howlett says. "Our building I think stands out a little bit in Elkhart. We did have some struggles with trying to convince our builders to use some more European styling, and we have geothermal heating and cooling for the office area, which was not a known or a commonly used system in the Elkhart area."

The facility was designed to be as state of the art as possible and a welcoming place for people to come to work.

"We are able to bring in customers immediately into our facility. We have two service bays. We have seven bays in total. We also invested heavily into a climate chamber, which allows us to do heating and cooling tests of RVs for our customers. That is a differentiator for us," Howlett says.

"Standing behind that, we have 70 years of technology knowledge not only of our products, but how products should be installed," Howlett adds. "We want to give the best overall customer experience possible for the consumers, and therefore we work very closely with their OEM partners to ensure that the vehicles are designed to optimize the heating and the cooling systems."

Truma employs approximately 50 people in Elkhart and another 20 in Canada and around the U.S. who support the company as mobile service technicians. There is also a brick-and-mortar office in Florida.

"I would say our passion is really to create solutions for maximum comfort in caravaning and outdoors," Hundsberger says. "We develop the best-in-class systems, which are highly reliable. We strive to be simply better in everything we do here in North America."



Truma employees at their headquarters in Elkhart, Indiana.

The manufacturers or the dealers that buy Truma's products are their customers, but the president and CEO points out that it's the end consumer who will hopefully use the products for the next 10 years or longer.

"So, our end consumer is the center of our DNA – the center of everything we do here in North America," he says.

The company focuses on three main values: adaptability, connectedness and courage, Hundsberger says.

"What we mean by adaptability is being open-minded and prepared for new or future circumstances; being able to adapt quickly to changes in the business environment that guarantees long-term success," he says.

By connectedness, Hundsberger shares that globally, Truma has more than a thousand employees.

"We discuss ideas and solutions on a global basis as customer requirements are similar in all global markets," he says. "If we can connect those dots with systems on a worldwide basis, adopt them a little bit to certain requirements and certain countries, but overall the way systems work and the basic DNA of our systems are always the same."

Connectedness also refers to how the company communicates within the organization and with its customers. And lastly, courage means Truma's team members are willing to take certain calculated risks, Hundsberger says.

"And of course, coming to North America was definitely a brave decision," he adds.

As for the future of Truma, Hundsberger says the company has built a foundation and reputation in North America that the team should be proud of. And hearing positive feedback from customers at recent shows such as the Hershey RV Show held in Hershey, Pennsylvania, is proof of that success.

"We're going to continue to build on this great story. We are still relatively small, but we have ambitious goals," he says. "Why can't we not become a similar supplier to the North American market like we are in the European market? We want to make millions of customers happy with 'simply better' Truma systems. That is my vision." RVP

Voted Most Popular

When RV PRO asked Gerhard Hundsberger and Mark Howlett which Truma product has been its most well received, the answer was undoubtedly the Truma Combi – a combination of a gas furnace and water heater for medium-size vehicles.

"For premium vehicles in the premium market it is the go-to product," Howlett says. "We design our products [to be] long lasting and low maintenance, low service, and we have a very low warranty rate as well."

Another product Howlett noted is the Aventa rooftop air conditioner.

"One of the great features of that product is its ability to use less energy and as more OEMs and consumers want to run off lithium batteries, our ability to run longer with the product has been a differentiator and a product that more and more both consumers and OEMs are moving toward. It fits within the expectations of the customer being able to boondock longer by having a system that allows them to use less energy," Howlett says.

RVPRO

40 UNDER 40

THE CLASS OF 2023

Now in its fourth year, the 40 under 40 awards for young professionals in the rv industry have become a highlight of the year. rv pro's editors were blown away by the nominations we received, making our final 40 hard to narrow down. it is an honor to celebrate all of the industry's up-and-comers, and this year's class is no different. we are pleased to introduce you to the 2023 class of 40 under 40.

By Jordan Benschop, Kristin Carroll & Lisa Dicksteen

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AARON BASHORE

Tom Schaeffer's Camping and Travel Center
Service Manager

With company: 20 years

As the third generation in the business his grandfather started in 1955, Level 2 Certified Service Manager Aaron Bashore is invested in the success of Tom Schaeffer's Camping and Travel Center and the industry he describes as "aways changing. It's never the same thing day in and day out. There's aways something new to learn or pursue."

According to Service Advisor Deron Schuler, who has reported to Aaron for a year, Aaron's "passion for the industry and taking care of customers is obvious. He leads by example and works one on one with our technicians to improve efficiency, decrease repair time and increase customer satisfaction.

"He also stays on top of emerging technologies and processes and mentors our team daily on upcoming training." Aaron developed an internal training program to improve productivity and efficiency while supporting new hires who may not have backgrounds in the industry, and his "policies and procedures have lowered dealerships' R.E.C.T time to 16 days, well below the national average, an improvement that has greatly increased customer satisfaction."

Aaron is grateful to his three mentors, his grandfather, his father Bruce Bashore, and retired Service Manager Terry Ritter.

When he is not doing the job he loves, he might be fishing, camping, riding ATVs, or hanging with his three golden retrievers.



ALISSA REYES

Thetford
Senior Vice President, HR & Administration

With company: 4 years

Alissa Reyes, Thetford's senior vice president of human resources and administration – Americas, has worked in the aerospace, automotive and CPG industries, and says she doesn't know of an industry that comes together "for the betterment of all" like the RV industry.

According to Lori Conte, executive administrative assistant, Alissa is "a master collaborator" whose recent accomplishments include creating a flexible staffing model, an Employee Voice Survey, and a values-based awards program that have "transformed [the] culture and helped drive retention and engagement."

Alissa says, "Being a member of the RV Industry Association has been an incredible experience," mentioning learning from industry leaders at events, lobbying during RVs Move America Week, and developing as a leader through various associations.

When she first arrived at Thetford four years ago, she was "a newbie to the industry" and Executive Vice President Mary Pouliot "took me under her wing. I am still learning things from her all the time." She attributes her success to that mentorship and her desire "to learn and contribute as much as I possibly can."

Married for 11 years, Alissa stays in shape by doing the things she loves, being a mom to two girls, volunteering for the PTA at school, running marathons, and caring for her 16-year-old Westie.



TRAVIS HOUSE

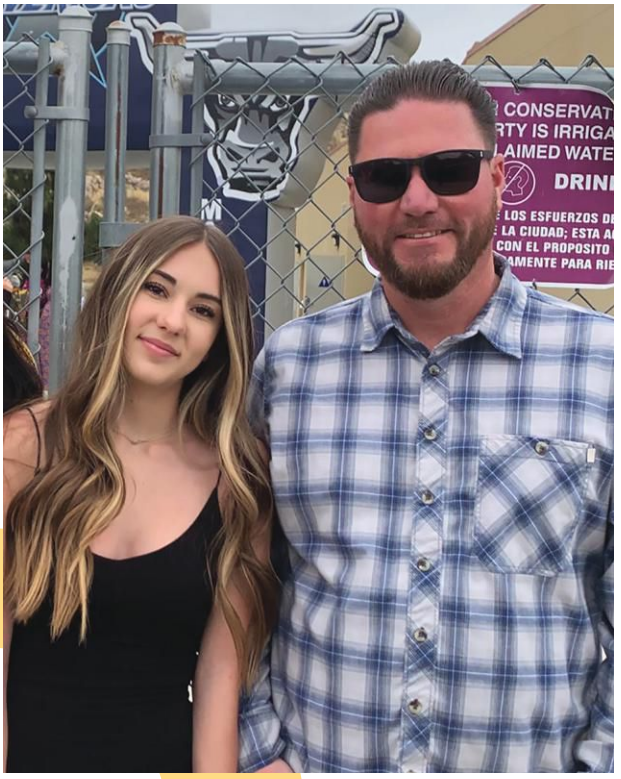
Temecula Valley RV
Service Advisor

With company: 19 years

Travis has worked with Temecula Valley RV for 19 years and is currently one of three service advisors for the dealership's multimillion-dollar service facility. Starting as a lot porter, he worked his way through production, retail and parts, to his current role as service adviser. Through hard work and a positive attitude, Travis's company says he has mastered every position he's been asked to fill. Every day, the dealership goes through each of its service jobs (approximately 125 jobs) to update their statuses, so no one falls through the cracks. Travis's input during those meetings is vital to the company's success. He continually suggests ways to streamline business in the most effective and productive ways.

During his employment with Temecula, he has moved from lot porter to lead lot porter, and from retail parts representative to parts manager.

Outside of the office, Travis is an avid fisherman and golfer. He loves to golf with his dad and friends, and enjoys fishing and camping with his daughter and son. Travis started his career right after graduating from high school and has learned the business from the ground up, becoming an extremely valuable employee for Temecula Valley RV, the company says.



MICHELLE BLOSSER

Grand Design RV
Interior Design Manager and Marketing Specialist

With company: 2 years

Michelle merges her design expertise with strong communication, project management and problem-solving skills to bring her visions to market while meeting product development expectations, her nominator says. She also builds robust client relationships.

In 2021, when Grand Design launched an interior redesign campaign for 2022 models, Michelle spearheaded the effort, collaborating with external suppliers and the in-house purchasing team to create innovative designs. The effort resulted in the successful launch of entirely new designs for each brand partner that resonated with the market.

Michelle also plans Grand Design events such as Dealers Rock and Grand Design University, and she provides support in organizing events like Open House, Tampa RV Super Show and the Hershey RV Show. Her work has resulted in numerous awards from RV industry publications including the RV PRO 2023 Best New Model for Imagine AIM.

Outside of work, you can find Michelle at EDM music festivals and spending time with her family.



RICKY CHYNOWETH

Campers Inn RV

Director of Strategic Initiatives

With company: 10 years

Ricky is a key member of the Campers Inn RV team in his role as director of strategic initiatives. Having been in the RV industry for more than 12 years and with the dealer network for 10, he leads Campers Inn RV's sales strategy, including corporate pricing, marketing efforts, oversight of its internet sales department and used buying department, and other sales initiatives. Ricky oversees 50-plus personnel from various teams, and indirectly influences hundreds of others through different locations' sales management. He routinely is the first to volunteer to help others in the industry with understanding things like market share, sales trends and inventory strategy. He is always willing to help Campers Inn teammates as well as those outside the company. Ricky has been instrumental to Campers Inn RV in 2023, his nominator says. He has helped most of its stores take market share through sales training initiatives, marketing campaigns and pricing strategies. He is the go-to sales guy for any sales manager with questions and a trusted resource internally. Due to his efforts, 25 of the company's 37 locations are taking market share this year. In addition, the company has almost eliminated obsolete inventory (2022 models) due to his efforts. Ricky loves to spend time with his wife and kids. He is also a bowler, likes to fish and enjoys an occasional round of golf.



SUMMER TRAMMELL

Storyteller Overland, LLC

Chief of Staff/Chief Communications Officer

With company: 1 year

Since joining the Storyteller Overland senior leadership team, Summer has tackled her role with confidence and strategic acumen. She works directly with the CEO to assist in oversight and strategic alignment for all aspects of Storyteller's communication across all disciplines of the company. Summer helps oversee all board of directors and C-Suite team communication and works in close concert with all principal leaders and stakeholders throughout the organization to ensure that Storyteller's strategic vision is being executed in a manner consistent with the company's core values. Her nominator says her expertise has helped bring about greater harmony among all the teams at the organization, smoothing communication around competing deadlines and priorities. Summer joined the RV industry from the OEM automotive manufacturing industry, where she won numerous awards and citations for her work. Since joining Storyteller, Summer has worked to help others within the organization achieve their individual and team goals. She is also active in her local community leading, supporting and serving Storyteller's S.O.U.L. (Storyteller's Outreach Uplift & Love) Program, which supports nonprofits related to health and wellness, personal betterment, and outdoor and natural conservation initiatives.



CRISTAL DOLL

Hilltop Camper and RV
Controller

With company: 8 years

With eight years as a controller with Hilltop Camper and RV, Cristal has spent the last five in leadership and recently added another team member to its accounting office, taking on delegation and training. She also recently stepped up to fill the dealership's HR manager role. Cristal was essential in the expansion of the company with its additional location. When she started with Hilltop, it was a two-store dealership with under 60 employees. With Cristal's help, it has grown to six locations and nearly 170 employees. The company's revenues have climbed from $38 million to $82 million, and Cristal has taken every challenge head on, including mastering both the IDS and Lightspeed software systems. Starting as an accountant with Hilltop Camper and RV, she was promoted to accounting manager and recently to its controller.

"There is no way our company would be where we are today without Cristal's hard work, dedication and passion to excel," says General Manager Mike Pearo. "Cristal is very deserving of this award, not only for the work she has performed, the attitude she performs at work with and her skill level, but she is one of the nicest people you will every encounter."

Outside of the office, Cristal enjoys spending time with her husband James, her dog and extended family. She also enjoys traveling, camping and outdoor recreation.



DIANE MILLER

Firefly Integrations
Associate Software Engineer

With company: 10 years

Diane started her RV industry career working on Firefly Integrations' assembly line as part of its production team. Over her nearly 10 years with the company, she has demonstrated exceptional leadership, rising through the ranks and achieving the position of vice president of assembly. She played a major role in the implementation of a new company structure at Firefly, worked with team members to help eliminate errors in assembly and quality control, switched to the use of digital copies to save paper, helped create a system that improved inventory management and cut costs, and upgraded Firefly's Wire Shop machines to increase production and efficiency.

Since Diane took over production leadership, the team went from processing nearly 16,300 orders to increasing output at more than 33,000 units. She has won Employee of the Month multiple times and has been a member of the CEO's Advisory Board for the past two years.

Diane made the decision to transition into a programmer role, where she is starting from the bottom again. This decision was motivated by her love of learning and passion for the business. Her goal is to eventually work her way back up to senior-level management and use her well-rounded knowledge to become an even stronger leader.

Outside of work, Diane enjoys traveling, volunteer work, fishing and making art. In 2015, she and a small team of women traveled to eight countries in southeast Asia, aiding those in need of clothing, supplies and English lessons.



ALLISON LEONHARDT

Renegade RV

Accounting Manager

With company: 4.5 years

Originally hired at Renegade RV as a staff accountant and later promoted to accounting manager, Allison is known as a "team player" and respected by her peers. Allison is knowledgeable in all processes in Renegade's finance department, supervising the day-to-day activities in the accounting department while also providing leadership, training and problem-solving skills. She focuses on team development to further strengthen the organization.

With Renegade RVs growth over the past several years, Allison has helped to plan, organize and implement programs and procedures to effectively manage the expansion. Never one to say no to a challenge, in addition to her finance duties, Allison has also handled most of the human resource (HR) activities at Renegade RV until the recent addition of an HR manager.

From reading to kayaking to finding various craft projects to pick up, Allison likes to keep busy in her off time. Additionally, you can find her spending time with her husband, Matt, and their 1-year-old son, Sam, and dog, Ellie.

Her natural inclination to leadership roles follows her in her personal life as well as she serves as the treasurer at Brighton Chapel Church. Allison also volunteers with Feed my Starving Children.



COREY PAYNE

Patrick Industries

Senior Designer

With company: 8 years

As Patrick Industries' senior designer for eight years, Corey is not afraid of a challenge. She takes on any project with pride and makes sure all involved parties are informed, facing problems with a positive mindset and creativity. Starting with the company as a junior designer, she has helped Patrick gain accounts and build relationships in the RV industry. Corey now leads the company's design team and educates sales on current trends, helping businesses display Patrick products in the showroom. During the industry's slower production time, Corey educates customers on design trends to help them update their units' interiors. She is constantly improving Patrick's design studio to show current trends with its products.

"When she has a challenge…She doesn't just use one material or one supplier to get the design she is needing for a client. She makes sure her customers have the best design no matter what the project is," a team member says. Corey handles all customers with grace and makes sure they feel their design style matters, even if it's not something she chose herself.

Outside of the Patrick studio, Corey runs her own fine arts business, selling paintings at art fairs and producing her own pieces for clients, as well as spending time with her husband and kids. Corey is anticipated by her Patrick peers to "move mountains in this industry."



TONY LIZZI

Grand Design RV
Product Manager
With company: 9 years

According to Peter Kinden, general manager of Grand Design RV, Product Manager Tony Lizzi "has climbed upward steadily since his first day at Reflection Towables nine years ago." He started by growing his territory 250% in under two years and winning the coveted Best Sales Representative Award and the RV Show Rep of the year.

Following in the footsteps of his grandfather and father, Tony started as a sales trainee and rose quickly to regional sales manager for one of the industry's largest companies, before being recruited by Grand Design. Two-and-a-half-years ago he was promoted to product manager in the middle of a major transition when, according to Peter, "the competition was gunning for us."

Peter attributes Tony's 16 years of industry success to always "going the extra distance to maintain the culture, fine-tune the focus on our core values, and drive quality and innovation. He is always there to help, even with tasks well outside his job description, including volunteering in community-focused events and supporting industry associations. If his passion for his company, our dealers, and our customers could be equaled by all our competitors, it would take our industry to new heights."

Tony and his wife love traveling and spending time at their lake house on Lake Wawasee where they enjoy boating and participating in community fundraisers and functions.



PAUL CHOQUETTE

Blue Ox
Vice President of Operations
With company: 14 years

Paul's nominator describes him as a servant leader, taking on an ownership mentality of everything he does at Blue Ox, from meeting customers to mentoring the front-line team. In his current role as vice president of operations, Paul has assisted in developing a new operational road map for the company to maintain standards and procedures during a five-year period of aggressive growth.

With an eye for emerging technologies, he has transformed the company's operations with cutting-edge automation that has allowed Blue Ox to double in size over the past five years and sets the table to double again in the next five years. His nominator says Paul has a commitment to employee enrichment both at work and home, making positions at Blue Ox coveted in the community.

He began at the company as a draftsman, moving up to engineer II, engineering manager, operations manager and director of operations over time. He holds seven patents across the Blue Ox product offerings. Outside of work, Paul is a volunteer coach for his children's sports teams and enjoys hunting, fishing, ATVing and snowmobiling.





ALLY MONCAYO

MBA Insurance

Director of Sales

With company: 17 years

Ally began her career with MBA Insurance at the age of 19. She has had a hand in all areas of the business from everyday operations, training, marketing and sales. In her role as director of sales, she has ensured all her team members have the knowledge, processes and tools to thrive in their jobs. She created a centralized knowledge base for sales processes, and during the pandemic, took the lead on building a shared site for documents, which created a smooth transition to remote work. Most recently, when MBA embedded the ability to create and bind a policy directly on the website, Ally took the lead on the details of the front-facing process. This led to a 200% increase in sales conversions and gave time back to account managers to focus on customer relationships. She is a graduate of the Brown & Brown Leadership Workshop, which is only offered to a few leaders in the Brown & Brown company. Outside of work, Ally enjoys gardening and spending time with her family and French bulldogs.

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ROBERT KOWALCZYK

Fleetwood RV

Director of Quality and Operational Excellence

With company: 8 years

Robert has worn a lot of hats at Fleetwood RV, from operations group lead, materials receiving clerk, quality engineer, materials purchasing/buyer, materials manager, quality manager, quality and operational excellence manager and operational excellence manager to his current title of director of quality and operational excellence.

Through these changes, his nominator says Robert has placed a tremendous emphasis on mentorship and helping new employees at Fleetwood RV grow in their roles. He is a key stakeholder in the company's employee change management training and onboarding initiatives, meeting every new hire that comes in the door.

In 2022 and 2023, he helped drive more than $5 million in operational savings and improvement. He implemented the use of visualization boards to improve safety, quality, delivery and costs and led multiple Kaizen events to eliminate bottlenecks in operations. He is a Six Sigma black belt and has instituted the program at Fleetwood RV; the company has 12 green belts and more than 30 bronze belts.



TREVOR KROPF

Kropf Industries, Inc.

General Manager

With company: 13 years

Trevor grew up in the RV business, learning the ropes under his family at Kropf Industries, which was founded by his great-grandfather in 1946. He earned his CPA designation in 2010 and worked as controller until taking the company's reigns in 2021. Under his leadership, the company has seen an increase in sales revenue of 28% in 2021-22 and 11% in 2022-23. He has reduced turnover in the office to 0% and in the production facility to 3% during his tenure. His nominator says that during a time of materials shortages and rapid inflation, Kropf Industries didn't shut down production or have layoffs. Kropf Industries has also been in the top three for park model retail registrations since 2021. Trevor is a member of RVIA's board of directors, member of the Park Model Committee for RVIA, and is actively involved in RV Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C. Outside of work, Trevor sits on the board of directors for the local youth basketball league and is a coach for third through sixth graders. He has led fundraising events to ensure local youth have access to basketball at an affordable cost. He is also an advocate for junior golf and is on the Greens and Ground Committee at his country club.



PHYLLIS BEYERS

Genesis Products

Product Manager, Films & Overlays

With company: 8 years



Phyllis consults with more than 75% of RV OEMs on color selection and interior design, helping to streamline product selections and create a cohesive interior across a brand's products. She takes the lead on conversations with more than 20 suppliers, building relationships that helped manage supply chain issues during the COVID-19 pandemic and after. When the Genesis Products senior management team underwent a restructuring, Phyllis took on all customer inventory and ordering, managing sales requests, suppliers and every angle of the film process. Her work has allowed the company to implement new ways to streamline their processes. In 2022, she won the company's Impact award, which is given to an exemplary employee that drives impact and overcomes obstacles for the betterment of the business. Outside of the office, she serves on the board of the Bashor Children's Home and chairs their biggest fundraising event, Running with the Spoons.



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SHANNON REGAN

Crestview RV Center
Finance Manager
With company: 8 years

Shannon was poised to become an RV industry leader from an early age, her nominator says. She is the daughter of past RV Dealers Association Chairman Mike Regan, and started her career at Crestview RV not long after graduating from Texas Christian University. She started in the sales department where she began a business development company for the company's dealerships, which expanded the company's reach across the United States and into Canada. In her current role, her nominator says Shannon is tenacious about finding the best financing fit for the customer, dealer and manufacturer. She has been instrumental in setting up electronic means of communicating with customers, such as the text platform Kenect, that allow salespeople to reach out with information and ask for a call back. She has completed the Spader Leadership Development course and was named Coach-Net's Ambassador of the Year in 2022. During the past few years, she has been immersed in a fast-track learning program, implementing the things she learns to improve the customer experience and overall business.



SAM MARTIN

Airxcel, Inc.
Corporate Controller
With company: 5 years

Sam was raised camping with his grandparents but did not have extensive knowledge of the RV industry until he joined Airxcel. He began his role at Airxcel as manager of financial reporting; he was promoted to corporate controller in 2021. In this role, Sam helped take the company from privately held to a public entity and was instrumental in the process of integrating the acquisitions of Aqua-Hot, Cleer Vision, Elkhart Composites and CAN into the Airxcel family of brands. His role included financial reporting, inventory costing, valuation of assets, documentation of policies and processes and internal controls. In this role, he also oversees the financial reporting process of seven U.S.-based divisions and a European division. His nominator says Sam communicates easily with people across the organization and has high integrity, care for teammates, an infectious laugh, drive to maintain a fun working environment and a yearning to meet the goals of the organization. For his part, Sam says he has learned that the heart of the RV industry isn't the product, but the people. Outside of work, Sam spends time with his wife, Alex, and dog outdoors and enjoying local breweries.



ANNA RUIZ

Octane Lending, Inc.

Business Development Representative

With company: 1 year



Octane Lending entered the RV space in September 2022, and Anna has been on the team since the first day. Anna has had an active role in growing the number of dealers enrolled in Octane's lending program 27 times in the program's first six months. She has also taken on a more active role in recent months due to changes on the RV team. Her nominator says she dove in head-first into existing customer relationships – answering dealer questions and ensuring that more RV dealers know about the company's financing options. These efforts have resulted in 100 new dealer enrollments, growing originations by 85% in the first quarter of 2023. Anna works cross-functionally to ensure dealer success by implementing policies and procedures with the RV industry in mind. She has also optimized Octane's accessible financing experience to help more underserved customers access their dream RV.

Away from the office, Anna is a passionate advocate for RVing, saying it gives everyone the chance to travel and adventure; she frequently takes RV trips to the beach with her family.

"ANNA HAS OPTIMIZED OCTANE'S ACCESSIBLE FINANCING EXPERIENCE TO HELP MORE UNDERSERVED CUSTOMERS ACCESS THEIR DREAM RV."

4



KYLE PETERSON

Airstream Adventures

General Manager of locations in California and Idaho

With company: 5 years



During his tenure as general manager at three Airstream dealerships, Kyle has seen his teams set gross and net profit records. His stores have been named Airstream Five-Rivet Dealers, which recognizes exceptional customer service, for the past four years. Kyle has been able to build a culture at the stores he manages that results in low employee turnover.

Most recently, when Airstream Adventures was acquired by Lithia Motors, Peterson has actively worked with peers and his direct reports to embrace new systems, processes and policies. Kyle's nominator says he is never afraid to take on new tasks or challenges and has successfully built strong relationships with manufacturers and vendors. He is an excellent example of how "rising tides lift all boats," striving to build up his team and challenge them to grow, his nominator says.

He represents the state of California and Airstream Adventures on the CalRVDA board of directors as secretary. Outside of work, Kyle volunteers as a tour guide at Alcatraz Island, logging more than 250 volunteer hours with the National Park Service per year.

RYAN EASH

Jayco

General Manager, Jayco Motorhome Group

With company: 8 years



Ryan joined Jayco in 2015 as marketing brand manager. He has received three promotions in his time at Jayco, most recently to general manager of the motorhome group in 2022. This role involves leading two separate sales teams and two product teams, which his nominator says Ryan leads in such a way that they function as one team. Under his leadership, the company has seen their Class C market share grow 50%. He took the lead on changes to the gas Class A division, leading to the company having 21% of market share, up from 6%. Ryan led Jayco's entry into the Class B market, setting a rapid pace of growth. The motorized division as a whole has grown 70% under his tenure. As part of the chassis procurement group for Jayco, Ryan has overcome supply chain challenges to help keep production employees working toward the finished product. Ryan is a board member for the Pennsylvania Recreational Vehicle and Camping Association and an active participant in various THOR Industries Leadership Development initiatives.

AUSTIN CIAMBRIELLO

Intellitec Products LLC

Engineering Manager

With company: 10 years



Austin jointed Intellitec Products as an engineering intern in 2013, adding responsibilities and roles over time; he was promoted to engineering manager in 2019. In this role, he led the company's capital equipment investment plan and implementation and the complete re-layout of the 34,000-square-foot manufacturing operation in 2020 and 2021. He continues to lead product development team, working closely with the OEMs on new products to meet current and future needs. His nominator says he understands the RV business from all angles and is always looking to meet customers' needs. He has faced the supply chain issues of the past few years head on, completely redesigning the hardware and software of Intellitec's most complicated product — and getting the redesign validated and to market in just six months. He holds a patent on "battery power management device and associated method of use" and has a second patent on file with the United States Patent Office awaiting approval. Austin joined the RV Industry Association RV-C Subcommittee in 2020, taking a leadership role in developing the standards for power products. Outside of work, Austin plays softball, disc golf and pickleball. He enjoys spending time with his wife, Paula, and 2-year-old daughter, Camilla.

BRIAN LOSCHEIDER

Sika Corporation

Sales Manager

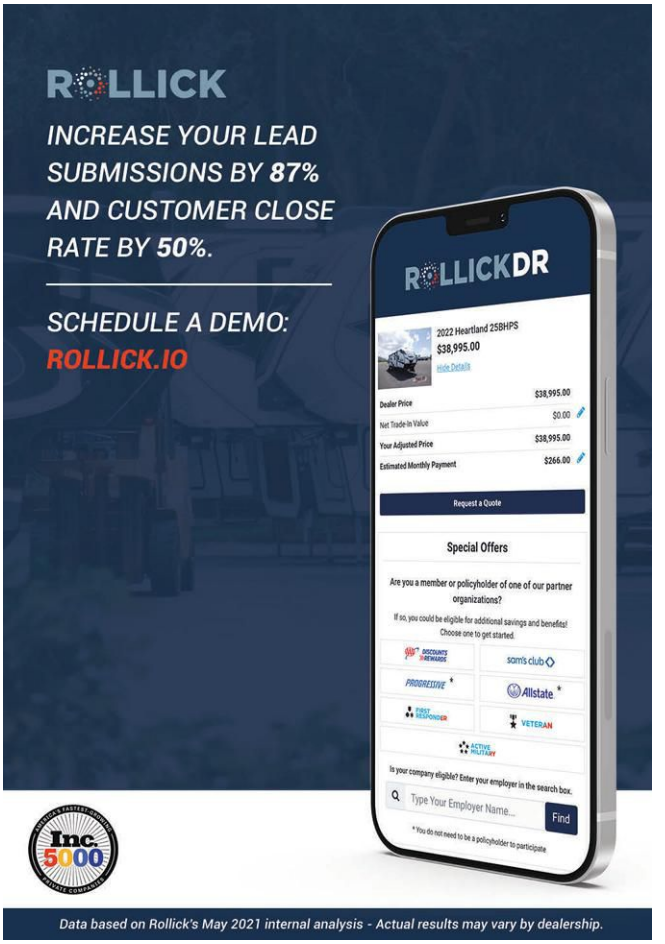
With company: 8 years

Brian has been in the RV industry on and off for 13 years, joining Sika Corp. for the last eight after taking a different career path. He has been the company's area sales manager for the past year. Throughout his employment, he has helped lead the way in utilizing new products and technology that will help improve the construction of RVs, preventing water infiltration issues and improving customer satisfaction. Brian helped introduce new products to Winnebago Industries.

"With the products that he has introduced to us, it not only helps the end customer, but helps our employees with safety and ergonomics," Winnebago says. His introduction of Sika products to Winnebago has helped reduce its warranty costs by 5%. Specifically, he helped reduce the cost of in-house repairs ($144,000) on its Class B product by introducing a liquid butyl that does not need to be trimmed with a knife, prevents knife slips and prevents possible knife injuries. The introduction of new adhesives and sealants will provide a better produced unit which will provide better customer satisfaction, the OEM says.

Outside of work, Brian is the assistant fire chief of the Cologne Fire Department in Minnesota, as well as a private pilot interested in aviation. He also loves to spend time with family.





Data based on Rollick's May 2021 internal analysis - Actual results may vary by dealership.

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MICHAEL YANNI

Wilkins Recreational Vehicles, Inc.
Sales Director

With company: 14 years

Michael started his career as a sales consultant at Wilkins RV. He was promoted to sales manager in 2014 and to sales director this year. As sales manager, he grew his department 56% over three years, from $31 million in sales in 2019 to $48.5 million in 2022. He has spearheaded efforts to move aged inventory throughout the year, not just in quarters one and two. His nominator says Michael embodies the company's core values of trust, mutual respect, excellence and financial sustainability. As a manager, Michael uses data to help drive decisions, but remains empathetic and communicative with his team and peers. His nominator says this has helped Wilkins RV remain proactive in the industry. Michael enjoys spending his free time outdoors with his family. Summers are spent boating and swimming in Keuka Lake and winters are spent hiking, sledding and by the fire.



BRENT SMITH

Craig Smith RV
Dealer Principal and General Manager

With company: 16 years

When Brent's father, Craig, opened Craig Smith RV in 2000, 12-year-old Brent got right to work in the dealership's wash bay. He continued to work summers through his time at Northwood University, where he majored in automotive marketing and business management. Brent became the general manager and dealer principal in 2018 and is currently the dealer principal of Craig Smith Chevrolet. His nominator says that in just two years, Brent helped moved the dealership from seat 19 to seat two, and his efforts increased sales volume by 150%. Brent embraced ringless voicemail to become the leading used Class C and Class B dealer in his market. He has received the Triple Diamond designation from Leisure Travel two years in a row. He sits on the executive committee of the RV09 Dealer Group where he will begin a term as chairman in February 2024. In his time away from the dealership, Brent works as a vigil volunteer for two large hospice groups, which he says helps keep everything surrounding his work in perspective.



JUSTIN RICKETT

RVTI
Manager, Authorized Learning Partner

With company: 6 months

Justin moved from a territory sales role into a newly created role that will broaden the reach of training and recruitment at the RV Technical Institute. In his four years in the RV industry and six months with RVTI, Justin has built lasting relationships with his coworkers and colleagues in the aftermarket industry.

His nominator notes that Justin is a visionary with creativity and dedication to creating a better future for the RV service world and those who work in RV service. He has become an aftermarket industry advocate, and his nominator says he is destined to be a driving force for the industry in the future.



Outside of work, Justin is an outdoor enthusiast, enjoying boating, water skiing and auto racing. In 2022, Justin ran for the Georgia state House of Representatives for District 137, and while he didn't win, he did make an impressive showing with 39% of the vote.

STEVEN RILEY

Rileys RV World
Sales Manager

With company: 22 years

Steven started in his family's dealership at 14 years old as a wash boy and learned almost every aspect of the business at Rileys RV World, taking the title of sales manager 22 years later. He was 5 years old when the Riley family got into the RV business, and would follow his father, Mike Riley, around the shop. The oldest of three sons, Steven earned his college degree in business and immediately put it to work for the mom-and-pop dealership with fresh ideas, including embracing an online presence. His dad credits his personality, insight in unit selection and creative advertising for the dealership's continual sales increase.

"He is the voice of reason most every time, and he values our generation's input while still having fresh ideas to keep our dealership relevant and profitable going forward," Mike Riley says.



The dealership's entire crew comes to him for guidance, and Steven communicates often with its local competitors to keep everyone in the loop as changes arise. He is currently coordinating "almost everything" for the shop's fourth major building project, including land preparation, design and lot layout.

Steven is a father of four and very involved in his children's activities. He is also an accomplished guitarist on his church's worship team and an avid duck hunter. Steven's father describes him as a "man of peace" with the ability to bring calmness to even the worst situations.

JESSICA HERMANN

Airstream of Tampa
Sales Manager

With company: 22 years

Being the top Airstream dealer in the world for five years running takes dedication, drive and commitment.

According to Tony Subbert, sales manager at Airstream of Tampa, those words define his boss, General Manager Jessica Hermann.

"Her desire to improve day in and day out motivates her team and influences the company as a whole."

Jessica began her career as a detailer 20 years ago. Acquiring the skills required to lead a team on her way up has given her the knowledge and experience to sense and respond to market shifts, drive sales increases and service improvement, manage inventory to keep the top-sellers on the lot without over-extending the company financially, and keep things moving forward no matter the temperature of the market.

But, according to Tony, who has worked with Jessica for three of her six years at Airstream of Tampa, her greatest strength is as "a leader who motivates her team to success after success," including Airstream awards for top dealer, top travel trailer dealer and top motor coach dealer.

"Her drive and focus on the company's goals, as well as her own, continue to push her team to never let her down. She is a joy to work with."

TREVOR YOUNGBLOOD

Youngblood's RV Center
Service Director

With company: 15 years

Trevor grew up in the RV industry and is currently service director of Youngblood's RV, yet doesn't shy away from being in the shop with its technicians. He works to help the dealership's service department grow and is regularly the one to stay late and help customers on the road, showing his dedication to Youngblood's customers. He always is brainstorming on how to better the company and is not afraid to try new procedures to help employees with their day-to-day responsibilities. Three years ago, Trevor completely restructured the shop's service department, starting a full active service experience from start to finish that has changed the department for the better, the company says. Trevor was chosen for the dealership's local VUE magazine 40 Under 40 in 2022. He started as a service adviser and has quickly moved up to service director.



Outside of the office, Trevor likes to spend time with his family along with camping, golfing and traveling. The knowledge he has of this industry is extremely hard to find, his company says. He truly cares about the well-being of Youngblood's customers, business and the industry at large.

SETH BUCHHEIT

Chinook Motor Coach
Sales Manager

With company: 3 years

Seth is Chinook RV's sole sales representative covering the entire United States, and is credited for working in sales, product training, warranty and marketing for the OEM. Within his three years at Chinook, Seth has helped the OEM increase its dealer body from five to 25, showing consistent leadership in driving retail leads with its dealer partners. He was nominated by a dealer who credits him for helping it open a store and constructing "win-win ways" to help dealers stay away from bad habits. Chinook's production has increased from 10 motorhomes in 2020 to 45 motorhomes year-to-date. The OEM's dealers have recognized him and his efforts, as well as his peers at the many shows he travels to.



"His passion to provide a first-class experience for customers is something that we value in the management team of this company," says Jeff Butler, Chinook general manager. "We need more people like Seth with the passion, determination and drive to push the RV industry further. I've been a part of this industry for 38 years. It is great to see young people like Seth come into the business and push for success, rather than only wanting to be rewarded financially without showing the same traits I see in Seth."

Seth is a family man and while work demands take him all over the country, he spends what other time he has with his kids. Family is the most important thing to him.

MEGAN STOUDER

Newmar Corporation
Sales Product Trainer

With company: 4 years

Megan spearheads Newmar's entire training department, creating video and text content for the company's Newmar Professional Product Institute online training program for dealers. She also serves as the face of customer-facing videos and has been able to resonate with Newmar customers in a positive way. Her nominator says it's hard to judge how many sales Megan has influenced in her role. She was promoted to her current role in 2021 and is also tasked with preparing and leading the company's Master Series in which Newmar hosts dealership sales personnel on plant tours and on-site training during a five-week period of scheduled classes. Megan is a member of the Women Inclusion Network (WIN) at Winnebago Industries. As a leader in WIN, she led a test-driving seminar for female employees at Newmar this summer, giving women the opportunity to learn about and test drive 45-foot diesel pushers in a safe and supportive environment with Newmar drivers.



CAMILA RAMIREZ

GoCamp
CEO

With company: 1 year

Camila joined GoCamp shortly after Storyteller Overland acquired the company. She was recruited by the Storyteller CEO as part of a succession plan for GoCamp founder Deborah Kane. Prior to joining the GoCamp leadership team, Camila channeled her skills for sales, marketing and operations into an overland vehicle rental business. Her nominator says she leveraged the skills from this role to instill confidence among GoCamp's employees, channel partners, van owners and a growing customer base. Since stepping into the leadership role in 2021, Camila has led the GoCamp team through triple digit growth each year and has increased the rental fleet from 150 units to more than 350. She also helped negotiate the acquisition of the technology platform VanCation. Camila loves any activity that immerses her in the great outdoors, especially if she can invite friends, family and others to join her adventures.



BROCK ALLEN WARD SR.

Ed Allen's Campground & Cottages
Owner/President
With company: 13 years

Buying a business at the age of 24 would scare most young adults — but not Brock. Since day one as owner and president of Ed Allen's Campground & Cottages, Brock has demonstrated great leadership and provided a wonderful work environment for his employees, ensuring that each employee is aware that they're a vital part of the team. Active in each part of the business, there is not a job in the park that Brock won't do. From office work, events, grounds keeping and cleaning, maintenance — he does it all. Like many businesses, the campground has been impacted by staffing shortages, so Brock does his part in making sure what needs to get done is done.

In 2011, Brock purchased Ed Allen's Campground & Cottages from his mother, a family business since the 1930s that has been passed down for three generations. Since then, Brock has renovated 80% of the 100-acre property, including adding 155 new RV sites, four cottages, a new swimming pool and a new entertainment area featuring a stage. With 18 years of experience in the industry, as owner of the campground Brock has shown steady growth in business at about 15% each year. In 2017, Brock was named the Business Citizen of the Year in New Kent County, Virginia.

When Brock isn't maintaining and improving the campground so it can be passed down to future generations of his family, he can be found hunting, fishing and spending time with his wife and two children.



CATHERINE BARSANTI

RV Industry Association
Content Manager
With company: 2.5 years

Catherine is a content manager for the RV Industry Association (RVIA) and a talented designer who is always looking to creatively bring ideas into reality. Since she joined the group a little over two years ago, her work has led to significantly more awareness of the programs and services of the RVIA and helped reach consumers and the media.

She has been instrumental in launching and growing the RV Technical Institute brand, having created the website and collateral materials that have helped scale the industry program. Recently, she jumped into the Go RVing national media campaign, using her digital design skills to help drive interest in the RV lifestyle and helping boost the market.

"Catherine is always looking for the next creative endeavor," the association wrote in her nomination. "She constantly assists others on the RVIA team with creative projects and shares her knowledge and understanding of design to help others on the team grow their skill set."

Catherine loves spending her time outdoors, volunteers for the Wildlife Rescue League, and also enjoys local breweries and concerts. She is a partner in a small local company that creates custom artwork and other items, Dogwood Goods.



JESSE STOPNITZKY

Performance Brokerage Services

Co-owner/Partner

With company: 13+ years

Now co-owner of Performance Brokerage Services and head of the company's RV division, Jesse joined his family's business more than a decade ago. Since then, the firm has grown from three team members to more than 30, from one office to 10 across the U.S. and Canada, helped develop separate verticals dedicated to RV, marine, powersports, commercial trucking and equipment and seen an annual volume of transactions increase by more than 10 times.

However, bolstering business isn't the only thing Jesse is known for – he is also recognized by those around him as a truly "one of a kind human being." Jesse brings an overwhelming amount of professionalism and passion to the industry and is well respected within his brokerage as well as among his clients, friends and family. With the understanding that there is no one-size-fits-all approach in an everchanging environment, Jesse is driven to helping dealers understand all aspects of their dealership, regardless of if it is their intent to sell, grow or for estate planning purposes.

In his free time, Jesse continues to help educate others in the industry by speaking on industry-leading podcasts, contributing written pieces to news publications and presenting at the RVDA Convention/Expo. Outside of work, he composes and performs music internationally and volunteers at his place of worship and his local Veteran's Outpost, a transitional housing center for veterans in need of housing and a helping hand.



JOHN JONES

Cruiser RV

General Manager

With company: 8 years

John is senior general manager at Cruiser RV and has been in the industry for more than 13 years, starting with Heartland RV in 2010 as a regional sales manager and later joining Cruiser – both divisions of THOR Industries. John oversees aspects of the brand's sales, product development and strategic planning. His innovations, including Cruiser's king bed slide system and hidden pass-through storage, demonstrate his exceptional creativity and problem-solving abilities. John was touted by Cruiser as having "patent-worthy designs that have not only benefited his company but have also contributed to the industry's overall advancement."

He joined the brand's leadership after being a product manager for multiple toy hauler lines, and his influence extends to the broader RV industry as he continues to push the envelope. He was also noted for his ability to effectively lead Cruiser sales teams, driving growth for the company, along with navigating the post-COVID environment and implementing creative strategies to drive organizational success.

His most recent promotion "further solidified his reputation as a rising star and a standout professional in the RV industry," his company says.

John is known for his vibrant personality, sense of humor and deep devotion to his family. Outside the office, he coaches his daughter's softball team and stays busy with his son's swimming, lake adventures and T-ball.



CHRISTINA GOSE

Mapletree Transportation
Director of Safety and Compliance
With company: 2 years

Christina Gose moves fast. Beginning as a shop manager for an RV PDI company only seven years ago, and propelled by her twin passions – safety and making room for women of color at management levels in a mainly male, mainly white industry – she became director of safety and compliance at Mapletree Transportation in under two years.

There, according to her nominator, her accomplishments already include:

- A continuing education program for office staff
- Bringing on 241 new drivers, a 114% increase, in 2022
- A safety-based driver appreciation program
- Lowering CSA safety scores to 2013 levels
- Specialized workplace safety training by third-party experts
- Company-wide participation in the RV Women's Alliance
- Increased company-wide engagement with the local community, including participation in Toys for Tots and a fall food drive

"Christina works extremely hard and is passionate about her career and company, constantly pushing for improvement, even at the risk of her position," her nominator says, because she believes that drivers should be appreciated more and keeping them safe is one way to do that.

Her nominator says she is going to hate this article because, "she is a private person and does not like to be praised or shown recognition."

In addition to her workplace passions, Christina loves traveling, hiking, reading, time at the lake and her family.





JOE MEHL

Alliance RV

Marketing Director

With company: 9 months

Anyone who has managed social media for a company knows it's not an easy task. Fighting social media algorithms is a job in itself, not to mention creating content that attracts and keeps eyes on your page, while encouraging likes, hearts and clicks to your website. In his time with Alliance RV, Joe has overcome those obstacles to grow the company's social media presence 1200%, from 7,300 followers to 92,000. He has crafted a clear and concise message to dealers and retail customers about the "customer obsessed" mentality of the company, allowing the young Alliance RV to grab market share in 2023. His nominator says he leads projects from start to finish, pulling his team together to get results. Outside of work, Joe has been flying drones for over eight years and just recently received his Part 107 pilot certificate. He volunteers at numerous organizations in his community, including the Goshen Noon Kiwanis, Elkhart County Humane Society and the Boys & Girls Club of Elkhart County, where he sits on the marketing committee.



BEN JOHNSON

Meyer Distributing

Sales Manager – RV, Towing & Marine

With company: 5.5 years

Promoted in 2022 to lead an inside sales team focused on growth and promoting relative products, Ben is Meyer Distributing's sales manager for its RV, Towing & Marine category. His five and a half years with the company have made him an expert and a teacher/mentor to his team, which has grown over the last few years to match strong industry demand. His open mind, lending ear and positive attitude have created a knowledgeable, motivated and respectful team, Meyer says, and that same skill set allows him to effectively manage vendor relationships.

"His integrity, communication, innovation and problem-solving is second to none," his company says.

In his free time, Ben lives the outdoor lifestyle and enjoys camping, fishing, hunting and woodworking.



DEREK WEAVER

NTP-STAG

Regional Sales Manager – Central Territory

With company: 10 years

Derek followed in his father's footsteps in the RV industry, starting as an outside sales rep for NTP-STAG in the Midwest. He then moved to covering a territory in Texas. He was promoted to regional sales manager for the central United States in January 2022. His nominator says he is always working to improve the customer experience, which includes working with his staff and peers to develop creative solutions to help dealerships overcome the supply chain pressures of the past few years. He is responsible for ensuring that the company's outside sales staff brings value to each sales visit, keeping customers informed of current trends and reviewing overall performance. Derek easily gains the trust and support of those he works with and encourages collaboration among his team, his nominator says. Outside of work, Derek enjoys spending time with his wife, Kristy, and four children, the youngest of whom was recently adopted. He also enjoys fishing and cooking.



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DRIVING SALES WITH SOCIAL MEDIA:

RV DEALERSHIP INFLUENCER MARKETING STRATEGIES

Try these tips when forming a relationship with an RV influencer who can build your dealership's brand.

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY SCOTT RUSSELL

Influencer marketing is one of the fastest-growing tools to leverage sales and growth. Are you taking advantage of it? Let's discuss why influencer marketing is a key strategy for reaching your target customers, specific dealership strategies for working with influencers and how to find these goldmine partnerships.



Influencer Marketing Can Bring You Closer to Your Target Customers

Why is influencer marketing such a powerful strategy for growth? As full-time outdoor travel/RV influencers, we often explain to clients who are new to this marketing style exactly what makes influencer marketing so unique and effective.

Imagine with me if you will that there is a television channel with nothing but RV-themed shows all day, every day. Every viewer watching the channel went through the effort to add this channel to their lineup because they are RV travel enthusiasts. Also, imagine that every show on this channel has the same show host that viewers know, like and trust due to their expertise in RVing and helpful/educational show programming.

Can you imagine the advertising potential if this television channel existed? Not only are viewers already your target customers, but the audience also feels like they know/trust the host and their recommendations, providing a warm market for sales in the RV industry. While this channel doesn't exist on television, it is a reality on RV influencer accounts across Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and YouTube.

In fact, many of these channels get more viewers than most TV shows. The content created is not limited to just an influencer's channel, but it can also be turned into social media ads to be shown to look-alike audiences across the platform for an even more significant reach/return. The advertising potential is limitless.

Intrigued? So, how can RV dealerships leverage influencer marketing? Here are some specific ideas you can use right away.

Influencer Marketing Campaign Ideas for RV Dealerships

Now that you realize the potential of leveraging a warm market of RVers through influencers/content creators, let's go over some specific campaign ideas. We will start with the easiest to implement and move to more advanced strategies.

1. On-Site Content Creation: RV Tours, Sales & Other Promotions

Influencers can cover almost anything you have going on at your RV dealership to create a buzz. One of the easiest advertising methods is RV tours. This is a great way to showcase your inventory, promote sales and keep your dealership top of mind to potential customers.

An ideal partnership may be to have an influencer film multiple RV tours to post throughout the month for the greatest exposure. You can also use the tours or promotion videos could also be reused as content on your dealership's channels and turned into social media ads to reach an even greater audience. This way, the content is shown to the influencer's audience, reused for your business's social accounts and receives an even larger impact when you repurpose it as an ad. This provides the biggest return on your investment.

Consistent, frequent content creation on multiple social media platforms will provide the most significant results. For example, choosing an influencer with audiences on multiple social platforms allows cross-posting the content for further exposure. This also gives you the ability to leverage videos as ads on those various platforms.

Social media ads can be run from your business's social account, but a more effective way is to run the ads directly through the influencer's social account. (This process is known as whitelisting.) This gives the ad a higher trust factor with the viewer versus being generated directly by the dealership.

2. Giveaways: A Great Tool to Generate Name Recognition

An RV dealership-sponsored giveaway is a great tool to get your name out there and generate a buzz. It's not only about hosting a giveaway but how you host the giveaway. For example, having an influencer host a giveaway of a coveted RV camping product sponsored by your dealership is a great idea. But a more effective giveaway marketing strategy is to have a giveaway component that also involves visiting your dealership.

An example is running an RV influencer giveaway sponsored by your dealership of a YETI cooler (or other popular camping item) and a set of camping chairs with your dealership's name printed on them (a branded item is key). This alone is effective name recognition. However, what if you run the same giveaway with a second YETI cooler and chairs to be given away to in-person customers who visit the dealership to take advantage of a big sale this weekend. This second strategy provides name recognition with an extra incentive to get customers in the door.

Giveaways can be great ways to increase followers to your dealership's social accounts by asking customers to follow your business account and tag two friends for the contest entries. An alternative to this is to add people to



your email list. If you would like to work with RV influencers not located in your area for filming, giveaways are a great way to tap into their audiences regardless of location.

3. Affiliate Marketing for RV Dealerships

Most people think of products when considering influencer affiliate marketing commissions. However, creating a program at your dealership that compensates influencers for referred customers who book a tour appointment or who visit the dealership can be an effective strategy to add to influencer partnerships.

4. RV Wraps & Custom RV Designs Promoting Your Dealership

Ready for a couple of outside-the-box influencer marketing strategies? RV influencers who travel full-time are rolling billboards 24/7 as they travel across the country. Not only are they showing the outside and inside of their RV consistently in most of their social media content creation, but they also are traveling major highways and staying at many different campgrounds as they go. A full-time RV influencer's RV can be seen as a rolling billboard. Why not leverage this with marketing for your dealership?

The easiest way to work with influencers to get your dealership featured on an RV is to provide an RV wrap with your business name and a QR code to scan. People just can't resist scanning a QR code they see while walking around at a campground, on the road or in a parking lot. Keystone RV recently partnered with a full-time RV travel influencer by providing a custom painted RV promoting their brand and the influencer.

A more advanced strategy is to have an RV custom-decorated to be the "ultimate RV" and have an influencer travel in the RV while creating consistent content promoting the RV and your dealership. Keystone RV created a similar marketing campaign for the Ultimate Fuzion toy hauler with the influencer The Flipping Nomad Cortni Armstrong.

Tips for Finding a Knowledgeable RV Influencer to Work With

1. Sizable RV Travel-Focused Audiences on More Than One Social Platform

Leverage your influencer partnerships by selecting a content creator/influencer who has audiences on multiple platforms. For example, our partnership content is cross-posted to Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and YouTube for greater reach.

2. Account With Informational RV Content to Increase Audience Trust & Authority

Consider choosing an influencer who has been traveling for a long time and who posts helpful informational content. While entertaining content can be fun, choosing an influencer with increased audience trust can be beneficial. For example, we have traveled full-time for eight years, so our audience knows that the content we produce is trustworthy.

3. Look for RV Influencers Posting Tours

A simple Instagram hashtag search (#rvtours, #rvtour, #campertour) can help you locate influencers who are already creating RV tours and who have worked with RV brands or dealerships. Then, take a close look at their page's content, audience size, and if they have audiences on other platforms to see if it is a good fit for your business.

Feel free to contact us for recommendations and with any questions. Not only are we full-time RVers/influencers who produce content for RV dealerships and brands, but we also network with other influencers who create similar content.

Will You Try Influencer Marketing?

There is no doubt that influencer marketing is emerging as a top strategy for tapping into your ideal customer base. Influencers have a unique trust built with viewers, and the content they create can span from their social audiences to ads that reach look-alike audiences across social platforms. From RV tours and dealership giveaways to rolling RV billboards with your dealership's name, you are only limited by your creativity when it comes to RV influencer marketing partnerships. RVP

Scott Russell, his wife Vanessa and their 14-year-old daughter have traveled full-time in their RV for eight years. They have worked and homeschooled on the road through 42 states so far. The Russells work as freelance travel writers and RV technical writers, RV social media content creators and brand influencers. You can find them @theadventuredetour on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and YouTube. They also run two blogs about RVing tips, travel destinations and the full-time RV lifestyle at TheAdventureDetour.com and RVNomadJobs.com. Contact them with any questions at scott@theadventuredetour.com.



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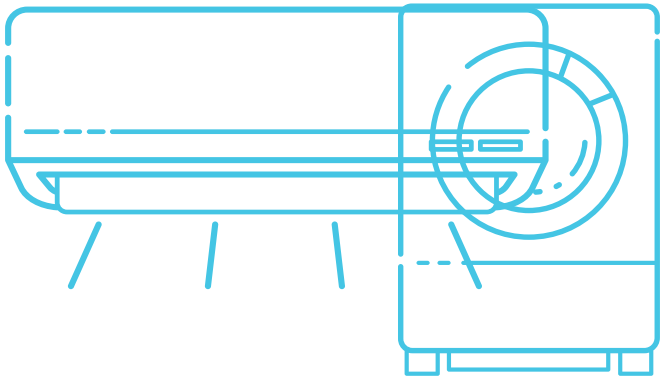
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RV INTERIORS & APPLIANCES





VOLTAGE PROTECTOR

Camco, Greensboro, North Carolina, offers its Power Grip Voltage Protector. Ensure the safety of your RV and appliances with Power Grip's 30- or 50-Amp RV Voltage Protector. It offers integrated surge protection and guards against high/low voltage levels and power surges. Once connected to your campsite power pedestal, diagnostic LEDs indicate the source circuit status. If dangerous conditions are detected, it will automatically disconnect – reconnecting only after restoring normal operating conditions. In addition to protecting against wiring issues, integrated surge protection is also included. Power Grip handles provide effortless plugging/unplugging.

camco.net



DROP-IN, TWO-BURNER STOVE

DDR Co., Bristol, Indiana, offers its Drop-In 2 Burner Stove. The 18-inch-wide, drop-in stove is certified for RV use, both indoor and outdoor. The top is stainless steel with a modern design and produces 7,200 Btu on the large burner and 5,200 Btu on the small burner. Option to install direct piping internally or also offered with a rear pipe for easy installation. This stove also has the option to include a black lid with wind guard wings and clips to hold the wings in correct position.

ddrcompanyllc.com



TANKLESS WATER HEATER

FOGATTI, Elkhart, Indiana, offers its InstaShower 8 Pro. FOGATTI InstaShower 8 Pro RV tankless water heater is rated at 55,000 Btu with staged combustion and mixing tank function.

fogatti.com



CUSTOM DASH COVER

Dash Designs, Tempe, Arizona, presents its RV Dashcover custom dash covers for motorhomes. The cover's digital CAD/CAM patterns ensure the very best fit and appearance. It reduces annoying glare and dust, has easy installation with included Velcro tabs and nine different color choices to complement most any vehicle interior.

dashdesigns.com







COMPACT DISHWASHER

Collins & Company, empowered by Patrick Industries, Elkhart, Indiana, offers its 24-inch Compact Dishwasher. Upgrade your RV kitchen experience with the HIGHPOINTE 24-inch Dishwasher. Its sleek design, available in various finishes, is perfect for smaller kitchens, yet doesn't compromise on quality with its robust stainless steel tub. Accommodating up to six place settings and offering eight distinct wash programs, it ensures flexibility for every cleaning need. The user-friendly LED control, coupled with a quiet 52db operation and handy 1- to 24-hour delay start, makes dishwashing a seamless task on the road.

collins-n-co.com

COMPACT RV FURNACE

Truma, Elkhart, Indiana, presents its Truma VarioHeat comfort. Truma VarioHeat comfort is a compact, luxury RV furnace perfect for travel trailers, motorhomes and vans. You will sleep soundly, thanks to its near-silent operation and intelligent fan control, three-stage burner system and special night mode. The digital CP plus control panel ensures minimal variation in room temperature and can also be used to operate other "Simply Better" Truma systems like the Truma Aventa or Truma AquaGo for an interconnected comfort experience.

truma.net

TIRE PRESSURE MONITORING SYSTEM

ASA Electronics, Elkhart, Indiana, presents its iN-Command TPMS. ASA Electronics knows how devastating crashes are, especially involving an RV, and that tire pressure monitoring can make all the difference. Equipped with a Bluetooth repeater that strengthens the signal, enabling its use on longer towables, ASA's iN-Command TPMS comes with an app to provide drivers with instant alerts about the temperature and pressure of each tire. Proper tire inflation can reduce blowouts and provide peace of mind, improve fuel economy and extend tire life.

in-command.net

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RV SHOWER HEAD

Ecocamel Ltd., St. Petersburg, Florida, presents its Jetstorm power-boosting, water-saving RV Shower Head. Upgrade your RV shower with the Ecocamel Jetstorm for an amazing shower experience. Jetstorm shower head is perfect for RVs and motorhomes. It adds air to the water stream via a hole in the handle, creating high-speed turbulence and increasing water pressure. This allows for a full-flow shower while conserving water. The innovative, water efficient and easy-to-install Ecocamel Jetstorm elevates the RV shower experience from anemic to euphoric.

ecocamel.com



PLEATED SHADE REPAIR KIT

United Shade, an Airxcel brand, Elkhart, Indiana, offers its Pleated Shade First Aid Kits. First Aid Kits from United Shade were designed to elevate RV interiors with upgrades for existing pleated shades. The First Aid Restring Kit has materials to repair up to five shades (directions for two-cord day/night shades, four-cord day/night shades or two-cord night shades included) and is compatible with most styles of pleated shades. United Shade also has a Darkout Kit that allows RV owners to add a room-darkening, back liner to their pleated shades to transform them into blackout treatments.

unitedshade.com



SHOWER WALL DESIGNS

Duo Form Plastics, Edwardsburg, Michigan, offers its Shower Wall Designs. Duo Form offers on-site design and engineering staff and an in-house tool shop. Its 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. Something for all projects. With its American-made products, it offers no minimums or contracts. Duo is your one-stop-shop thermoformer for your endless designs.

duoformplastics.com





PULL-DOWN KITCHEN FAUCET

Dura Faucet, Camas, Washington, offers its streamline pull-down kitchen faucet. Add style with this pull-down kitchen faucet that features a smooth-turning single handle for quick and precise control over temperature and stream strength. Detachable sprayer toggles between aerated and spray stream functions to provide full sink access and securely locks into place. Durable ceramic disc cartridge proves leak-free operation. Optional base plate will accommodate one or three holes sink tops on this lead-free faucet. This CUPC-certified faucet comes with Dura Faucet's limited lifetime warranty.

durafaucet.com



RV TOILET

Dometic, Stockholm, Sweden (U.S. headquarters in Elkhart, Indiana), presents its Dometic 320. Enjoy all the best features of a household toilet in your RV with a Dometic 320 series RV toilet. The elongated, deep ceramic bowl and enameled wood seat offer comfort that far surpasses most smaller RV toilets. The pressurized, full-rim flush delivers a bowl-clearing rinse every time.

dometic.com



RV MATTRESS PROTECTOR

CKI Solutions, West Palm Beach, Florida, offers its Dreamline RV Encasements. Life on the road can get dirty. RVing is to breath and embrace the outdoor life, but the bed you sleep on is not the environment you dreamt of. Besides the toxic chemicals from mattresses, if you are not properly protecting your mattress, you are sleeping with the bacteria, mold and sweat we all deposit at night. Sleep as pure as the outdoor air with CKI Dreamline RV encasements. They protect from liquid stains and even Covid.

ckisolutions.com

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RV WALL & CABINET OVERLAYS



Genesis Products, Goshen, Indiana, presents its REVIVE Collection. There's a new way to update your RV interior with the REVIVE Collection by Genesis. Designed specifically to overlay RV walls and cabinets, the peel-and-stick design and RV-grade adhesive makes it easy to transform your coach with confidence. Available in a variety of trending colors, patterns and woodgrains, REVIVE wallboard kits, cabinet kits, backsplashes and hardware are made to last for the long haul. Design your coach to feel like home and fall in love with your RV again.

genesisproductsinc.com



WALLPAPER PRODUCTS

Graphix Unlimited, Bremen, Indiana, offers its Inspire 360. Inspire 360 is a line of high-quality wallpaper products. The company offers its Removable Wallpaper and Commercial Grade Wallpaper.

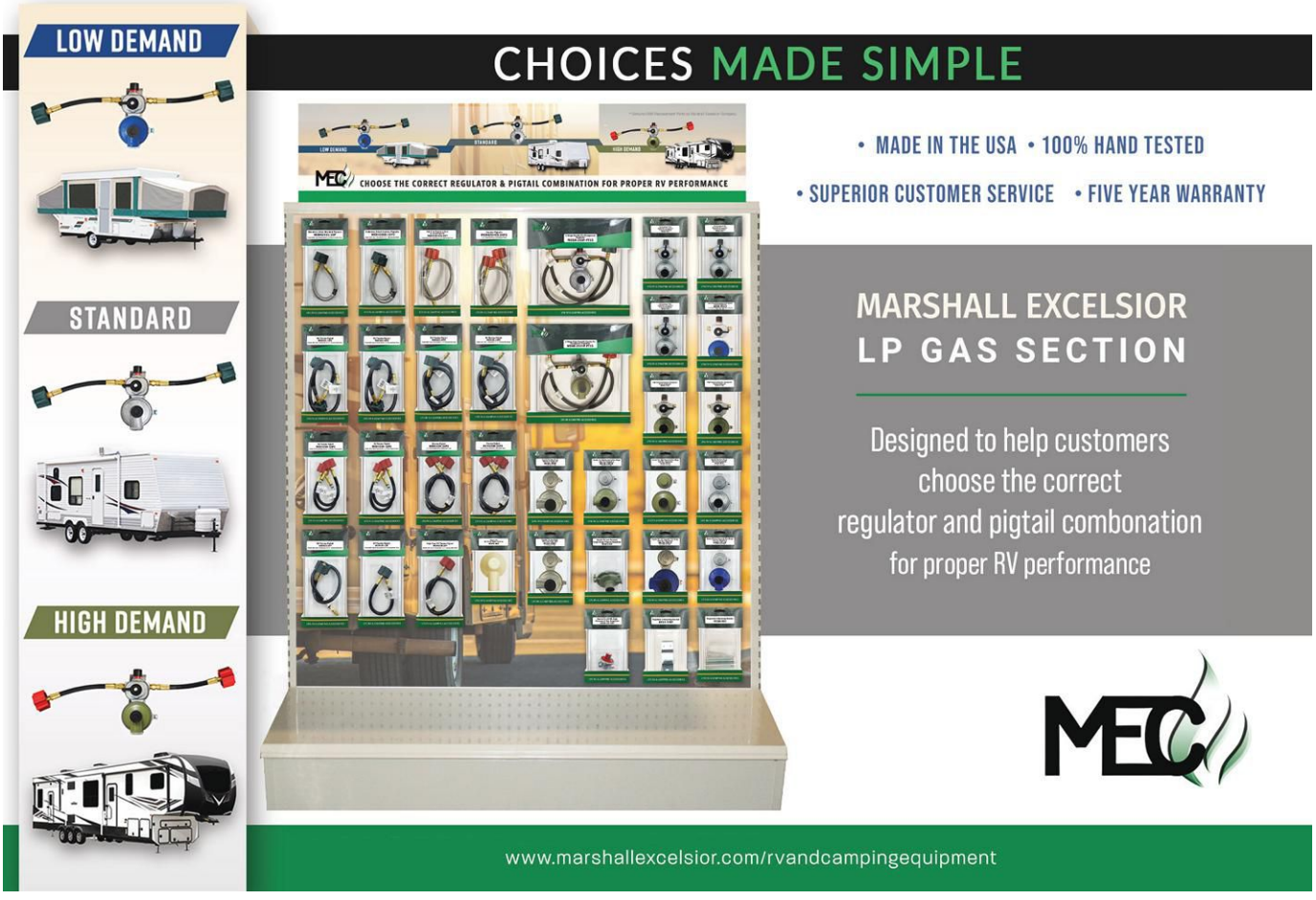
inspire360interiors.com



GAS RANGE

Furrion, Elkhart, Indiana, presents its Furrion Chef Collection Gas Range. Cooking in your RV has never had a more residential feel. Say goodbye to small camp stoves and limited camper cooking capacity. The Chef collection RV range boasts an oven that is more than 20% larger than previous models, which is perfect for full-time and frequent RVers. Residential-style cast iron diecast grates provide a durable and high-quality grate, which is stronger than those made through a welding process. The glass front oven door is also triple layered for extra durability. The larger capacity oven with four racks and powerful cooktop means homecooked meals on are on the menu on the road or in the campground.

furrion.com





SOLID SURFACE OEM SINKS

American Stonecast, Elkhart, Indiana, offers its "greatest advancement in kitchen sinks in 20 years" – compression molded Solid Surface OEM RV Sinks. American Stonecast has developed a proprietary coating process that allows for a harder, more stain-resistant finish than ever before. The finish is designer friendly allowing for matching strainer baskets and virtually any shade of any color in quantities that almost every OEM can handle. Pricing is highly competitive and everything is made in the USA.

RV-Sinks.com



TOUCHLESS KITCHEN FAUCET

Empire Faucets, Cleveland, Ohio, presents its SLT4900TLN-A Touchless Sensor Kitchen Faucet with metal, stainless steel supply lines in brushed nickel.

rvfaucets.com



BOTTOM FREEZER RV REFRIGERATOR

GE Appliances, Louisville, Kentucky, offers its GE Profile RV Refrigerator. GE Profile designs intelligent appliances with cutting-edge features for today's RV lifestyle. The RV-ready appliances make it easier than ever for RVers to take the features, innovation and technology that they love at home on the road. The GE Profile 10-cubic-foot, 12-volt DC Bottom Freezer RV Refrigerator comes equipped with 12-volt DC power, energy saving defrost, LED lighting, maximized storage, easy installation with zero clearance, turbo cool and integrated door latches and an easy-access on/off switch.

geappliances.com





TABLE LEG SYSTEM

Lagun USA, Cedar Falls, Iowa, presents the original Lagun Table Leg System. The Lagun Table Leg swivels 360 degrees, easily rotating out of the way to create more floor space. Adjust vertically for multiple uses. Disassembles for easy storage. Made of anodized aluminum, meaning salt air won't harm the Lagun system. This is the ultimate table leg to improve your existing van, pontoon, truck camper, yacht, travel trailer, teardrop or motorhome. With its versatility, the possibilities are endless.

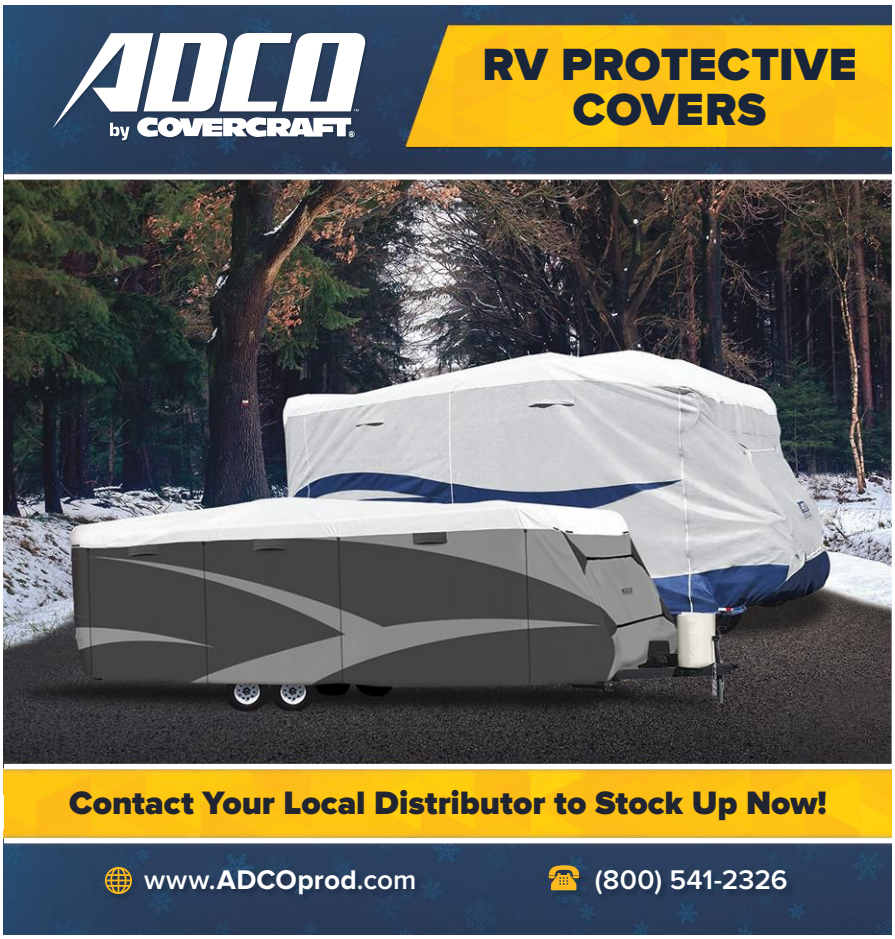
lagunusa.com



STOVETOP OVEN

Omniasweden, Chicago, Illinois, presents its Omnia Stovetop Oven. The oven for the ovenless. With the Omnia oven, you get freshly baked bread and delicious oven-cooked food using the heat of the cooktop. It's easy to use, low in weight, takes up little space and requires no installation.

omniasweden.com





REINFORCED LAMINATE

LAMILUX Composites, Rehau, Germany, offers its LAMILUX LAMIGraph. LAMILUX Graph is a polyester-resin-based, glass-fiber reinforced laminate with a high-grade décor paper on the visible side. This product perfectly combines a wide range of designs with the favorable mechanical properties and resistance of glass-fiber reinforced products.

lamilux.com



AC/DC SMART TVS

Majestic TV, Boca Raton, Florida, presents its Majestic AC/DC Smart TVs. Majestic Electronics is proud to offer a lineup of 12-volt smart LED TVs ranging from 19 inches to 40 inches in size. Smart TV features combined with an industry-leading, 178-degree viewing angle and high brightness LED panels make this TV versatile and viewable indoors or outdoors. While packed with advanced features, it is also the lowest power consumption smart TV on the market. To learn more or place an order, contact marketing@smosgood.com.

majesticelectronics.us



WI-FI THERMOSTAT

Micro-Air, Allentown, New Jersey, presents its Smart RV Wi-Fi Thermostat. Take your RV comfort to the next level with the EasyTouch RV Thermostat by Micro-Air. Use our subscription free Bluetooth or Wi-Fi technology to heat up and cool down your RV and monitor your cabin temperature from anywhere with our free app – a must for pet owners. This thermostat, which features a large touchscreen display and simple menu icons, is the perfect replacement for most major RV thermostats.

microair.net



LP GAS ABSORPTION REFRIGERATORS

Norcold, Ann Arbor, Michigan, offers its Polar LP Gas Absorption Refrigerator. Big adventures demand the bear. The Norcold Polar series of LP gas absorption refrigerators provide the perfect fit and function for RVers seeking more freedom and bigger adventures. Polar N8XFR/L 2-way AC/LP models feature tall door panels with hidden hinges and recessed door handles, LCD displays with adjustable thermostats and mode selection, and adjustable interior shelves. Black trim is standard. Frames accept black door panels (sold separately) or custom panels.

norcold.com

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Pinnacle Appliances, Houston, Texas, presents its 23-4800 Vented Super Combo. This RV-ready, 15-pound, all-in-one combo is a must-have essential for worry-free laundry. With wash and dry functions boasts energy and time-saving features such as Sanitize, Allergen, Quiet winterize programs and Pet Cycle to remove pet hair. Advanced Suspension Control technology that takes out the bounce and sway of the drum while on the road. The new struts, springs and blockers allow the Super Combo to be installed in any type of RV including toy haulers.

pinnaclecombos.com





RV COLLECTION FABRICS

Richloom, New York City, offers its latest RV Collection. Richloom's latest RV Collection features polyurethanes inspired by cozy tweeds, flannels and herringbones found in menswear. With a supple leather feel, they maintain the fabric look and while offering care-free maintenance. Richloom's design team pairs polyurethanes with heavily textured chenille solids that draw inspiration from handwoven baskets. Complementing the look are chenille jacquards for that extra touch of color and elegance. To complete the RV interior, select from Richloom's new multipurpose textured solids in earthy tones, including a featured windowpane plaid.

richloom.com

RV STEP TREADS

SeaDek, empowered by Patrick, Rockledge, Florida, offers its RV Step Treads. Durable, UV resistant and easy to clean, SeaDek's step treads add comfort, safety and style to your RV adventures. Drawing inspiration from SeaDek's signature marine flooring, these treads offer superior traction, while blending noise reduction with maximum shock absorption. Sporting a rugged style that complements any RV, SeaDek makes installation a breeze. Just peel, stick and step. No tools, no fuss – just enhanced grip and peace of mind for every adventure ahead.

seadek.com





18-INCH DISHWASHER

RiverPark, Elkhart, Indiana, presents its Samsung 18-inch Dishwasher. Quiet and ultra-efficient, this 18-inch double drawer dishwasher combines superior cleaning power with small, space-friendly proportions. With settings to automate and optimize cleaning and drying, it also offers Whisper Quiet Cleaning, so you can run it while you enjoy the comforts of RV. Other signature features include AutoRelease Door Drying to save time drying dishes with a door that automatically opens after the wash cycle to circulate air and improve drying performance, plus a Fingerprint Resistant Finish.

samsung.com



TASK SINK

Patrick Distribution, Elkhart, Indiana, offers its Rainfall Task Sink. Enhance your RV's kitchen with the Rainfall Task Sink. This all-in-one solution boasts a sleek design available in black/gunmetal, stainless steel and gold finishes. The integrated cutting board offers convenience while the high-arc faucet ensures ease in washing. With a dedicated soap dispenser and a specialized drainage area, this sink combines functionality and style. Designed specifically for RVs, the Rainfall Task Sink is the perfect blend of utility and modern aesthetics for the road.

patrickdistribution.com



CAST IRON GRIDDLE

Suburban, an Airxcel brand, Dayton, Tennessee, offers its Elite Series Cast Iron Griddle. Available in both 18-inch and 23-inch models, the Elite Series Griddle from Suburban is designed for use with RV LP supply systems. The griddle comes with a pre-seasoned cast iron surface for unparalleled heat distribution and a cooking surface power 20% higher than comparable models. The Suburban griddle can be installed permanently in your RV galley or outdoor kitchen or used temporarily on a countertop or picnic table when connected to propane.

suburbanrv.com



HEATING SYSTEM

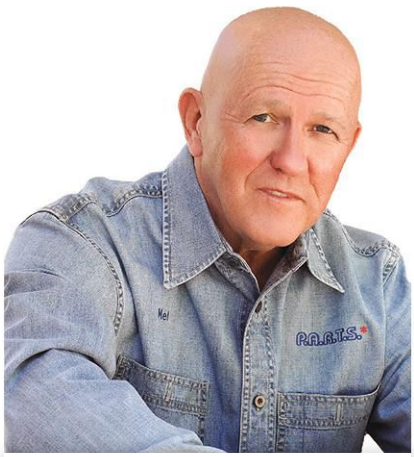
Elwell Corp., Washougal, Washington, offers its Timberline Heating System. Timberline is specifically designed to provide consistent heat and hot water, even in extreme temperatures. The system is programmed to efficiently manage energy using the gasoline or diesel burner, which is optimized for seamless use whether you're traveling in high altitudes or at sea levels. Comfortable heat is provided by automated air handlers that run softer or harder depending on what your climate demands. Should you want a quick boost of heat, a supplemental 120-volt heating element is also available when your motorhome is plugged into shore power. Set your desired temperature and enjoy your adventure with knowing that warmth and hot water will be waiting for you when you get back.

timberlineheat.com



How to Prep Parts & Accessories *for Next Year*

Consider your inventory performance factors when planning for this department.



Mel Selway is the president of P.A.R.T.S. Inc., a Sahuarita, Arizona-based firm providing business management analysis and training to retailers. He can be reached at 520-336-8606 or melselway@aol.com.

2023 will soon be history, so perhaps – if you haven't already done so – it is time to plan for 2024.

Based on the performance of your Parts & Accessories department in 2023, what changes are you planning to implement for that department in 2024? Though there could be several factors such as physical layout, personnel staffing and process documentation, this month's column focuses on Inventory Performance Factors (IPFs). To assist you in considering what IPFs you might include in your parts and accessories department change plan, here are three IPFs with goal suggestions for each, as well as some tips as to how to achieve those goals.

Gross Turns

This is a very useful metric that can be used to track and evaluate the purchasing and the selling performance of your parts and accessories manager. The formula for calculating gross turn is:

Cost of Sales – Annualized ÷ Average Inventory Cost – Over the Same 12 Months

It is important to track the gross turns using a rolling 12-month period so that you can account for any seasonality of the purchases and sales of the parts and accessories inventories. You could track the gross turns for each inventory subset (type of goods) so that you can easily identify the better performing and the lesser performing subsets.

Reasonably achievable goals for your parts and accessories inventories are:

- Parts = eight-plus gross turns per year
- Accessories = five to seven gross turns per year

To enhance the success of your plan to improve gross turns, include some selling skills training for your parts associates, which could increase the cost of sales (COS), as well as your gross turns.

Within each of your inventory subsets, there will usually be a group of items that are not selling as well as expected and directly impact the gross turns of your inventories. These items are termed slow-moving inventory (SMI).

Slow-Moving Inventory (SMI)

Before mentioning a suggested goal for your SMI, perhaps it is important to define SMI.

SMI can be defined as items that have incurred no demands (including lost sales and special orders) in nine or more consecutive months and have been received at least 12 months ago.

SMI should account for less than 15% of your inventory cost value. When calculating your gross turns, you should consider calculating them with the SMI value included and with the SMI value excluded so that you can see the impact of the SMI on your inventory performance.

As part of your 2024 parts and accessories plan, you might decide to develop and implement some policies and procedures that could reduce (and possibly eliminate) the SMI. These policies and procedures could include:

- Require a 100% deposit on any special orders.
- For any items sold in package quantities greater than one, require that the entire package be sold – this would apply to items such as hardware, small gaskets and O-rings and similar items.
- Train parts associates to confirm each special order request to ensure that the correct item is ordered, especially when working with suppliers that have a restrictive return policy or if returns are not permitted.
- Process a return for any special order items that have been received more than 15 days prior and have not been installed on an RV or have not been retrieved by the customer.

You could also develop and implement a method for assigning specific area(s) for storing special order items while they are awaiting installation or retrieval. I also suggest that you assign each special order item a bin location of SO because this identifies the item as being located in the area(s) you have designated for special orders. This SO bin location should be a component of your policy to assign a bin location to each item that is controlled in your dealership management system (DMS) database – and which introduces the third IPF that you could include in your 2024 plan.



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- Train 5 Technicians per class

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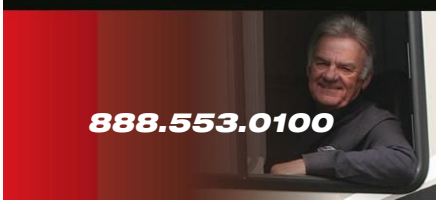
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"Slow-moving inventory should account for less than 15% of your inventory cost value. When calculating your gross turns, you should consider calculating them with the SMI value included and with the SMI value excluded so that you can see the impact of the SMI on your inventory performance."

Bin Locations

Perhaps you have heard the common saying, "A place for everything and everything in its place." As a parts manager and in my personal life, every item has an assigned bin location. Yes, I use bin locations in my home so that I don't waste time searching for something when I need it, especially those rarely used items. I once had a mug with the words: "Organized people are just too lazy to look for things."

The benefits to having everything in its assigned place are:

- A parts associates can place or retrieve each item more efficiently, which could increase the opportunity for more sales transactions (refer to gross turns).
- You eliminate duplicate orders because items can be found without wasting time searching in places where they are not.
- You can process physical counts of your parts and accessories inventories more efficiently and accurately.

The use of SO as a bin location for items that have been specially ordered for a customer can assist in minimizing SMI and in enhancing customer service. Consider this scenario:

A customer requests an item that is not normally stocked. The parts associate notices that one is on-hand and is located in the special order storage area. That item had been received more than 30 days ago. Since it seems that the original purchaser is not in a hurry to retrieve the item, the parts associate could offer to sell the item to the current customer, thus eliminating the possibility of a lost sale. Assuming the current customer purchases the item, the parts associate would notify the parts manager that the item has been sold. The parts manager has at least two options at this time:

- Contact the original customer to determine if he or she still wants the item and, if so, reorder the item for that customer.
- Contact the original customer to determine if he or she still wants the item and, if not, offer to refund the customer's money, less the handling charge

In either case, the product is not in danger of being added to the SMI value of the inventory, and a sale has been made to satisfy a customer.

More in '24? – Your Choice

Yes, as with most of my suggestions for improving your parts and accessories operations, these could require some effort to implement. To quote H. Jackson Brown Jr.: "Opportunity dances with those already on the dance floor." Are you on the dance floor or holding up the wall? RVP



Helpful Tips for Reducing Employee & Customer Turnover

Involvement from both sides is the key to significantly improving retention.

BY GERRY BRIEN

As an RV dealer, you may find it difficult to come up with ideas that help you stand out from your competitors. Completing even a handful of the following tips will help you develop rapport between your customers, employees and brand. You'll improve retention and reduce the need to spend resources replacing turnover.

One of the best ways to help you attract new leads and maintain existing business is to make your customers and employees integral parts of your brand. This will help them feel like they are part of a community, increasing rapport and loyalty.

Here are some actionable tips you can take to involve employees in marketing and get customers engaged with your brand.

Boost Employees' Morale

The first step in bringing your marketing strategy to the next level is getting your team on the same page. The following are some suggestions to help get you started.

Encourage Employees to Participate in Social Media

Inspire and provide time for your team members to be active on your brand's social media pages, particularly LinkedIn and Facebook. Have your staff add your company to their LinkedIn profile's "Experience" section and encourage them to use the "Endorsement" function to certify their coworkers' skills. This will provide credibility to future customers and future employees who may be keeping an eye on your company's online presence.

Help Your Team Feel Confident

The salespeople, technicians, and parts and accessories employees are the ones on the front line of your business. Give them the tools they need to speak confidently about your company and its offerings, such as fact sheets, phone scripts, FAQs and more. This will help your team present a cohesive front and a unified brand image.

Another great way to help employees feel confident is to construct role-playing opportunities. Employees can gain a lot of confidence when they get to test their knowledge and become comfortable answering questions on the spot by practicing speaking to an RV owner.

Host Employee Team-Building Events

Host a company happy hour, team-building event or holiday-themed party, and put it on the calendar for the last hour or two of the workday. Your team members will appreciate having time to bond, laugh, catch up and network with their coworkers without having to carve precious personal time out of their week to do it. You'll see a return on your investment when employees come to work happier and are more productive than before.

Get Involved in the Community

Giving back is great for your company because it helps customers feel like they are contributing to the greater good. Talk with your employees about local charities they are passionate about. Then, donate company time, products or dollars to make a difference.

You can get your customers involved as well, then post about it on your company's social media pages. Don't forget to have your team wear company T-shirts for some free press when donating your labor hours.





And lastly, don't contribute solely for demonstrative purposes; make your contribution of time or resources authentic. Customers can smell performative actions from a mile away.

Host 'Day-in-the-Life' Work Swaps

You may be surprised to hear that companies find success in letting employees sit with someone in a different department every now and then. A fresh set of eyes could be all you need to save your company time and money for years to come.

Invest in Your Employees

Employees leave companies when they don't feel there is room for growth. To combat this issue and get employees more invested in your company, invest in them first. Budget for ongoing learning for your team members, whether this is sending them to a trade show event, listening to a speaker at a leadership conference or attending a local TED Talk about professional development. Your investment will return to you tenfold when they know you care about helping them grow.

In addition, consider hosting regular trainings about safety practices, new products and technology. What technology, you ask? Connect with your team and ask them what type of product or software would make their jobs easier and more productive. Then, invest in a trial period of that product to see if it works for them and for your bottom line.

Conduct Employee Focus Groups

Many employees have ideas for company improvement but don't feel comfortable sharing feedback with their leadership in fear of repercussions. Provide them a chance to share their feedback in an open and honest setting.

Hosting employee focus groups is a great way to open the floor for constructive criticism and brainstorm creative, actionable solutions that your leadership team can employ to provide a productive working environment.

Involve Customers & Improve Retention

Your employees aren't the only ones who need to be involved with your company to make the most of your marketing plan. Here are some actionable suggestions for incorporating customers into your strategy.

Show Up Where Customers Hang Out

We're not talking about the local bowling alley — although that's not a bad idea, either. We're talking about social media. Be sure to post and advertise regularly on social media to increase both brand awareness and customer engagement. Customers expect to see sales content, but be sure to mix in some memes and special offers to keep them entertained and coming back for more.

Host a Fun Contest

Hosting a contest is an excellent way to get customers excited and talking about your company. You can do a kids' coloring contest, send out a quiz about your company and its offerings,

or get owners to upload photos of their travels or how they've personalized their RVs. Get creative! The more fun you have organizing the contest, the more enjoyment your employees will have spreading the word — and the more customers will love participating and anticipating the next contest you host.

Include Customer Reviews in Your Marketing
This makes customers feel appreciated and heard, and it encourages other customers to write reviews so they'll be featured, too. Statistics by Reputation X show that 85% of customers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations. Be sure to encourage and incentivize your team to ask for reviews at every point of contact, especially during appointments where the customer walks away happy.

You can be strategic about how you ask for reviews; direct unhappy customers toward your private contact form, while happy customers can be pointed to your public review pages. This keeps suggestions for improvement in your personal inbox, while positive feedback is displayed on your public channels such as Google, Facebook and Yelp.

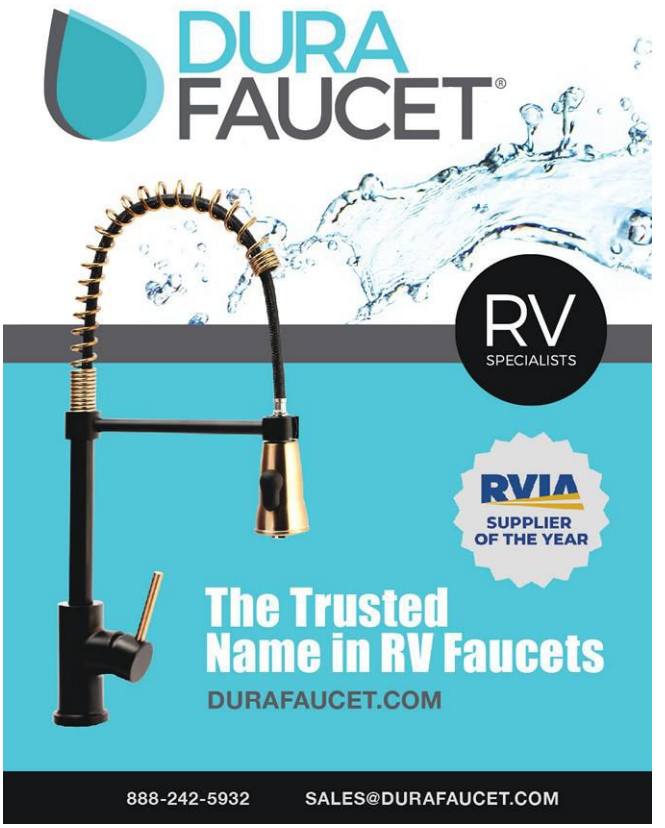
Start a Referral Program
Do you have a referral offer? According to Annex Cloud, customer acquisitions through referrals spend 200% more than the average customer and are four times more likely to refer other customers to your brand. If you aren't encouraging customers to refer their friends and neighbors by offering an incentive, now is the time to start.

Have an "About Us" Page on Your Website
Customers feel more connected with a brand when they can see what the company stands for and how they're involved in the community. Remember those community service events we talked about earlier? Get those photos up on your website and social media pages, along with information about when your company was founded and your mission for the community.

Host a Giveaway to Drum Up Good Press
Customers love the idea of winning a prize. By hosting a giveaway, you'll experience firsthand the positive benefits this type of goodwill offers. Plus, you can easily ask for customers' email addresses or other helpful demographic data in exchange for entries into the prize pool. Your customer base will appreciate the opportunity to get something for free, and your lucky winner will associate their prize with your brand forever.

Follow these tips to develop your brand and build a strong employee and customer base that stands the test of time. You'll see improved morale, better retention and happier people. RVP

Gerry Brien is the senior vice president of Consumer Focus Marketing. He has more than 23 years of marketing experience and specializes in creating comprehensive marketing plans. Visit consumerfocusmarketing.com to contact Brien or learn more about marketing services available.





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Pit Stop



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- **30%** of leisure travelers who have traveled in an RV own an electric vehicle (EV)
- **17%** of travelers who have traveled in an RV plan to buy an EV in the next year
- **50%** of travelers who own an EV plan to use it to tow an RV
- **22%** of travelers who own an EV plan to buy an electric motorhome, along with 30% of travelers who plan to own an EV

8 UNIQUE GIFTS FOR TRAVELERS ON-THE-GO

Looking for extras to stock at the shop in time for the holiday season? Check out some of RV PRO's picks for every RVer/camper's wish list:

Custom bucket list travel maps - check out @HyperHandcrafted on TikTok for customized wooden maps that track RVers' travels. Make one for National Parks, MLB stadiums or even Taylor Swift concerts.

Personalized campsite flags – mark your territory with a custom flag to display from the RV.



Handheld hummingbird feeders – RVers love getting close to nature. Small hummingbird feeders pack away without taking up storage.



The Minipresso – a portable espresso machine designed for small spaces and weighing under 8 pounds.

Passport to Your National Parks booklet – a pre-planning travel journal that pairs great with the America The Beautiful pass, covering entrance fees to national and federal parks/lands.





Picnic backpack – carry settings for 2 or 4, a picnic blanket and cooler in one, for RVers wanting an off-grid lunch.

Matching key fobs & dog collars – for travelers with furry friends, keep track of keys, fobs and dogs at the same time with a matching collar/key fob set.

Portable telescoping tire-anchored flagpole – a flagpole kit that mounts to any flat surface and fits most RV ladders.

24,700 TOTAL RV SHIPMENTS

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To date, RV SHIPMENTS **42.8%** DOWN with 238,121 units

SEPTEMBER SHIPMENTS

"With milder weather, spectacular fall landscapes, and family-friendly activities at campgrounds, 38 million Americans are choosing RVing as their vacation of choice this fall," said RVIA President and CEO Craig Kirby. "RV manufacturers and suppliers continue to innovate and release new features and products for today's RVers who are looking to spend time with friends and family while also enjoying the many physical and mental health benefits of living an active outdoor lifestyle."

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