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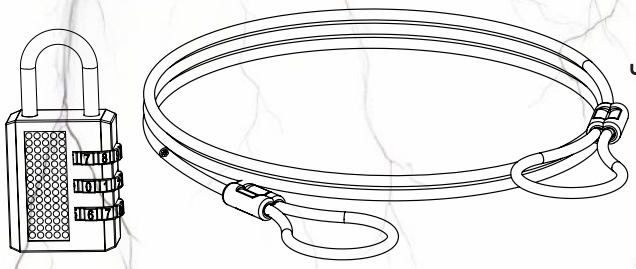
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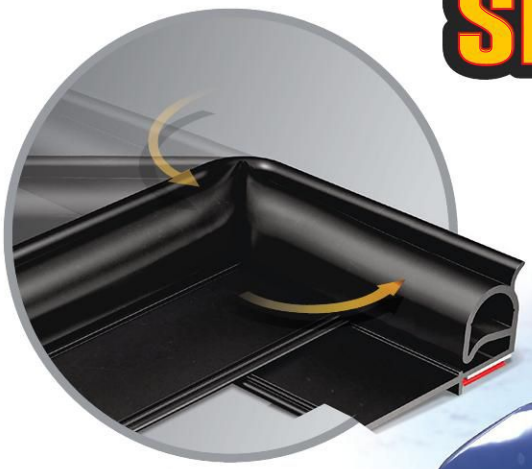
ON THE COVER
Exploring the great outdoors in Rossmönster's Havn.
Photo courtesy of Rossmönster.



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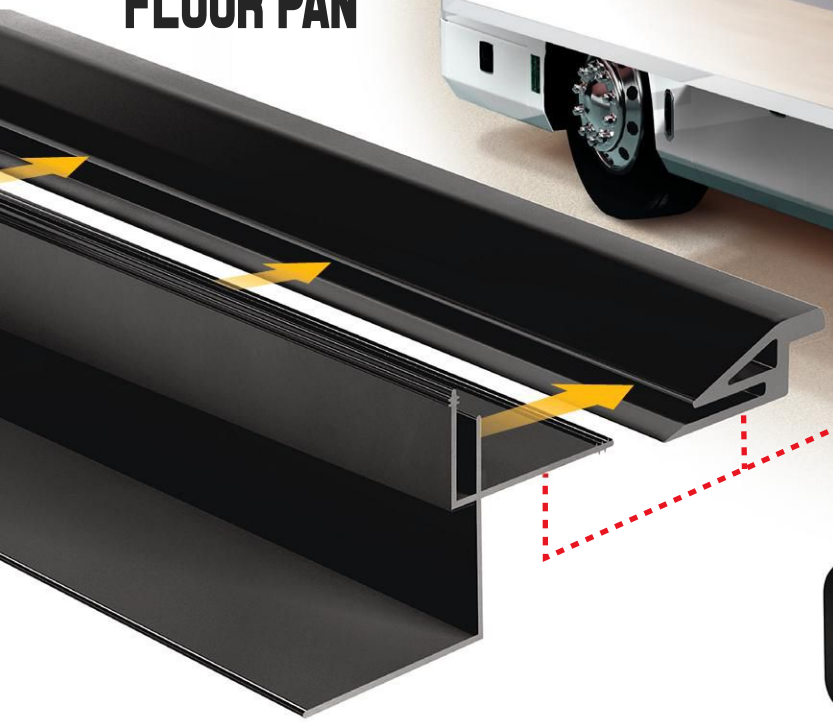


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RV PRO



Jennifer King

In February, Gallup reported that most Americans trusted mass media in the 1970s. By 2024, 36% said they "have no trust at all," 33% said "they do not trust it very much" and only 31% said they trust the media "a great deal or a fair amount."

While traditional news media face a declining reputation, most trade or business-to-business publications such as RV PRO have earned the trust and respect of their readers by providing accurate, educational information that is useful and impactful. As I always say, my job as the executive editor of RV PRO is to help industry professionals stay up to date, achieve success in their business and uplift the people in the industry and the industry as a whole.

To do that, RV PRO enlists the help of seasoned subject matter experts and highly regarded reporters and writers, as well as contributions from top companies in the industry. To the best of our knowledge, everything we report and write for RV PRO's various platforms are products of real humans doing research, conducting interviews, taking photographs or designing, fact-checking, editing and writing every word, every graphic and every image.

To that end, I would like to share the artificial intelligence (AI) policy of RV PRO's parent company, Cahaba Media Group (CMG):

CMG's Editorial Policy on Artificial Intelligence

Our approach to using artificial intelligence (AI) is simple: it is a great tool for improving and optimizing content, but never a replacement for insightful, quality content written and edited by a human.

While we may use AI to inform, assist, or improve our work, our editors will never use AI tools to write exclusive content published under a CMG brand. We will also continue to communicate this expectation with our contributors and writers, and we will do everything within our power to thoroughly vet the content we publish to verify a human was responsible for the creation and editing of that content.

In any instance where AI is used to alter or improve content (produced by a human) for our brands and we choose to move forward with publication, CMG will include an editor's note or other attribution clearly identifying the use of AI. Any use of AI by our editorial and design teams will be guided by an intent to better serve our audience.

I welcome any feedback or discussion on this topic; please email me at jdking@cahabamedia.com.

Thank you for allowing us to be a trusted resource for you and your business. And as always, thank you for reading!

Jennifer King

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REV Group Sells Lance Camper, Exits Nonmotorized Segment

REV Group announced the sale of Lance Camper Mfg. Corp., its nonmotorized travel trailer and truck camper manufacturing business, to Vision Kore Inc., effective Thursday, June 26.

The sale of California-based Lance Camper marks REV Group's exit from the nonmotorized recreational vehicle segment and reflects a strategic focus on its motorized RV brands, which include Fleetwood RV, Holiday Rambler, American Coach, Midwest Automotive Designs and Renegade RV. By focusing on its motorized Class A, B, and C motorhomes, REV will optimize its facility proximity for resource allocation and strengthen its competitive position while continuing to consistently deliver exceptional products and services, the company said.

"We are excited for the continued growth and success of Lance Camper under Vision Kore's ownership. I want to acknowledge and thank the Lance team for their unwavering dedication, professionalism, and hard work," said Gary Gunter, president of REV Recreational Vehicles Segment.

"Lance Camper is an iconic brand of campers and trailers, and we are thrilled that it's joining the Vision Kore family," said Bill Rex, co-founder of Vision Kore. "We look forward to welcoming and working with the talented Lance Camper team led by Gary Conley who's been with Lance over 40 years, building on the foundation laid by REV Group and continuing to serve the brand's loyal customer base."

FCCC Celebrates 30th Anniversary

Freightliner Custom Chassis Corp. (FCCC) celebrated its 30th anniversary in June, a milestone marking three decades of dedication to the innovation, quality and service that have helped establish FCCC's position as a driving force in each industry it serves, the company said.

Since its start in 1995, FCCC has produced:

- More than 667,000 total chassis
- More than 230,000 school bus chassis
- More than 200,000 walk-in van (WIV) chassis
- Almost 200,000 RV chassis
- Nearly 70,000 commercial bus chassis

And today, FCCC said it has dominant market share across the luxury motorhome and walk-in van (WIV) segments:

- More than 70% diesel Class A luxury motorhome market share
- 100% diesel WIV market share
- More than 50% gas WIV market share

"For 30 years, FCCC has built its success through innovation, productivity, reliability and overall customer experience," said TJ Reed, president and CEO of Daimler Truck Specialty Vehicles. "Just as importantly, the passion and commitment of our team has helped set us and our products apart over the past three decades. Each and every day, they know that we're not just building a chassis, we're helping people achieve their dreams and businesses reach their goals."

Over the past three decades, FCCC has achieved numerous milestones, the company said, including:

- Pioneering advanced safety features: FCCC has been at the forefront of integrating cutting-edge safety technologies into its chassis, enhancing driver confidence and vehicle protection. Recent features include RoadWatch, Ultrasteer and DriveTech.
- Developing market-leading chassis platforms: The company has introduced platforms that help set new industry standards for ride, handling and efficiency across its diverse market segments. Its luxury RV chassis include the SL, XC and S2RV, while its WIV chassis are available in diesel, gas and all-electric versions.
- Developing industry-leading alternative-fuel products: No matter what the fuel or power source, FCCC is committed to delivering a commercial chassis with revered performance and automotive-like usability.

With more than 1,000 team members nationwide, FCCC has grown into a market share and innovation leader across all markets it serves, the company said.

"This is also an opportunity to ensure we're focused on the next 30 years and beyond," Reed said. "We are poised for continued growth and innovation. The company remains focused on anticipating market needs, leveraging emerging technologies and delivering the high-performance, reliable chassis that customers have come to expect."

Fun Town RV Acquires Former Lazydays RV Arrowhead in Arizona

Fun Town RV has acquired the former Lazydays RV Arrowhead dealership located in Surprise, Arizona. The dealership was previously known as Orangewood RV Center before being acquired and renamed by Lazydays. This acquisition represents a significant milestone in Fun Town RV's westward expansion strategy, the company said, and reinforces its commitment to growing in key RV markets across the country. Fun Town RV Surprise will open at 11405 W. Bell Road, Surprise, AZ 85378.

"Expansion into key Western markets is critical to our long-term vision," said Jarrod McGhee, founder and CEO of Fun Town RV. "Our unbeatable selection, transparent pricing and commitment to taking care of the customer will resonate with both locals and travelers alike. We're here to raise the bar for RV dealerships in the West."

Chandler McGhee, chief operating officer of Fun Town RV, added, "We believe in building sustainable, high-performing dealerships that focus on the customer experience from sales to service. Phoenix is a vibrant and growing market, and we're excited to bring our culture of operational excellence and hospitality to this community."

REV Group Names New Chief Supply Chain Officer



Polteraitis

REV Group announced that Linas Polteraitis has been promoted to chief supply chain officer. He joined REV Group in September 2023 as the vice president of supply chain. Polteraitis will continue reporting to Mark Skonieczny, CEO and president, REV Group.

"Linas has been instrumental in strengthening REV's procurement and supply chain operations," Skonieczny said. "Over the course of his tenure, he has built a high-performing team and fostered strong supplier partnerships. He has proven himself to be a strategic and results-oriented leader, and we are delighted to promote Linas to our chief supply chain officer."

Prior to joining REV Group, Polteraitis was senior director, supply chain at Otis Worldwide, where he led various strategic initiatives and transformations to generate

increased sales and profitability. Before that, he was vice president, purchasing – direct materials at Adient; supply chain management director – Americas at Aptiv; and various progressive leadership roles in purchasing at ZF TRW; DMAX, Ltd.; General Motors Corporation; and Isuzu Motors America.

With many career highlights and recognitions, Polteraitis received the CEO Award at Otis Worldwide for his activities related to COVID-19 and global supply chain disruption mitigation. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Supply Chain Management from Michigan State University.

Camco Appoints New CEO



Metz

Camco Manufacturing, a leading manufacturer of parts and accessories serving the outdoor recreation industry, announced the appointment of Chris Metz as chief executive officer, effective immediately. Metz succeeds Demir Vangelov.

"I am honored to step into the role of CEO of Camco Manufacturing and lead a company with such a strong legacy of serving outdoor enthusiasts," Metz said. "I look forward to building upon our heritage in partnership with our talented team, deepening our customer relationships, accelerating our growth and expanding our impact in the outdoor lifestyle marketplace."

Metz brings to Camco a distinguished track record in the consumer products industry. He began his career at Black and Decker, helping launch DeWALT power tools, rising through the organization to become president of the Hardware and Home Improvement Group. Following nearly a decade at Sun Capital Partners, he returned to the consumer products space as CEO of outdoor products companies Arctic Cat, Vista Outdoor and, most recently, Solo Brands.

The leadership transition reflects a thoughtful and collaborative process between Vangelov and the board of directors, with the priority focus on positioning Camco for continued success, the company said.

"Chris' appointment ensures continuity of our strategic vision while bringing fresh perspectives that will drive innovation and growth," Board Chair Dave Butler said. "We're confident that Chris' leadership and extensive background in the outdoor industry will strengthen Camco's position in the outdoor lifestyle market."

Metz holds an MBA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Management from the University of Delaware.

Forest River Bus & Van Expands Leadership Team

Forest River Bus & Van announced a series of leadership advancements aimed at strengthening operations, enhancing the customer experience and supporting long-term growth.

Forest River named Douglas Wright as president of its bus, van and marine divisions. With more than three decades of experience in the automotive industry, Wright is known for his strategic leadership, operational expertise and commitment to customer service.

"This company was built by people who care deeply about what they do — and who they do it for," Wright said. "Our responsibility now is to carry that legacy forward while continuing to refine and elevate the customer journey."

Supporting that vision is longtime Forest River leader Mike Terlep, appointed as director of sales for the bus division. Terlep will lead all sales efforts across government, commercial and dealer channels in North America. With a strong foundation in both RV and commercial transportation, he brings decades of hands-on experience and a reputation for being dependable and dealer focused.

"There's no substitute for consistency and follow-through," Terlep said. "We've built a strong foundation, and I'm excited to help carry that forward, ensuring every agency, fleet and dealer experiences the strength of our commitment."

But this expansion goes beyond titles. It's about reimagining what service looks like at every step — from initial order to years after delivery. To do that, Forest River has introduced two new roles focused on aligning the ownership experience with the operational precision behind each build.

- Ryan Lamb has been named director of customer experience, leading efforts to bring greater continuity, speed and clarity to every customer touchpoint.
- On the dealer side, Matt Steele has been named director of dealer experience. Together, these leadership moves reinforce what has always set Forest River apart, the company said: its people, its partnerships and its purpose.

"We're redefining support — not just a call center or a policy, but a part of everything we do to build, deliver and maintain vehicles that truly matter," Wright said. "Our work isn't only about vehicles — it's about independence, opportunity and everyday life. We are transporting what matters."

Airstream Opens Exclusive Dealership Serving Texas, New Mexico

Airstream has made its official debut in the Borderland with the grand opening of Airstream El Paso, an exclusive dealership serving west Texas and southern New Mexico.

Located at 1421 RV Drive, El Paso, Texas, the new dealership was slated to open to the public on Saturday, Aug. 9.

Airstream El Paso will showcase the full range of Airstream travel trailers — including the rugged Basecamp, the spacious Classic and the off-grid-ready Tradewind — along with the premium lineup of touring coaches such as the Interstate and Atlas, both built on the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter van chassis, and the RAM-based Rangeline.

"We're proud to bring this iconic brand to the people of West Texas and Southern New Mexico," said Andrew Meadville, president of Airstream El Paso. "Airstream is more than a vehicle — it's a lifestyle rooted in freedom, quality and exploration. Our mission is to share that spirit with the Borderland community and beyond."

With a team of knowledgeable professionals and a commitment to superior service, Airstream El Paso is poised to become the regional hub for outdoor enthusiasts, full-time travelers and weekend wanderers across west Texas and southern New Mexico. RVP

GOT NEWS? Send your company news items to jbenschop@cahabamedia.com or mmoore@cahabamedia.com.

RVWA Charitable Foundation Celebrates Inaugural Golf Outing Success



Photo courtesy of RV Women's Alliance

The RV Women's Alliance Charitable Foundation (RVWACF) announced the success of its inaugural Golf Outing, held June 20 at Meadow Valley Golf Club. The sold-out event brought together supporters from across the RV industry for a day on the greens in support of a great cause.

Under an overcast sky and ideal conditions, over 80 golfers teed off, enjoying friendly competition, camaraderie and the shared mission of giving back. The spirit of generosity was palpable as participants, sponsors and volunteers united to raise much-needed funds for the RVWA Charitable Foundation's educational programs.

"It was wonderful to see so many people come together for our very first golf outing," said Brittany Gingerich, RVWACF event organizer. "Thanks to the overwhelming support from our participants and sponsors, the event sold out, and we are thrilled to direct the funds raised toward vital educational initiatives that empower and advance women in the RV industry."

The foundation extended its gratitude to presenting sponsor RVTV, co-sponsors Amerimax and New Paris Speedway, as well as all additional sponsors, volunteers and attendees whose commitment made the inaugural outing a triumph.

Century Chemical Sponsors YWCA Donation Match Campaign

Century Chemical Corp. announced it is sponsoring the YWCA North Central Indiana's Spring/Summer Donation Match Campaign, pledging a dollar-for-dollar match for the first $10,000 in gifts made during the fundraising effort. This campaign directly supports Safe Haven, the YWCA's program for survivors of domestic violence.

Running through September, this annual appeal highlights stories of courage from survivors who have broken free from abuse and begun rebuilding their lives. The funds raised and matched will support Safe Haven's vital services, including emergency housing, counseling, legal advocacy and wraparound care for women and children in Elkhart County, Indiana.

"This funding push is hugely important in supporting our local community," said Denyse Pontius, CEO of Century Chemical Corp. "Our YWCA Safe Havens leave a light on for all of us, offering resources and hope day or night. I'm honored to contribute to this campaign and encourage others to help make an impact alongside us."

Century Chemical's support ensures that donations go even further, empowering the YWCA to meet increasing demand for services and help more individuals find safety, support and hope.

"We are so very grateful to Denyse and the entire team at Century Chemical," said YWCA CEO Amy Hill. "We know without the support of community leaders like Century Chemical we cannot do this vital work to help victims of abuse not only survive, but thrive."

For more information or to contribute to the campaign, visit ywcancin.org.

Unifab, Girl Scouts Partnership Offers Students STEM Education


Photo courtesy of Unifab

In May, Unifab Corporation partnered with Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Troop 80452 to deliver a unique, hands-on learning experience that combined design, engineering and community service. As a result of this partnership, 17 custom-designed metal signs created by the Scouts were unveiled at St. Augustine Cathedral School on Thursday, May 29.

Throughout the past year, the scouts toured Unifab's facility, engaged in design discussions and observed their signage being fabricated. This immersive process offered Troop 80452 insight into the technical and creative aspects of metalworking, reinforcing Unifab's ongoing commitment to encouraging youth exploration in the skilled trades and STEM fields.

"It's been incredibly rewarding to work alongside Troop 80452 and see their creativity and curiosity come to life," said Unifab President Matt Hill. "At Unifab, we enjoy supporting the next generation of innovators and giving back to the communities that support us."

Unifab was joined in this initiative by Midwest Fasteners, who generously donated the bolts used to install the signage. The completed signs are mounted at St. Augustine Cathedral School in Kalamazoo, where students, families and community members can view the Scouts' hard work and celebrate their contributions.

"This project came out of our effort to complete our Bronze Award," said Girl Scout Troop Leader Maureen Yanik. "Earning the award involves a long time of exploring your community, choosing your project, planning it, putting your plan in motion and spreading the word about your project.

"Our troop decided to beautify our school community and wanted to do it in a sustainable way. These metal signs, courtesy of our friends at Unifab, will stand the test of time, enabling our scouts to improve their community while also learning about STEM and manufacturing fields. We are incredibly grateful for everyone who helped the girls along the journey of this project," Yanik said.

Unifab CEO Rob Thayer agreed, saying, "We're proud to play a role in helping young leaders explore new interests and build confidence in their abilities. This project is a great example of what can happen when industry and youth organizations collaborate with purpose." RVP

Awards Ceremony, Capitol Hill Visits Highlight RVs Move America Week





RVs Move America Week 2025 kicked off June 2 in Washington, D.C., with an awards ceremony that recognized individuals, companies and organizations for outstanding contributions to the advancement of the RV industry.

RV Industry Association (RVIA) President and CEO Craig Kirby opened the program with insights into the state of the RV industry and the association's ongoing research initiatives. Awards were then presented by Chair of the RV Industry Association and Executive Vice President of Thetford North America Mary Pouliot.

The first honor, the National Legislative Award, was presented to three policymakers who champion the RV industry on Capitol Hill. Senator John Barrasso (R-WY) and Representative Bruce Westerman (R-AR) were recognized for their outstanding leadership in expanding outdoor recreation access, including their leadership and advocacy in passing the EXPLORE Act, a landmark legislative package that boosted outdoor recreation and RV camping.

Additionally, Senator Blake Doriot (R-IN) has been a friend to the RV industry for many years and was recognized for his sponsorship and leadership in passing the RV-specific franchise legislation this year.

The second award was the National Education Service Award, which recognizes those who have been instrumental in the development of educational programs in the RV industry.

This award was received by Ryan Horsey, president of Parkview RV Center. He has championed industry education programs and technician training throughout his career.

The recipient of the next award, the Distinguished Achievement in RV Standards Award, was Joe Kleinknight, quality assurance technical manager at Keystone RV. This award was established to recognize those who have contributed to the enhancement of RV standards in the industry.

Kleinknight has certainly done that and more over his 35-plus years in the RV industry, including many as an active member of the RVIA Technical Subcommittees.

The next honor was the David J. Humphreys RV Industry Unity Award, which was presented jointly with the RV Dealers Association. This honor recognizes those who continuously strive to encourage the multiple constituencies of the RV industry to work collectively for the growth and betterment of the industry. The recipient was Ron Breymier, executive director for the Indiana Manufactured Housing Association-Recreation Vehicle Indiana Council.

Through his career, Breymier has consistently worked with manufacturers, dealers, suppliers and other stakeholders to improve the business environment for the RV industry in his state and throughout the U.S.

Breymier is a partner of LegisGroup, a government relations firm representing the RV and manufactured housing industries in Indiana and has developed deep relationships with federal and state officials that have greatly benefited the legislative efforts of the RVIA and the RVDA.

The final award was the Distinguished Service Award. As the RV Industry Association's highest honor, this award is presented to an individual within the RV industry who has set themselves apart by outstanding service. The recipient was Chad Reece, Winnebago Industries' vice president of government and industry relations.

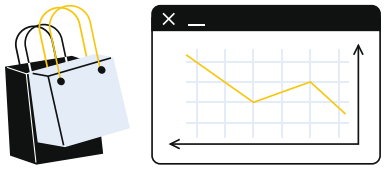
Reece was honored for his many contributions to the association and the RV industry over a career that has spanned nearly 40 years at Winnebago Industries. In that time, his participation and expertise guided the association in providing outstanding member programs and services that have helped propel a rising RV market.

On June 4, RVs Move America attendees participated in Advocacy Day, during which 100 RVIA members and partners attended 107 meetings with federal legislators and decision-makers on Capitol Hill, emphasizing the RV industry's considerable economic impact and advocating for several industry priorities.

With a $140 billion economic impact, a strong voice in Washington, D.C., is vital for the industry's continued success, RVIA says. Jason Rano, RVIA's vice president of government affairs, emphasized the importance of engaging with policymakers to achieve legislative goals and secure a stronger future for the RV industry.

"As we conclude another successful Advocacy Day, we'd like to thank our members and partners for continuing to champion the RV industry on Capitol Hill," Rano said. "Engaging with policymakers is a key component of achieving these legislative priorities and, ultimately, building more support for the RV industry in Congress and the administration." RVP

CONSUMER TRENDS: CLASS Bs



Class B motorhomes — also known as camper vans — continue to stand out as a popular choice among recreational travelers. Compact, versatile and easier to drive than their larger counterparts, these nimble RVs offer the freedom of the open road without the bulk. In today's market, where efficiency and flexibility are key considerations for consumers, Class B RVs are seeing notable trends in inventory levels, buyer engagement and overall demand. Data from RV Trader explores how buyers have interacted with Class B listings so far this year, and what those trends might suggest about their roads ahead.

Top 5 Class B Makes

***Based on search activity on RV Trader, January–May 2025.*

1. **Winnebago**
2. **Thor Motor Coach**
3. **Roadtrek**
4. **Airstream**
5. **Pleasure-Way**

It's been a strong year for the top five Class B manufacturers, with all but one experiencing year-over-year growth in listing interactions. While **Winnebago** and **Thor Motor Coach** continue to lead the segment, the most notable shift came from **Roadtrek**, which surged back into the third spot with a remarkable **69% increase.**

Top 5 Class B Models

***Based on search activity on RV Trader, January–May 2025.*

1. **Winnebago Travato**
2. **Airstream Interstate**
3. **Mercedes-Benz Sprinter**
4. **Winnebago Solis**
5. **Winnebago Revel**

After slipping to third place at this time in 2024, the **Winnebago Travato** has reclaimed the top spot, driven by a **28% surge** in buyer interactions. After falling out of the top 10 list last year, the **Winnebago Rialta** and **Pleasure-Way Excel** have both returned, ranking eighth and 10th, respectively.

It's worth noting that the top five most popular models reflect the diverse preferences of today's RV travelers. The Travato attracts buyers looking for efficient performance and practical features, while Airstream's Interstate caters to those who value luxury finishes and high-end power systems. Meanwhile, the Revel appeals to adventure seekers with its rugged build and off-road capabilities, while the Solis provides flexible accommodations for families.

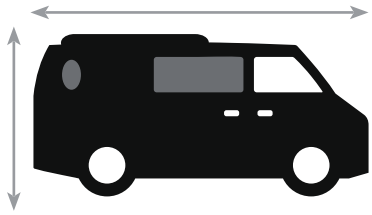
Inventory Insights

Although Class B inventory has dipped a modest 6% year over year, **total listing interactions are up more than 16%**, fueling increased competition among available units. The balance between new and used inventory has also shifted notably: in 2023, used models accounted for just 25% of Class B listings, but that share has since grown to over 37%. Correspondingly, **clicks on used listings have climbed by more than 35%**, highlighting growing buyer interest in pre-owned options.

As inventory trends shift and online engagement continues to rise, Class B RVs remain a strong draw for a wide range of buyers. Used models, in particular, are gaining ground — both in availability and consumer interest — as economic uncertainty influences purchasing decisions. For dealers and manufacturers, staying attuned to these evolving patterns will be key to meeting the needs of today's buyers and staying competitive in the year ahead.

Most Popular Class B Lengths

1. 29 feet
2. 32 feet
3. 30 feet
4. 25 feet
5. 21 feet



About RV Trader *RV Trader, a part of the "Trader" family of brands and owned by Trader Interactive, is the leading marketplace for advertising RVs, motorhomes, and campers. With an average of 6.5 million monthly visitors, RV Trader offers innovative tools to help manufacturers and dealers make connections with customers, increase sales, and maximize profits. For more information, visit rvtradermediakit.com.*

**SOURCE: RV TRADER SEARCH ACTIVITY FOR CLASS BS FROM JANUARY–MAY 2023-2025.

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BUILT TO ROAM

Colorado-based Rossmönster rewrites the road map for dealers and overlanding enthusiasts.

BY JORDAN BENSCHOP

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROSSMÖNSTER

A craftsman, an engineer and a dog walk into a bar … three hours later, the bar's been remodeled, the lighting is solar-powered and a four-legged ambassador is born.

The origins of Rossmönster aren't far off from that story. The company name was derived from Co-founder Ross Williamson (the craftsman) and his Swedish roots (mönster loosely translating to "build beautifully and simply"), with a logo standing as tribute to the brand's first shop dog, Thor. Alongside Co-founder and CEO Luke Farny (the engineer), the journey to a successful overlanding company didn't need a road map — it needed the perfect rig. What started as a passion project in 2016, built off Farny's personal $1,800 Ram cargo van, sparked a 10-year dive into a direct-to-consumer custom van shop.

"We built our first van in the driveway of one of [Williamson's] jobsites and listed it on Craigslist, and it sold the very next day," Farny says. "So, we bought and built out two more vans that sold rather quickly, and we said, 'You know, this could be more fun than our day jobs.'"

After hiring their first two employees, Farny and Williamson took on a shop space and clients seeking custom Sprinter vans, long before #vanlife made its way onto the scene. Today, the duo's vision has transformed into a nearly 50-person team

pushing a rugged lineup of truck campers and Sprinters with Scandinavian-forward style, sold through a dealer network. The newest debut, dubbed Havn, aims to fill a market gap for off-grid travelers who don't need the extreme off-road focus of the company's Baja truck camper.

"What's special about what we do and how we do it is we manufacture everything here in-house, and get to keep a tight grasp on quality," Farny says. "Having all those skills in-house means there's a lot of innovation that opens doors to be able to launch new products."

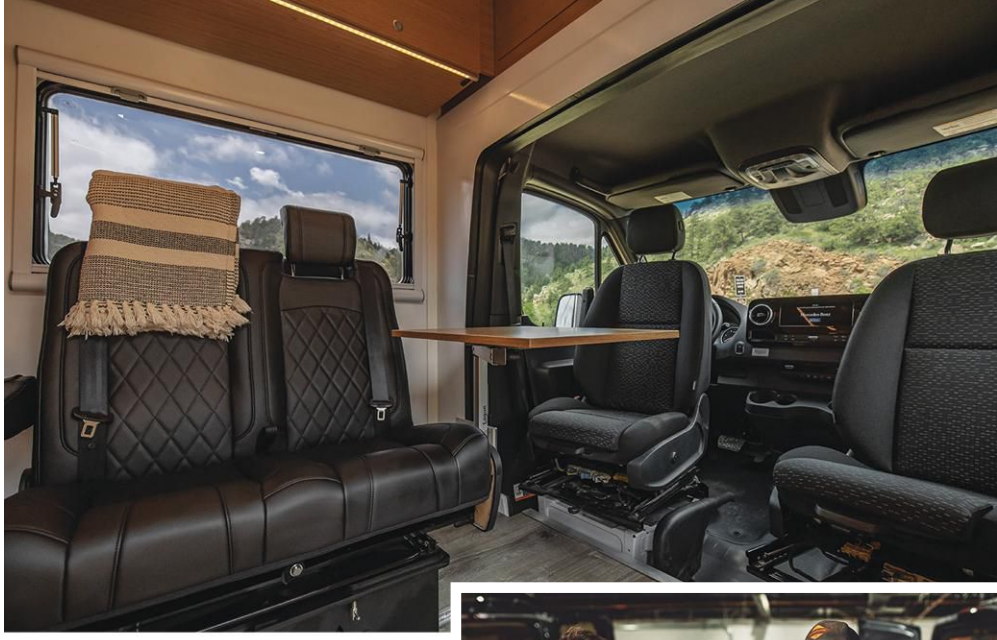
Even with a rich history of direct-to-consumer work, Longmont, Colorado-based Rossmönster's updated wholesale model now makes up roughly 75% of its business. The company currently has a dozen dealer locations densely populated in the West, with eyes on reaching 25 by year-end, including a few dealers on the East Coast. Giving customers the opportunity to drive the company's rigs locally while considering their price tags — which start at $233,983 for the Skye van — has a been factor in choosing to adopt a dealer network.

"We're newer in the pond of dealers, but we've been building vehicles for 10 years and our service network is alive and well, tried-and-true at this point," he says. "We support the customer directly on the backend along with our dealer network. With these vehicles, you definitely want people to be comfortable to go out and use them, off-grid and all over the world — so primarily they have to be durable, but secondarily they have to be serviceable and supportable."

Showing up for customers from both a design and customer support perspective is the true key to success, Farny adds, and being able to provide that level of service means experiencing the lifestyle yourself.

"Not only myself, but most of our team is out camping in these vehicles and staying in them a lot of nights per year. Having that tight feedback loop from an innovation standpoint really makes the product better.

"It also gets us out there. We get to connect with our customers, hear their feedback, support them and really just be part of the community instead of them just owning another vehicle."





Co-founders Luke Farny (l-r) and Ross Williamson

Such was the advent of the recently launched Skye Van — Rossmönster's Class B amalgamation of a decade of "best of" requests from hundreds of its customers.

"In the custom world, we get to see so many cool and crazy and wacky ideas," Farny says, adding that the company just wrapped a project working with a Light to Medium Tactical Vehicle (LMTV) in its custom-build channel.

"The magic is in distilling those ideas into something that's going to be durable and functional long-term," he says. "It's being able to draw little bits of the hundreds of vehicles we've built into a solution. At the end of the day, there's not one vehicle that's perfect for everyone — but creating a platform that is multifunctional and lends itself well to most uses is really what we created in the Skye. That's the direct product of us listening to our customers."

Community is a big part of Rossmönster's culture — from owners' rallies and camping events to the Overland Expo and other gatherings, the company finds taking part in their customers' outdoor experiences is a surefire way to sustain a successful product.

"We are definitely seeing a lot of people move out of their first or second or third Sprinter van and into the trucks," Farny said of customers' feedback on trends. "We're really excited to see customers taking that leap and experiencing what that platform has to offer.

"Generally, the ethos of the way we design things is building vehicles that are holistically set up to get you out there and be successful on day one. Our vehicles aren't coming stripped down where you need to add $50,000 worth of accessories to be camp-ready."

From a systems perspective, Farny says Rossmönster's offerings are designed in a way where most issues are able to be resolved with a call to a service tech, from even as far off the beaten path as South America.

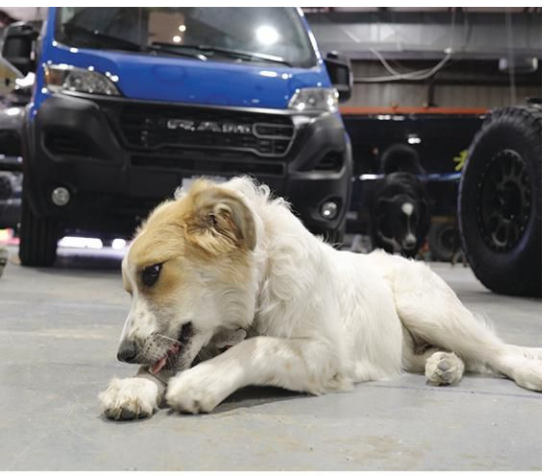
"That doesn't mean you might not have to seek service for something, but a lot of your traditional RV service points have either been eliminated or at least brought to the surface to be way more accessible."

It's obvious Rossmönster prides itself on being the ultimate subject matter expert on its own product — including keeping much of its material sourcing and servicing close to home. The company manufactures nearly all components in-house, such as cabinetry, electrical and plumbing, a full fabrication shop and more.

"We're very proud of our supply chain. We source American parts as much as possible — even Colorado parts as much



The company's newest debut, Havn, offers more interior space than a Sprinter van with off-road capabilities.





as possible. Obviously we live in a global economy and there's limitations with that, but we're actually quite lucky that the tariffs haven't affected us majorly yet, and likely won't because we are manufacturing American parts."

That sentiment fairs well for the next big stop on the road map: a new 40,000-square-foot shop. The company's original space was nearly 24,000 square feet.

"That's going to support the production of the Baja and of this new product [Havn]. We'll have more bays inside, and our service center will grow a bit, too. The idea is this will be a destination where people will be able to come and see the vehicles, seek service and be a hub for our customers here in Colorado."

Currently building 12 vehicles a month, Farny says the new capacity will increase production volume to an additional vehicle per week of its newest product — and possibly even more important, give the company's 10-plus shop dogs more space to run around.

"That's just a big part of enjoying where we work. [The dogs] contribute a lot to the culture and who we are at the core," he says. "We have a very skilled and talented workforce here. We share the passion for this space and so creating an environment where we all want to show up to work every day has been core from the start.

"We build every day, but we also get out there and use [the vehicles] together on the weekends and as we travel for shows, wherever the rubber meets the road." RVP

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Airstream Streamlines the Class B Experience

Airstream's 2026 Class B RVs will boast upgrades in power, connectivity and luxury.

BY RONNIE WENDT

PHOTOS COURTESY OF AIRSTREAM

As more travelers seek freedom, flexibility and comfort on the go, Class B RVs have emerged as one of the fastest-growing segments in the RV market.

Sleek, compact and ready for anything, Class Bs have redefined what it means to travel. These nimble vans are easy to drive and park — even in city centers or tight national park campsites — and offer the comforts of home: a full kitchen, bathroom, sleeping area and ample storage.

At the forefront of this movement is Airstream, an iconic brand known for its polished aluminum travel trailers. With its Interstate, Atlas and Rangeline Class B models, Airstream has brought its renowned craftsmanship and design sensibility to the van-life generation.

"It's the best-of-all-worlds kind of product," says Aaron Bump, product and market insight manager at Airstream. "We've got a full bathroom, full galley kitchen with everything you need for cooking — microwave, induction or LP cooktop, and storage — in a coach that's easy to drive, maneuver and park."

From solo travelers and couples exploring cross-country highways to families and friend groups seeking weekend getaways, Airstream's Class B lineup offers something for everyone. With models ranging from agile 19-foot builds to feature-packed 24-foot vans, these vehicles are changing how — and where — people choose to roam.

Built for Every Type of Traveler

Airstream has embraced the growing demand for Class B coaches by offering a diverse lineup built on two trusted chassis: the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter and the Ram ProMaster 3500. Each model is designed to meet the needs of specific travelers, from luxury road-trippers to off-grid adventurers.

Airstream builds its Interstate models on the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter chassis. The coaches come in 19-foot and 24-foot lengths, with multiple configurations tailored for comfort, convenience and performance.

First is the Interstate 24GT (Grand Tour). Bump says this 24-foot van is ideal for couples seeking luxurious travel with all the essentials: a full bathroom, galley kitchen and rear lounge that converts into a queen-size bed.

The Interstate 24GL (Grand Lounge) is a rear-wheel drive, 24-foot-long van with a second row of captain's chairs, offering seating for up to nine passengers. "Many people like this model because they can take friends and family along with them," he says. "It works well for executive travel, business trips or tailgating."

Bump says the Interstate 19 is Airstream's most popular model Class B. Despite its compact size, it offers a fully equipped bathroom, galley kitchen, generous storage and a rear lounge that transforms it into a comfortable sleeping space.

"This is the perfect vehicle for a couple to travel in," he says. "It offers everything they need in a smaller, 19-foot van that will fit in a standard parking spot. It also works well for solo travelers because it's easy for them to drive and manage."

For those with a more rugged lifestyle, Bump points to the Interstate 19X, which is designed as an adventure van. It features a front-end brush guard with LED lights, all-terrain tires and all-wheel drive, a Raptor-coated exterior for protection and a wide-open interior layout. The 19X offers a clever design that tucks ample storage inside benches, cabinets and flexible overhead bins. Its Aluminum Aircraft L-track Storage System on the walls, ceiling and floor creates a flexible storage and securing solution for gear.

"There is room to take bikes, kayaks, and hunting and fishing gear along with you because the interior has room to store all of those larger items," he says. "This model is designed for those with a more active, off-road lifestyle."

Airstream's Ram ProMaster 3500 chassis-based models offer RVers a lower-priced, gas-powered alternative. "People really appreciate the familiarity of a gasoline engine, front-wheel drive and the lower maintenance needs," he says.

Still, for travelers seeking maximum performance and premium features, he says the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter chassis remains a standout. Powered by a durable diesel engine, the Sprinter offers advanced driving, top safety features and convenience technologies. Airstream takes it a step further by selecting every available factory option.

"By offering both platforms, Airstream provides a tailored fit for every kind of road traveler," Bump says.

Floorplans & Customization

Unlike traditional RVs that offer multiple floorplans under a single model, Airstream takes a different approach with its Class

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Atlas Curbside



Rangeline Curbside



Interstate 19X Curbside

B lineup. Rather than breaking models into individual floorplans, each model is designed with a specific use case in mind.

"The only difference between the Grand Tour and the Grand Lounge is the layout," Bump says. "The Grand Lounge has an extra row of captain's chairs for additional seating, which makes it ideal for people who want to bring friends or family along. Otherwise, the coaches offer the same features."

Airstream also keeps its options list intentionally limited — not because of a lack of innovation, but because premium features already come standard.

"We realized if we offer the best of what's available, that's what the customers want," Bump explains. "For example, hydraulic leveling jacks are standard on the Atlas, but they're an optional upgrade on the Interstate 24 models. In the 2026 model year, we'll introduce an upgraded battery option, but everything else is already maxed out. If it's the best, it's going to come standard."

When it comes to personalization, customers can still make the vehicle feel like their own through interior decor choices. Airstream offers a curated selection of decor packages that change the color of seating, cabinetry, flooring and countertops — all tied to the tone of the chosen Ultraleather seating fabric.

And for those who want a more tropical touch, Airstream's Tommy Bahama collaboration is available on both the Atlas and Interstate models.

Innovations for 2026

As Airstream prepares to roll out its 2026 model year, big changes are on the horizon — both inside and out. According to Bump, this next generation of Class B and B+ touring coaches brings bold exterior updates and powerful new systems designed to make off-grid travel easier, more efficient and unmistakably Airstream.

"Years ago, we were one of the first to introduce an exterior body kit that gave our vans a more automotive, streamlined look," Bump says. "But over time, a lot of brands followed suit. On the road, it started to become harder to tell which van was actually an Airstream."

In 2026, Airstream touring coaches, including the ProMaster-based Rangeline, will sport new front hood badging that is unmistakably Airstream. The Mercedes-Benz-based Atlas and Interstate models will also feature a custom vertical-slat grille.

"Our owners are proud of owning an Airstream," says Bump. "Now they'll be more instantly recognized wherever they go."

While the cosmetic upgrades enhance brand identity, the most significant updates are under the hoods, specifically in the power system. Airstream will introduce a new standard power platform called Advanced Power (and Advanced Power Plus for those who want even more capability), to boost off-grid readiness.

Previously, Airstream offered an optional E1 power package, which included a larger battery system, a second alternator and the removal of propane systems. Now, the advanced power

system is standard, which is a single-fuel source (diesel or gas only, no LP) system and includes three 12-volt, 3.5kWh Battle Born Batteries (Gamechanger) 10.3kWh total, 3,000-watt Xantrex Freedom Pro Inverter, ARCO A275L (marine grade) alternator and Zeus regulator, 12-volt, 311A (max output), 40A dual input multistage in-vehicle battery charger, Victron BlueSolar Charge Controller (MPPT), Victron SmartShunt for solar monitoring, and 1,000-watt single-burner induction cooktop (all electric, no propane required).

For those who want maximum freedom, Airstream will offer an upgrade to five lithium batteries, bringing the total usable battery capacity to 17.2kWh. "As far as we know, that's the highest usable battery capacity currently available in the industry," Bump says.

These upgrades are a direct response to how RV travel has evolved. Bump explains the COVID-19-era surge in camping created crowded campgrounds and limited campsite availability, pushing many travelers toward boondocking.

Now, he says, people prefer these off-grid experiences.

"People have realized they enjoy being in more remote places, not just the typical campground with full hookups," he explains. "We already offered that capability in our upgraded systems, but now, it's built in. With our 2026 models, Airstream owners can confidently stay off-grid longer, with a coach that's fully equipped to support that lifestyle right out of the gate."

Airstream will also add Starlink satellite internet connection as standard on its Atlas line and introduce flexible connectivity features on Interstate and Rangeline models.

"We've added an exterior to interior ethernet (Cat6A) prewiring for easy internet or Starlink connection. The interior ethernet connection is near outlets (now all inverted) for easy Starlink set up," Bump explains. "We wanted to give people the flexibility to use whatever works best for them, while making it simple to install and operate."

The design allows users to position their satellite antenna wherever reception is strongest. The port is prewired to the coach interior, making setup simple and ensuring dependable coverage.

Airstream is also upgrading its warranty program for 2026. Traditionally, Airstream — like many RV manufacturers — offered coverage for workmanship, while individual components and appliances were subject to varying manufacturer warranties.

"But that's changing. We are moving to a two-year (no mileage) Airstream Limited Warranty," Bump says. "That means for two full years, every appliance and component is covered through Airstream. Our owners won't need to chase individual warranties for different parts."

Bump says this shift will make service and support more straightforward, eliminating confusion and giving customers added peace of mind during their ownership experience.

With luxury, drivability and off-grid capability packed into every inch, Airstream's Class B touring coaches prove that big adventures can come in small packages. RVP



Outside Van DELIVERS ON PERFORMANCE



Embracing a new demographic of **"Outsiders,"** the Oregon-based company thrives on offering **Class B luxury.**

BY JOHN MCCURRY

PHOTOS COURTESY OF OUTSIDE VAN



Outside Van's Lunarnova Mercedes-Benz Sprinter

Since its founding in 1999, Portland, Oregon-based Outside Van has been building top-of-the-line Class B vans targeting outdoor adventurers. The company is building five new models on converted Mercedes-Benz Sprinter chassis at its two manufacturing facilities. The newest model is the Overnight, which features a 144 chassis, drives four, sleeps four and has a pop top.

A popular model is the Parks, which debuted at the Tampa RV show earlier this year. Matt Clemo, director of sales and business development, describes it as a huge success, due to the inclusion of a full luxury bathroom in the rear of the van.

"We always try to check as many boxes as we can when we are designing these vans," Clemo says. "The one thing we kept hearing was, can you build a van with a very nice bathroom, not like a tiny closet, but a full bathroom? We did that with the Parks model, and it has been quite a hit."

Also, in response to customer demand, Outdoor Van added the Parks Ranger version, which has a different trim, larger tires and suspension, a larger power system and more lighting.

"It is just a very well-built, cutting-edge, high-tech van," he says. "We made sure that we were keeping in line with our clean lines and our finishes that we are known for."

All of the company's vans are engineered with a robust chassis specification from Mercedes and a strong infrastructure system, according to Clemo.

"Anywhere there is an attached component, anywhere on our vans, we attach our own 14-gauge galvanized steel infrastructure package, so everything that is bolted, that is a component, goes into that infrastructure package," he explains. "It is aircraft-riveted into the metal. This means the van is really strong. What it also does is make them quiet. That difference is something you cannot see, because it is behind the walls. You can feel it when you drive one of our vans. We build our vans to go off-grid. You can get out and go where everyone else isn't. The suspension system can tolerate all of those different terrains. Then when you get back on

pavement, that van is very quiet."

Outside Van builds its vehicles using premium materials throughout. This includes using PUR (polyurethane reactive adhesive) glue to prevent tearaway. No fiberglass, molded plastic or silicone is used in the construction. All of this is aimed at ensuring safe off-grid adventures.

"When you go to buy an Outside Van, whether it is custom from the factory, or from a dealer lot in any corner of the U.S., it is the same build quality," Clemo says. "The RV has to pass RVIA [RV Industry Association] standards — fire, electrical, counter height, things of that nature. We try to design and engineer our vans to look more like a custom van, while still being in compliance with RVIA."

Embracing a New Demographic

Class B vans are not inexpensive, so owners expect performance. Clemo says Outside Van has built its reputation on delivering just that.

"If you are going to spend a quarter of a million dollars on a van, it better perform," he says. "It better not fall apart. You better have a company that is on the spot when it comes to service questions. We answer the phone, and we get you with service."

Outside Van management fondly refers to its customers as "Outsiders." The company focuses on providing a great experience after the sale to its Outsiders.

"That is one of the things we pride ourselves on, and frankly, it is the reason we are still here," Clemo says. "We have been around since 1999, building vans, learning and trying to get better. Right now, we feel that we have hit our stride."





One thing that has changed is customer demographics, especially over the past five years. Pre-COVID-19, Outside Van's typical customer was 60 to 65 years old. They were retirees, ready to see the country, and visit national and state parks.

COVID-19 changed everything. During the pandemic, the customer base was broad. The company couldn't keep enough vans in stock.

Now, the demographic ranges from people in their 40s up to their mid-60s. The market has grown to include a younger generation. A primary driver is the ability of vans to go off-grid.

"The technology in our vans is aligned with that generation, being able to use features of the van with an app, for example, turning lights on and off or putting your awning out, checking your water tank monitor," Clemo says.

Multiple Streams of Revenue

Custom van construction accounts for about 20% of Outside Van's business. Building a custom van takes four to six months after the design, colors and layout are chosen. That requires some patience on the part of the buyer. Many want something right away, so that keeps the model business thriving.

"All of our vans are priced the same at any location, and people can get them right away," Clemo says. "After purchase, the van can be tweaked. It can be sent to the factory for upfits to be done."

A major revenue stream for Outside Vans is its upfitting business. Upfits can range from $5,000 to $85,000. Owners often want to add features such as a new galley or an upgrade to the power system.

"That is a big part of our business," Clemo says. "If we are not selling vans, we are doing upfits, performing services or selling bolt-on products. The revenue stream is coming from multiple sources.

"People are cautious right now. The things going on with the world definitely affect the number of purchases of big-ticket purchases. We are building new models in cadence with demand."

Outside Van has dealers across the U.S. Thirty-seven of them are part of the Campers Inn network in the Northeast, Southwest and South. The company also has three dealers in Texas, in San Antonio, Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston. Dealers are also located in Washington, Oregon and California. Service centers are located in Utah and Colorado. Clemo says that's as many dealers as the company needs, calling it a "perfect spread" of dealerships.

Outside Van displays its models at the Overland Expos held in the Northwest, Colorado, California and Arizona. These shows attract serious buyers.

"They want to see what is hot and fresh," he says. "We have very well-informed customers, and our booth is packed from morning to night. We do as many of those shows as we can."

Promising Partnerships

Fox Factory Holdings, a specialist in off-road racing suspension components, bought Outside Van in 2021. It has been a beneficial deal, Clemo says. The company will debut Fox Factory's limited-edition performance shocks at shows this summer. "We are lucky to be able to be among the first to get the new performance series shocks, which is a game changer. It is like



riding on a cloud," he says.

Clemo says Fox has been "hands off" in its relationship. The companies they acquire are generally best in class.

"They say, you guys know what you are doing. How can we help you? It is an open line of communication. Having a billion-dollar company backing you is a very comfortable feeling," Clemo says. "It means we can try things smaller companies might not be able to do, such as try new product lines."

The chassis Outside Van uses are built at the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter factory in Ladson, South Carolina. Outside Van orders them as cargo vans with a front window and side windows for the driver and passenger. That's it.

"We add a ridiculous amount of safety features, and the RV bundle, the digital cameras, the heated leather seats, the 10.25-inch screen," Clemo says. "We build them out in Portland and cut all our own roof penetrations for fans, AC, windows. We drop our own floors, we CNC everything that goes into that van. All the metal products are made in-house, as well as all the upholstery, cabinetry and wiring. The only thing we purchase are the AC units."

Outside Van makes its own wheels, bumpers, crossbars and roof racks. Everything is made in the U.S.

"Everything we put on there has a good reason to be on a van," Clemo says. "We don't put anything on there just to be flashy. It all has a purpose. If you want to add things, you can, but our vans can be driven off the lot and into nature."

Clemo says Outside Van has a flexible operation and constantly adapts to market conditions. He sees 2026 as shaping up to be a good year. This year has been challenging, with many in the industry stacking up inventory. Everyone is looking for a deal, and for the first time, Outside Van has offered an incentive in the form of a $12,000 rebate direct to the customer once they buy the van.

"We are excited with where we are headed. I think you are going to see some really amazing new endeavors, different things that no one else is thinking about," Clemo says. "We promote van-life. We want it to continue. We hope people will put down their phones and tablets and get in an Outside Van and go. There are a lot of wonderful places in this country to see. Get out and do it." RVP

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Lexi, Frank and Suzanne Roberts (l-r) of Long View RVs

LONG VIEW RV'S LONG GAME

The 66-year-old New England business is going strong and training a new generation to take over.

BY JENNIFER KING

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LONG VIEW RV SUPERSTORES

"Give the boy a shot!"

That's all it took when Fran Roberts tried to get a bank loan to open a business selling tent campers at just 19 years old. As Roberts faced a possible denial, someone called out from the back and told the loan agent to reconsider, changing the course of Roberts' life — and that of his family members for generations.

Since the doors of Long View RV Superstores opened in Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts, in 1959, the company has been passed on to Frank Roberts, who now runs it alongside his daughter, Lexi.

After moving locations a couple of times, Long View RV is now headquartered in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, on a five-acre site near the Bradley International Airport. The site consists of a display lot, a parts and accessories store and a service department.

The Robertses also operate a store in Canaan, New York, during the summer months. This location is "buried in snow" for the winter months, Frank says, but summer traffic through the Berkshire Mountains there is plentiful.

"We have some local people who [operate] that store in the summer," Frank says.

IT'S A NEW DAY

Frank is looking to Lexi as the future of Long View. After finishing her master's in business administration, she's now poised to dive in — though she's been working at the dealership since 2018, when she was just 16 years old.

"She's learned everything from the bottom up, same as me," Frank says, "with more of a stress on her background in parts and service than mine. Mine was sales-focused."

The Roberts say the only con they experience working as a family is turning off work mode — but they like it that way.

"Lexi brings in a whole different aspect — something I have

never looked at in the business," Frank says. "The new ideas she's spitting out are coming fast and furious."

"Then we get to go home and talk about it, and we're always going — it never stops," Lexi says. "I think that's what makes it good as a family business because we're always working on something."

One thing that's changed since Lexi started working full time at the dealership is Long View's social media presence.

"I thought ours was kind of lacking before I took over," she says. "So now we have a TikTok page; I'm trying to get a lot of engagement on that end to get the new buyers coming in. I realize my generation and the next generation, that's how people shop — it's online. They want to be able to see their options before they even ever go to a dealership to walk in an RV.

"That's a big project I've been working on, trying to get that going, get more content. We're going to be doing some giveaways because we're on Facebook but not really on Instagram. So, I'm trying to do giveaways to get followers."

Long View RV works with InteractRV for its website and Motility for its CRM. With eight technicians and 18 service bays, there's a lot to juggle. The business is actually on two sides of Lawnacre Road — parts and service on one side, sales on the other. The retail store has about 12,000 square feet.





KNOWN FOR SERVICE

"We have a lot of indoor space, but you need it in this country," Frank says, referencing the cold winters in New England.

Long View, which has 38 employees, focuses on selling motorized RVs but also sells tent campers and pop-ups. While RV sales make up the majority of the business, service plays a large part as well.

"Sales is certainly the driving force, but service is the most important aspect of any dealership," Frank says. "Without good service, you will never have good repeat business. We have proved over 66 years that our service is fantastic, but we take a different approach than a lot of dealers in that every single mechanic has two to three weeks a year of training.

"The other thing with us that most dealerships don't have is longevity of employees. The service manager, it's his 32nd year; the sales manager, it's his 25th year. We have more employees over 10 years than under 10 years."

Frank says it's the family atmosphere that keeps employees around for a long time. Lexi references monthly birthday lunches and ongoing professional development as just two of the benefits of Long View's culture. She notes they have four Level 4 technicians right now.

One thing that sets Long View apart is they will service anyone — you don't have to have an RV purchased from them.

"It helps exponentially because if you bought it from a competitor and you saw how they treated you in service and then you come to us, we'll definitely get your next sale," Frank says.

PLAYING IT SMART

In the years since the COVID-19 pandemic, Frank says they were careful to stay on top of their inventory, which helped their business when sales slowed down. The dealership did well at the beginning of this year, with sales up year over year during January and February. He says he feels customers were moving quicker at the beginning of the year to make purchases just in case prices went up as a result of the tariffs.

As a business, Frank says they want to be known for their great customer service. Lexi adds they also want to be known for fun.

"We're selling vacations," she says, "so we want a good overall experience throughout the whole process."

Frank is most excited about the new innovations coming out from the RV industry. He notes there are better components in RVs now, and technology that allows people to run much of their RV from their phone is leaps and bounds from where the industry came from.

Lexi notes additions like rear decks, huge windows and other new features are appealing to a new generation of campers.

"Now there is so much cool stuff coming down the line," Frank says. RVP

ROAD-TESTED RESULTS

RV **content creators** on the **newest form of marketing** that promises growth for RV businesses.

BY JORDAN BENSCHOP AND MICHELE MOORE

MARCELINO VICTOR M-STOCK.ADOBE.COM

"Influencers" are nothing new — athletes and actors have been hawking products for centuries, driving consumer purchases with traditional advertising. But in recent years, a new branch of marketing is staking its claim across industries, without the celebrity price tag. Once a place to share posts with friends and family, social media has evolved into a full-blown business model for regular people amassing large followings — and finding such success as to coin a new industry under the ubiquitous guise of "content creator."

Typically known by their followers for a specific niche — be it travel, fashion, cooking, fitness and more — these creators have the power to impact purchasing decisions due to their knowledge, authority or relationship with their audience. Rather than a mere marketing tool, influencers are a social media asset that brands can use to achieve business goals through exposure. In fact, today's consumers may be more likely to trust influencer recommendations. According to a Forbes report, in 2023, a Matter Communications survey of consumers found that "69% of respondents said they trusted influencer recommendations over brand messaging." That sentiment is echoed in the growth of the marketing tactic itself, which more than tripled since 2020 to an estimated value of $33 billion.

So, why trust someone you've never met? It's all about authenticity. Followers trust influencers who appear genuine and relatable, sharing their everyday lives, struggles and successes. Seeing those experiences fosters belief in a creator's expertise and therefore makes a trustworthy place to gain advice and recommendations. In addition, the consistency in content creation aids influencers in keeping a strong presence in their followers' lives: regular updates and valuable messaging make for a loyal audience that looks forward to their posts.

Some influencers in the RV space, such as Tom and Cait Morton of "Mortons on the Move," have built their content creation business on 10 years of cultivated trust with their followers. And that wasn't even the goal, they said — the two sold their house in 2015 and hit the road in a 35-foot DRV fifth wheel simply as a "sabbatical."

"We started traveling with no intention of becoming RV influencers. That didn't really exist back in 2015," says Cait Morton.

The two were eventually influenced themselves by YouTube vlogs from younger folks such as Jason and Nikki of "Gone





The Whites opted for a Dutchmen Voltage Triton 4271 because it has two bedrooms and a garage. *Photos courtesy of "The Everywhere Family"*



Exploring Canyon Trails Ranch in Cortez, Colorado. *Photo courtesy of Kristen May*

With the Wynns" — leading to the Mortons documenting their travels to share with family back home. While operating from 3G internet, spotty cell reception and a big desktop computer, Tom Morton says somewhere along the way, other people started watching.

"It was very slow growth, but then we ended up meeting a whole bunch of other hobby YouTube and social media creators — people we saw on Instagram who were doing the same thing. We all started talking and collaborating, sharing tips and tricks, and then it all grew from there in a kind of weird and wonderful way."

That sentiment is shared by younger audiences entering the RV lifestyle. According to Go RVing's latest RV Owner Demographic Profile, 16.9 million Americans have a significant interest in purchasing an RV in the next five years, with a large wave of intenders trending younger, more diverse and increasingly tech-savvy — creating a market with an evolving path to purchase.

"Intenders are highly digital, relying on social media, YouTube and online listings more than traditional dealership visits," the report said. "Many are cautious buyers, concerned about costs and seeking education on RV types and ownership." In essence, the future of RVing is ripe for reaping the benefits of influencer marketing.

Research from the World Federation of Advertisers found that "54% of multinational brand marketers say they plan to boost spend in 2025 and 61% [agree] that influencer marketing will become more important in the future."

RV companies are increasingly tapping influencers to spread their word, such as Go RVing, who spotlighted the travels of Abbey Romeo from Netflix's "Love on the Spectrum," to Dometic's ambassador program, Battle Born Batteries' product reviews and numerous OEMs sharing owners' travels on social media.

"The RV industry has a tremendous opportunity to connect with the next generation of buyers and help them turn their RV dreams into reality," said Chief Marketing Officer Karen Redfern in Go RVing's report.

Working With Influencers On the Go

For the Mortons and many other content creators, such as Jessica White of "The Everywhere Family" and Kristen May, choosing to work with a brand means a "rigorous shakedown" to ensure a company's goals align with their voice.

"We're always very careful crafting things so that we're staying true to ourselves and not just purchasing a product we don't actually believe in," Tom says.

The landscape of approaching RV brand partnerships has certainly changed, the Mortons say — what once was a "What is social media?" response has blossomed into 20-30 emails a day from OEMs and suppliers requesting product reviews and paid sponsorships.

"There are a lot of people who are willing to push anything [to their audience] for a free product or some money. So, there's a possibility to make content that might not be as advantageous for the end consumer. We never want to provide information that could be negative toward our audience," says Cait Morton on choosing which companies to work with.

Having influence means protecting your followers, she adds, especially in a technical market where the products and expertise can either make or break RV travel. Content creators need to safeguard their creative freedom and voice, rather than being a mouthpiece, to stay reliable in the eyes of their audience.

"We want to offer that genuine review because that's the whole basis of our channel and our subscribers. They're here for us, and they trust us," Tom says. "So, any RV influencer who is making it is kind of approaching these partnerships as a conversation rather than a sales list, a pitch or a 'Send me a script and I'll video record it.'"

May also says to use caution when selecting who to work with, adding that she is "very careful to only work with brands I truly love or would buy/use" herself, and that her end goal is always to "build trust with my audience."

Businesses interested in working with influencers need to determine what kind of content they're looking for. In addition to boosting ad campaigns, influencers — particularly full-time RVers — can also serve as a valuable feedback loop for brands seeking real-life product testing.

"It's like a collaborative approach of not only do we want you to test this

thing out for us and showcase your experience but also provide feedback to us on how we can improve it," Tom Morton says.

True partnerships are what make the best deals, says White of "The Everywhere Family."

"When our input is welcomed and respected, the content doesn't just promote — it educates and inspires. Our audience trusts us because we're intentional about what we share," she says. "We expect our partners to support that authenticity so we can continue to create honest, meaningful content that resonates."

May can attest to power of recommendations from fellow RVers. "Every single thing [I've] bought was recommended by others in the space," she says, "so I think creators and influencers definitely help so many of these brands absolutely thrive."

Being intentional about what to share also comes with knowing how to handle a less-than-satisfactory experience with a brand.

"If we're into a product and we end up having problems, we always try to have an honest conversation [with the company]," Tom Morton says. "There have been a few times where things weren't quite up to expectations, but that's part of what we want to be able to share, as well. Everybody makes mistakes. You have to give them a little grace, if they're willing to fix things and accept feedback. Usually we've determined up front if [a company] will be a partner that is open to that.

"It's on us to phrase things in a way where we aren't just bashing a product or a company. It's important to make sure that you can just speak to the audience appropriately."

From Dealer to Educator

The No. 1 thing that the Mortons always come back to, especially from a first-timer perspective, are true weight limits, requirements and proper setups.

"So often people end up with a truck that's too small, a rig that's too big or a setup that isn't right. Unfortunately, these things are not always brought to the forefront when a sale is on the line."



Boondocking near Yellowstone National Park with dogs Mocha and Bella
Photos courtesy of "Mortons on the Move"



New Zealand's Kā Tiritiri o te Moana



Arriving in Tuktoyaktuk, near the Arctic Circle

Many times, new owners don't even know what an RV's dry weight is until it comes off the lot, or don't consider specs like water weight at full capacity — a big safety concern, Tom says, and an expensive one, too.

"A lot of people don't add in that a 100-gallon freshwater tank filled up is an extra 800 pounds. Then imagine if your gray and black tanks are also full from camping," he says. "A lot of rigs don't have carrying capacities over 1,500 pounds, so if you're loading it up with 1,000 pounds of water, you only have 500 pounds for gear, food and drinks. That's not much."

Another top priority are batteries, Tom says. Most people don't realize damaging a lead-acid battery one time takes half of its life cycle away. With RVs seeing a plethora of new technology, owners need to know how much power is being drawn from standard electronics such as 12-volt fridges, electric stoves



Desert sunset at a secluded BLM boondocking site outside Phoenix, Arizona



Editing video in a truck camper while boondocking atop Boutte du Cap, Newfoundland

and smart monitoring systems.

"Most manufacturers and dealers have someone who works on one thing, like the electrical engineer who designed it. But there's a whole bunch of stuff nobody messes with except in an RV, when a house and a car are combined into one. We come from the perspective of knowing every single internal engine component, down to the water system."

"Dealers have a real opportunity to go beyond sales and become trusted educators," White says, noting that a lack of education, particularly for new RVers, can lead to frustration or unsafe situations. "Dealers who go the extra mile here earn lifelong customers and tons of word-of-mouth recommendations."

Informing customers about routine maintenance is another vital element. May says when she was first starting out, YouTube was a valuable resource for her. Dealerships could make their own educational videos or possibly explore an influencer partnership.

Cait Morton adds, "A really good thing for dealers to start doing for new customers is even just sending them home with a comprehensive list of annual maintenance. Things they can do themselves ... basic maintenance and repairs."

Ensuring customers are set up for success is a way to build trust and loyalty, Cait says, inspiring people to return to a dealership.

Whether it's on the factory floor or the Instagram feed, the RV industry is united by a single purpose: encouraging adventure on the open road. RVP

Life on the Road

What is the best part about being an RV influencer?

"Honestly, just sharing my life from the good and bad has been so much fun! One of my goals as a creator is to make travel, outdoor adventures and RV life more approachable, which I've loved finding ways to make happen. ... It's also been so much fun to meet people on the road. While I'm a tiny channel, I've still met so many people who follow me on the road, and that's been so much fun to actually connect in real life with them and form a friendship!" —Kristen May, @kristenmayx

"Hands down, the connections. We love inspiring other families to break free from the white picket fence 'American Dream.' It's incredibly fulfilling to receive messages saying, 'Because of you, we took our first trip.' ... It's also rewarding to work closely with brands shaping the future of RVing. We get to test new innovations, give real-world feedback and help bridge the gap between manufacturers and customers. But more than anything, my favorite part is building a community of like-minded people who become lifelong friends that remind each other that it's OK to live differently, take the scenic route and create a life full of unforgettable memories, not just things." —Jessica White, @theeverywherefamily

"It's kind of twofold — being able to help people out and sort of direct the industry to areas that I think could improve the experience as a whole. ... I have the capability to be an RV tech and I could go fix one RV at a time, but my videos can fix a thousand RVs. [Also inspiring] people to travel. That was the reason why we didn't stop. We were planning to do this one to two years. ... And that's why we're here 10 years later. You get people excited about travel and checking off those bucket list items." —Tom & Cait Morton, @mortonsonthemove

HOW TO PREPARE FOR OFF-GRID & OVERLANDING ADVENTURES



Tips dealers can use to prep customers for going off the beaten path in a variety of RV styles.

BY TONY FLAMMIA, NATIONAL RV TRAINING ACADEMY & TOMMY HENDERSON, SUPERSTEER

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUPERSTEER

As more RVers venture beyond campgrounds and into the backcountry, the demand for off-grid readiness and safe, comfortable ride control is growing. Whether customers own a luxury Class A motorhome or a compact camper van, preparing for overlanding means more than just adding solar panels and calling it a day. Dealers have a key role to play in educating RVers about the right upgrades for their chassis and travel goals.

Class A Motorhomes: Luxury Meets the Limits

Class A rigs offer unmatched interior comfort and space, but their size and weight can limit their reach when it comes to rugged or remote camping, not to mention their frequent lack of ground clearance. That said, they can still access many beautiful off-grid sites and enjoy a smooth ride while getting there, especially with the right suspension and safety upgrades.

Recommended Upgrades:

- **Heavy-Duty Suspension & Shocks:** Replace stock shock absorbers with high-performance aftermarket units to minimize sway, bounce and driver fatigue. Take this even further with anti-sway bar upgrades and, on air ride coaches, motion control units to greatly reduce rocking and rolling while getting to the destination.
- **Steering Control Units & Rear Track Bars:** Reduce lane wandering and improve steering responsiveness, especially in crosswinds.
- **TPMS:** Preventing blowouts on long rural drives.
- **Auxiliary Braking Systems:** Critical if towing a vehicle.
- **Solar + Lithium Battery Banks:** Class A owners benefit from 600Ah to 1,200Ah lithium systems and high-output inverters for off-grid living.
- **Water Conservation Tools:** Filtration systems, tank upgrades and efficient fixtures support boondocking stays.

Class A Considerations:

Due to their high center of gravity, Class A motorhomes are susceptible to sway — especially when solar panels or rooftop gear raise the vehicle's center of mass. Anti-sway bars, shocks and (on air ride coaches) motion control units help, but remember that added weight eats into available cargo capacity. Always weigh the coach when fully loaded and make sure that you're running the proper tire pressure and are within the load ratings for the chassis and tires.

Class B Vans: Small but Mighty

Class B camper vans are nimble, fuel-efficient and increasingly favored by solo travelers and couples. Their compact size makes them ideal for tighter trailheads and forest access roads, but space limitations require smart, multifunctional upgrades.





Recommended Upgrades:

- **All-Terrain Tires:** Great for traction, but blocky tread can cause squirming on the highway. Choose carefully based on where the van will be used most.
- **Lift Kits & Shocks:** Improve clearance and handling, but confirm shock length matches final ride height. Upgraded shocks help balance on-road comfort with off-road control.
- **Anti-Sway Bars:** Essential for vans with rooftop solar or roof racks. Prevent excess sway without compromising travel.
- **DC-DC Charging or Portable Power Stations:** Maintain power while driving.
- **Compact Water Filtration:** Make natural water sources safe to drink with minimal storage footprint.

Class B Considerations:

Solar panels and roof-mounted gear increase sway. Weight should be monitored to ensure you stay within GAWR/GVWR limits (gross axle weight rating/gross vehicle weight rating). Class B rigs benefit greatly from steering control units and track bars to eliminate wander or tail wag.

Class C Motorhomes: Versatility in the Middle

Class C RVs offer a balance of comfort and maneuverability, making them great candidates for off-grid travel with a few key enhancements.

Recommended Upgrades:

- **Upgraded Suspension:** Control body roll and improve ride quality with high-quality aftermarket shocks and anti-sway bars, as well as motion control units for Super C coaches with rear air suspension.
- **Track Bars & Steering Control Units:** A front steering control unit and rear track bar is a particularly useful combination on the Ford E-series chassis, to reduce driver fatigue and improve stability in crosswinds.
- **Composting Toilets or Gray Tank Expansions:** Support extended boondocking without hookups.
- **Solar Kits (300 to 600W) + 400Ah Lithium Banks:** Sufficient for powering essentials.
- **Underbody Protection:** Skid plates protect tanks and valves on bumpy backroads.

Class C Considerations:

Most Class C rigs have a cab-over bed, which adds weight above the front axle. Anti-sway bars and shocks optimized for weight distribution are highly recommended. Tall spring packs can increase wander or shimmy without additional track bars. As with other types of rigs, we recommend weighing your Class C on the front and rear suspension individually to make sure the weight distribution is acceptable; confirm that tires are set to the correct pressure; and verify that the curb weight is within the GVWR/GAWR limits.

Truck Campers: Off-Road-Ready With the Right Setup

Truck campers shine when it comes to rugged, remote destinations. When mounted to a capable truck, they offer incredible flexibility — but weight distribution and chassis performance become even more important.

Recommended Upgrades:

- **Load Carrying Upgrades:** Rear airbags can be useful if your truck is often used without the camper installed, since you can vary the air pressure to adjust for whatever load you are carrying. SumoSprings or Timbrens are other good options for adding load capacity without having to worry about adjusting air pressure. Overloads or added leafs are a good way to go if you don't plan on driving your truck without the camper installed.
- **Sway Upgrades:** Truck campers can cause quite a bit more sway than you would have with an empty pickup. In addition to the load carrying upgrades mentioned above, high-quality aftermarket shocks as well as anti-sway bar upgrades can do quite a bit to reduce rocking.
- **Tie-Down Systems (e.g., Torklift):** Secure the camper to the truck bed.
- **Steering Stabilizers:** Crucial for 3/4-ton and 1-ton trucks carrying heavy loads.
- **DC-to-DC Chargers:** Charge camper batteries while driving.
- **Portable Solar Panels (200 to 400W):** Offer flexibility in shaded areas.

Truck Camper Considerations:

Truck campers add substantial weight high above the rear axle, making tail wag and sway common. Anti-sway bars and track bars (especially on solid axle trucks) make a noticeable difference. Always weigh the loaded truck to confirm tire load capacity and proper inflation.

Overlanding Trailers: Rugged by Design, Still Need TLC

Purpose-built overlanding trailers are often marketed as "go-anywhere" options, but they still benefit from thoughtful setup for safety and comfort.

Recommended Upgrades:

- **Independent Suspension Systems:** For absorbing off-road shock.
- **Electric Brakes & Brake Controllers:** Keep towing safe on grades.
- **Articulating Hitches:** Prevent jackknifing and improve maneuverability.
- **Onboard Solar Generators:** Power lighting, refrigeration and pumps.
- **Water & Fuel Storage Solutions:** One suggestion would be RotopaX systems for easy, modular supply management.

Overlanding RV Considerations: While smaller and more agile than motorized RVs, overlanding trailers are often towed through technical terrain. Maintaining proper tongue weight, regularly checking tire pressure and using a brake controller tuned for weight are keys to safety.

Suspension & Ride Control: What Every Off-Roader Should Know

When upgrading your van or coach's suspension for off-road capability, it's important to remember that you still spend quite a bit of time driving on pavement. Some upgrades that improve off-road or boondocking capability can reduce highway comfort or control.

- **Tires:** Aggressive blocky tread patterns are great in dirt but can cause squirming or tracking issues at highway speeds.
- **Weight Distribution:** Solar panels, roof racks or winches can raise your center of gravity, increasing sway and roll. Too much weight at the back of your rig can also make the front end too light and cause the steering to feel twitchy.
- **Shocks:** Make sure new shocks match your final ride height and balance on- or off-road performance.
- **Sway Bars:** Upgraded sway bars help with high center of gravity. Too stiff can reduce travel, but most overland rigs are heavy enough to offset this. Disconnects are an option for more serious terrain.
- **Steering Components:** Lift kits can cause bump steer. Upgraded steering dampers or self-centering control units can correct this and help in emergency scenarios like a blowout.
- **Track Bars:** Tall spring packs and extended shackles can cause lateral axle movement, leading to tail wag or wander. A track bar or Panhard rod can reduce this and restore stability.
- **Weight Management:** Always weigh your RV in travel-ready condition and confirm your tires are rated for the load. Set pressures accordingly.

Final Thoughts for Dealers

Overlanding isn't a one-size-fits-all adventure. By understanding the strengths and limitations of each RV type and the modifications they require, you can better educate your customers and stock smarter. Help your customers dream big — and travel smart.

Your customers want freedom. You can give them confidence. RVP

Tony Flammia serves as the director of marketing for the National RV Training Academy (NRVTA), where he plays a vital role in advancing the mission to train and equip the next generation of certified RV technicians and inspectors. His work ensures that RV owners have access to knowledgeable, certified experts — strengthening the RV community one technician at a time. For more information, visit NRVTA.com

Tommy Henderson is the owner of SuperSteer, a brand dedicated to engineering high-performance suspension and steering upgrades for RVs and specialty vehicles. With decades of real-world experience at their shop in Grants Pass, Oregon, and a passion for solving the handling challenges RVers face across the country, SuperSteer has developed American-made products that deliver safer, more stable and more comfortable rides. Visit supersteerparts.com for more information.



RESPONDING TO THE CALL OF THE WILD



A former Wall Street businessman **started a guided expedition company, embracing his dream of being outdoors and helping others.**

BY JENNIFER KING

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FERNWEH

A strong desire to travel is the Merriam-Webster definition of "wanderlust," a word that aptly encapsulates how Joel Hempel lives his life.

Owner of fernweh, a company that plans guided expeditions for those looking for off-road adventures, Hempel says the name of his company is German for the "deep, aching desire to explore distant places."

So how did a former Wall Street businessman get into taking groups on desert trips in their off-the-grid vehicles?

"I've always been an outdoorsman," Hempel says. "At a very young age my dad exposed me to camping — canoe camping in the Adirondacks specifically. We ended up doing that for many, many years, and you realize that whether it was by way of canoe or a car, [it was] whatever you could do to get [out] and be with nature."

Raised in the Bronx and Long Island, New York, Hempel spent summers fishing, and the common thread through all of his activities was being outside.

"I love the outdoors. I love travel, and when I bought my Storyteller van, I had spent 30 years working for a big Wall Street bank running an asset management business for them. I bought my van in September, and in October they said 'Your job was eliminated.'

"So after 30 years with the same company, doing all the things you think you're supposed to do, they came and said your job's eliminated. I took the next year and traveled this amazing country and met some rad people. I got to use my van and went from Maine to Key West to Oregon and everything in between ... I think I was able to see things that the average American never gets to see, and along the way I realized, there is a community of people [here]."

Embracing this community and discovering a need some travelers have to gain confidence in their ability to go boondocking led to the creation of fernweh. These guided expeditions were "born from a love of wild places, good people and meaningful journeys," according to the company website.

Since off-roading and overlanding can be intimidating for some, taking the stress out of the logistics helps travelers just "show up, drive and enjoy the ride."

"You can visit places, you can have a campfire, you can do some fun stuff, but at the end of it, doing it together is a whole lot better than doing it alone," Hempel says. "There's a quote that I have

used quite often, an old African proverb, and it basically says 'if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.'

"A guy who exposed me to that was from South Africa, and it just resonated with me as I was building this business."

Fernweh launched last September, and the company's first trip was in Death Valley over New Year's Eve.

"We were as far away from the light pollution and noise and the ball falling in New York Times Square as we could possibly be, and we got to have an amazing time," Hempel says.

While there are other expedition guides who will take people off-grid to help learn all the tips and tricks, Hempel says he wants to do all this, but do it differently.

For example, one of their trips was in the San Luis Valley in south-central Colorado to watch the migration of the sandhill crane. A professional photographer is brought along on each of fernweh's expeditions to capture these unique moments.

Fernweh also partnered with Storyteller Overland this year to hold Camp Her Way outside Nashville in April (Hempel also owns a Storyteller HILT and TAXA travel trailer in addition to his Beast MODE van).

"That was a huge, raving success, and it was all about bringing women together and having an education of the van, how to off-road, doing recovery discussions," he says. There were other elements as well, such as yoga, a nature walk with an herbalist and fly-fishing.



Joel Hampel

This September, fernweh has a trip planned to Vermont to see the fall colors. A professional mountain biker will join them for anyone who wants to go on the mountain biking trails, and that Sunday of the trip, attendees can go to the US Open for downhill mountain biking competition.

No matter what activities are included on the trip, there is always an element of giving back included. Hempel says he believes in "Adventure with a Purpose," so wherever they travel, they select a nonprofit to work with to help people in the area. For Camp Her Way, fernweh partnered with Sackcloth & Ashes, which manufactures and distributes blankets to shelters for every blanket that's purchased. In Vermont, they will partner with the Mountain Biking Association, which maintains trails.

"We don't want to just take a group of people in what are perceived as expensive vans, whip into town, rip up trails and leave," Hempel says. "We've also worked with Tread Lightly so we're educating our participants on how to [camp] responsibly, and Leave No Trace.

"So yes, we do trips, we teach a bunch of stuff, but we're trying to be a little different in the themes that we're doing and our ability to give back."

When asked why he opted to take his love of off-grid traveling and turn it into a business, Hempel didn't hesitate with this answer: "Retirement was not an option because I can't sit still."

"I've always been somebody that wants to help others. I did it in a world where I was helping people retire and manage their money," he says. "Now I am helping people in a very different way and in a way I think is really important — which is I think we have the greatest country in the world, and I think there are places that people may


Adventurers on a fernweh expedition at Bell's Reserve in Kingston Springs, Tennessee, outside of Nashville.



Bonding around a campfire at Overland Expo in Flagstaff, Arizona.

FERNWEH

A German word that means you have a deep, aching desire to explore distant places. From the fernweh website: "it's a pull — something in your gut that tells you there's more out there, beyond the next ridge, beyond the next dirt road."

Faraway places
Exceptional meals
Remember the moments
New knowledge
Worthy causes
Engage with community
Have fun



Fernweh campers in Death Valley, California, near Eureka Dunes.



not get to, and [I am happy] to be able to bring that together.

Building community is also an important benefit for Hempel.

"If I could build a business and partner with some people along the way, then I was going to go do that. I've given myself a budget of time and money, and I don't know where this business takes me, but it's very interesting to see how my network of friends and professionals have now latched onto this. The people that are still in the banking world are fiercely jealous of the fact that I'm out having fun. The business is growing, and I'm not slowing down."

What fuels Hempel to bring more off-roaders to the experience fernweh offers is the growth of confidence he sees during their trips.

"I was in the middle of the Black Rock Desert and a 79-year-old man, who is a [widower], owns one of these crazy vans and travels all over the place. He was with us, and we went up this fairly challenging ... hill. We had to go up and over it, and he did it and he was smiling ear to ear.

"He said to me, 'Joel, if I don't wake up tomorrow morning, I will have missed nothing in my life.'

"So here was this man who had lived this amazing professional career, he's a dad, he's now a [widower], he's a grandfather, and now I call him a friend ... the transformation of this guy who did not know how to air down or up his tires, and we helped him through that. Now he's going over this terrain and just having an amazing time. It is really nice to see how he has evolved with the confidence in his van."

He was able to coach another woman who travels solo on how to change a tire and understand how to take care of the van — and in turn, herself — while out on the road.

"Whether it's how do I change a tire or know where the tools are to be able to do that," he says. "That for me is more rewarding than anything, to see that transformation in the people that are here."

Another rewarding aspect, Hempel says, is the conversation around the campfire each evening.

"The discussions that happen around the campfire will never cease



to amaze me," he says. "Some of it is superficial — I like your clothing, the weather's nice, how are your kids, typical conversation. By the third day, it can be the most revealing, vulnerable personal conversations. And that's the power of the community and the trust and the bonds that come together.

"I think it's the transformation of humans, the education of the people, and the connection and vulnerability that gets created as to why I keep doing it." RVP



MARCELINO VICTOR M - STOCK.ADOBE.COM

MANAGING OFF-GRID COMFORT

Using an **energy-efficient AC unit** that can work in tandem with a combination of power sources is crucial.

BY MAURA KELLER

IMAGES COURTESY OF PREMIER PRODUCTS

For many RV enthusiasts, camping under the stars is considered the idyllic way to experience nature — secluded campsites, tranquil environs and off-the-grid experiences that leave the RV consumers longing for more. And with the pandemic behind us, more and more RV owners are setting their sights on long-haul trips, enjoying their motorhomes and traveling to far-off places to experience boondocking in all its glory.

Unfortunately, for many, the idea of being truly off-grid, without access to electricity, potable water and sewer facilities seems daunting. Luckily, many RV OEMs, suppliers and aftermarket companies are listening to the interests of today's RV consumer and introducing products that help RV owners "get away from it all" while still maintaining the comfort and amenities that RV owners seek.

Take Premier Products, for example. Founded in September 2012, Premier Products boasts a core focus on manufacturing seating, HVAC systems and windows for the luxury bus and van markets. The company has recently developed a way for RV aficionados to have an off-grid experience in a comfortable and environmentally responsible way.

"We aways had the RV industry on our radar, being located in Elkhart, Indiana, the RV capital of the world," says Brandon Alpert, executive sales director at Premier Products. "In 2017, an opportunity presented itself when Airstream approached us about manufacturing a seating product line for the Interstate Sprinter vans."

This was Premier Products' entrance into the RV space, and today the company makes products for every major OEM in the industry.

In 2018, Premier Products was approached by GREE, a large AC manufacturer, about partnering with them to develop and distribute a 110-volt AC system to the industry. The goal was to change the way RV consumers could experience off-grid camping in warm environments that required air conditioning for comfort.



"We recognized the need for a better RV air conditioner to what existed, and our goal was to create a product that was quieter, more energy efficient, durable, and something that was more aesthetically appealing than what existed at that time," Alpert says. Development and tooling of the product took nearly four years, and in the spring of 2022, Eco-Cool received its first prototypes, followed by the production model being released in early 2023.

Eco-Cool is a 15,000-Btu RV air conditioner with a built-in heat pump. The product is available as a ducted and nonducted application, which means it can be installed in nearly every motorhome. Its proprietary compressor technology utilizes less power at startup, less power while running and, due to overall performance, allows the compressor to cycle off for longer periods of time. All three of these benefits lead to around 30% overall power savings versus other 15K Btu systems on the market, the company says. Currently there are a wide range of OEMs using this system — ranging from Class B to Class A units.

"The final product was everything we had hoped for and even exceeded our expectations in regard to noise, performance output and efficiency," Alpert says.



Premier Products is based in Elkhart, Indiana, where it manufactures its products and offers HVAC installs.

It also captured the attention of off-grid RV enthusiasts who were looking for a solution to using their AC units in remote locales. While running an RV air conditioning unit off-grid using solar power is certainly an option, this method requires a complete solar setup and careful planning. In addition, standard RV air conditioning units that are run on solar power need a substantial battery bank to meet the requirements for the AC unit being run at night. Of course, solar power is weather-dependent, so being off-grid in inclement weather can impede RV owners from effectively using their AC units.

Enhancing the Off-Grid Experience

When RV owners go off the grid, they rely on external power systems to keep their appliances running. They also need to carefully manage energy consumption and use only energy-efficient appliances. With a 110-volt AC system, the efficiency allows consumers to run their AC system for longer periods of time without having to worry about plugging into shore power.

"There are many factors that play a role in combining AC and solar power to camp off-grid comfortably — ranging from the type of RV all the way to where the consumer is traveling," Alpert says. "RV owners are intelligent, and they do ample research. As it relates to our product, we tested the system vigorously and consumers see a 30% efficiency savings over the 'run-of-the-mill' RV air conditioner."

Of course, camping off-grid requires RV owners to meld with their environs — enjoying the quiet stillness of a remote site. The loud, consistent humming of some air conditioning units can negatively impact the overall off-grid experience.

Premier Products specifically designed Eco-Cool to be one of the quietest air conditioning products available for the RV market, Alpert says.

"RV owners often talk about how loud their existing AC systems are — making it hard to sleep, watch TV or even hold a conversation in their motorhome," he says. Using computational fluid dynamics (CFD) technology to optimize air flows results in a very quiet environment when the Eco-Cool unit is in use. Thanks to this advanced noise reduction technology, on the unit's low setting the noise level is 43 dB, the medium setting is 52 dB and the high setting is 56 dB.

Another big challenge for RV travelers relying on battery or solar power is finding an air conditioning system that balances performance with energy efficiency. Finding an AC unit designed to provide optimal cooling while consuming less power is critical for boondocking and off-grid adventures in which consumers worry about draining their power supply.

"Eco-Cool is power efficient," Alpert says. "This allows RV owners to run their AC systems for longer periods of time while not being connected to shore power. This is important for consumers who need their AC system to get them through the night without shutting off."

In addition, while most RV air conditioners have built-in heat pumps rated for ambient temperatures between 32 F to 35 F, Eco-Cool is rated down to 23 F, allowing customers to use the heat pump in more extreme climate conditions.

"We've even had customers come back to us during the winter months and let us know the heat pump worked in the low-mid teens," Alpert says. "At the end of the day, people want to be comfortable and not have to worry about where things may go wrong." RVP



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WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT SOLAR POWER COULD LEAVE YOU POWERLESS

Wesco offers its assessment of solar power's **shortcomings and advice** on what to do to avoid issues when traveling off-grid.

BY KENT ANDERSON, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, WESCO

It sounds simple enough. To leverage a renewable energy source like solar power for your customer's next RV journey, simply calculate the amount of power needed to keep the RV operational and ensure you have the right panels, controllers and batteries to support it. But that calculation could leave you in the lurch. The reality is that solar power wasn't designed for RV use. In fact, the first modern solar cell was developed 70 years ago, and despite regular advancements in cell technology, the surrounding components in a solar panel have remain unchanged for decades.

Traditional solar power mechanisms were built for static scenarios, such as massive, open solar fields or panels housed on the tallest city skyscrapers. Conversely, RV travel is dynamic, and not every route or every site will provide the necessary sunlight needed to make solar panels effective. And it's not always shade that can cause issues. Parking in full sun in hot climates can exacerbate other issues, often requiring more power to cool and operate the RV than is generated by the panels.

Be Prepared for the Challenges of Solar

Since the early 1990s, solar technology has relied on a built-in safety feature that, while critical, is also one of the leading causes of solar panel failure — the

bypass diode. If one cell stops working or is shaded by an air-conditioner, a tree or snow, the other cells may overheat and cause a fire hazard. To prevent this from happening, bypass diodes in the panel will shut down entire strings of cells to preserve the integrity of the panel. The problem is that by doing so, power output is immediately reduced by almost 90%. That's a significant decrease for any RV, but especially detrimental for off-grid travelers who may be relying on solar energy to power their journey. Plus, today's RVs have more "smart" appliances and power-hungry features than their predecessors. Ensuring power performance and availability is critical to truly be able to go off-grid.

New advancements in solar technology can make solar power more reliable for those headed off-grid. For example, one innovation lets the flow of current continue through the shaded cells, without safety risks. Optivolt's patented balancing technology uses power electronics that are built into the panel to enable shaded cells to "borrow" power from nonshaded cells, opening a current path that maximizes panel output when the panel is shaded. This keeps every cell productive and reduces the risk of failure.

This technology also eases the burden on your overall electrical system (charge controller, battery, inverter), enabling the panel to work as efficiently as possible and extending the lifespan of the panels themselves by eliminating bypass diodes and hot spots. Balancing technology provides a solution that is universally compatible with any maximum power point tracking (MPPT) solar controller, offering simplified wiring, making it easy to use and install.

Let's take a closer look at a case study. An RV owner had 900 watts of solar panels and an MPPT controller accompanied by a 24-volt, 600Ah battery and inverter. With Optivolt, they were able to generate 1,350 more watt-hours of energy per day than the traditional panel alone. They also reduced their overall lifetime cost of solar per watt generated, both panels and components, by 58%. Balancing technology can provide what every off-grid traveler needs — a more dependable and reliable source of energy and one that can keep functioning over an extended period of time.

Stable power resources are vital, especially if your customer is looking to RV off-grid. But traditional solar power components were not designed for shade-blocking situations and often cannot produce the level of power needed. New applications that can be purchased aftermarket eliminate the hidden challenges of generating solar power and provide RVers with the chance to truly go off-grid. RVP





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Attracting People to the RV Dealership Workforce

Consider how you write job descriptions to catch the eyes of the most qualified individuals, regardless of gender.

BY MEL SELWAY

The theme of the May issue of RV PRO was women in the RV industry, and this month my column includes, among other aspects about personnel, comments on women in the parts and accessories operations in an RV business. Some of the data in this column was obtained from a 2021 study commissioned by the RV Women's Alliance (RVWA).

As of the 2021 study, approximately 16% more women were employed in the RV industry than in 2019. An estimated 66% of employers in the industry were actively seeking female applicants, with 71% of the manufacturers actively seeking female applicants.

This is data for the RV industry overall. How do they correlate with your staffing requirements and with your recruitment practices — especially for your parts and accessories operations?

Recruiting for Your Parts & Accessories Staff

If you don't currently have a need to seek candidates for your parts and accessories department, then perhaps the information in this column won't have an urgency.

However, staffing needs might change due to retirement, injury, employee relocation or other reasons. In these circumstances, perhaps the contents

of this column could be applied to future situations. Following are some factors that could come into play when considering applicants for a position in your parts and accessories department.

Job Tasks in a Parts & Accessories Department

What are some of the functions that are required of parts and accessories personnel? These could include yet not be limited to:

- managing the department operations
- receiving incoming shipments and processing outgoing shipments
- transacting internal and external customer requests
- maintaining and updating the displays and the stockrooms
- performing inventory accuracy cycle counts

For each of these listed job functions, what work skills are necessary? When was the job description for each of these positions updated? Why would these job descriptions need to be updated?

Job Descriptions, Employee Recruitment & Evaluation

If you have a job description for each of the positions in your parts and accessories department, and if each of these job descriptions details the current skills required to perform the tasks competently and efficiently, then you could more easily solicit appropriate candidates when and as needed.

Having detailed job descriptions might be an opportunity to enhance your chances of getting more qualified candidates — especially if you are willing to consider female applicants. This is a list of items you might include in your employment want ad that could improve your opportunities for more female applicants.

- What is your pay scale? Is it gender equitable?
- What skills are required?
- What physical restrictions, if any, are there?
- What are the days and hours for the position?

Where will you place your advertisements? Have you considered what media women might be more likely to check if they are seeking employment?

If you are seeking employees and have received applications for an open (or soon to be open) position, you can compare the skills listed on each application against those necessary for the position and decide which of the applicants should be contacted to schedule an initial interview.

If at least one of the applicants is scheduled for the initial interview, then having a checklist that is used for each applicant in the interview process is very important so that there is no bias. This checklist might include:

- a written application to determine handwriting legibility and to confirm contact information for the interview follow-up
- a review of the job description to



ensure the candidate understands the job requirements

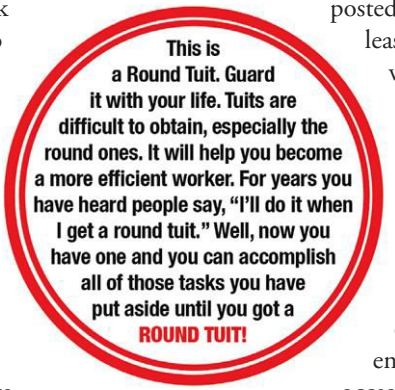
- a test of some of the job tasks, such as researching parts for a specific vehicle or product; interpreting a work order; performing a cycle count (to determine the proficiency level of the applicant) and similar such tasks
- a statement of the parts department rules regarding dress code, acceptable language (no cursing for instance) and employee interactions
- a review of the work schedule for the job position to ensure that the applicant can comply
- you present a scenario that could occur during the performance of the job for which the applicant is applying and require the candidate to reply how she would handle it
- a tour of the department (possibly the entire dealership) to offer the applicant the opportunity to evaluate how you operate and to meet current employees

First impressions are important, and your preparation for the interview might be graded by the applicant as much as your impression of the applicant's preparation.

A Personal View & Examples

As a parts manager/director, I offered equal pay for each job position regardless of the gender of the employee. To fill my shipping/receiving position, I occasionally would have a "school bus mom." This was a woman with school-age children (usually the K-8 grades) who wanted the freedom to get the kids on the bus in the morning and meet them when they returned from school in the afternoon. We coordinated their work to occupy the hours from approximately 9 a.m. until noon or 2 p.m., depending on the age(s) of the children.

My staff had flexibility to their work schedules as long as coverage was there. Birthdays off with pay and a card signed by each department employee were a benefit. If an employee was experiencing a situation that might impact their job performance, I gave them the day off with pay because they would not be performing at their optimal level. Job schedules were posted for the current and at least one subsequent week with scheduled lunches included.



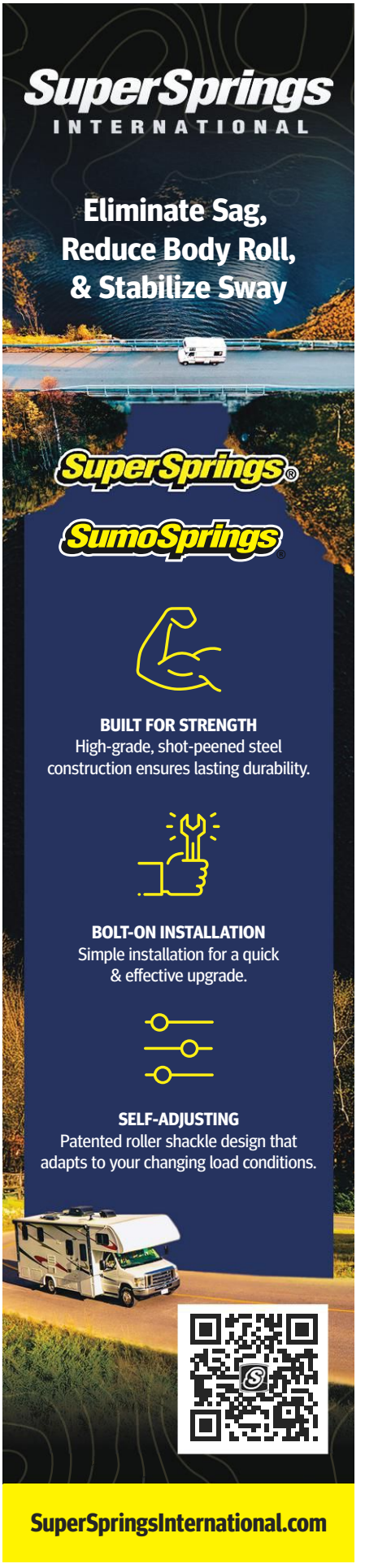
My staff performance impacted our customer service experiences, so I tried to offer a comfortable work environment. It occasionally required some extra effort on my part, but the benefits were worth the effort.

When Will You Get This Accomplished?

As with most of my suggestions, some of those in this column will require extra effort. Over the 35 years since I started P.A.R.T.S*, I have suggested methods to my clients that could improve their business operations and their opportunities to enhance their customer service as well as increase their net profit. Many of them state they will do it when they get around to it. If that is your answer to my request that you implement any of my suggestions, then here is my gift to you! Please accept the Round Tuit above. RVP

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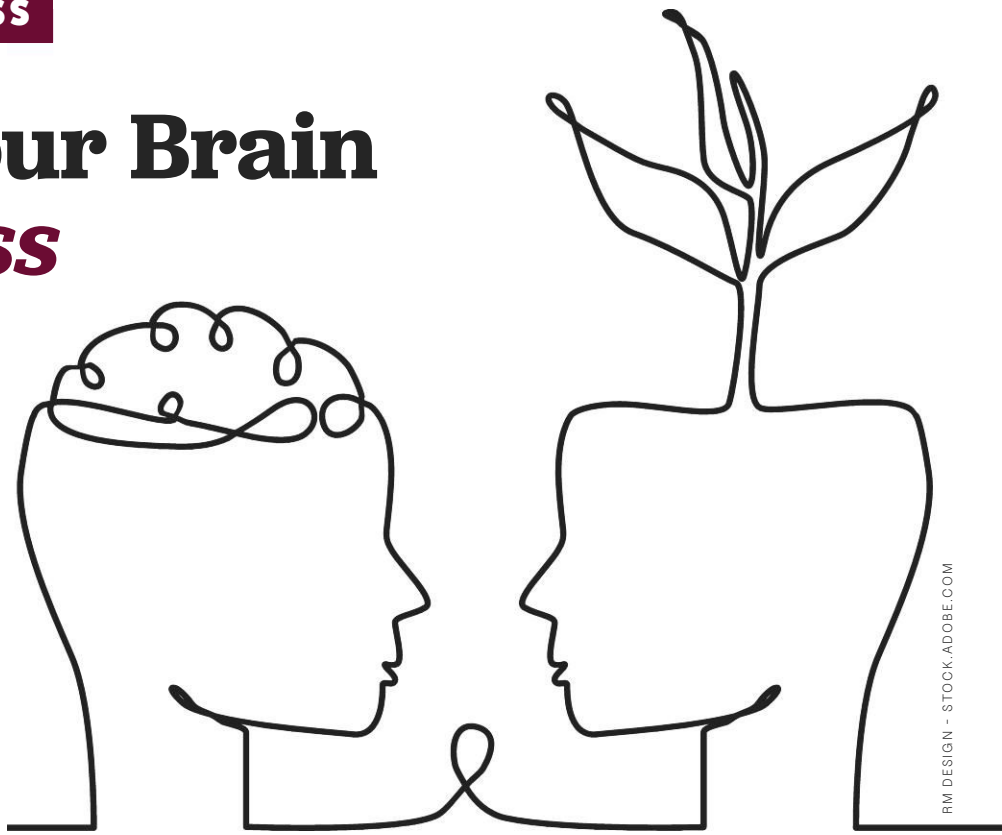




Rewire Your Brain *for Success*

How shifting your mindset can create a foundation for sustained personal and professional growth.

BY MARGARET GRAZIANO



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The human brain is incredibly adaptable. It holds the potential to change, learn and grow throughout our lives. However, many people unknowingly sabotage this by operating with a fixed mindset — the belief that abilities and intelligence are static. Research shows that this mindset limits personal and professional success, as well as discouraging any positive change. On the other hand, a growth mindset, the belief that skills can be developed, unlocks boundless possibilities.

Do you feel stuck, unmotivated or frustrated by repeated challenges? Maybe you find yourself resisting new experiences or feeling overwhelmed and burned out by stress. These are just a few of the symptoms of a fixed mindset.

The key to shifting from a fixed to a growth mindset is in the chemistry of our brains. The chemicals dopamine, serotonin, endorphins and oxytocin all play a role in our motivation, emotional resilience and adaptability. If your brain has lower levels of these chemicals, change becomes a challenge. However, just adding some simple self-care practices to your life can increase these neurotransmitters and prime your brain for growth.

8 Strategies To Rewire Your Brain

1. Improve Your Sleep Habits

Sleep is foundational for mental and physical health. During sleep, the brain clears toxins, consolidates memories and prepares for new learning. Aim for seven to nine hours of consistent, high-quality sleep by establishing a bedtime routine, avoiding screens before bed and creating a relaxing sleep environment.

2. Eat for Brain Health

Nutrition profoundly impacts the brain. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and complex carbohydrates supports the production of neurotransmitters like serotonin. Avoid processed foods and added sugars, as they can disrupt your gut microbiome and negatively affect mood and cognitive function. Even small dietary changes, such as reducing sugar or increasing fiber intake, can make a noticeable difference.

3. Get Moving

Regular physical activity boosts endorphins, reduces stress and improves overall brain function. Even moderate exercise, like walking, swimming or yoga, oxygenates the brain and strengthens its adaptability. Consistency is key, so find a form of movement that feels enjoyable and sustainable.

4. Practice Mindful Focus

In today's fast-paced world, constant distractions diminish focus and productivity. Train your brain by practicing mindfulness or meditation. Focus on one task at a time, and take periodic breaks from technology to recalibrate your attention. Even five minutes a day of deep breathing or intentional concentration can improve your ability to manage stress and improve clarity.

5. Calm Your Mind

Chronic stress impairs the brain's ability to adapt and grow. Counteract stress by engaging in calming activities like nature walks, deep breathing exercises or journaling. Quiet moments allow the brain to reset and process information more effectively. Immersing yourself in

peaceful surroundings, such as a park or forest, can significantly lower cortisol levels and foster a sense of well-being.

6. Embrace New Experiences

Novel experiences stimulate neuroplasticity by challenging the brain to form new connections. Learning a new skill, taking up a hobby or exploring a creative activity all encourage growth and adaptability in your brain. Whether it's learning to cook, play an instrument or paint, pushing yourself to try something unfamiliar keeps your brain active and flexible.

7. Cultivate Gratitude

Gratitude directly impacts brain chemistry by increasing dopamine and serotonin levels. Start a daily gratitude journal to focus on the positive aspects of your life. This simple practice shifts your perspective toward growth. Gratitude also enhances your relationships, which strengthens social bonds and further supports emotional health.

8. Engage Your Senses

Deep observation helps you become more present and aware of the world around you. Take time to fully engage your senses, whether it's savoring the taste of food, listening to the sounds of nature or noticing details in your surroundings. This practice promotes mindfulness, stimulates curiosity and encourages a sense of wonder about the world.

The Growth Journey Starts Now

Rewiring your brain is not an overnight process. It requires discipline, rigor and the development of the right habits. By incorporating even just a few of these self-care strategies into your life, you'll create the foundation for sustained personal and professional growth.

Start with one practice today, and commit to building from there. Small, consistent changes lead to significant transformations over time. Embrace the journey, and watch your mindset shift from thinking about what isn't possible, to everything that is possible.

Having an open mindset is a necessity. With rapid advancements in technology, shifting social landscapes and global challenges, those who stay curious, adaptable and open to new ideas are the ones who thrive. An open mindset encourages innovation, strengthens relationships and helps us navigate change with confidence. On the other hand, holding onto rigid beliefs or outdated views can lead to missed opportunities and stalled growth. In a world that rewards flexibility, a closed mind can hold you back more than ever before. RVP

Margaret Graziano, known as the Evolutionist, is the founder and CEO of KeenAlignment, as well as a Wall Street Journal bestselling author for her book "Ignite Culture." She has been recognized as one of Silicon Valley's Top 100 Women Leaders and her groundbreaking work is driven by her power to uncover and catalyze human potential. For more information, visit margaretgraziano.com.





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— **Mark Rispens** | Owner of D&D RV Center

SAFETY SOLUTIONS & RIDE CONTROL



TIRE BLOWOUT PROTECTION

Armis RV Guardian, Seguin, Texas, presents its Armis RV Guardian 2.0, which provides maximum RV protection from blowout damage. Armis delivers an axle-mounted tire shrapnel containment shield system. Version 2.0 is 100% cold-rolled steel, withstanding tire failure and highway conditions. The new and improved design is reimagined and reinforced for greater strength and protection with a smooth and durable powder coat finish. Armis RV Guardian is proudly made and assembled in America.

armisrvguardian.com

BRAKE SYSTEM

Blue Ox, Pender, Nebraska, offers its Blue Ox BRK2022 Patriot Brake, featuring faster extension of the braking action for truly proportional braking. The brake is all-electric and self-contained with no tank to drain, no pumps or hoses to connect. The Patriot checks brake pressure to ensure proper setup. An in-cab controller monitors the brake and allows manual input. The brake also works with hybrid dinghy vehicles.

blueox.com





LATCH COUPLER

Demco Products, Boyden, Iowa, offers its EZ Latch Coupler. The Demco EZ Latch coupler provides a safe, maintenance-free towing solution with a self-locking mechanism that exceeds SAE J684 standards. It automatically latches onto the hitch ball — no safety pin needed, though lock pins can be added for anti-theft purposes. Equipped with a durable composite handle to withstand extreme conditions. Available in multiple styles and weight ratings (7,000-25,000 pounds), perfect for RV bumper-pull applications.

demco-products.com

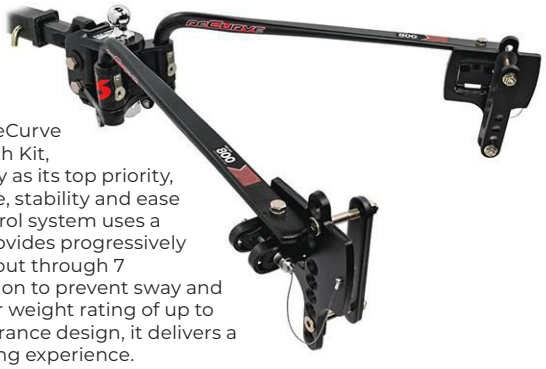


ASSIST SYSTEM

Dexter, Elkhart, Indiana, presents its Tow Assist, a safety solution featuring anti-lock brakes, sway mitigation and a towable odometer to ensure a safer towing experience. Tow Assist utilizes Dexter's genuine running gear components. Partnering with Bosch, an automotive technology industry leader, allows Dexter to provide a system proven to perform to stringent automotive standards. Includes built-in notification and system diagnostics.

dextergroup.com

WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION HITCH



Camco, Greensboro, North Carolina, presents its Eaz-lift ReCurve R6 Weight Distribution RV Hitch Kit, which is engineered with safety as its top priority, offering premium performance, stability and ease of use for towing. Its sway control system uses a ball-and-socket design that provides progressively increasing resistance, maxing out through 7 degrees of trailer angular rotation to prevent sway and maintain stability. With a trailer weight rating of up to 15,000 pounds and a high-clearance design, it delivers a smooth, quiet and secure towing experience.

camco.net



HEADREST SAFE

The Headrest Safe Company, Birmingham, Alabama, offers its Headrest Safe. The Headrest Safe hides in plain sight, where no thief will think to look for your RV customer's valuables. This ingenious, invisible and lockable safe is built inside the headrest, giving your customers secure storage.

theheadrestsafe.com



POWER CENTER

Hughes Autoformers / Power Watchdog, Anaheim, California, offers its Watchdog Power Center. The all-new Watchdog Power center combines the Hughes Autoformers voltage booster with the generation 2 Wi-Fi Power Watchdog surge protectors. It features voltage boosting, surge protection, replaceable module, real-time alerts and data with Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity.

hughesautoformers.com







WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION HITCH

Husky Towing, Exeter, Pennsylvania, presents its Center Line FS Weight Distributing Hitch, a two-point friction sway weight distributing hitch with up to 12,000 pounds GTW. It offers effective sway control at a budget-friendly price. Spring bars with adjustable brackets ensure stability, while engagement pins and a pin-style locking system add security. The preset head, preinstalled longer shank and ball, and durable powder-coated finish provide convenience and long-term performance.

huskytow.com



PROPANE GAS & CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM

MTI Industries, Destin, Florida, presents its Safe T Alert 85 Series Universal CO/LP Alarm, a modern alarm found in the OEMs. Safe T Alert's 85 Series Universal CO/LP Alarm offers an easy surface mount installation, accompanied with a Trim Ring designed to cover previous installation cutouts.

stadealer.com



FLAT TOWING BRAKE

NTP-STAG, Exeter, Pennsylvania, offers its RVibrake 4 Portable Flat Towing Brake. Lightweight and compact, the RVibrake 4 is built for portability and convenience. Its slim design and built-in carrying handle make it easy to store and transport. With a 0.5-second reaction time, it improves stability and control, helping to tow with ease. Brake-lock detection eliminates the risk of improper installation, preventing unnecessary wear or damage to a vehicle's brakes. Made in the USA and backed by a three-year warranty.

ntpstag.com



ELECTRIC BRAKE CONTROLLERS

REDARC Electronics, South Australia, Australia, presents its Tow-Pro Electric Brake Controllers. Designed for safe, smooth and controlled braking, REDARC's Tow-Pro range of electric trailer brake controllers features units with multiple towing modes for highway and off-road conditions, fingertip adjustment and a factory-look remote head. With sway control, active calibration and seamless integration, it's the smarter, safer choice for towing trailers, RVs or boats. Choose from Liberty, Elite or Trail Kits — all backed by REDARC's trusted Australian engineering and over 45 years of experience.

redarcelectronics.com



WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION HITCH

Lippert, Elkhart, Indiana, offers its CURT TruTrack 4P Trailer-Mounted Weight Distribution Hitch (17520), which makes towing safer and easier with a quick-connect, trailer-mounted design. Once installed, you can leave it on your trailer and skip setting up spring bars each time. Built for trailers up to 10,000 pounds gross trailer weight and 1,000 pounds tongue weight, it features integrated four-point sway control, heavy-duty steel construction and a durable carbide powder coat finish.

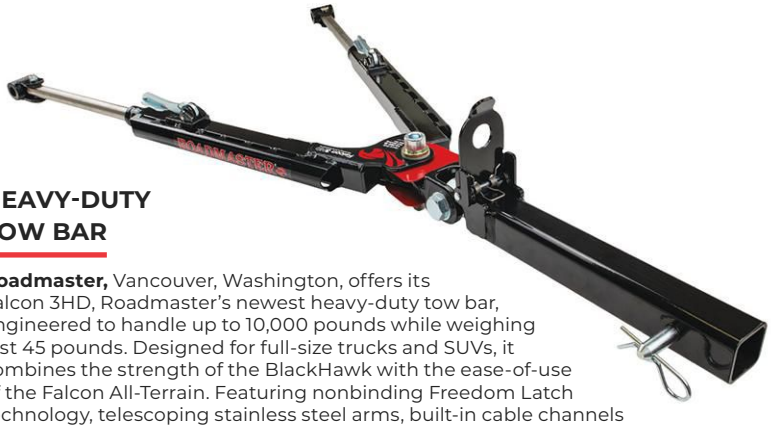
curtmfg.com

WIRELESS PORTABLE SURGE GUARD

Southwire, Carrollton, Georgia, presents its 30A Wireless Portable Surge Guard. Easily portable and wireless, the Surge Guard 30A model provides total electrical protection from faulty park power and electrical issues inside the RV. Other features include weather resistance, anti-theft lock ring, text-based LCD display, LED protection status indicator and Easy-T-Pull handle. Perfect for all campers, the 30A-Model protects RVs from power surges, high/low voltage, open neutral, open ground and overheating plug/receptacle.

southwire.com





HEAVY-DUTY TOW BAR

Roadmaster, Vancouver, Washington, offers its Falcon 3HD, Roadmaster's newest heavy-duty tow bar, engineered to handle up to 10,000 pounds while weighing just 45 pounds. Designed for full-size trucks and SUVs, it combines the strength of the BlackHawk with the ease-of-use of the Falcon All-Terrain. Featuring nonbinding Freedom Latch technology, telescoping stainless steel arms, built-in cable channels and a powder-coated finish, the Falcon 3HD delivers premium performance and effortless operation — all made in the USA.

roadmasterinc.com





RV HANDRAIL

Stromberg Carlson, Traverse City, Michigan, offers its Lend-A-Hand Banister Rail, which features an anodized finish with ribbed tubing for a better grip. The rails clamp closed for travel with no tools required. The 42-inch model is designed for double and some triple steps. The 50-inch rail, designed for some triple and all quad steps, offers two angle positions. Made in the USA.

strombergcarlson.com



SUSPENSION ENHANCEMENT

SuperSprings International, Carpinteria, California, presents its SumoSprings for Your F-53. Driving an RV can get stressful when crosswinds hit or trucks zoom past. SumoSprings are an easy upgrade for Class A, B and C motorhomes, using microcellular polyurethane to smooth out rough rides, reduce sway and boost overall stability. No air lines or compressors mean zero maintenance headaches.

superspringsinternational.com





SUSPENSION ENHANCEMENT SYSTEM

Timbren Industries, Whitby, Ontario, Canada, presents its Timbren SES — Suspension Enhancement System, which delivers a smoother, safer ride for RV owners when towing. Engineered with Aeon rubber springs, SES kits eliminate sag, reduce sway and enhance stability under heavy loads. This results in better control, less stress on your suspension and improved braking performance. Easy to install and maintenance-free, Timbren SES transforms ride quality and provides peace of mind for long hauls.

timbren.com



COLOR TOUCH SCREEN DISPLAY KITS

TST by P.S.I., San Antonio, Texas, offers its TST TPMS 770 Color Touch Screen Display Kits. Properly inflated tires keep you safe, while delivering better fuel economy and longevity. Offering flow-thru and cap sensor configurations, TST's touchscreen display makes programming a breeze and is compatible with legacy TST products, offering expansion opportunities of up to five trailers plus a power unit, including spare tires.

tsttruck.com



WHEEL CHOCKS

Valterra Products, Mission Hills, California, presents its Wide Chock. This extremely heavy-duty WIDE chock is an essential safety item, preventing unexpected trailer rolling for RVs, travel trailers and fifth wheels. Its 5 3/4-inch width and integrated grooves offer superior grip and tire contact. Weighing 1.5 pounds, it's 3.5 times heavier than basic models and built from durable polyethylene.

valterra.com



If you're interested in submitting a product for the Special Product Focus section,

submit to your sales rep:
Rebecca Tittel:
rtittel@cahabamedia.com
Caroline Fugler: **cfugler@cahabamedia.com**
Or contact Managing Editor
Michele Moore for information:
mmoore@cahabamedia.com.

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HEAVY-DUTY PLIERS

Vampire Tools, Irvine, California, offers its Vampliers 9-Inch Heavy-Duty Lineman's Pliers, which feature a 21-millimeter side cable-cutting blade and a high-leverage design that delivers 30% more cutting power. Horizontal and 4-millimeter offset vertical serrations grip wires, stripped screws, and rusted screws and nuts, common issues in RV electrical and mechanical systems. A built-in crimper handles AWG 16–12 bare terminals, both insulated and noninsulated.

vampiretools.com

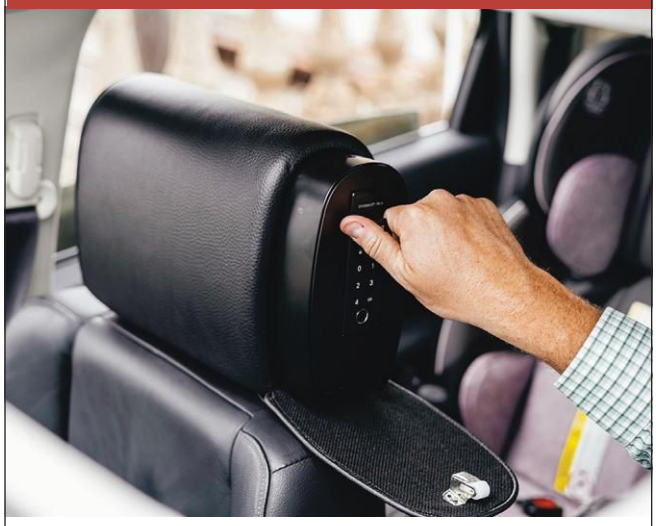


WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION HITCH

Weigh Safe, Lindon, Utah, presents its True Tow Weight Distribution Hitch. With Weigh Safe's patented technology and companion app, you'll never have to guess if your hitch is correctly set up and your trailer properly loaded. The Middleweight comes in 4-inch, 6-inch, 8-inch and 10-inch drop lengths for a 2-inch or 2.5-inch receiver size. You can choose between spring arms for trailers up to 8,500 pounds or 12,500 pounds.

weigh-safe.com

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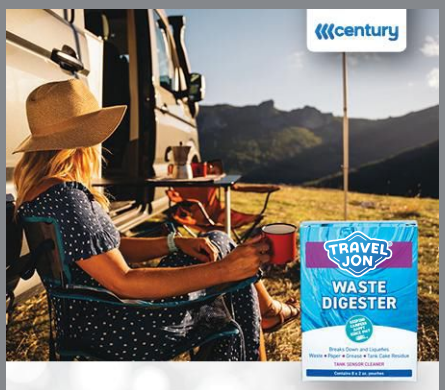
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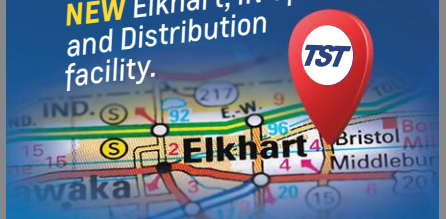


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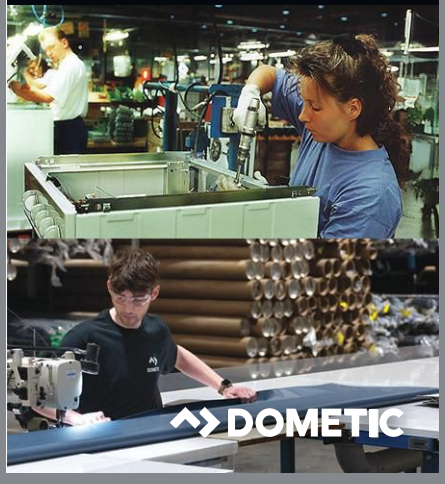
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Pit Stop



Trends to Know: Grandymoons

Go RVing's Monthly Trends Report detailed findings on multigenerational family trips and "grandymoons" — a new travel trend that honors grandparents and encourages family trips for all ages.

These trips present opportunities for a family to take a break from their everyday responsibilities and embrace new adventures together. Whether it's exploring a destination or trying a new activity, a grandymoon is a great way to honor grandparents and foster connections in a new, exciting context.



In 2023, the Family Travel Association Annual Family Travel Survey gathered data from 3,300 parents and grandparents. It found that **more than half of parents are planning to travel with both their children and their own parents, citing it as a key reason this type of travel is on the rise.**

Over the past decade, the **number of U.S. campers has grown by 68% while the number of campgrounds has stagnated**. With demand outpacing supply, 56% of campers in 2024 reported difficulty booking a site because campgrounds were full. Additionally, recent news of layoffs in national parks and budget cuts driving the potential summer closure of over 4,000 campsites in California alone have further exacerbated this already tenuous situation.

"Our campers' No. 1 request has consistently been that they need more places to camp that reflect their individual camping styles. As the camper community continues to grow and diversify, from Gen Z to retirees, the need to streamline the process for finding the perfect campsite has never been more urgent," Hipcamp CEO Alyssa Ravasio said.

Source: Hipcamp, KOA, SGB Media, New York Times

Influencer-Recommended Items for Off-Grid Travel





- Composting toilets
- External power banks, like Jackery or BLUETTI
- Portable solar panels, batteries or full solar kits
- Water and sewer hoses
- Tire pressure monitoring systems
- Jack and leveler pads, like SnapPads
- Surge protectors, extension cords and 50-30-amp adapters
- Water filters
- Satellite internet modems and mounts
- Dishwasher sinks
- Durable, stackable storage bins
- Shower curtains for RV showers

See page 26 for more on influencer marketing in the RV space.

MAY 2025 SHIPMENTS

28,150 (units)
Total RV shipments

15.8% Decrease compared to May 2024 (33,150 units)

To date, shipments are up 5.3% with 161,373 units

"This summer, more than 44 million Americans plan to go RVing with nearly 7 million hitting the road to celebrate the upcoming Independence Day holiday," said RVIA President and CEO Craig Kirby. "While the industry continues to navigate uncertain economic conditions, the long-term pattern of growth for the industry remains with a recent study showing 16.9 million American households indicating they intend to join the RV lifestyle. These potential customers are younger and more diverse than ever before, showcasing the wide and enduring appeal of RVing."

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