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RV PRO



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Photo courtesy of Lightship

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Jennifer King

I'm sure we've all heard the phrase "actions speak louder than words." This is what came to mind when I read the articles in our Sustainability feature section for this issue. Thankfully, the RV industry has many companies who understand the meaning behind this phrase and are willing to put their money where their mouths are.

Take Cummins, for example. On page 36, you'll read Ronnie Wendt's interview with Terry Magid, executive director of Global Enterprise Risk. Magid explains that sustainability is one of the key principles driving the company's decisions, stating it is their "mission in action," one that propels "sustainability, risk management and long-term strategy." This is a company that understands that complying with standards of environmental, social and governance framework isn't just something to slap on a report and pat themselves on the back. It's an ethos to be lived day in and day out in their operations throughout the world.

The companies innovating the next generation of RVs and embracing electrification are also following the call to keep sustainability in the forefront of their business practices. As Sam Shapiro, founder and CEO of Grounded, said in the article starting on page 28, the company saw a fundamental shift coming in the industry: "People who care deeply about nature and the outdoors were being asked to explore it in diesel-burning vehicles built with materials that don't reflect their values. The technology to fix that exists, it just hadn't been applied to this category with enough ambition." It's exciting to see stalwarts of the industry like THOR and Forest River, as well as a cadre of independent OEMs, exploring the future of electric vehicles in RVs.

One place where "all talk, no action" is the antithesis of success is in the fixed operations of any RV dealership. In this issue, you will find loads of advice about everything from needing a point person to own the systems in your fixed operations departments, to sales tactics sure to bring in revenue, and Mel Selway's tips on the importance of inventory accuracy. Every role in your dealership contributes to the operation's growth — take action to give each system you have in place the attention it deserves.

Lately I have been teaching my 8-year-old daughter that it's not enough to simply say "I'm sorry" — she also needs to change the behavior that led her to apologize to make things better. It's an important lesson to learn — words do matter, but so do the actions behind those words. I am grateful to see the companies in this industry implementing meaningful actions to support the words they speak, and I am excited for the future knowing we're not just paying these principles lip service.

As always, thanks for reading!

Jennifer King

RVPRO

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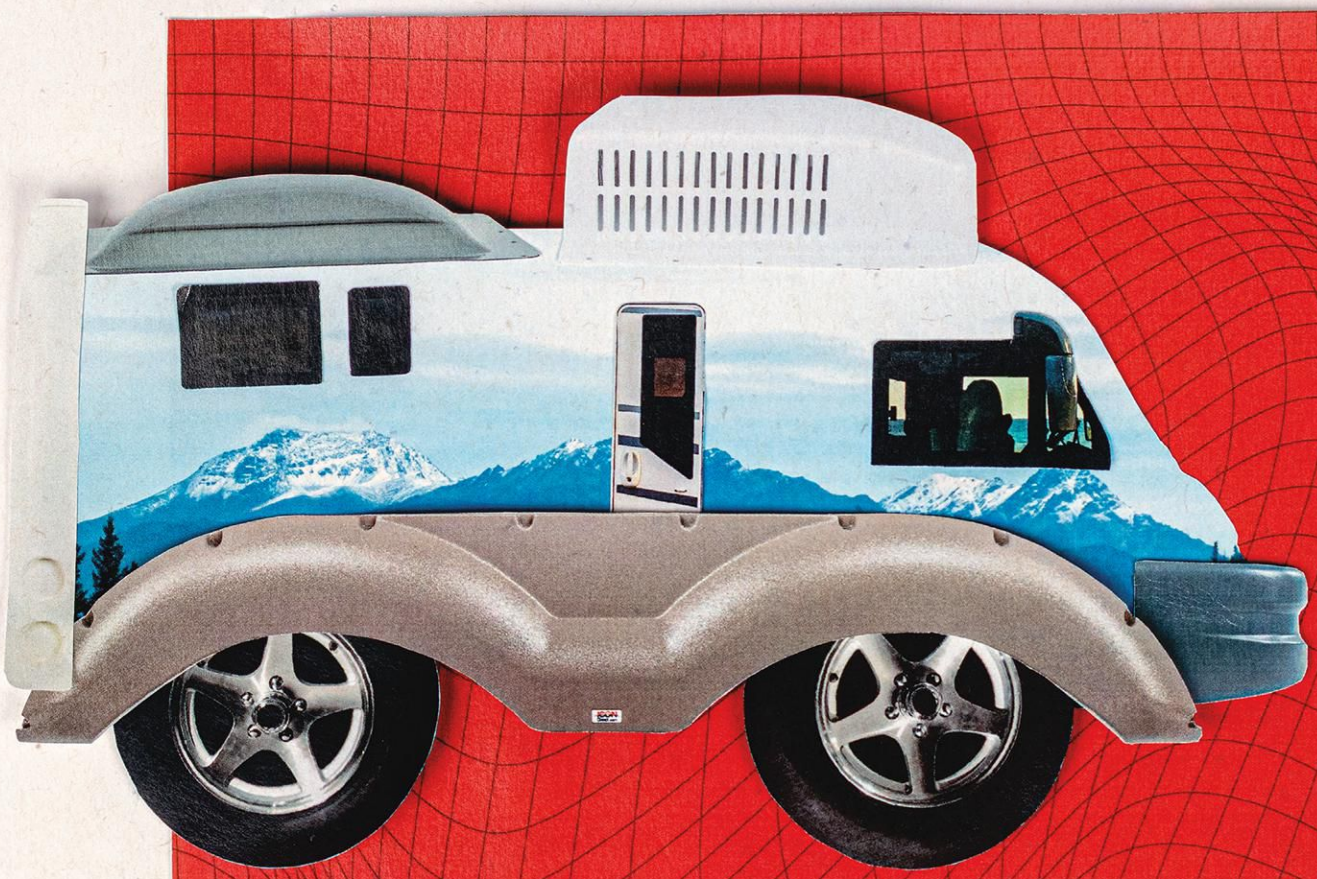
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HIRES & PROMOTIONS



Tom Fohr
Kunes Auto & RV Group

Kunes Auto & RV Group announced that Scott Kunes was stepping down from his day-to-day role as chief operating officer (COO) with the company. Tom Fohr, a 20-year veteran of the company, was appointed COO in February.



Chris Robinson
Suburban & Aqua-Hot

Airxcel promoted Chris Robinson to president of Suburban, effective Feb. 2. In addition, Aqua-Hot will now be aligned under Robinson's leadership within the Airxcel family of brands.



Colton Phelan
Jaeger-UniTek Sealing Solutions

Jaeger-UniTek Sealing Solutions appointed Colton Phelan CEO, succeeding Mark Dilley, who retired after more than three decades of service to the company and the sealing industry. Phelan brings 11 years of experience with Jaeger-UniTek Sealing Solutions, including the past three years as vice president of sales.





Chris Fairlee & Brian Elsmore
Kampgrounds of America

Kampgrounds of America (KOA) promoted Chris Fairlee (top) to chief operations officer and Brian Elsmore to chief information officer. Fairlee will oversee franchise services, OAK operations, commercial strategy, acquisitions and franchise development, consolidating these functions under a single Campground Operations division. Elsmore will continue to advance KOA's technology, data and systems infrastructure, enhancing campground operations and elevating the guest experience.

GIVING BACK

RV Women's Alliance Charitable Foundation (RVWACF) launched Chassis to Classy, a signature Vision Vehicle initiative designed to bring the RV industry together in support of education, community and career development. Once complete, the vehicle will be raffled, with proceeds directly supporting RVWACF to help women thrive in the RV industry. For more information, visit chassistoclassy.org.

IN MEMORIAM



Frank Konigseder Sr., founder and president of **Liberty Coach**, died Feb. 12, at age 88. An announcement released by Liberty Coach said Konigseder had a lifelong passion for travel, the outdoors and anything with an engine. He was an accomplished sports fisherman, earning trophies across all five of the world's oceans, and had an extensive tractor collection. He also loved motorhomes and the never-ending challenge of building a better one, leading to the creation of Liberty Coach.

Konigseder remained active in company operations into the 21st century, and continued to run the original family foundry, F.K. Foundries, well into his later years. Liberty Coach said it remains a wholly family-owned business, with sons Frank Konigseder Jr. and Kurt Konigseder heading the firm since 2000 and a third generation emerging as key players in company operations.

Want more? For more information on any of these news items, visit rv-pro.com/news.







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EVENTS

RVWA Spring Campout
May 1-3
Howe, IN
rvwa.org/events

Overland Expo West
May 15-17
Flagstaff, AZ
overlandexpo.com/west

All-Industry Volunteer Day
May 20
Elkhart, IN

RVs Move America Week
May 31 - June 4
Washington, D.C.
rvia.org/events/rvs-move-america-week

National Go RVing Day
June 13
gorving.com

Overland Expo PNW
June 26-29
Redmond, OR
overlandexpo.com/pacific-northwest

RVWACF Golf Scramble
June 25
Middlebury, IN
rvwa.org/events/golf-scramble

FRVA's 113th International Convention & RV Expo
July 1-4
Sedalia, MO
frva.com/frva-sedalia-2026-learn-more

RVIA Aftermarket Conference
Aug. 10-13
Orlando, FL
rvia.org/events/rv-aftermarket-conference

NATDA Trailer Show
Sept. 1-4
Nashville, TN
natdatrailershow.com

RV MANUFACTURING



In February, **Tiffin Motorhomes** and **THOR Industries** announced Leigh Tiffin's resignation from his role as president of Tiffin Motorhomes. "After a great deal of thought, I've decided to step away from my role at Tiffin to pursue a personal opportunity that is important to me," said Leigh Tiffin. He has joined National Indoor RV Centers as its president. Tiffin Motorhomes also announced its plans to relocate its Class C motorhome production and operations to its primary manufacturing campus in Red Bay, Alabama. The transition is slated for May 2026.

Storyteller Overland launched its latest model: the TOUR MODE. Built on the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 170-inch 3500 dually chassis, the TOUR MODE features versatile seating and RV queen-size bed configuration, a full wet/dry bath, an nVader Roof Rack, ample storage and more.

MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

Alliance RV acquired **Midwest Automotive Designs,** a premium custom van "upfitter" that develops and manufactures luxury vehicles for end segments including motorhomes, shuttle vans and customized executive transportation vehicles. This acquisition marks Alliance RV's strategic entry into the motorized segment of the RV industry with Midwest's Class B RVs and multiple products for the luxury limousine, charter and tour bus markets, respectively.

In early February, **Terex Corporation** announced the successful completion of its merger with **REV Group** to form a specialty equipment manufacturer with a diversified portfolio and growth prospects. "The merger positions the company quite uniquely to accelerate profitable growth with a much more resilient top line," said Simon Meester, Terex president and CEO.

RV DEALERS

Blue Compass RV announced the grand opening of its new flagship dealership in Fort Myers, Florida; an official grand opening celebration was held on Feb. 5. The new facility spans across 12 acres and 30,000 square feet of building space, and includes 20 service bays and offers space to showcase more than 225 RVs on-site.

SUPPLIERS & AFTERMARKET

LCI Industries announced the upcoming retirement of James Gero from its board of directors, effective at the company's 2026 Annual Meeting of Stockholders in May, following 33 years of dedicated service. Gero served as the chairman of the board of LCI Industries from May of 2014 to May of 2021.

WEBINARS



From Rearview to the Road Ahead: AI & Your DMS
April 9 | 1 p.m. CT
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How To Restore & Maintain the Appearance of RVs
April 21 | 1 p.m. CT
Sponsored by ReFresh Exterior RV Restoration

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Go RVing's RV-2-50 Positions RVing at the Center of America's 250th Celebration

The year-long campaign elevates RVing during a once-in-a-generation travel moment.

BY MONIKA GERACI, RV INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION SENIOR DIRECTOR OF PR & COMMUNICATIONS

As the United States prepares to celebrate its 250th birthday, the RV industry has an opportunity to position RV travel as one of the most compelling ways to explore the country. Go RVing, the RV industry's consumer marketing campaign, is leading that effort via a national initiative known as RV-2-50 — designed to elevate RVing as a central part of America's semiquincentennial travel.

RV-2-50 is a year-long, industry-wide effort that invites travelers to experience the freedom, flexibility and fun of RVing while exploring destinations across the country. The initiative creates tangible benefits for RV dealers, campgrounds, manufacturers and destination partners by driving interest, foot traffic and engagement throughout 2026 and beyond.

"RV-2-50 is about ensuring the RV industry is front and center during one of the most significant travel moments in our nation's history," said Craig Kirby, president and CEO of the RV Industry Association (RVIA). "RVing offers a uniquely American way to explore the country, connect with its history, spend quality time with loved ones and support local economies. This initiative creates meaningful opportunities for dealers, campgrounds and other RV industry businesses to engage consumers throughout the year."

At the heart of RV-2-50 is a growing collection of curated RV road trip itineraries regularly published on the Go RVing website. These guides highlight routes across the country that are well-suited for RV travel, featuring a mix of iconic landmarks, historic sites, family-friendly stops, and RV campgrounds and parks.

Go RVing is collaborating with state, regional and city destination marketing organizations, campgrounds and travel experts to ensure each itinerary reflects authentic local experiences while reinforcing how RVing enhances flexibility and comfort. For the industry, these itineraries serve as evergreen content that supports trip planning, inspires first-time RV consideration, secures media attention and reinforces RV travel as practical, desirable way to experience the country.

To date, Go RVing has published more than 20 RV-2-50 itineraries as well as extended cross-country journeys designed to be completed over six weeks or six months.

THE TRAVEL PASSPORT PROGRAM

Go RVing recently introduced the RV-2-50 Travel Passport Program, a new engagement tool designed to encourage participation while directly supporting dealers and campgrounds.

The RV-2-50 Travel Passport is a physical, small-format journal that allows travelers to document their RV trips throughout 2026 — whether they are following one of the official RV-2-50 itineraries or charting their own adventures. While consumer-facing in nature, the program encourages existing RVers to share their adventures with others, using word of mouth to inspire others to consider RVing. The passport program also creates value by putting foot traffic in local RV dealerships and campgrounds.

"The RV-2-50 Travel Passport Program was designed with the industry in mind," said Monika Geraci, senior director of PR and communications for RVIA and Go RVing. "It gives dealers and campgrounds a tangible, low-barrier way to engage travelers, spark conversations about RV travel and encourage repeat visits — all while tying into a national Go RVing campaign that will generate sustained visibility for the RV lifestyle throughout 2026."

RV dealers and campgrounds can participate in the program as official RV-2-50 Travel Passport "Hubs," where Travel Passports are distributed directly to consumers. These hubs serve as physical touchpoints between the national campaign and local businesses.

For dealers, the Travel Passport provides a natural conversation starter that can increase time on the lot, support trip-planning discussions and keep RV travel top of mind even after a customer leaves the dealership. For campgrounds, it reinforces booking behavior and loyalty by encouraging travelers to document and share their experiences online.

Participating hubs also gain valuable insight into what inspires RVers to travel, where they go and how they are using their RVs — information that can inform marketing, merchandising and customer engagement strategies.

Go RVing continues to expand its network of participating dealerships and campgrounds. If you're interested in becoming a Travel Passport Hub, please email Geraci at mgeraci@rvia.org. Limited quantities are available.

INCENTIVIZING PARTICIPATION

Another component of RV-2-50 is a user-generated content activation that invites RVers to submit photos and videos from their road trips for the chance to earn exclusive Go RVing swag and be entered to win the grand prize: camping fees paid for one year, up to $5,000.

This opportunity further amplifies the initiative by encouraging organic social media sharing and peer-to-peer inspiration, extending the reach of RV-2-50 content. Participation in the Travel Passport Program is not required to submit content, ensuring broad accessibility while still reinforcing the campaign message.

A CALL TO ACTION

Go RVing is inviting the entire RV industry to help promote RV-2-50 and encourage RVers to share their journeys throughout 2026. To support participation, Go RVing has developed templated social media posts, email newsletter copy and campaign graphics that industry stakeholders can easily customize and deploy. To receive this toolkit, email Mindy Smith at msmith@rvia.org.

By aligning around RV-2-50, the industry has an opportunity to collectively elevate RVing during a once-in-a-generation travel moment — connecting the freedom of the open road with America's 250-year legacy and reinforcing RV travel as an essential part of how Americans explore their country. RVP

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Richie Fort, business development manager for MDC USA (left) with John and Carina DeHoff

SERVING A SPECIALIZED NICHE

Idaho-based Leisureland RV keeps its inventory lean and focused on RV industry trends while maintaining a customer-centric reputation.

BY JOHN MCCURRY

IMAGES COURTESY OF LEISURELAND RV

Perhaps few RV dealers have successfully reinvented themselves as often as Leisureland RV in Meridian, Idaho. Launching in 2015 to refurbish pre-owned RVs, Leisureland turned its attention first to selling destination RVs in 2018 and then to well-built overlanding units in early 2025.

In 2026, dealership co-owner John DeHoff, who considers himself an "industry disrupter," is selling a selection of niche products.

DeHoff, an Air Force veteran who retired on a medical discharge in 2014 with nearly a quarter century of service, is known for his predilection for hiring military veterans. The practice has led to the dealership receiving several U.S. Department of Labor awards.

"I have always had an appreciation and fondness for those who have served in the military," he says. "It is a call to duty, not a job.



It is a great sacrifice that people make. Most Americans support the military, which I appreciate. I always said I would seek out veterans to hire, because they understand that extra level of dedication and discipline."

DeHoff's wife, Carina, is co-owner of the dealership. When her husband retired from the Air Force, she asked if he could help fix an old travel trailer she had. They reconditioned it and sold it within two days after putting it on the market. That was the impetus of Leisureland's original business model.

At its peak employment level, Leisureland RV had 29 employees, nine of whom were veterans. Since then, the DeHoffs have changed the company's structure, transforming it into a "boutique" store, specializing in a limited number of brands with a focus on overlanders. In the process, the staff was trimmed considerably.

"We have compressed the company," DeHoff says. "When we were selected for the Veterans Gold Medallion Award by the Department of Labor, we had five [veterans] out nine on the team, so we were at over 50%."

Due to its focus on a dedicated team with low turnover, openings are infrequent. As part of its veteran-centric hiring, Leisureland is a member of the Veterans Chamber of Commerce. It is also a certified Service-Disabled Veteran Small Business (SDVSB).

"Veterans do seek us out, but currently we do not have openings," DeHoff says. "Anytime we do, I am always looking for veterans."





A VERSATILE BUSINESS MODEL

DeHoff has long been critical of the construction of many RVs. "They can have problems," he says. That skepticism led him to initially build a business model of reconditioning pre-owned units. DeHoff decided to expand in 2018, first into destination lines. That move worked well at the time, buoyed by the housing crunch in nearby Boise.

"As an independent dealer, we started out the first four years only in pre-owned, and we did very well. We had a robust service department, and we did heavy reconditioning on them until we became known as one of the best pre-owned dealers in the industry. We would go to great lengths to get them into good shape. Our reputation grew until half of our sales were out of state.

"We expanded from [Forest River's] Sandpiper into [THOR Industries'] Crossroads campers. We kept doing well, so we decided to try other new lines. This was leading into the COVID years, where anything and everything would sell. We kept adding new lines until we got away from our core, which had been the beautiful, hand-selected, pre-owned units, meticulously selected by my wife or me."

DeHoff realized another change might be in order after the RV market declined following the pandemic. In mid-2022, overloaded with new inventory, he began contemplating his next move. He decided to get rid of every unit by the end of October. That was more than 100 2022 models.

"The pendulum had swung, and interest rates went through the roof. It took us three years to unburden ourselves of aged inventory and to try to build up a better inventory. By then, the game had changed. The larger dealers were buying in bulk, and they were selling them for the same amount that I was buying them for. It was destroying our company. The destination market was saturated."

So about a year ago, DeHoff began to reflect on Leisureland's time in the pre-owned market.

"We were the best. Then when we first got into the destinations, nobody competed with us in that space. We were in a modular office on a dirt lot in southeast Boise, and we were the No. 1 Sandpiper dealer in the U.S. for destinations. We were

the No. 1 Crossroads Hampton dealer in the western U.S. ... just because of our client-centric reputation. We were accountable when things went wrong."

DeHoff decided to transform Leisureland into a boutique dealer, phasing out from "the regular RV world," which he says had become a "headache." The new Leisureland is built around selling well-built units backed up by strong warranties.

In June 2024, DeHoff partnered with MDC USA, the U.S. branch of an Australian builder of overland RVs. He quickly became enamored with the quality and sturdiness of the MDCs, which were new to the U.S.

"I saw these MDCs, and they are built like battleships. I understand military-grade quality [and] aerospace engineering, and what it takes to build something that is going to last. They planned to produce about 500 units a year, with six or so dealers. They gave us a massive territory and customer support. It was a godsend, and it was everything I was looking for.

"With the overlanders, it was a different story. If there is ever a problem, it is always addressed. I have the personal cell number of the U.S. plant manager. I was in direct contact with the number two at MDC on a weekly basis, [with] unrestricted access. We were part of the developmental process for the off-grid extreme variant, the Generation II. Clients seek us out and say they had heard we were an MDC dealer."

Leisureland added a second brand in early 2025 — Pause by Forest River, a builder of off-road models, which DeHoff says offers the same level of support as MDC.

"We started getting questions from clients looking for that specific product, the same as with the overlanders. ... I know our clients are going to get a superior product. They are going to be taken care of and the manufacturer is going to stand behind them, and I can stand behind the product."



"I KNOW OUR CLIENTS ARE GOING TO GET A SUPERIOR PRODUCT. THEY ARE GOING TO BE TAKEN CARE OF."

—JOHN DEHOFF

ON THE HUNT

For MDC, Leisureland's territory is Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Alaska and western Canada. For Pause, it is Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and some small dealers in Washington and Oregon.

"We are going to assume control of that market, because that is what we do," DeHoff says. "That is what we specialize in. Customers will want to go to the best."

The switch to a limited selection of models has attracted a completely new set of customers. Overlander enthusiasts typically have done their research when they arrive.

"The reason we chose Pause to pair with MDC is that is the lion's share of the overlander market. There are a lot of similarities, but there are some marked differences. The Pause has a lot of bells and whistles, features and some very cool gadgetry, which gives it a 'wow' factor. MDC is rugged luxury. It is a battleship, a tank. It has everything you need, and it is not going to fail. You'll never have to worry about it."

DeHoff says Leisureland has matured its MDC line, carrying all eight floorplans. He has been showcasing the Pause brand while developing that inventory. In late January, he had two in stock and five more on order.

The dealership's third OEM partnership is with Genesis Supreme, an independent builder of toy haulers in Perris, California.

"They are sought out as the best," DeHoff says. "There is a waiting list for those. What I want to develop is the complete shopping experience, which we had developed way back when we had our destination line. I offered a good, better and best."

DeHoff wants one more line to round out his offerings.

"I'm on the hunt for an entry-level line to offer. It has to have the same level of quality and manufacturer's support that fits with our business model. I have not found it yet, but I'm looking, and that is what will round out what I need for this chapter of my business. We will also have selected pre-owned units that will be the best that can be found out there."

DeHoff says the switch to selling MDC was timely and helped keep Leisureland afloat. It was part of a restructuring process that eliminated overhead. Realizing products have a life cycle, DeHoff is always looking ahead to his next move.

"If the overlander runs its course, how can I move onto the next thing while still maintaining the culture and integrity of the company? How do I find the right product that is worthy of our reputation? That is the biggest challenge." RVP

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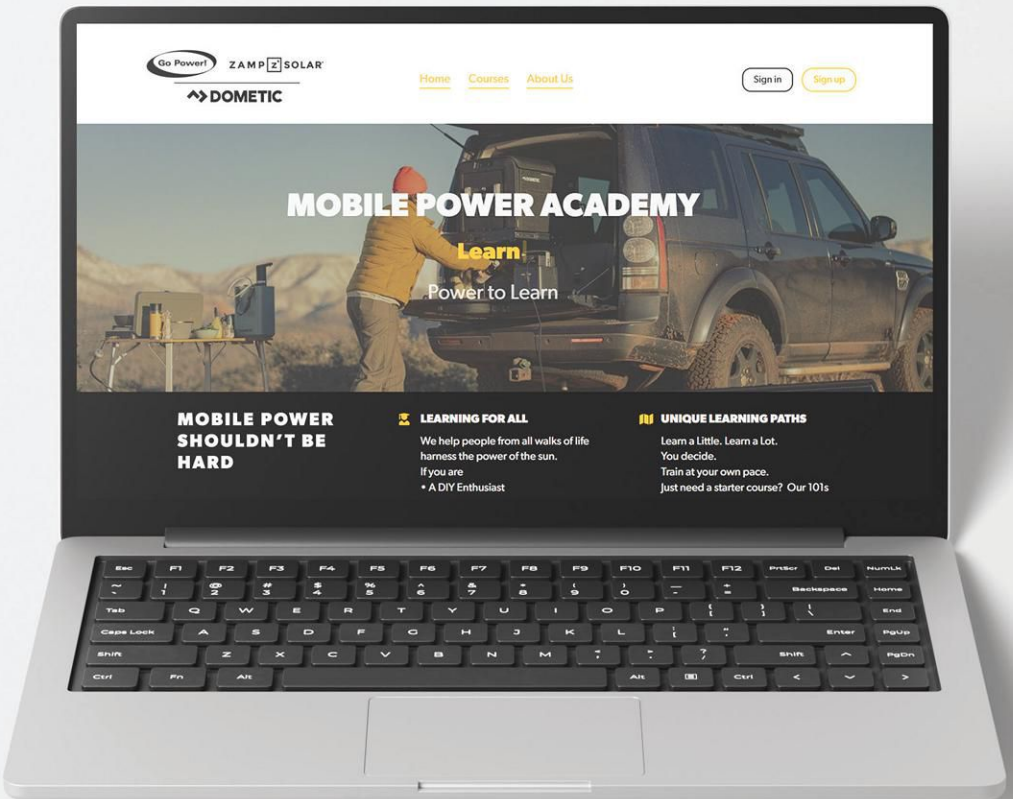
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Fleetwood's Fresh Perspective







A **reimagined Class C** lineup introduces customers to **Fleetwood's** RVs, capitalizing on a desire for affordability, maneuverability and flexible floorplans.

BY DARIAN ARMER

PHOTOS COURTESY OF REV GROUP

"WE PROVIDE A GOOD PRODUCT. WE WANT IT TO STAND UP AND MAKE SURE THEY ENJOY IT FOR A LONG TIME."

—DOUG MILLER

The Class C segment is not new for Fleetwood, but its new Class C lineup is an updated take on old excellence. After shifting focus to their Class A lineup for several years, they've reentered the Class C segment, bringing innovation and a fresh perspective to their offerings.

"Back in the day, Fleetwood was very well known for their Jamboree. It ruled the roost when it came to Class Cs. In the boom of Class Cs, we were right in the thick of it. After a while, we deviated and focused more on the Class A business," says Doug Miller, sales and product manager for Fleetwood, Holiday Rambler and American Coach.

Miller says over the course of the last six or seven years, the OEM identified through research that it wasn't providing a great path for customers to get into a Class A. By offering a newly reimagined Class C lineup, it gets customers introduced to the Fleetwood lifestyle.

"It gets branding around their head as they migrate through the RV life cycle. They hit our Class As next. We know how to build Class Cs and didn't have any fears. We brought that back to get into that space," Miller says.

With that in mind, Miller says they introduced the Altitude and Insight Class Cs because the company is climbing.

"We're getting back into consumer driveways, campgrounds and tailgates. We chose not to go with the Jamboree and Tioga names because they've been used in the past and we want to look forward to the future."

Fleetwood offers products in both the Class C and Super C segments. In Class C, they have the 2026 Insight (diesel) and the 2026 Altitude (gas). The Super C lineup includes the 2026 Altitude FS600D (diesel) and 2026 Altitude FS550 (gas).

INSIDE THE INNOVATION

In designing its Class Cs, Miller says they took some of the most popular floorplan products they were seeing in Class Cs and found out ways they could make them bigger or better.

"Most Class C motorhomes have narrow entry doors. Trying to carry things in and out, the narrow entry way prohibits you. We tend to use larger doors on a Class A than a Class C. We thought, 'Let's change that.'"

So they put in an enhanced radiused entry door for increased accessibility and security. The next area they identified for improvement were the entry steps.

"We noticed entry steps can be kind of clunky and sit lower to the ground so they pick up more debris from the road. So we got rid of the step. We made our entry lower so it's easier to get into and out of and makes a lot of sense. We tried to find the most interesting things that stand out."

Looking from the outside in, Fleetwood addressed the front cap appearance next.

"We partnered with Goldshield Fiberglass and had a large windshield made since that front cap is really the first thing you see. We wanted to make sure we had a powerful statement that said, 'Here I am. Come look at me.' We have one of the largest upper cab bunk areas with a power shade that comes down, surface chargers and a large sleeping area that's comfortable for adults and kids," Miller says.

Regardless of who's using the bunk, Miller says they wanted a fabric that could stand up to kids, dogs, cats and the adults who might use it. That's why they teamed up with Revolution Performance Fabrics to provide an improved fabric for their bunk that's easy to clean and maintain and be comfortable.

"It's darn near bulletproof," Miller says. "The end result for the consumer is they don't have to replace this component we put in as a manufacturer."

Inside the Class C, Miller says they looked at shower size.

"Inside a Class C, typically your box is smaller and you don't have as much space. So we researched and kind of leaned on our Class A mentality. We took that concept and provided a bigger shower."

Fleetwood Altitude gas units also offer an exclusive powerlock system, premium full-body paint and Roto-Cast molded and citadel-lined luggage bays. The Roto-Cast molded luggage bays are easier to clean and more resilient than traditional plywood compartments. Inside, there are options for all, from spacious dinettes to multiple sleeping arrangements.

"We just started checking boxes. We're conscientious of price, but that can't be our only staple we lean on. We provide a good product. We want it to stand up and make sure they enjoy it for a long time."

Construction using premium Tuff Coat vacu-bonded sidewalls and a Tuff-Ply thermal polyolefin composite roof offers long-lasting durability and protection. High-performance frameless radius corner windows add a sleek exterior look.

Miller says they added the DX4 Package, with best-in-class anti-dive control to combat the common complaint of difficult handling across Class C products and provide a smoother, more stable ride.

The Fleetwood Insight includes the Mercedes-Benz suite of safety features for added driving confidence and security. It also features stainless steel luggage door framing, composite fiberglass sidewalls and a fiberglass roof to enhance corrosion resistance, longevity and exterior quality.

In the Super C series, Miller says they're doing something different by offering a gas version of their Super C diesel.

"Something new we're doing is the F550 but using a gas version instead of diesel. We've created a shorter F-series type motorhome and are in a different price point than the consumer that has to have a diesel. It's for the person who likes the profile but not the price point of a diesel. We can attack that by not having a diesel. We strive to build more and better floorplans going out. It complements our diesel offering and longer floorplans. We are venturing out and trying to find pockets of where it may make sense to a consumer to have one."







LOOKING AHEAD

Miller says he anticipates steady demand in the Class C segment as buyers continue prioritizing drivability, durability, safety features, flexible floorplans and upscale comfort.

"Affordability is probably one of the things driving demand for Class Cs. They're easier to jump in and out of. They're a little bit more flexible, nimble and affordable. There are less people who can spend the type of money it takes to get into a Class A."

With both first-time buyers and experienced RVers seeking maneuverability without sacrificing amenities, demand for more floorplans and configurations will continue to grow.

"THE CLASS C SEGMENT ISN'T GOING ANY PLACE. IT HAS BEEN ... ONE OF THE STRONGEST IN THE RV MARKET FOR A LONG TIME."

—DOUG MILLER



Fleetwood has met this challenge head on and continues to fulfill that demand for flexible floorplans and better storage solutions. Miller says Fleetwood's products have garnered positive feedback.

"Our Class C products have been received very well. The biggest proof is when you get the consumer behind the wheel and let them take it off the lot," Miller says.

"The Class C segment isn't going any place. It has been and remains one of the strongest in the RV market for a long time." RVP

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TOWING IT RIGHT: *How To Approach Hitches, Setup & Customer Education*

Helping customers understand that there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

BY KRISTI FEENEY, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING, AFTERMARKET AUTOMOTIVE, LIPPERT

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LIPPERT

"EVEN THE BEST HITCH WILL NOT PERFORM CORRECTLY IF IT IS IMPROPERLY INSTALLED OR ADJUSTED."

—KRISTI FEENEY

Walk into any RV dealership and you will hear the same towing questions day after day. Customers arrive excited about their next adventure, but often unsure about what it really takes to tow safely and confidently. From our side of the counter, hitching is not just about hardware. It is about matching the right equipment to the right vehicle, trailer and lifestyle.

Here is what RV dealers see, hear and explain every day.

The Questions Customers Ask Most

Most conversations start with a familiar set of questions:

- Can my truck or SUV tow this RV?
- Do I need a weight distribution hitch, or will a standard ball mount work?
- What size hitch and ball do I need?
- Can I reuse the hitch from my last RV?
- Why does this hitch cost more than the one I saw online?
- Do I really need sway control?

Many customers assume towing is universal. They expect one hitch to work for every trailer and every vehicle. What they quickly learn is that towing setups are highly specific, based on the tow vehicle, the RV and how the rig will actually be used.

A big part of our role is helping customers understand that there is no one-size-fits-all solution.



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Attendees will learn:

- Which AI use cases are delivering measurable results today
- How to identify high-impact AI opportunities inside their dealership
- Real examples of AI improving customer outreach and operational workflows
- Simple, practical first steps that don't require a full tech overhaul
- A preview of upcoming AI innovations built specifically for RV and recreational dealers

This is a real-world roadmap for dealers who want to stay competitive and move forward with confidence — not guess their way into AI.

SPEAKER



Taylor Allis
Chief Product Officer
Lightspeed

Taylor Allis is chief product officer at Lightspeed, leading AI-driven product strategy that simplifies dealership operations and improves the customer experience. He is a longtime product and technology leader focused on turning complex data into practical, real-world outcomes for businesses.

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Asking the Right Questions Makes All the Difference

Before recommending any towing equipment, we must take time to understand how the customer plans to use their RV. The right questions guide everything:

- What vehicle are you towing with, including year, make, model, engine and factory tow package?
- What RV are you towing, including GVWR, tongue weight and length?
- How often will you tow, whether it is a few weekends a year or full-time travel?
- Where will you be towing, such as flat highways, mountain passes, windy plains or gravel roads?
- How will the RV be loaded, including cargo, water tanks, bikes, generators and gear?
- Who will be driving, whether they are a first-time tower or experienced?

These details help determine whether a customer needs weight distribution, sway control, higher capacity components or an upgrade from what they originally expected. Without this information, any recommendation is just a guess.

What Dealers Need To Know To Serve Customers Well

Successful hitch recommendations come down to confidence in a few core areas.

Weight ratings matter across the entire system, including the vehicle, receiver, hitch, ball and trailer. Compatibility is critical, because not every hitch works with every frame, coupler or vehicle configuration. Setup is just as important as the product itself. Even the best hitch will not perform correctly if it is improperly installed or adjusted.

We also encourage customers to think about future needs. Many start with smaller trailers and later move up, so understanding upgrade paths helps protect their investment.

When dealers know exactly why a specific hitch is recommended, they can clearly explain both value and safety, not just price.

Common Misunderstandings We See Every Day

There are a few misconceptions that come up repeatedly at the counter.

Customers often focus on maximum tow ratings without accounting for passengers, cargo or tongue weight in real world conditions. Tongue weight itself is frequently underestimated, even though it adds up quickly once tanks are filled and gear is loaded.

We also hear a lot of "my buddy tows without one," especially when it comes to weight distribution and sway control. Add in conflicting advice from online forums and YouTube, and customers can arrive with more confusion than clarity.

Perhaps the biggest misunderstanding is assuming all hitches are the same. Differences in quality, engineering and safety are not always obvious at first glance, but they make a major impact on towing performance.

Much of our job is resetting expectations in a way that educates without overwhelming.

What Happens When the Wrong Hitch Is Used

We should be very direct about the risks of improper towing setups:

- Poor handling and trailer sway
- Longer stopping distances
- Accelerated wear on tires, suspension and drivetrain
- Potential damage to the RV frame or tow vehicle
- In severe cases, loss of control or accidents

Even when nothing catastrophic happens, towing with the wrong equipment often feels stressful and unstable. That kind of experience discourages customers from traveling and enjoying their RV, which defeats the entire purpose of ownership.

Day-to-Day Challenges for Dealers

Towing education comes with its own set of challenges.

Customers want quick answers, but towing is never one-size-fits-all. Dealers must balance education with sales, making sure recommendations are based on safety and suitability, not just closing a transaction. Vehicle technology continues to evolve, from new truck platforms to EVs and advanced driver assistance systems, and staying current takes effort.

Correcting misinformation requires tact, especially when customers arrive confident in what they think they know.

That is why clear, practical, scenario-based training makes such a difference. When dealers understand real-world towing situations, they feel more confident guiding customers to the right solution, and customers leave better prepared for the road ahead. RVP

GOOGLE VEHICLE ADS IS THE 'FRONT ROW' IN RV SHOPPING

Own the top of Google with one partner managing your digital strategy.

Written by Eric Pedretti, InteractRV

If you've felt the market shift this year, you're not imagining it.

Inventory isn't the story it was just last year. We're closer to balanced-to-competitive conditions again — roughly a 1.64% average increase per dealer — and many stores are seeing more traffic, more leads and more sales. That's a good problem.

But it comes with a new reality: when the market shifts from "who has RVs" to "who stands out," the question isn't just whether shoppers are seeing you — it's whether your entire digital strategy is aligned to help you get seen first.

That's where working with a single, integrated partner matters.

And with peak buying season upon us, "found first" isn't a branding exercise. It's demand capture. Shoppers are planning trips. They're checking towing capacity. They're comparing floorplans. They're moving faster than we give them credit.

The hard part? Google isn't what it used to be.

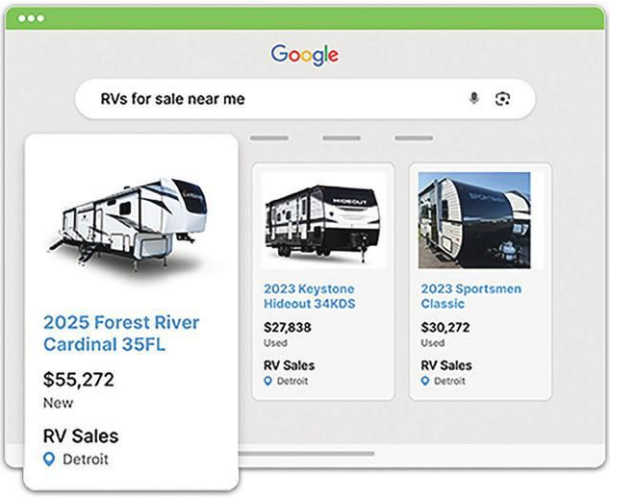
Google Search Got Crowded & the Best Real Estate Disappears Fast

Think about what your shoppers see today when they search:

- AI overviews answering questions before anyone clicks
- Multiple ad formats fighting for the same above-the-fold space
- Organic results pushed further down than they were even a year ago
- Big listing sites doing what they always do: showing up everywhere

So the dealer question becomes simple and brutal: How do you get your actual inventory in the highest position possible, in front of shoppers who are ready to buy?





Google Vehicle Ads: Inventory That Shows Up & Works With the Rest of Your Marketing

InteractRV's Google Vehicle Ads is designed for one thing: putting your in-stock units directly inside Google Search results — with photos, pricing and unit-level details.

This is what matters most:

- Your ads can appear in premium placements at the top of search results, competing in a world where AI overviews and paid formats are taking more space than ever.
- Shoppers see the actual units you have in stock, not just dealership messaging. Google Vehicle Ads automatically generates and manages campaigns based on live feed data without daily manual work.
- Every click takes the shopper straight to the vehicle detail page (VDP) — where the real decision-making happens. No detours. No "browse our inventory" dead ends. Less friction, cleaner intent, better conversations.

See the Difference When Your Marketing Isn't Fragmented

Many vendors can technically run Google Vehicle Ads. But inventory visibility doesn't operate in isolation. It directly impacts your website traffic, VDP engagement, SEO performance, paid search mix and overall lead flow.

And that's where InteractRV's approach changes the equation. Because your website, digital marketing and inventory feeds are all managed under one roof, performance isn't siloed — it's coordinated.

- If GVA data shows stronger engagement on certain models, your website merchandising can adjust.
- If specific units are driving higher-intent traffic, paid search strategy can pivot.
- If VDP behavior reveals friction, updates can be implemented quickly — without juggling multiple vendors or waiting on separate teams.

Instead of disconnected reports and competing recommendations, you have one partner with a complete view of your marketing performance.

This isn't about adding another marketing task to the pile. It's about removing complexity while strengthening visibility.

Be the Dealership Buyers Click on First

See how dealers are overcoming crowded search results to promote their in-stock units, get found first and drive shoppers straight to their VDPs.

WHY FIXED OPERATIONS TRAINING ISN'T THE PROBLEM — EXECUTION IS



LEXICONIMAGES - STOCK.ADOBE.COM

What on-site performance reviews consistently reveal inside RV dealerships.

BY MARK BOSWELL

In most RV service departments I work inside, the breakdown starts quietly, and it starts long before anyone sees it on a financial statement.

In many dealerships, leadership believes sales volume will offset operational inefficiencies. As long as units are moving, fixed operations is viewed primarily as a support department — there to prep inventory, handle warranty and keep customers moving. Revenue growth is expected to come from sales, not from disciplined execution inside service and parts.

That mindset works — until it doesn't.

What I see on the floor reflects that history. Repair orders stall. Technicians wait. Advisers manage chaos instead of workflow. Dispatch decisions happen reactively instead of intentionally. These behaviors didn't start when sales slowed; they existed long before and were simply masked by unit volume.

One of the clearest warning signs appears in unallocated technician labor accounts. In dealership after dealership, significant amounts of technician time sit unbilled — hours that should have been converted to revenue if proper estimating, authorization, dispatch and follow-up processes were in place. The issue isn't technician capability. It's the execution breakdowns surrounding them.

In multi-rooftop organizations, this problem often compounds quietly across locations. Each store may believe the issue is manageable on its own, but collectively the lost capacity becomes substantial. By the time leadership recognizes the impact in the numbers, fixed operations is suddenly expected to generate revenue it was never structurally prepared to capture.

Fixed operations doesn't become important when sales slow. It becomes exposed.

Training Exists — Execution Often Does Not

Nearly every dealership I work with has invested in training. Advisers have attended classes. Technicians are certified. Teams participate in off-site meetings and peer groups. Leadership believes systems and processes are in place.

But when I'm physically on the floor, I often find that many of those processes aren't being run — or aren't being owned.

In many dealerships, there is no true fixed operations playbook guiding daily behavior. Even when a playbook exists, accountability for enforcing it is unclear. Dispatch systems are available, but no one truly owns the flow of

work. Workflow tools exist, yet advisers manage repair orders from memory and habit. Accountability is discussed in meetings but rarely reinforced during the day when outcomes can still be influenced.

This creates a dangerous illusion. From leadership's perspective, everything appears functional. Training has been completed. Systems have been purchased. From the floor, execution is inconsistent, and results depend more on individual effort than on structure.

Dealerships spend meaningful money sending teams to off-site training, meetings and peer groups, yet often struggle to define what return they expect once those teams return to the store. The issue isn't the value of training itself — it's what happens, or doesn't happen, afterward.

Without a defined owner responsible for enforcing the process, reviewing performance in real time and correcting execution during the day, even well-designed systems fail to move the needle. The result isn't a lack of effort or intent, but a lack of structure strong enough to turn learning into consistent, measurable outcomes.

Where Execution Actually Breaks Down on the Floor

When unbilled hours accumulate and workflow stalls, it's rarely because of one major failure. What I see instead is a series of small execution breakdowns that compound throughout the day.

"THE ISSUE ISN'T THE VALUE OF TRAINING ITSELF — IT'S WHAT HAPPENS, OR DOESN'T HAPPEN, AFTWERWARD."

—MARK BOSWELL

The first breakdown typically appears at the front end of the repair order. Estimates aren't built thoroughly, customer authorizations lag and work begins without a clear path to completion. Advisers manage interruptions instead of controlling workflow, which causes repair orders to pause unnecessarily while technicians wait.

Dispatch is another consistent pressure point. In many dealerships, dispatch technically exists, but no one truly owns it. Decisions are made reactively based on immediate availability rather than what work should be moving next. Technicians bounce between jobs, priorities shift midday and productivity suffers — not due to effort, but due to unclear direction.

Parts staging often becomes the silent contributor. Technicians flag time waiting on parts that should have been identified, pulled and staged in advance. Advisers and parts teams work hard, but without a shared rhythm or defined expectations, delays become normal. Those delays don't always show up as obvious downtime; they surface as reduced billed hours that quietly settle into unallocated labor accounts.

Warranty work creates its own execution drag when treated as interruption work instead of planned work. In some dealerships, warranty is minimized or avoided altogether because it's perceived as low-paying or not worth the labor time. What often gets missed is the total opportunity being left on the table.

Manufacturers allocate warranty reimbursement tied to the cost of the unit, representing a meaningful recovery opportunity when captured correctly. When warranty issues aren't identified early, documented properly and scheduled intentionally, that opportunity disappears. The result isn't just lost reimbursement — it's technician capacity consumed later fixing issues that should have been addressed before delivery.

This is why disciplined new-unit check-in matters. Every unit arriving from the factory should go through a complete, consistent inspection process designed to identify warranty items before delivery.

Many of these execution gaps persist because the tools designed to support real-time workflow aren't being used as intended. Today's DMS platforms already support tablet-based check-in, technician documentation, photo capture and live repair order updates. Yet in many dealerships, advisers are still entering technician notes after repairs are completed, photos are uploaded later from separate cloud systems and documentation is reconstructed instead of captured in the moment. That delay quietly erodes productivity. It adds administrative time, disrupts workflow, reduces technician efficiency and ultimately limits billed hours. When documentation is captured in real time — at check-in and throughout the repair process — cycle time improves, warranty recovery becomes cleaner and technicians spend more time producing instead of waiting.

Execution doesn't fail all at once. It fails in small, repeated moments — moments that only surface clearly when someone is watching the workflow as it happens.

Why Structure Fails Without Financial Leadership & Ownership

Even when dealerships recognize execution issues and attempt to introduce structure, results often stall for a simple reason: structure isn't reinforced daily, and it isn't anchored to financial leadership strong enough to drive it. What I see repeatedly is accountability without ownership — and ownership without financial understanding.

Leadership wants the numbers. Reports are requested. KPIs are reviewed. But responsibility for driving those numbers is often unclear, and the people expected to deliver results don't always understand how the pieces fit together financially. Managers are asked to perform without a clear view of what "winning" actually looks


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like — or how daily decisions impact the outcome.

In many dealerships, department-level budgets either aren't shared or don't exist. Service and parts managers are expected to hit KPIs without knowing their monthly revenue targets, gross profit goals or expense expectations. Without that context, metrics lose meaning. Numbers get tracked, but they aren't tied to a plan.

Even when budgets are established, another breakdown often appears: the role driving the department isn't equipped to translate financial targets into operational behavior. Capable people are placed into positions that require financial leadership without being given the training, support or structure to succeed. Expectations exist, but the path to achieving them is unclear.

Fixed operations departments don't improve by monitoring numbers alone. They improve when leaders understand how labor efficiency, billed hours, parts margin, workflow control and warranty recovery connect directly to the budget they're accountable for.

Numbers don't lie — they always tell the truth. But numbers only matter when the people responsible for them understand what they're measuring, why it matters and how their decisions move the department toward, or away from, the goal. Without financial clarity, capable leadership in the right seats and defined ownership, metrics become noise instead of guidance.

What High-Performing Fixed Operations Teams Do Differently

Across the dealerships I've worked inside, the highest-performing fixed operations departments don't succeed because they have better people, tools or market conditions. They succeed because leadership treats execution as a daily responsibility, supported by clear structure and disciplined processes.

The difference is clarity.

High-performing teams know what they're driving toward. Department goals are defined, shared and understood. Managers know their monthly targets. Advisers and technicians understand how daily behavior connects to those goals. KPIs aren't just tracked — they're reinforced throughout the day.

Just as importantly, these dealerships operate from strong, written processes. Expectations don't live in someone's head or rely on internal knowledge. They are documented, trained and reinforced through clear standard operating procedures (SOPs) that define how workflows from check-in to completion. Those SOPs become the real playbook — one that supports accountability, creates consistency and allows execution to scale beyond individual performers.

Ownership is equally clear. Someone controls workflow. Someone owns dispatch. Someone plans warranty work. Someone ensures parts are staged. Because processes are written and understood, accountability feels fair instead of personal.

These dealerships plan work instead of reacting to it. Repair orders are built thoroughly. Authorization follow-up is intentional. Parts are staged ahead of time. Warranty work is identified early through disciplined unit check-ins and scheduled like any other revenue-producing work — guided by documented expectations rather than habit.

Leadership rhythm ties it together. Daily huddles set priorities. Managers stay engaged on the floor. Corrections happen while the day is still recoverable. Structure and process do the heavy lifting, not heroics.

In high-performing fixed operations departments, success isn't dependent on who happens to be working that day. It's driven by processes that make execution repeatable and by leaders who ensure those processes are followed consistently.

Why Fixed Operations Will Decide Who Wins in 2026

The dealerships that have the processes, structure and discipline described throughout this article didn't build them by accident. They built them because they understood something early: fixed operations isn't just a support function — it's the stabilizer of the entire dealership.

This year, that distinction matters more than ever.

Sales volume alone is no longer reliable enough to mask operational gaps. Market conditions remain uneven. Margins are tighter. Inventory dynamics have shifted. In this environment, the dealerships that continue to perform are not the ones waiting for sales to rebound, they're the ones that already have execution control inside service and parts.

What separates these dealerships is alignment — financial clarity, disciplined processes, clear ownership and consistent execution reinforced every day, not just when conditions tighten.

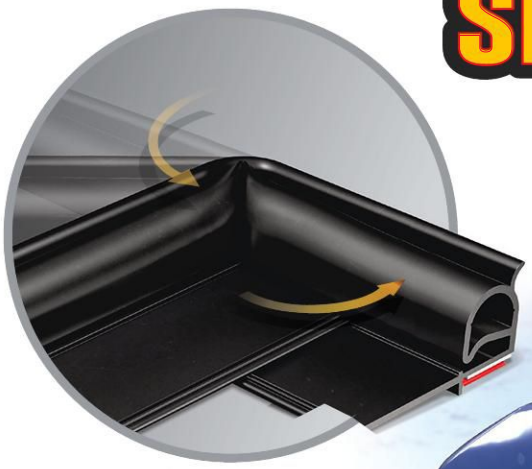
Fixed operations doesn't suddenly become important when the market softens. It becomes decisive.

In 2026 and beyond, the strongest dealerships won't be defined by how many units they sell when the market is strong. They'll be defined by how well their fixed operations perform when the market isn't. RVP

Mark Boswell is founder and CEO of Crossroads of America Consulting LLC. He has more than 30 years of experience working inside RV and marine dealership fixed operations, with a focus on service and parts execution, operational discipline and profitability. He works with dealerships nationwide to improve performance through process clarity and accountability.



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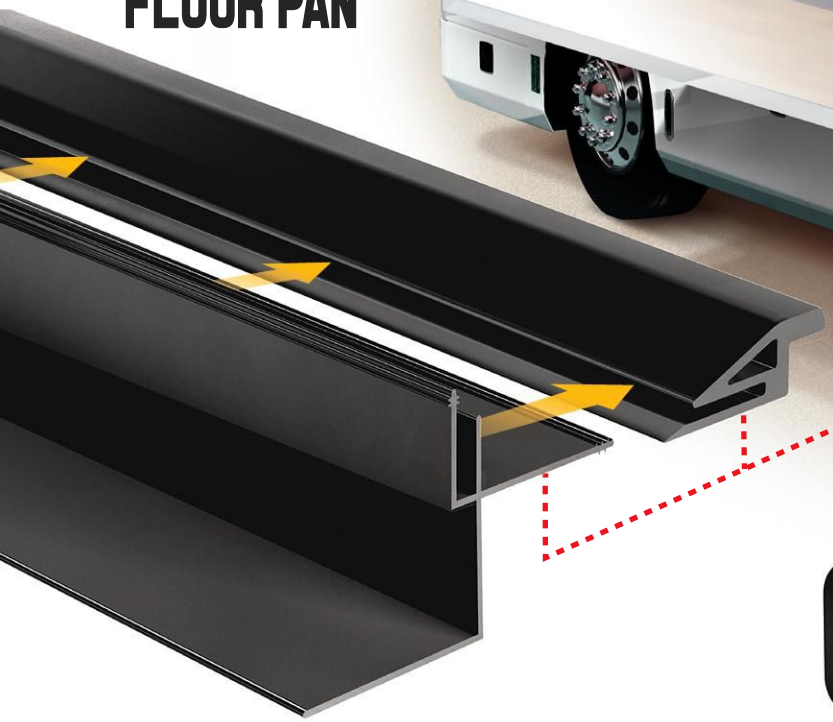


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THE FUTURE OF EV RVS

RV PRO asked some of the biggest names in the industry what they have in store for electric RVs. Here's what **5 companies** had to say.

BY RV PRO STAFF

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPANIES



Grounded

What is your company working on in the EV RV arena?

Cory Weatherton, Senior Director of Product Development, Jayco Family of Companies: For the past two years, we've been in development on a Class A that sits on an electric chassis with a gasoline range extender.

Royer Allman, Vice President-Chassis Administration, Forest River Inc.: Forest River is currently in a prototyping and exploration phase, evaluating multiple EV chassis platforms. While we previously introduced the all-electric concept RV, the RVEX, we are not yet in full production on an EV platform. Our focus today is exploring viable chassis partnerships and continuing internal development work to prepare for the future of EV RVs.

Ivan Wang, Chief Marketing Officer, Evotrex: We're building the Evotrex-PG5, [a] power-generating RV trailer. Rather than simply putting a large battery into an RV trailer, we've designed a unified and intelligent electric ecosystem that works seamlessly to deliver real off-grid power. The PG5 is engineered to make off-grid living sustainable. By providing its own motive force and capturing energy via regenerative braking, the trailer significantly reduces the overall energy consumption and carbon footprint of the tow vehicle. The 1.5 kW rooftop solar array continuously replenishes the battery with clean energy. The Horizon generator only kicks on when the battery reaches a low threshold or whenever needed. It runs at peak efficiency to quickly recharge the battery (up to 75 kW when towing, and up to 20 kW when parked), cutting down on fuel use and local emissions.

Sam Shapiro, Founder & CEO, Grounded: Last summer, Grounded launched the G3, our third-generation, all-electric camper van built on the Chevrolet BrightDrop Zevo platform. It delivers 286 miles of combined range with all-wheel drive and is engineered for true four-season use, down to 0 F.


Lightship

The G3 is a ground-up reimagining based on real-world feedback from our G2 owners. We replaced wood cabinetry with durable aluminum frames and 100% recycled tree-free materials; added a motorized lift bed that converts to a California King; reengineered our electrical system for 1,400W vehicle-to-house charging; and designed a new insulated rear swing-out door that improves thermal efficiency without sacrificing the view. We also added self-heating LiFePO batteries to enable reliable four-season travel.

Sustainability is built into the G3 at every level, not just the drivetrain. The vehicle itself is fully electric and zero-emission, with access to CCS fast chargers and Tesla Superchargers via an included NACS adapter. For off-grid power, we offer up to 1,000W of rooftop solar and up to 20kWh of modular LiFePO house batteries that can recharge via solar, shore power or our 1,400W vehicle-to-house system. The self-heating batteries maintain performance in extreme cold without external energy input. Combined with improved 2-inch EPS foam insulation and our redesigned rear door, the G3 maintains comfort and power availability in harsh conditions while minimizing energy waste.

Toby Kraus, Co-Founder & CEO, Lightship: Lightship is building the AE.1, a fully electric travel trailer designed specifically for the EV era. Instead of retrofitting a traditional RV platform, we engineered from scratch to rethink what a trailer could be, making it dramatically more efficient, higher performing and far more sustainably engineered . At the core of the AE.1 is a 77 kWh battery, the largest in its category, paired with 1.8 kW of integrated rooftop solar. The trailer is fully electric, with no propane system and no gas generator, which means quiet camping and zero on-site emissions. Under typical use, a family of four can expect approximately one week of off-grid capability supported by onboard storage and daily solar production. One of the biggest breakthroughs is TrekDrive, our proprietary self-propulsion system. The trailer actively assists the tow vehicle using onboard motors, reducing drag and energy loss. This can deliver up to three times the efficiency of towing a conventional trailer, extending range for electric tow vehicles and improving fuel economy for gas trucks. The AE.1 also supports bidirectional charging, which opens up some powerful use cases.

Why is your company pursuing this avenue & what do you expect to be the price point for the unit?

Weatherton: Over the past number of years, we've seen the automotive market slowly moving toward electrification and other alternative fuel sources. It does seem as though alternative fuel sources to fossil fuels will become more and more mainstream in the coming years. As a company, it's our desire to be innovative and remain relevant in regard to consumer demand. We have seen diesel pushers decline in popularity and also certain states not allowing their residents to buy these products. We feel as though our Entegra Coach Embark, with the electric chassis and range extender, will be a great alternative for those who have a passion for RVing and live in those states. We anticipate the unit will have a retail price of approximately $400,000.

Allman: Forest River recognizes the long-term benefits and potential viability of electric RVs. As consumer interest in sustainability and off-grid capability continues to grow, we believe electrification will ultimately play a role in the RV market and eventually have a place within one of our brands. At this stage, we are not discussing projected price points. The EV chassis market is still evolving, and pricing will ultimately depend on advancements in battery technology, range capability and scalable production.

Wang: The Evotrex-PG5 Pioneer starts from $119,990 and comes standard with a 43 kWh battery, Active Power Assist, and the Horizon generator. Stepping up to the Atlas — our fully loaded flagship trim priced at $159,990 — adds all available options, including integrated solar, a power awning, the terrace, a dynamic skylight, a premium interior, forged wheels and more.

Shapiro: We started Grounded because we saw a fundamental mismatch in the RV industry: People who care deeply about nature and the outdoors were being asked to explore it in diesel-burning vehicles built with materials that don't reflect their values. The technology to fix that exists, it just hadn't been applied to this category with enough ambition. But electrification is only part of the thesis. What we're really building is a modular architecture that lets us configure vehicles for radically different use cases on the same electric chassis. The same platform and design system that powers a camper van for a couple living on the road also powers a mobile dental clinic for Colgate or a field operations vehicle for a municipal fleet. The infrastructure is catching up fast; our G3 can charge on both CCS and Tesla Superchargers, and the economics of electric drivetrains keep improving. The G3 is available across three tiers: G3 Form starts at $211,995, G3 Function at $224,995 and G3 Freedom at $234,995. Each tier reflects a different level of configuration, from a clean, essentials-focused build with a queen bed and smart home functionality, up to the


Entegra Coach Embark

fully loaded Freedom with max battery, high-speed Starlink, lift bed, full kitchen and bathroom suite, and our full palette of designer recycled materials.

Kraus: RVs are an iconic American product, but the industry hasn't meaningfully evolved in decades. We saw an opportunity to reinvent the RV around electrification, efficiency and modern manufacturing. Pricing ranges from $151,000 for the AE.1 Panos, $184,000 for the AE.1 Atmos, and $250,000 (limited run) for the Founders Edition (Cosmos). As we scale production, we're focused on improving accessibility while maintaining performance and quality.

What challenges have you faced in producing an EV RV?

Weatherton: We needed to find a chassis manufacturer that would allow us to tie into their electrical system for the power needs of the components in the RV. We looked at a few different manufacturers until we landed on the Harbinger chassis. Range anxiety is a big deal in the automotive world and even more so in the RVing world. RVers expect to drive multiple hours at one time versus an hour and then needing to recharge the chassis.

Allman: The three primary challenges we have faced in producing an EV RV include achieving sufficient daily driving range (ideally 300-350-plus miles), managing vehicle weight while maintaining performance, and identifying a reliable, long-term chassis OEM partner. Range becomes particularly challenging once RV weight and payload are factored in. Many EV platforms list optimal range figures under minimal load conditions, and range decreases significantly when additional weight is added. Infrastructure is another hurdle. Charging networks, both highway-based and campground-based, have not yet fully matured to support widespread EV RV adoption. Additionally, the sudden discontinuation of a previous chassis platform reinforced the importance of developing strong, stable OEM partnerships moving forward.

Wang: Creating a category-defining product is never easy. It requires understanding market gaps, leveraging the right technology, identifying genuine customer needs and assembling a world-class team. From finding solid partners to launching, delivering and scaling — every step presents unique challenges. Yet, at Evotrex, we are incredibly grateful. We've built not just a phenomenal team, but a passionate community of future owners and enthusiasts who constantly exchange ideas, provide essential feedback, and share valuable experiences.

Shapiro: The biggest challenge is that you're building on platforms that were not designed for this. Electric cargo vans are optimized for last-mile delivery, not living, so we're working around separated cab compartments, limited rear access and packaging constraints that traditional RV builders don't have to deal with. Every generation we've had to engineer creative solutions around those limitations. The most significant recent challenge has been GM's decision in October 2025 to discontinue the BrightDrop line. We built three generations of vehicles on that platform, and it's been an excellent foundation: 286 miles of range, AWD, great safety features. The good news is GM produced a large quantity of 2024 and 2025 units, and we still have access to that inventory to fulfill orders, so we are continuing to sell BrightDrop-based G3s. GM has also committed to continuing service at BrightDrop-certified centers and honoring the 8-year/100,000-mile warranty, so existing and future G3 owners are fully supported. But it also reinforced something we've believed from the start: our modular architecture needs to be platform-agnostic. We're now expanding to build on Rivian, Ford, Harbinger and Slate chassis. The whole point of our system is that the interior modules and smart platform adapt to different vehicles, so a platform change doesn't mean starting from scratch — it means plugging into a new foundation.

Kraus: Producing an all-electric RV from a clean sheet platform has required solving challenges that traditional RVs were never designed to address. One of the biggest hurdles is energy density and weight. Integrating a 77 kWh battery, unprecedented in the travel trailer segment, demands careful structural, thermal and safety engineering to preserve towability, stability and interior comfort. Towing efficiency is another core challenge. Conventional travel trailers create significant aerodynamic drag, especially for electric trucks. Lightship addressed this through a low travel profile and its proprietary TrekDrive self-propulsion system. This required developing advanced control logic, hitch force sensing and multiple safety redundancies to ensure the trailer assists the tow vehicle without ever pushing it. Manufacturing has been equally complex. Bringing automotive-grade battery systems and propulsion technology into an industry, while simultaneously establishing a largely domestic supply chain and meeting applicable safety standards, is a meaningful undertaking. Ultimately, the challenge has not simply been electrifying an RV. It has been reengineering the category around energy, aerodynamics, safety and production discipline to make electric road trips viable and scalable.

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Evotrex

How are consumers responding? Who do you anticipate being the buyer for your company's EV RV?

Weatherton: We have a large West Coast rental company that will be buying our first few production runs of the Entegra Coach Embark. We will be receiving constant feedback from them on the user experience of the chassis and the whole motorhome. We feel as though this is a great opportunity for us prior to releasing it for retail sale. It allows us to test the market and also make midcourse corrections if needed.

Allman: Consumer response to the Coachmen RVEX was overwhelmingly positive. The concept generated excitement around innovation, modern design and the future of EV RV travel. It was a floor showstopper at Forest River's 2025 Expo. We anticipate early adopters will likely be tech-forward consumers, sustainability-minded travelers and those interested in extended off-grid capability. However, broad market adoption will depend on improvements in range, infrastructure and affordability.

Wang: Evotrex is resonating with modern, tech-forward adventurers who want to go off-grid without sacrificing comfort, design or reliable power. The core buyer is typically tech-forward families and couples who value independence, performance and access to remote destinations over traditional campground RVing, space for serious adventure gear and the ability to stay self-sufficient while remaining connected and comfortable. At its core, Evotrex is for people who want unlimited range, unlimited destinations and true energy independence.

Shapiro: Response has been strong. We're expanding from 13,000 to 75,000 square feet of production space to keep up with demand. Our G3 configurator tool has driven significant engagement; people are designing their builds online and coming to us with a clear vision of what they want, which shortens the sales cycle considerably. Our core buyer is someone who already lives a values-driven lifestyle. They care about sustainability, they're comfortable with EV technology and they want a vehicle that reflects how they see themselves. They tend to be more technology-forward and more design-conscious than the traditional RV buyer. Remote workers, couples and outdoor enthusiasts who want to live and travel without compromise make up a big portion of our consumer base. But increasingly, the buyer isn't a consumer at all. We're seeing serious traction in commercial verticals: mobile health, food and beverage, pet services, trades, municipal fleets. These are organizations that need a configurable, zero-emission vehicle platform and can't find one anywhere else. That commercial demand has become a major growth driver, and it validates the modularity of our system.

Kraus: Consumer response has been strong and notably balanced. Early demand has split almost evenly between EV owners and traditional truck drivers, which reinforces the AE.1's position as a bridge product. EV drivers are drawn to the efficiency gains, integrated energy storage and extended towing range, while gas truck owners are responding to the aerodynamic design, premium interior and the ability to dramatically reduce fuel consumption and generator dependence. Lightship anticipates its core buyer to be a premium road-trip customer who values technology, design and energy independence. These are families and outdoor enthusiasts who want the comfort of a high-end travel trailer, the flexibility of weeklong off-grid capability and the added resilience of bidirectional power for campsite vehicle charging or home backup. The AE.1 is designed for mainstream usability on roads and established campsites rather than extreme off-road terrain, positioning it as a high-performance, energy-dense electric trailer for modern American road travel.

What segment is your company electrifying first? Why is that the segment your company is going with?

Weatherton: Class A. In order to get the driving range that the average RVer expects to travel at one time, we had to find a chassis manufacturer that would work with us in developing a range extender for the electric chassis. A rail chassis made the most sense for us to start building on, simply due to the GVW needed in order to carry the weight of the batteries as well as the range extender.

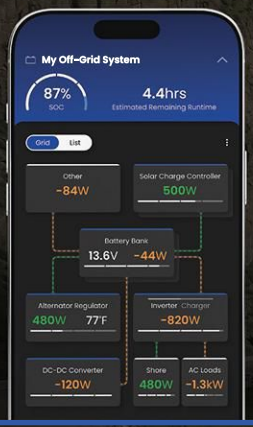
Allman: Other/none of the above. At this time, we are keeping all segments open for consideration. The RVEX concept was positioned between a Class A and Class B motorhome, but moving forward, we are not limiting our exploration to a single segment. Electrification potential exists across multiple motorized classes, and final direction will depend on chassis viability and market readiness. Rather than committing to a specific segment today, Forest River is maintaining flexibility. As technology evolves, the segment that offers the best balance of range, weight capacity and consumer demand will guide our decision.

Wang: Towable/travel trailer. Evotrex's mission is to transform outdoor experiences for the adventurous through pioneering technology and insight-driven innovation [and] reimagining a lifestyle that goes beyond electric. We are starting with the RV trailer

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Shapiro: Class B/camper van. We think this is the most comfortable, easily maneuverable RV segment, and most practical for an EV, given that larger units would require larger batteries and have less range.

Kraus: Towable/travel trailer. Towing is where electrification can have the greatest impact. Conventional trailers can reduce EV range by 50% or more due to aerodynamic drag and weight. By integrating self-propulsion and aerodynamic optimization, we meaningfully mitigate that range penalty. This approach solves a core industry pain point while preserving flexibility; customers can detach the trailer and use their tow vehicle independently.

What are the benefits of an EV RV for the end user & what are the challenges?

Weatherton: There are a few benefits of an EV RV for the end user. The two most notable are the ride and handling of the coach as well as, obviously, fuel efficiency. With the Entegra Coach Embark, the unit is incredibly quiet while driving down the road. Compared to an E450 or F-53 chassis, it is a night and day difference in the drive experience. Currently, there is not a Class A or Class C chassis on the market that could have the desired range for an RVer running solely with a lithium battery bank. It was critical that we worked with a manufacturer that would be able to incorporate a range extender onto the chassis. The chassis range extender runs off of gasoline and recharges the battery bank while driving down the road. So, while fossil fuel is still used in order to get the desired range for the end user, the fuel economy is considerably better than what your traditionally powered fossil fuel RV would be.

Allman: The benefits of an EV RV for the end user include:

- Increased ability to operate off-grid
- Greater self-sufficiency and energy independence
- Reduced carbon footprint
- Quieter operation
- Integration of advanced electrical systems and smart technology

Challenges include:

- Range limitations under load
- Vehicle weight constraints
- Charging infrastructure that is still developing
- Longer charging times compared to refueling

Wang: All-electric trailers try to fix [mileage/EV range] by using their battery to assist with towing, but that drains the power you need for actual boondocking, forcing you right back to crowded campsite hookups. We built Evotrex to eliminate that compromise. By integrating an ultra-efficient power generator, our trailer automatically recharges its own battery. You get seamless tow assist on the highway and limitless power for off-grid camping when you arrive.

Shapiro: The immediate [benefit] is the driving experience. Electric drivetrains are smoother, quieter and more responsive than diesel or gas and have no engine vibration at camp, no exhaust fumes, no gas station stops. You wake up, unplug and go. Then there's the energy system. Our G3 carries up to 20kWh of house batteries that recharge from solar, shore power or the vehicle's own drivetrain via our 1,400W vehicle-to-house system. That means genuine off-grid capability without a generator. Owners can monitor and control everything: power usage, tank levels, appliances, etc., remotely through our Grounded+ app. Charging infrastructure is the biggest [challenge]. It's improving fast (our G3 works with both CCS and Tesla Superchargers), but route planning still requires more thought than pulling into any gas station. Range is sufficient for most travel days at 286 miles, but topping off at camp versus on the road is a mindset shift. Weight is another factor. Batteries are heavy, and that limits how much payload you can carry compared to a gas van with the same GVWR. We've addressed this by using aluminum framing and lightweight recycled materials throughout the interior, but it's a real engineering constraint.

Kraus: Benefits: An electric RV fundamentally improves the camping experience. Owners benefit from quiet operation with no generator noise, the elimination of propane systems, and lower operating and energy costs over time. Integrated rooftop solar enables extended off-grid capability, while regenerative braking and propulsion assist improve towing efficiency and reduce strain on the tow vehicle. The AE.1's 77 kWh battery is comparable to roughly five to six residential battery systems, effectively turning the trailer into a mobile microgrid. In addition to powering life off-grid for days at a time, it can also serve as backup power for a home when needed. Challenges: The primary challenge today is charging familiarity and infrastructure awareness. While charging networks are expanding rapidly, rural travel corridors can require more planning and education. We addressed this by designing multiple redundant charging pathways, DC fast charging, Level 2, campground shore power and solar, giving owners flexibility and confidence wherever they travel. RVP

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CUMMINS UPHOLDS SUSTAINABILITY AS A GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Terry Magid, executive director of Global Enterprise Risk at Cummins, stresses the importance of integrating sustainability, ESG strategy and community impact into core business practices.



Terry Magid

BY RONNIE WENDT

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CUMMINS

At many companies, sustainability lives in a single department or annual report. Cummins embeds sustainability across the entire company, from product innovation and emissions reduction to community engagement and risk strategy.

The company's most recent Sustainability Progress Report underscores that integration, highlighting record financial performance alongside measurable progress on environmental and social goals. In 2023, Cummins reported $31.4 billion in revenue while advancing its decarbonization roadmap, known as Destination Zero, and achieving a 31% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions from facilities and operations.

The report also points to broad global impact. Initiatives like Cummins Water Works have generated billions of gallons in water benefits for communities, while employee-led programs have driven large-scale volunteer engagement and community investment. The company has also emphasized the role of diversity and inclusion in innovation and long-term performance; priorities that leadership says are deeply tied to business resilience.

Terry Magid, executive director of Global Enterprise Risk, says these outcomes reflect what the company describes as "mission in action," a philosophy that connects sustainability, risk management and long-term strategy.

In an era defined by climate uncertainty, evolving regulations and rising stakeholder expectations, Magid's role sits at the intersection of transparency and accountability, helping translate big-picture commitments into measurable progress.

RV PRO spoke with Magid about how Cummins approaches sustainability reporting, why transparency matters more than ever and how initiatives like Destination Zero are shaping the company's future while influencing broader industries, including mobility and manufacturing.

Q: Cummins defines sustainability as "mission in action." What does that look like in practice across the company?

Magid: To achieve Cummins' mission of making people's lives better by powering a more prosperous world, it requires the company to play a key role in nurturing a healthier planet, vibrant communities and engaged citizens. We see this unfold by:

- Significantly reducing emissions from our products and operations. Over the past few decades, we have reduced nitrogen oxide and particulate matter emissions from our products by 95% in the U.S. and 90% globally. In fact, 60 Class 8 semitrucks today emit what one emitted in 1988.
- Contributing to the health and vibrancy of the communities in which our employees live and work. In 2024, over 57,000 Cummins employees volunteered 340,479 hours, organizing 11,322 community events and partnering with over 3,000 nonprofit organizations around the world. Coupled with a record $49.6 million in community giving, Cummins' focus on large-scale community initiatives and strategic global programs continues to increase our overall impact and improve the health of the communities in which we operate.
- Fostering inclusive environments in and outside of Cummins. Our company is at its best when everyone is safe, included and connected to our purpose. We remain committed to equipping employees with the training and resources needed as our industry evolves.

Q: What key metrics or indicators does Cummins track to measure

Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) progress?

Magid: Cummins tracks metrics such as greenhouse gas emissions, energy use, water and waste performance, workforce diversity and engagement, health and safety indicators, and governance measures like ethics, compliance and risk oversight. We report these in our Sustainability Progress Report and other voluntary frameworks such as Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP).

Q: Why is transparent sustainability reporting so important today for employees and external stakeholders?

Magid: Transparency is a key factor in maintaining accountability for our sustainability strategy, initiatives and outcomes. It helps build trust, demonstrate progress credibly and empower employees and external stakeholders to understand how their actions contribute to long-term impact.

Transparent reporting enables employees to see the results of their work and feel connected to the company's purpose, while external stakeholders gain the clarity they need to assess performance and evaluate how commitments translate into measurable results.

Q: How do you decide which sustainability initiatives to prioritize & measure across a global organization?

Magid: Cummins uses a materiality assessment, which plays a critical role in shaping our strategy by providing a comprehensive understanding of financial and nonfinancial impacts, risks and opportunities. The reporting team leverages this information to identify the topics included in our annual Sustainability Progress Report.

Q: How does Cummins ensure sustainability goals aren't siloed across business units?

Magid: Sustainability is not new to Cummins. Well before "ESG" entered the general lexicon, sustainability, including the company's efforts related to ESG issues, has been critical to Cummins' long-term business and growth strategies. Since the 1970s, Cummins has focused on producing engines that reduce environmental impact, supporting more prosperous communities, and embracing diversity and inclusion among its values. With these principles embedded across the company, Cummins' ESG strategy is its business strategy.

At Cummins, our business and environmental strategies are intentionally and intricately aligned to capture the growth opportunity decarbonization presents through Destination Zero, which is our commitment to sustainability and helping our customers navigate the energy transition.

Q: Programs like Cummins Water Works, Powers Women & CARE demonstrate social impact. How do they reflect the company's philosophy?

Magid: We believe in the inherent social responsibility of companies in society. This is not only the right thing to do, but a business imperative. We believe that our long-term survival is as dependent on responsible corporate citizenship as it is on responsible financial performance and maximizing returns to our shareholders.

Investing in our global communities has long been an important objective for Cummins, a vision that started with our former chairman and CEO, J. Irwin Miller. Our dedication to responsible citizenship has been reinforced by every successive Cummins leader, and our efforts to make the communities in which our employees live and work strong and equitable is as vital as ever.

Q: How does employee-led engagement amplify Cummins' sustainability & social initiatives?

Magid: Our corporate responsibility work aims to build more prosperous communities and inspire our employees. Around the world, our employees identify local community needs and volunteer in teams to meet those needs. Engagement is the underpinning of our responsibility to our communities — employees around the globe using their skills to make their communities better. Cummins employees are deeply committed to the prosperity of the cities, towns and villages where they live and work. We aim to use our global footprint and the strength of our employees' skills to achieve impact and results.

Employees engage through a network of over 400 Community Involvement Teams (CITs) around the world. These teams are supported by a company with a deeply rooted history of community problem-solving. As such, our employees have significant flexibility to craft community solutions with an array of nonprofits they select and projects they fund with Cummins Community Development Grants.

Q: In what ways does the health of communities influence business strategy & decision-making?

Magid: Our Destination Zero strategy is our business growth strategy, leading the industries in which we compete through the transformational changes required for achieving zero-emissions solutions. Our business and moral responsibility is to ensure that all our industries and customers, and our global communities, can make the transition toward a healthier planet in a manner that makes the most sense to them.

The alignment between community strategies and business strategy is crucial for success in both areas. Ensuring Cummins communities are strong, resilient and prepared directly influences our business strategy.



Healthy communities support a skilled workforce, strengthen our license to operate, and enable long-term economic and environmental stability.

Q: Cummins has emphasized that diversity & inclusion drive innovation. How does that connect to sustainability?

Magid: Our commitment to diversity and inclusion dates back nearly three-quarters of a century and remains a strategic advantage. By harnessing the strengths of our global workforce, we accelerate innovation, deliver strong results and create exceptional solutions for customers and communities worldwide.

Q: As sustainability becomes more critical across industries, what challenges does Cummins face in meeting ESG targets?

Magid: It is clear the energy transition is going to be even more dynamic, uncertain and divergent than we ever thought it would be. It is also clear that our Destination Zero strategy is the right one to lead our industry, customers and partners into the next era of smarter, cleaner power.

While uncertainty exists regarding the role regulations, incentives and trade policy will play in the future of our industry, we continue to invest billions of dollars to innovate and develop technologies that are cleaner, more advanced and more efficient than ever before.

We are equally focused on the solutions we can deliver today that make an immediate impact in reducing emissions and the technologies of tomorrow that will drive us to zero emissions.

We acknowledge that progress toward this goal is impacted by pacing factors, such as infrastructure readiness, customer adoption and regulatory uncertainty, which slow the rate of lower-emissions technology adoption. Cummins is committed to addressing climate change and reducing air emissions through its decarbonization efforts.

Q: Looking ahead, what aspirational goals does Cummins have over the next three to five years?

Magid: Cummins' business and sustainability strategies are intentionally and intricately aligned through Destination Zero — the company's commitment to sustainability and helping customers navigate the energy transition. This strategy builds on Cummins' long-standing commitment to environmental sustainability, with focused efforts on three priority areas: decarbonization, materials and communities.

Cummins' 2030 goals and 2050 targets for climate change encompass Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, which include its facilities and operations (Scope 1 and Scope 2), products (Scope 3) and procurement (Scope 3). Cummins near-term 2030 GHG reduction goals

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for facilities and operations and products are approved by the Science Based Target Initiative (SBTi).

Cummins sets ambitious long-term goals to guide our direction, recognizing that clearly articulated guideposts help us stay focused on continuous progress while adapting our strategy along the way. Details and annual progress are available in our sustainability progress report and Climate Transition Plan documents.

Q: How do you hope Cummins' approach to sustainability will inspire others in mobility & manufacturing, including the RV industry?

Magid: People who love their RVs also love spending time outdoors — whether that's exploring national parks, visiting campsites with family or simply enjoying the open road. We understand that RV owners care about protecting the places they travel to. Cummins' commitment to communities and the environment reflects those same values. We invest in our people and operate with a focus on responsibility, innovation and long-term sustainability.

We also recognize that for RV manufacturers and owners alike, the priority is equipment that works reliably, safely and with the power to get them where they want to go. That's why we're focused on delivering engines and technologies that meet customers' real-world needs while also advancing toward lower-emissions solutions over time.

Our Climate Transition Plan is designed to guide how we move forward and to support customers and partners navigating similar challenges.

Meaningful progress will take collaboration across society, including supportive policies, continued energy infrastructure development and customer readiness for innovative technologies as they become practical and accessible.

Looking Ahead

As industries grapple with decarbonization and evolving stakeholder expectations, Cummins' approach highlights the growing importance of embedding sustainability into business strategy rather than treating it as an adjacent effort.

This integration also demands transparency, disciplined measurement and a willingness to adapt amid uncertainty.

Whether through Destination Zero, expanded ESG reporting or employee-led community engagement, Cummins' strategy reflects a broader shift across manufacturing and mobility, and, as the company has clearly found with its "mission in action," sustainability is becoming what drives resilience, innovation and long-term growth. As Magid emphasizes, meaningful progress will ultimately depend on collaboration across industries, governments and communities alike. RVP



FEATURE

LEVELING UP WITH RECYCLED RUBBER



Devon Wilson, CEO and founder of **RV SnapPad,** offers an inside look at the process of turning commercial truck tires into durable leveling solutions.

BY JORDAN BENSCHOP

IMAGES COURTESY OF RV SNAPPAD

When RV SnapPad set out to rethink the humble leveling jack pad, sustainability was not the starting point — performance was.

The company's foundation traces back to the invention of the original orange plastic leveling blocks widely used throughout the RV industry — an innovation from Gordon Wilson, father of now CEO and founder Devon Wilson. That legacy of practical problem-solving shaped RV SnapPad's next move: eliminating the need for loose plastic blocks beneath RV leveling jacks by creating a permanent attachment.

From the beginning, material requirements were demanding. Any solution would need to withstand extreme weight, constant ground contact and prolonged exposure to weather. Plastic, while effective for temporary blocking, was not a long-term answer for a permanently mounted component. The search for a better material led to an unlikely but logical candidate: recycled commercial truck tire rubber.

Truck tires are engineered to carry tens of thousands of pounds across thousands of highway miles while enduring UV exposure, temperature swings, road salt and constant abrasion. If that material could perform under those conditions, supporting a stationary RV represents a significantly less aggressive application. The sustainability story followed the performance decision as opposed to the other way around.

The Differentiators

Today, RV SnapPad's products are manufactured in the United States using domestically sourced, end-of-life commercial truck tires. The company's primary manufacturing partner processes



hundreds of millions of pounds of tire material annually. Steel belts are mechanically removed, and the remaining rubber is shredded, refined and sorted into specific granule sizes. The crumb rubber is then blended with a custom urethane compound in a high-intensity mixer before being hydraulically compressed at more than 100 tons in a proprietary heated molding process.

An additional domestic manufacturing partner molds select product lines to RV SnapPad's specifications using crumb rubber supplied by the primary recycler. Over time, the company has refined its rubber blends, density targets and molding parameters to ensure structural integrity and dimensional consistency. Rather than generic recycled material, it is purpose-built rubber engineered specifically for high-load RV applications.

Material usage per unit is significant. Individual pads weigh between approximately 3 and 9 pounds depending on diameter and application. A typical four pack for a motorhome can incorporate 20 to 30 pounds of repurposed tire material, while larger Class A or Class C motorhomes and triple-axle fifth wheels may require four or six packs of larger pads, collectively totaling 50 pounds or more of recycled rubber.

As of February 2026, the company reports recycling nearly 6 million pounds of rubber — material diverted from landfills or lower-value secondary uses and converted into long-life components designed to remain attached to an RV for years. The approach reflects a practical application of circular economy principles within the RV accessory segment.

Performance remains the central selling point. In leveling applications, recycled tire rubber offers several advantages over rigid plastics and composites.



From a durability standpoint, tire rubber is engineered for abrasion resistance and sustained stress. Unlike rigid plastics, it does not crack under prolonged static compression. In terms of load-bearing performance, rubber distributes weight more evenly, improves ground grip and absorbs micro-movement under static loads — important when leveling jacks support thousands of pounds per foot.

Weather resistance is another differentiator. The combination of high heat, extreme compression and urethane bonding produces a dense product capable of withstanding UV exposure, road chemicals, freeze-thaw cycles and wide temperature swings. Additionally, rubber provides inherent vibration dampening, absorbing minor ground shifts and micro-vibrations to improve stability and reduce hard-surface transfer when the RV is stationary.

Prioritizing Performance

Transforming recycled tire rubber into an RV component, however, has required significant engineering discipline. Achieving the correct density to balance compression and rigidity was critical. Designing a secure retention system that allows pads to remain permanently attached to leveling feet presented its own challenges — the hot compression molding process introduces material shrinkage, which must be precisely calculated to maintain tight tolerances across dozens of jack foot diameters. Tooling design, cure times and compound consistency all factor into performance.

Maintaining quality control at scale and educating customers on compatibility and clearance requirements have also been key considerations. Recycled rubber behaves differently than injection-molded plastic, demanding careful process control to ensure consistent results.

Looking ahead, RV SnapPad views recycled materials in RV accessories as an emerging opportunity rather than a known trend. Much of the industry's sustainability focus has centered on energy systems such as solar and lithium batteries, while structural accessories have received less attention. Broader adoption will depend not on environmental messaging alone, but on proven durability and reliability.

For RV owners and OEM partners alike, performance remains nonnegotiable. The future of recycled materials in the segment will hinge on engineering products that meet or exceed traditional standards while simultaneously reducing waste.

For SnapPad, the philosophy the company upholds of building better products first and achieving sustainability as a result continues to guide its direction. RVP



HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS EXPOSING CRACKS IN RV PARTS PLANNING

OEMs and dealers need to adapt to shifting weather patterns and related demands that can cause difficulties in forecasting, repairs and more.

BY BEN GROENEVELD, SYNCRON

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Summer temperatures now last 24 extra days in Arizona's Tucson and eight additional days in Phoenix compared to 1970, according to Climate Central's latest analysis. For RV parts planners, these aren't abstract climate statistics — they're the latest in a series of disruptions that have made it nearly impossible to rely on historical data.

From COVID-era shutdowns and post-pandemic demand surges to shifting trade routes and extreme weather events, RV manufacturers and suppliers have faced wave after wave of uncertainty. Now, with climate patterns increasingly out of sync with the past, it's clear that the old rules no longer apply.

Here's what shifting weather patterns look like in the RV aftermarket:

- **Pacific Northwest:** With an extended dry season, travelers are in more fire-prone areas, creating unusual demand for HVAC filtration systems.
- **Southeast:** More intense and frequent hurricanes are creating spikes in weatherproofing materials, generator parts and water damage repair components, demand that can come in concentrated bursts.
- **Southwest:** Record heat stretching into October is driving AC system and battery failures beyond the traditional peak.
- **Mountain West:** Shortened ski seasons that start earlier or later than usual leave dealers rebalancing inventory from winter to summer — sometimes midseason.

What does this cost manufacturers? For a midsize RV operation, the price of getting it wrong adds up fast.

Seasonal weather-related demand swings, like heat-driven spikes in Groeneveld AC replacements or early demand for winterization parts, make accurate forecasting difficult, pushing up safety stock levels and associated carrying costs. According to PW Consulting's 2025 Recreational Vehicle Appliance Market report, many suppliers now plan for 60% to 70% of inventory in advance to accommodate regional variation, locking up working capital and increasing the risk of obsolescence.

Compounding the issue, industry lead times have expanded from about three to over five months due to ongoing supply chain disruptions, making it even harder to respond quickly when weather patterns diverge from the norm.

Severe weather events have also historically caused direct damage to RV inventory and production facilities, adding unplanned costs on top of already volatile demand cycles.

That's before accounting for lost parts sales from stockouts, the long-term impact of dealer defections and the reputational damage that comes from leaving RV owners stranded when they could be on the road.

Availability Equals Loyalty

As weather patterns shift, so does how, when and where families use their RVs. An extended summer isn't just warmer weather; it's more weekend trips, longer road travel seasons and increased strain on critical components like AC units, batteries and filtration systems.

When an unexpected heatwave knocks out a family's AC unit in October, and the part isn't available, that trip to Yosemite gets cut short, and so does the customer's trust. Given how rarely RV owners purchase new vehicles, every delayed repair chips away at brand loyalty and lifetime value. This is how climate variability directly impacts aftermarket performance and why availability matters more than ever.

Adapting to the New Normal in Parts Planning

The RV Industry Association (RVIA) projects shipments will grow to 349,300 units in 2026, a clear sign of continued demand. But seizing that opportunity requires adaptation.

While manufacturers can't control the climate, they can take control of how they plan for it.

One of the key challenges is that forecasting models, no matter how sophisticated, are built on historical patterns that no longer apply. Weather variability has thrown those patterns out

of whack. And while AI and advanced analytics can help detect change faster, they can't solve the core problem: the past is no longer a reliable guide to the present.

That's why the next evolution in forecasting will rely less on history and more on signals, integrating real-time data like regional weather patterns and usage conditions to better anticipate parts failures and demand shifts. It's about building a forward-looking planning model that reflects how, when and where RVs are actually being used today.

But building that kind of model requires connected data, shared visibility and the right infrastructure — things many manufacturers still lack.

New research from Syncron surveying 550-plus OEM leaders across North America and Europe reveals a critical problem: 40% of OEMs admit their aftermarket data is siloed across systems, making it nearly impossible to respond when regional weather patterns diverge from historical norms.

So when AC failures spike in October, traditional or legacy planning solutions won't see it until November, after dealers have already lost sales or sourced from gray market suppliers.

The same Syncron research shows 80% of OEMs are actively investing in the aftermarket. While that's promising, realizing a return on that investment requires smarter prioritization — solving high-impact problems first, aligning strategies with real-world demand signals and building toward connected, data-driven operations over time.

The problem isn't starting small. It's staying siloed. The most effective strategies begin with focused, high-impact use cases, but they're built with long-term visibility and coordination in mind. Full integration doesn't need to happen overnight, but progress depends on solving today's challenges with tomorrow's ecosystem in mind.

The Dealer Dilemma

For dealers, weather unpredictability creates an impossible inventory trap. Stock heavy for an extended summer, betting your working capital that the heat will last? If September turns cool, you're sitting on idle inventory while your cash is tied up. Stock lean to protect cash flow? When that October heat wave hits and AC compressors are suddenly flying off shelves, you lose sales to competitors who guessed right. When OEM parts aren't there, dealers don't wait — they establish gray market relationships. And once established, those relationships rarely reverse.

To avoid that churn, OEMs need to anticipate regional demand, respond fast when the weather shifts midseason and adjust allocations in real time.

What Winning OEMs Do Differently

Weather unpredictability isn't going away. Neither is the RV industry's growth opportunity — RVIA projects a 3.7% year-over-year increase. So, what separates manufacturers who capture that growth from those who lose ground to gray market suppliers and dealer defection?

A $450,000 AI investment doesn't

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help you when systems can't see yesterday's dealer sales. Or treating regional weather as lumps to smooth out rather than the new normal.

What works? Consider these four principles:

1. **Real-time demand sensing:** You need parts planning to see that AC spike in October, not November.
2. **Regional supply chain management:** Make parts and inventory decisions at the local level.
3. **Rapid response capability:** Reposition inventory in days, not months.
4. **Integrated data model:** Parts, service and dealers operating from the same information.

You don't need perfect climate predictions to maintain parts availability. You need inventory strategies that work even when forecasts are wrong.

That means:

Stock by criticality: That AC compressor used to spike reliably in June-July. Now it might spike in May or October, or not at all. Traditional seasonal forecasting breaks when the seasons themselves become unpredictable. Stock deep on AC compressors that keep RVs livable in extreme heat, even if timing is uncertain. Less critical parts? Let them ship from the central warehouse.

Plan for error: In climate-sensitive categories, the forecast error matters more than forecast accuracy. Set safety stock based on how much demand varies, not just the average.

Use weather forecasts as a leading indicator: While historical patterns may no longer apply, short-term weather forecasts can provide valuable signals. Incorporating them into planning models helps OEMs anticipate regional demand shifts before they hit dealers.

Automate the routine: Free up planners to actively manage climate-sensitive SKUs that need human judgment, not spreadsheet reviews of low-impact parts.

The technology exists to connect these data sources and close the loop between OEM strategies and customer demand. But technology is secondary. The strategy comes first: accept unpredictability, then optimize for it.

Progress Over Perfection

The RV industry is growing. So is climate variability. Manufacturers who adapt will capture the opportunity, and those who don't will watch dealerships defect to suppliers who can deliver. The fix isn't about grand transformations but rather recognizing the new normal and solving the right problems first. Start with real-time demand visibility, regional inventory positioning and rapid response capability, then build toward broader integration. RVP

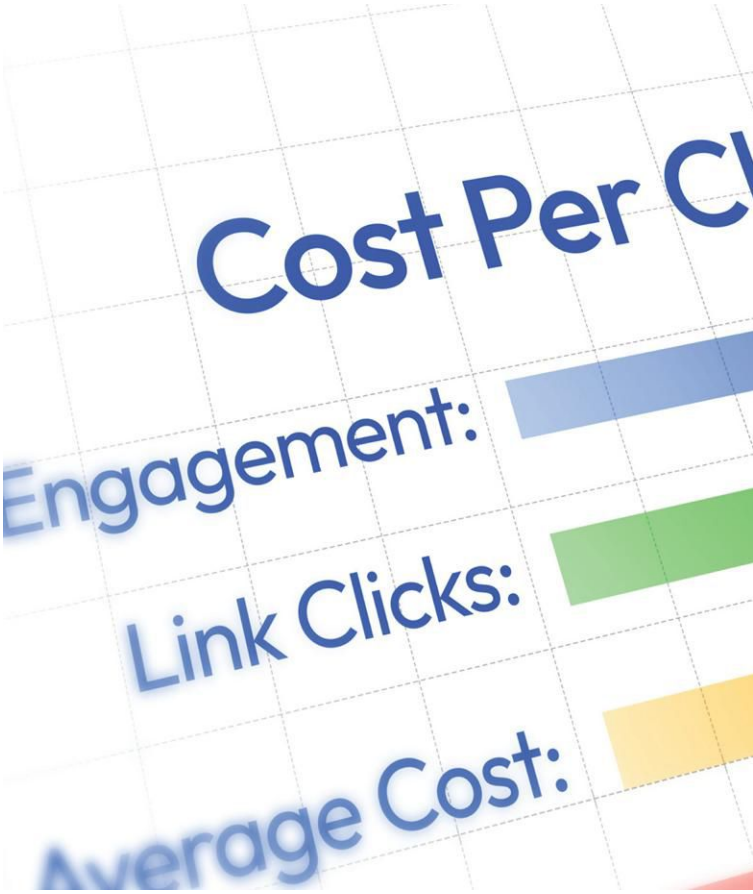
Ben Groeneveld is industry principal for global supply chain solutions at Syncron, where he works with equipment manufacturers on aftermarket strategy and implementation. Previously at Oracle, AGCO and Navistar, he has 20-plus years of experience helping OEMs navigate supply chain disruption and optimize parts operations.





BY ERIC PEDRETTI, INTERACT RV

Why Paid Media Feels Harder Right Now & What Dealers Can Do About It



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What rising CPCs and changing demand reveal about today's paid media (aka advertising) landscape.

You open your Google Ads report, and it doesn't square with what you're seeing on the lot. Cost-per-click (CPC) rose 14% in 2025, leads feel softer and the same budget isn't producing the same mix of calls and form fills. Before you assume your account slipped, zoom out: you're seeing a combination of heavier auction pressure, normal RV seasonality and a search results page that's changing how shoppers notice (or miss) ads — especially on mobile.

Why 'Better Traffic' Can Still Feel Like Worse Results in RV

The catch is that interest and intent aren't the same thing. Paid search pricing doesn't respond to how busy your store feels each week. It responds to competition in the auction and how many shoppers are ready to raise their hand today.

What's happening more often is that you're paying more to reach shoppers who are behaving differently:

- They research longer.
- They compare more dealers and more floorplans.
- They use multiple channels.

If you're watching clicks and thinking "we're still getting attention," but leads aren't matching that pace, it may not be a tracking problem. It may be a timing problem — shoppers are taking longer to move from "I'm looking" to "I'm contacting."

Seasonality is the amplifier. Spring and early summer tend to bring higher intent; later months bring more browsing and comparison. When CPCs rise during softer weeks, the same spend buys fewer clicks — and a bigger share of those clicks come from shoppers earlier in their decision cycle.

That's why judging paid media, or advertising, month to month without a seasonal lens is risky. It can push you into reactive changes that feel logical in the moment and then look unnecessary once demand picks back up.



Google's Search Page Isn't What It Used To Be

Even if your campaigns didn't change, the search engine results page you're advertising on has. The results page is increasingly designed to answer questions on-page, and it can take more scrolling for a shopper to reach the classic set of listings and ads — especially on mobile.

For dealers, the practical effect is simple: the old pattern of "ad shows at the top, shopper clicks, lead comes in" is less predictable. When the page layout shifts, the same ad can get a very different amount of attention depending on device (mobile versus desktop), query type (broad research versus model-specific) and what else Google chooses to show above the fold.

You can't control how the page is built. You can control how you read performance when visibility is harder to win than it used to be.

The Limit of a Search-Only Plan

Paid search does a great job of capturing existing demand, but it doesn't create demand by itself. When intent is high, search can carry a lot of the load because shoppers are already typing high-intent terms into the box (like year/make/model searches). When intent cools, search becomes a more expensive way to compete over a smaller pool of ready-now buyers.

That's where "clicks are up" can coexist with "leads are down." Shoppers can click, compare and leave — then come back later through a different path once they've narrowed their options, talked with a spouse, checked payments or waited for a weekend to visit (especially during the off-season).

In those stretches, it's not enough to watch clicks and CPC and hope the rest takes care of itself. You must measure what happens on your side of the fence, including cost per inquiry, cost per call, appointment set rate and response time when a lead does come in.

A steadier way to think about paid media is as a connected set of touchpoints that support awareness, consideration and conversion. It's not enough to simply target the "low-funnel" buyers — you also have



to have a consistent strategy for "high-funnel" and "mid-funnel" shoppers (think proactive display advertising and retargeting campaigns) to nurture folks through the sales funnel with each touch. Early exposure often influences later search behavior. When you support those earlier stages, you tend to see more branded searches, more return visitors and more shoppers who show up already familiar with who you are and what you stock.

When you rely on search alone, you're putting most of your spend into the last step and hoping enough shoppers show up there at the right time of year.

What To Do Differently in 2026

1. Treat CPC as a signal — not the scoreboard

CPC is shaped by auction pressure. It can rise even when your fundamentals are sound. The steadier question is whether your cost per inquiry, cost per call and cost per appointment still fit your margins — and whether those leads are turning into real conversations.

If those outcome metrics are stable, higher CPC may simply reflect a tougher auction and a different search page. If those outcome metrics are moving the wrong direction, that's your cue to diagnose, not panic.

2. Plan around the RV calendar instead of fighting it

In higher-intent months, protect coverage on the searches that reliably produce calls and appointments. In softer months, expect longer research cycles and focus on two controllables:

- Lead handling: response time, call tracking, appointment setting and consistency in follow-up.
- Staying visible enough to be remembered, so when shoppers come back later, you're not reintroducing yourself from scratch.

3. Read performance in context — especially by device

If the page is changing and mobile attention is tighter, performance can swing by device even when your targeting stays steady. When you review results, separate mobile and desktop, and look for patterns over time, not just week to week.

A simple rule: If traffic holds while leads lag, resist constant campaign rewrites. Look at seasonal patterns, device mix and what happens after the lead hits your team.

The Bottom Line

Paid media still works for RV dealers, but it behaves differently than it did a few years ago. Auction pressure is real, the seasonal curve still shapes intent and the search page is changing in ways that affect visibility and shopper behavior.

The dealers who do well in 2026 will be the ones who read performance in context, plan around the calendar and measure outcomes — not just click cost — so decisions stay steady even when the market isn't. RVP

A graduate of University of Northern Iowa, **Eric Pedretti** started working with dealers in automotive 20 years ago, and then for the past 17 years in RV, marine and powersports. He is the director of sales at Interact RV.



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 BY MEL SELWAY

Achieving Inventory Accuracy, Part 2

The service department and parts/accessories department can work together to reduce RECT.

This month's column is the second of a two-part series that offers some methods to maintain the accuracy of and the equivalency of your parts and accessories inventories values, and to offer methods of decreasing your RECT (repair event cycle time).

What Is To Be Identified as Inventory?

I introduced this aspect of inventory management in my March column. Defining what is inventory is important because your RV business purchases many types of goods. It is important that the accounting manager and the parts/accessories manager agree which goods qualify as inventory and which qualify as direct expense. This is important because if the parts/accessories manager receives an item to an inventory category in the DMS, yet the accounting manager posts that item to an expense account, then the B and C values are not equivalent. (NOTE: B value is "book" (accounting) value; C value is "computer" database value.)

As for the review of and approval of the invoices for all goods, it is imperative that the parts/accessories manager review and approve all invoices for goods because as the purchasing agent, she should be familiar with the reason for each purchase.

I suggest that any invoices for goods be provided to the parts/accessories manager for approval and coding of the amounts to the appropriate general ledger account on each invoice. If the parts/accessories manager assigns the appropriate general ledger accounts to each invoice in compliance with what is inventory and what is expense, then this could enhance the accuracy and equivalency of the B and C inventory values.

A client of mine provided me with the following example. A supplier invoice contained two pages, with the first page showing that tires were shipped with an extended cost of $200 and a freight charge of $3.60. The second page of the invoice showed that four training tapes were actually shipped at $50 each with a state tax of $2.50 for each tape. Several errors impacting the values of the parts and accessories inventory, as well as the freight and state tax general ledger accounts, existed because the accounts payable clerk posted from page one of the invoice.

If the parts/accessories manager had received and reviewed this invoice prior to it being sent to the accounts payable associate, then the errors could have been noticed. The primary flag to the parts/accessories manager would have been the $3.60 freight charge, which would not normally cover the freight of shipping four tires. The appropriate general ledger accounts could have been assigned to each of the values shown on the two pages of the invoice and the invoice could have been coded as:

- $200 to the Parts-Training expense G/L account
- $10 to the State Retail Tax G/L account
- $3.60 to the Parts-Freight G/L account

If you decide to implement this suggestion, then you might have to train your parts/accessories manager to use the General Ledger Chart of Accounts so that she could know to which account each invoice line should accrue.

Inventory Accuracy Drives RECT Efficiency

Your service department inventory relates to RECT, and the unit of measure is a factor of time. By reducing the time required to process the tasks involved in a maintenance or repair service, you gain more time to sell, without having to add technicians. You could also increase the possibility that you can provide a customer requested service when it is convenient for the customer — possibly enhancing your customer service rating.

Depending on your billable hourly rate for service, your RECT could increase the income for your service department. Therefore, if your parts associates can more efficiently support your service technicians, RECT could decrease. If your parts and accessories inventory is more accurate, this enables your parts associates to quickly fill the parts requests of the service technicians.

Interdepartmental Communications Drives RECT Efficiency

What if the parts associate could pull in advance some, or possibly all, of the parts, accessories and materials that a technician might require for a specific maintenance or repair event? If it was a routine maintenance event, could items be prepulled if the service dispatcher informed the parts associate that a technician would be assigned that event at some time during the day?

What if the repair involved an accessory that had been special ordered for the customer? Could that item be delivered to the technician's work bay when the job was assigned?

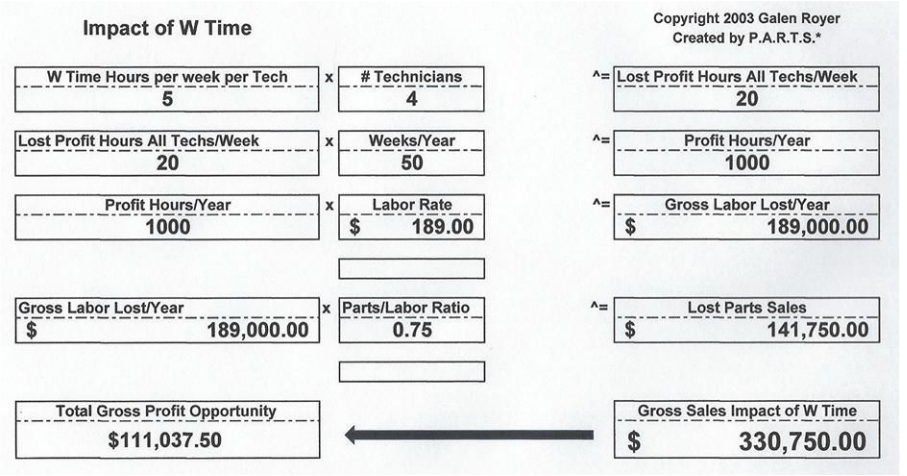


IMAGE COURTESY OF MEL SELWAY

At this point, the concept of W-Time (Waste-Time) enters the discussion. W-Time represents any portion of a technician's workday that is not generating income. This could be when a technician:

- is having to walk to the parts department to procure parts, accessories and materials required for the repair event
- must wait while the parts associate researches the goods required
- has to search for a special tool required to perform the repair event

These are just a few examples of how W-Time negatively impacts the technician's productivity and increases RECT.

The image on the left shows the impact that W-Time could have on your parts and service department income and profit as well as how minimizing W-Time could decrease RECT for your operations.

One method of reducing some of the W-Time incurred by technicians is to designate a service technician parts associate (STPA) to support the technicians. This STPA could communicate with the person who dispatches work orders so that any parts, accessories, materials and special tools required for a work order might be researched and set aside for the technician when the work order is assigned. By delivering any items required for a work order, the STPA reduces the W-Time incurred by technicians.

If you are concerned that this added position will add to your personnel expense, please refer to the W-Time chart for an example of the additional Gross Profit opportunity achieved by reducing the technicians' W-Time. RVP

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BY TYLER KELLY,
APPONE & MOTILITY

Surviving Peak Season

Practical tips to optimize your operations with limited resources.



IMAGE - TKTK

Peak season is here, and your dealership may follow the "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" philosophy. But what if heightened traffic in sales and service reveals your operations are broken?

Now isn't the best time for a process overhaul, but a few strategic adjustments can improve your operations and profits during this busy season.

Let's start with your dealership's front end.

Process Leads Effectively

Leads come in different forms. You can have a hot lead: someone who's ready to buy, knows which unit they want and is interested in buying from your dealership. On the other hand, you may have a cold lead: someone who's not quite sure what they're looking for, isn't set on purchasing and hasn't engaged with your business much — if at all.

During the peak season, it's essential your team knows how to manage both customer types to avoid missing out on deals and profits. But sometimes, lead processing systems fall short, making it difficult to track leads all the way through the sales process or prioritize hot leads over cold. Here are a few ways to optimize your lead management strategy:

- Clearly label each customer inquiry — whether they're ready to buy or just starting to browse.
- Avoid repeating questions or asking customers to complete the same forms multiple times.
- Keep a central customer profile for preferences and interactions.
- Take detailed notes in your DMS and pass them along immediately to whomever will help work the deal, including F&I.
- Connect your systems and employees, making it easier to communicate customer details and transfer information.

Move Inventory Strategically

Consumers have different tastes, and it can be difficult to maintain the right selection of vehicles and avoid high holding costs across your lot. Throughout the next few months, periodically ask yourself:

- Are there any old vehicles on the lot that need to move? Can we adjust our sales or marketing strategies to prioritize these?
- Do I have a lot of used inventory to offload?
- Is my lot well-organized, or can we create specific zones to operate more efficiently?

Work with your sales team to refocus their efforts and refine their pitches to create a sense of urgency surrounding the units you need to move. For example, shift the emphasis from specific features to the rarity of the vehicle. This strategy encourages faster buying decisions. You can also add value to the deal elsewhere. Instead of vehicle discounts, offer add-on accessories or special warranty or service packages.

Track & Improve Customer Interactions

Timely and clear communication is critical. Consumers expect fast

responses that address their needs, which means unanswered inquiries can make them lose interest.

Throughout the sale, track where communication falls apart and survey your team for solutions. Ask them:

- Do you have an established process for handling inquiries online, over the phone and in-person?
- What information aren't you getting or recording that stalls the deal?
- When do you hear or notice customers express their frustrations about how long it takes to complete the process?
- Has anyone found a successful way to navigate these pain points?

When possible, leverage automation to streamline communications. If you use a DMS or CRM, explore automated email or text message options. Pre-scheduled replies help customers move through the sales funnel outside business hours. At the same time, automatic internal notifications will save your team time and effort, helping them stay ahead of the game.

If your team doesn't use an automated tool, make sure you keep track of when customers reach out and what they ask about. Create email, text and phone scripts to efficiently follow up with customers before they arrive. When buyers come in to the dealership, reference back to any previous interactions to ensure a faster, smoother transition for the customer and your team.

Anticipate the Handoff to F&I

Buying an RV takes time. Many customers may settle on terms and forget they still have to get through F&I. Customers often express frustration about this handoff. They've likely spent most of their day at your business, and they want to close the deal and go home.

Train your team to provide customers with transparent, relevant updates throughout the process. Let them know when you're running credit checks or when F&I is comparing lenders for the best terms and rates. While they wait, give them resources about F&I products, or promote additional accessories and customer loyalty programs.

Behind the scenes, inform F&I about the customer's preferences, concerns and limitations to help with the transition. Consider:

- Is the customer value-driven? F&I can share stories that relate products to real-life scenarios.
- Are they skeptical about add-ons? Price transparency and a lighter sales pitch will go a long way.

Being open about next steps keeps customers engaged, leading to a more positive, satisfactory experience.

Prepare Digital & Print Documentation Correctly

Printing — and reprinting — documents throughout the sales and F&I workflow is costly. You complete and sign dozens of forms for each deal; even one mistake, like transposing the VIN or misspelling the buyer's name, could mean reprinting every form.



To avoid time-consuming errors, triple-check the information you receive from sales, including customer details, trade-in, model, VIN and anything needed for lender, federal, state or local forms.

Then, confirm which paperwork you can complete digitally and which requires a wet-ink signature before printing. Collecting digital signatures can help you easily catch any missed fields or nullify inaccurate forms before printing.

As a final check, review every form the customer returns to you to ensure it's completed correctly. It's expensive to constantly reprint documents, but it's more expensive to submit errors to the lender, resulting in callbacks when they reject the existing deal paperwork.

Pass Deal Jackets Off to Lenders Quickly

Once you have a complete deal jacket, don't let it sit. Send the paperwork to lenders immediately — with tracking if mailing it.

Keep a record of the deals you send off and follow up if you haven't received funding in a timely manner. Lenders get busy too, but quick funding might determine which lenders you decide to use for future deals.

Service Under Pressure

Now let's take a look at the service department, which can quickly become one of the busiest areas of the dealership under the pressure of peak season.

Reduce Service Lane Bottlenecks

This time of year, your service department is likely booked with maintenance, dewinterization or repair appointments. To ease your team's load and minimize customer wait time, identify any bottlenecks.

If you have a DMS, use its digital scheduling capability to allocate technicians. This feature helps minimize downtime and ensures techs know what's on their plate.

Frequently check in with your team members to discuss what's working and what changes could assist with streamlining workflows. These check-ins will also help set clear expectations. This will allow you the ability to organize jobs by urgency and complexity and to address high-priority items first.

Anticipate High-Demand Parts Needs

You may already be seeing demand for common RV parts. Encourage your team to proactively place orders when they notice inventory of major parts is running low.

To maintain customer satisfaction, be transparent about repairs that need custom parts or may be delayed by supply chain issues. Customers value honesty and want to be informed through every step of the repair. By openly communicating, you can minimize customer frustration and avoid setting inaccurate expectations.

Optimize Your Techs' Skills & Time

Your technicians are the most valuable part of your service drive. Assign your techs based on their strength and expertise, batching jobs to maximize efficiency. As you monitor daily activities, keep an eye out for costly disruptions such as last-minute schedule changes, overbooked appointments, inaccurate information and broken or missing parts.

By getting ahead of these interruptions, you can limit the time techs spend waiting for logistical issues to be fixed. This proactive approach keeps repairs moving and your repair event cycle time (RECT) lower.

When your team runs into obstacles during the busy season, meaningful and quick fixes will temporarily sustain your bottom line, employee efficiency and customer satisfaction.

But these changes aren't perfect, so note what you need to adjust and the impact on your business. Once sales and service demand slows, look for ways to automate and standardize your processes to perfect your operations. RVP

Tyler Kelly is the manager of recreational dealer sales for AppOne and Motility, bringing over 15 years of experience in recreational lending and sales. Since joining the team in 2013, he has held key roles in dealer sales and corporate account management. For more information, email info@motilitysoftware.com or info@appone.net.



ZELIOX NEO 3600

Eberspächer



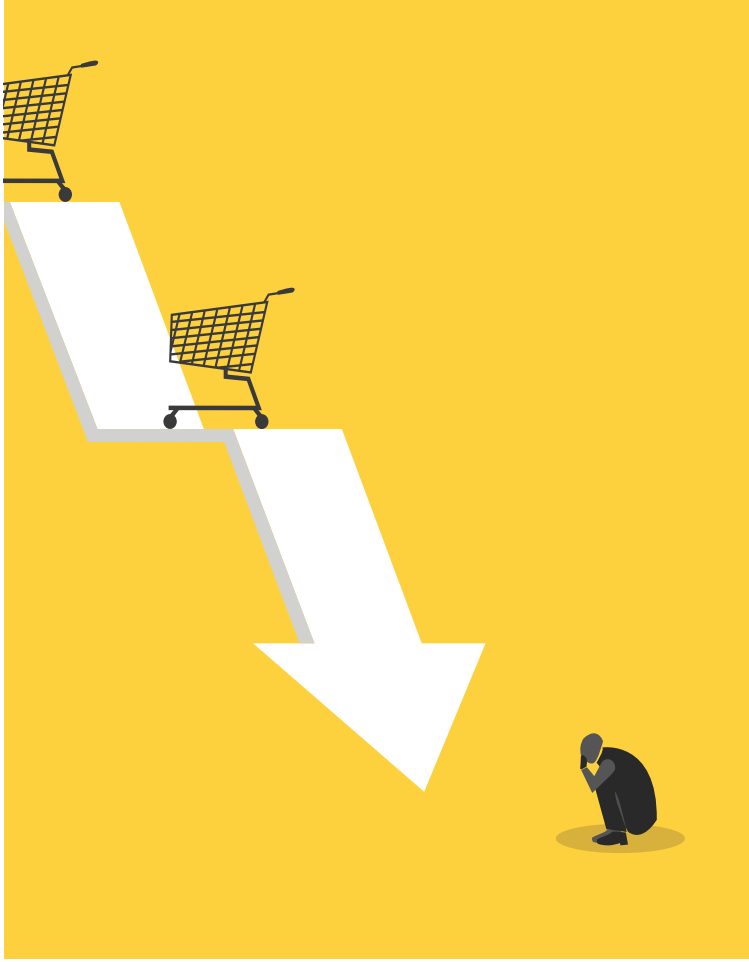
All-in-one mobile power storage solution — because off-grid shouldn't mean off-limits. Available Q2, 2026



BY THOMAS MORIN

Selling RVs in a Down Economy

Making a few adjustments to your selling style can help fiscally anxious customers feel more comfortable.



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During the initial surge of COVID-19, RV dealerships experienced record sales, profits and commissions. However, since then, RV sales have experienced only a few brief spurts of energy in an economy still trying to find its footing. The last two or three years have not created a consistent, reliable source of income for many RV salespeople. So, how can the average RV salesperson adapt and adjust to this? None of us can control the economy we live in, but here are some steps (within your control) you can take to survive it all until RV sales bounce back.

Focus on What You Can Control

A downturn can create a direct reflection on personal finances, and it's easy to get caught up in placing blame... but don't get caught in that emotional trap. Focus on positive thinking in areas that you can control: what you do and how you do it.

Take a hard look at your approach and systems, and review every step you're taking in the sales process to ensure that no steps are being missed. When things are busy, it's easy to miss steps, and during slow periods, it's a good time to make sure all bases are covered, no matter how small. Here are some things to look at now.

Prioritize Trust-Building

Building comfort, rapport and trust with customers is the cornerstone of relationships, both business and personal. As customers face challenging economic times, building trust becomes even more important.

There might be no greater priority in selling. So many sales are lost in those first few minutes when anxious customers are not connecting to the person they're working with. Their defenses are on guard, and if a salesperson gets too aggressive too soon, the sale is done right then and there — and most salespeople don't realize it.

So, in the early stages, slow things down and be a person before being a salesperson. This will help the customer to relax, make a friend and earn some trust. If you don't, you will have no chance of the customer being honest enough to tell you everything you must know to put them in the right product, at the right price. Most salespeople are so focused on their selling system steps that they overlook this important piece.

Sell the Way Your Customer Prefers

Another tactic that will fail with a nervous customer in this economy is a salesperson who tries to sell with an approach they prefer, rather than the way their customer prefers.

Customers also have a style they're most comfortable with, especially when they're anxious. The analytical, fact-based customer wants facts, supported by documentation and handouts that verify their accuracy. The opposite is true with the customer who focuses more on the shopping than the buying and doesn't want to be overburdened with an overly technical, ultra-detailed product presentation. All they want to know is how an RV makes them feel when they're traveling or camping in it.

The initial slow period is a good time to fine-tune listening and perception skills to more quickly understand the type of customer

standing in front of you. Develop your approach by asking questions, listening and paying attention to your customer's nonverbal cues. Remember that this customer has nothing to do with the way you tried to sell to the last customer.

Master Product Knowledge

An anxious customer will be more comfortable if you have also mastered your competitor's product. Being able to articulate specifically why yours is better is very important to them, and this includes being honest about times your competitor has a feature that your product doesn't have and then how you can overcome it.

As customers shop around, the salesperson who can master both their product and their competitors' will earn the sale. They will be perceived as a master problem-solver for anything that might arise with the product after they purchase. Customers in this economy need someone who has earned credibility as their "go-to" salesperson to feel comfortable buying when money is tight.

Focus More on Value Than Price

The customer in this economy tends to hold onto their money because they fear things could get worse. The product being demonstrated must exceed every expectation with no exception. This will put pressure on salespeople to be sharper than in previous years.

Achieving trust increases the chance that the salesperson will get the information they need to construct a product presentation that meets budgetary objectives, solves every need or problem, and then some. Meeting minimum expectations won't be enough for the nervous customer, so it must be a slam dunk that goes beyond expectations.

To do this, salespeople must know the "must-have" product features versus the "nice-to-have," and present them in that order of priority, with an emphasis on how the customer will benefit. The salesperson who involves their customer in their presentation, where together they figure out how to benefit from a particular product feature in an interactive manner, will have a more meaningful product presentation because it raises value and helps to justify the purchase.

Far too many salespeople tend to make long presentations and speeches that anxious customers will get bored with after a while. Taking a participative approach will help relax customers and "feel" the benefit.

Master the Art of Referrals

Studies show that 70% (or more) of salespeople never ask for a referral. The customer who decides to purchase something in a down economy tends to be more committed, so salespeople must ask for referrals from every customer.

Remember, a happy customer wants to tell the world about their new RV purchase because they are excited, so why not make them a partner in future sales?

Although customers are interested in purchasing an RV today, some may decide not to purchase because they want to hang on to their money in this economy. If this customer is handled respectfully, this group can also be a candidate for a referral offer. If they enjoyed the process but chose not to buy because money is tight, they may still tell others about their positive experience at your dealership. So by all means, ask for referrals from them as well. Don't be a part of the 70% who pass on an opportunity that's right in front of them.

Sometimes, a lean selling period can be the critical time that propels salespeople toward future success, because they self-reflect and sharpen their selling skills. Fixing things that were previously overlooked or taken for granted can often be the key to paving the way for the success people hope for when they join a sales organization in the first place.

These adjustments can help anxious customers feel more comfortable spending money, even when economic conditions might lead them to feel otherwise. RVP

Thomas Morin is a sales coach and author in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, who teaches salespeople in all industries how to build the rapport and trust that customers must feel to be comfortable buying. Listen to Morin's podcast "No Trust, No Sale" on Spotify, iTunes and Amazon. Contact Morin at bookauthorcoach@gmail.com.





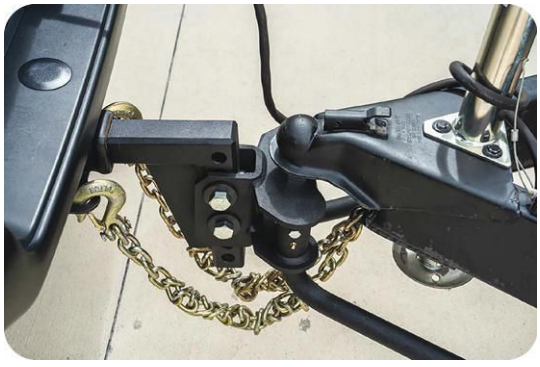
TOWING & HITCHES



SAFETY CHAINS

Austin Hardware & Supply, Lee's Summit, Missouri, presents its Safety Chains. Safety chains are essential hardware for trailer towing, serving as a critical backup to keep trailers connected in the event of a hitch failure and prevent runaway accidents. Properly rated chains and secure brackets are critical for control, safety and compliance. At Austin Hardware, safety chains and brackets are Austin Engineered Solutions designed, tested and verified to meet DOT standards, including extensive salt-spray testing. The safety chains enable safer towing.

austinhardware.com



WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

BulletProof Hitches, Bradenton, Florida, offers its BPH Weight Distribution System. The BulletProof Medium Duty Weight Distribution System improves towing stability by evenly distributing trailer weight across the tow vehicle's axles, reducing sag and enhancing control. Rated to 14,000 pounds trailer weight and 1,400 pounds tongue weight, integrated sway control limits side-to-side movement. It allows full turning and backing up without removal and works with electric and surge brakes.

bulletproofhitches.com



BRAKE CONTROL

Autowbrake, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, offers its Autowbrake Brake Control. Autowbrake, a trailer-mounted proportional brake control, has improvements coming in June, including an improved wireless handheld remote with LED settings and connection indicators. Options available for four-way, seven-way plug power and even solar. Easy-to-use plug and tow braking for single-, double- and triple-axle trailers. Mount anywhere on the trailer, choose the setting on the handheld remote and then just plug and tow.

getautowbrake.com



WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION HITCH

B&W Trailer Hitches, Humboldt, Kansas, offers its Continuum Weight Distribution Hitch, which uses built-in friction sway control, a preset head angle and hydraulic components for easy setup, smooth towing and quiet operation. To hitch up, snap the bars in, pump the handle and use the gauge to dial in the weight distribution. Opening the needle valve releases pressure from the bars. Composite spring bars deliver strength with less weight and more flex. A relief valve protects against pressures exceeding 3,000 psi. Rated for 16,000 pounds.

bwtrailerhitches.com



TOW LIGHT KIT

Blue Ox, Pender, Nebraska, presents its BX88462 Tow Light Kit for 2-Inch Receiver. The BX88462 is a professional, paint-safe lighting solution for flat towing that eliminates the need to modify the factory wiring. It mounts directly into any 2-inch hitch receiver, providing high-visibility signaling without the need for magnetic lights. The intuitive plug-and-play design allows for rapid setup and removal, making it an ideal choice for travelers who prioritize a clean, nonpermanent installation.

blueox.com



DOUBLE LOCK GOOSENECK HITCH

CURT, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, presents its PowerHaul Double Lock Gooseneck Hitch. CURT's PowerHaul Double Lock Gooseneck Hitch delivers professional-grade strength and stability. Built to handle up to 38,000 pounds gross trailer weight (40,000 pounds with optional 3-inch ball), its double-lock design and heavy-duty construction keep your trailer secure and balanced. Easy one-person installation, a removable flip-and-store ball and precision engineering ensure you hitch up with confidence every time.

curtmfg.com

WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION HITCH



Camco, Greensboro, North Carolina, presents its Camco Eaz-Lift ReCurve R6 Weight Distribution Hitch. The Eaz-Lift ReCurve R6 is designed for performance and reliability. Its adaptive sway control dynamically adjusts to road conditions and disengages for tight turns, ensuring smooth and effortless towing. The quiet, friction-free design eliminates grinding, while top-loading spring bars offer quick installation and superior ground clearance.

camco.net



FOLDABLE FIFTH WHEEL HITCH

Demco, Boyden, Iowa, offers its Recon Stealth Hitch, a foldable fifth wheel hitch. The Recon Stealth delivers the performance of Demco's Recon lineup, and its patent-pending folding base collapses with a single motion. When folded, the truck bed becomes fully usable again. Each component is light enough for comfortable carrying and can be stored almost anywhere. Demco also offers an optional bulkhead-mounted MOLLE Rack, engineered specifically for the folded Recon Stealth.

demco-products.com

ABS & SWAY MITIGATION SYSTEM



Dexter, Elkhart, Indiana, presents its TOW ASSIST Powered by Bosch. Dexter's Tow Assist ABS & Sway Mitigation System uses integrated wheel speed sensors with automotive-grade ABS and stability control to help reduce sway and improve control. Lane Change Assistance supports highway stability automatically with no driver input, and integrated diagnostics plus a towable odometer make it easy to track performance and service.

dextergroup.com

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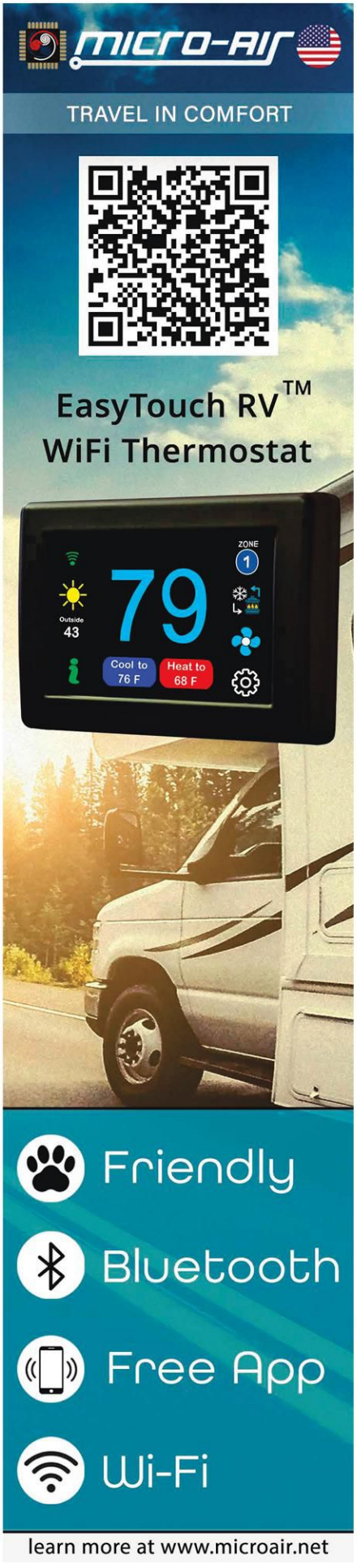


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HYDRAULIC TRAILER JACKS

EQ Systems, Cassopolis, Michigan, presents its AJ Hydraulic Trailer Jacks. The AJ Series is designed for heavy-duty applications like horse trailers, livestock trailers, gooseneck trailers and motorsports trailers. With an 8,000-pound capacity per jack and a 20- and 24-inch stroke, it provides the lifting power and range for safe, stable hitching. A hydraulic trailer jack for motorsports trailers eliminates the frustration of manually cranking a jack, giving you push-button control and stability every time you hitch up.

eqsystems.us





FIFTH WHEEL TO GOOSENECK PIN BOX

GEN-Y Hitch, Nappanee, Indiana, offers its NOMAD, a fifth-wheel-to-gooseneck pin box that replaces bulky fifth-wheel hitches, giving you full use of your truck bed when you are not towing. It features GEN-Y's SnapLatch coupler, an automatic self-latching system that locks onto your gooseneck ball as you lower the trailer. This eliminates the need to climb into your truck bed to latch a coupler, making every hookup faster, easier, safer and more secure.

genyhitch.com

CHAIN STOWING SOLUTION

Hanington Innovations Ltd., Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, presents its Connect-to-Protect Chain Buddy. The Chain Buddy chain stowing solution complements the total protection provided to the wire harness by its Connect-to-Protect wire harness guardian products. A 7-Way Harness Guardian integrates into the Chain Buddy product and requires no additional fasteners or mounting holes. Made of specialized military-grade PVC material, it is built to handle all environmental conditions.

connecttoprotect.ca





HELPER SPRING

Hellwig Products, Visalia, California, offers its LP-35 Heavy Duty Helper Spring. Hellwig LP-35 Helper Springs provide full-time spring rates, offering level-loads up to 3,500 pounds for a wide variety of Dodge Sprinter, Mercedes-Benz Sprinter, GMC Sierra and Chevy Silverado 2500, 3500 and 4500 models. The LP-35 Helper Springs are ideal for fleet applications, RVs or vehicles that consistently carry a heavy load day in and day out.

hellwigproducts.com



PIN BOXES

Lippert, Elkhart, Indiana, presents its CURT Helux Pin Boxes. CURT Helux Coil-Spring Fifth Wheel Pin Box and Curt Helux Coil-Spring Gooseneck Pin Box are engineered with advanced coil-spring and shock-absorbing technology, and reduce chucking, jarring and force transferred into your RV's frame and body for a smoother, more controlled ride. Available in fifth wheel and gooseneck configurations with multiple weight ratings, they're built with durable steel construction and a maintenance-free design.

lippert.com

SWAY CONTROL HITCH

Progress Mfg, Provo, Utah, presents its Original Equal-i-zer Sway Control Hitch. The Original Equal-i-zer Sway Control Hitch is recognized for its safety, quality and performance, combining weight distribution and sway control in one easy-to-use system. It levels the tow vehicle and trailer for improved steering and braking while it helps guard against crosswinds and passing semis. Built with high-quality materials and expert craftsmanship, it delivers safe, confident towing and has been made in America for over 80 years.

equalizerhitch.com





ELECTRIC BRAKE CONTROLLER

REDARC, Lonsdale, South Australia, offers its Tow-Pro Link, a next-generation electric brake controller perfect for towable RVs and trailers. It installs in under 15 minutes using a standard USCAR 7 pin trailer harness and a USB-A powered remote, no vehicle modification required. Once installed, it delivers proportional trailer braking for smooth, controlled stops. Drivers can control braking three ways: via the USB remote, the Tow-Pro Link app or Apple CarPlay. Activate SwayStop Plus for sway control, and receive over-the-air updates.

redarcelectronics.com/us

WIRELESS BATTERY DISCONNECT

Roadmaster, Vancouver, Washington, presents its Battery Ace, a patent-pending wireless battery disconnect designed to simplify power isolation for flat-towed vehicles and other 12-volt applications. Operated by a compact key fob, it eliminates the need to route wires through the firewall or mount dash switches, reducing installation time and complexity. An included Faraday pouch prevents accidental activation by blocking radio signals. Ideal for RVers, classic cars, trailers and boats, Battery Ace helps reduce parasitic battery drain during storage and towing.

roadmasterinc.com







FRONT RECEIVER HITCH

Torklift International, Kent, Washington, offers its North Hitch, a front receiver hitch for 2023-26 Mercedes-Benz Sprinter vans. It features a stainless steel receiver tube with a powder-coated hitch structure. Bolt-on installation uses factory mounting points, no drilling required. Designed to maintain ground clearance and avoid interference with airflow. Engineered for compatibility with factory parking sensors and adaptive cruise control. Rated for up to 7,500 pounds towing and 500 pounds tongue weight at the trailer ball. Made in the USA.

torklift.com





TRAILER JACK

Valterra Products, Mission Hills, California, presents its StayPut Trailer Jack, a simple way to change a tire on your dual-axle trailer. This ramp provides an 8.5-inch wide, 5.5-inch lift, raising a flat tire off the ground. Its textured surface ensures stability, and the integrated cradle guides precise trailer positioning. With a 15,000-pound load capacity and lightweight design, it's easy to store and transport. Stocking the StayPut Trailer Jack offers RV owners a practical, peace-of-mind accessory that enhances their journey.

valterra.com





BIKE BUNK

Stromberg Carlson, Traverse City, Michigan, offers its Bike Bunk. Turn unused A-frame space into prime bike storage with the Stromberg Carlson Bike Bunk. This raised 2-inch receiver lets you carry bikes up front using any RV-approved rack designed for a 2-inch receiver, freeing up valuable rear space. Heavy-duty all-steel construction supports up to 100 pounds and fits A-frame bars up to 6 inches tall. Final fit depends on rack position and turning radius.

strombergcarlson.com



TOW LIGHT BAR

TowMate, Rogers, Arkansas, offers its Saber Light (P/N: TM-SBR3F-7RV). The TowMate Saber Light is a wireless tow light bar that combines stop/turn/tail lights, an amber strobe warning light and a bright work light in one unit. It mounts magnetically and runs off a rechargeable 6,000 mAh battery with a power gauge, offering up to 45 hours of use and a 1,000-foot wireless range. RV owners can use it to illuminate and signal while towing vehicles, set up campsites or handle roadside tasks.

towmate.com



WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION HITCH

Weigh Safe Trailer Hitches, Vineyard, Utah, offers its True Tow Weight Distribution Hitch – Lightweight. The True Tow Lightweight delivers the performance you expect in a lighter, streamlined design. Like Weigh Safe's Middleweight and Heavyweight models, it provides real-time weight distribution control for precise load balancing and improved stability. The integrated Live Adjustment System lets you fine-tune your setup in seconds for safer, more controlled towing. Powered by True Tow Technology, installation and operation are faster, easier and more accurate.

weigh-safe.com



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Pit Stop



Zion National Park To Restrict Large Vehicles



Starting June 7, **Zion National Park** in Utah will enforce existing **size and weight limits** from Canyon Junction to the East Entrance. **The National Park Service** determined large vehicles cannot safely traverse the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway due to the roadway's design and capacity. As a result, vehicles must meet the following size criteria, or they will be denied entry:

- Single or combined vehicles cannot be wider than 7 feet, 10 inches or taller than 11 feet, 4 inches — anything bigger can't pass through the tunnel in a single lane.
- Single vehicles cannot be longer than 35 feet, 9 inches, and combined vehicles cannot be longer than 50 feet — any longer and you can't safely maintain a lane on the highway's tight curves.
- Neither single nor combined vehicles can be heavier than 50,000 pounds. The highway's four historic bridges are not rated to carry anything more.

STOCK.ADOBE.COM



PHOTO COURTESY OF RVIA

ALL-INDUSTRY VOLUNTEER DAY

The RV Industry Association announced this year's All-Industry Volunteer Day will be held May 20. The industry will once again gather for a day of giving back with the fifth annual Park Improvement Project.

This year, volunteers from all industry sectors will come together at Indiana's Elkhart County Fairgrounds to participate in restoration and enhancement projects to the fairground's recreation and campground facilities.

FUEL PRICE REALITY CHECK

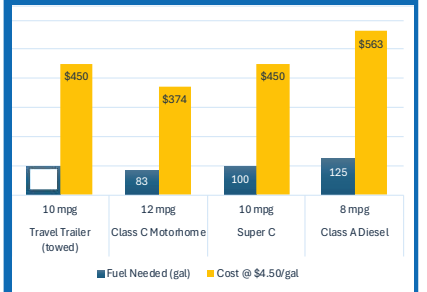
At ~8–12 mpg, fuel can be the *single largest variable* cost on a long trip.

On a 1,000-mile journey at ~$4.50/gallon:

- **Class A Diesel** could burn ~125 gallons → **~$560+**
- **Class C** might average ~83–100 gallons → **$375–$450**
- **Travel Trailer** combos sit around **$400–$500** depending on tow vehicle, weight and speed

Diesel vs. Gas: Diesel engines usually give modest mpg gains, but diesel is often more expensive per gallon — so cost per mile savings aren't always as large as the mpg boost.

Tow penalty: Towing a trailer can **cut mpg by ~30–40%** versus the tow vehicle alone.



JANUARY 2026 SHIPMENTS

24,683 (units)
total RV shipments

10.7% decrease
compared to Jan. 2025 (27,629 units)

For the 2025 year, shipments were up 2.5% with 342,220 units

Towable RVs, led by conventional travel trailers, ended the month down 13.2% from last January with 21,614 shipments. Motorhomes finished the month up 12.7% compared to the same month last year with 3,069 units. Park model RVs finished January up 22.9% compared to the same month last year, with 360 wholesale shipments.

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* Patents Pending ** Hitch does not need to be removed from truck bed.