

August 2022

RV PRO

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Steady as She Goes

Alabama's **Burton Campers** says quality customer service and low turnover keep customers coming back.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

East to West's Classy Class C

The 2022 Hall of Fame Inductees

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ABOUT THE COVER

Photo: Cary Norton
Shaun Gregory of
Burton Campers in
Calera, Alabama,
repairs an RV damaged
by a tree branch.



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I have a confession to make: I still keep a paper calendar. Do you? Or have you made the digital leap and every appointment is now entered on an online calendar or in your smartphone?

Lately it seems I need reminders set everywhere for everything. All tasks, Zoom calls, appointments, etc. are entered in a paper planner; work to-dos are in my Outlook calendar; personal stuff goes in my phone. Alerts are set, and timers, too.

And I still miss things sometimes.

With everything we're expected to juggle these days, it's no wonder we have to use multiple mediums to keep things straight. But I need you to add two things that are on my to-do list right now to yours as well:

1. 40 Under 40 nominations: RV PRO is excited to conduct the third annual 40 Under 40 nominations, due Aug. 12. The 2022 class of honorees will be celebrated in November at the RVDA convention in Las Vegas—another date that should be on your calendar. And the honorees will also be featured in our December issue. Please visit rv-pro.com to enter a talented person at your company or organization.
2. Will you be attending the Open House in Elkhart, Indiana, next month? I'm excited to attend for the first time, and I hope to meet many of you there in person. I've had the pleasure of getting to know many friendly people in the RV industry the past couple of months via email and phone, and I can't wait to actually shake your hands.

One more task to add to your list, if you don't mind—please drop me an email at jdking@cahabamedia.com. We are preparing our editorial calendar for 2023 and we'd love to know what you—our loyal readers—want to see in these pages each month. What do you like to read about that helps you do your job better? What information do you need to learn more about? And what could we do better?

Your feedback is invaluable to us, so please let us know what you think. We don't mind adding a few more tasks to our planners (or smartphones!) if it means delivering the content you need and want.

As always, thanks for reading!

Jennifer King

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ANNIVERSARIES & AWARDS

THOR-Made Film Wins Award

THOR Industries' film, "Finding Strength and Redemption: The Blackfoot River Adventure with First Descents," which chronicled the collaboration with nonprofit First Descents, was awarded gold in two categories at the inaugural Anthem Awards.

First Descents is a Denver-based nonprofit aimed at improving the long-term survival rates and quality of life for young adults impacted by cancer, multiple sclerosis and other serious health conditions.

Produced by The Public Works, a marketing and creative agency, the film shares the story of young adults impacted by cancer and their healing journey on the Blackfoot River in southwest Montana. First Descents invited the group to discover the river's restorative effects while paddling their way toward recovery, and to draw them closer to nature through the RV camping experience.

THOR's partnership helped generate support and funding for First Descents, as well as provide RVs at the Montana backcountry campsite.

"THOR is unbelievably proud to have been a part of this project and continue to partner with First Descents to help promote the healing experiences of outdoor adventure," said THOR President and CEO Bob Martin. "We are grateful our RVs enabled the Blackfoot River program, connecting many incredible young adults with nature and one another, which is truly inspiring."

The project received the highest marks in two for-profit categories at the Anthem Awards: Health—Brand Campaign Fundraising and Health—Best Brand Campaign Product/Innovation/Service. Presented by the Webby Awards, the Anthem Awards celebrate purpose and mission-driven work from people, companies and organizations worldwide.

New Horizons Recruitment Video Wins Top Industry Honor

A video created for New Horizons RV in Junction City, Kansas, has won the highest award available in the 43rd annual Telly Awards, which honors excellence in video and television.

"Join the Dream Team," which was created by IdeaBank Marketing in Hastings, Nebraska, won the Silver Telly in Promotional Video-Recruitment. The recruitment video also won a Bronze Telly in Promotional Video-Writing.

"This video does much more than help us recruit quality employees," CEO Bryan Tillett said. "It really captures what we're all about as a company—packing passion, pride and performance into every unit we build."

As a manufacturer of custom luxury fifth wheels, New Horizons RV faced the challenge of recruiting not just workers, but artisans dedicated to quality. "Join the Dream Team" addressed that need by appealing to applicants' desire to join a family of creative-thinking, problem-solving craftsmen.

Personnel working on the project included agency principal Sherma Jones, who directed the video; copywriter R.J. Post; and videographer and editor Travis Enck from Travis Enck Productions.

"New Horizons RV truly manufactures the most coveted—and the most customized—fifth wheels in the industry," Jones said. "It was a pleasure creating a video that matches the quality of this company and its products."

Founded in 1979, the Telly Awards represent the most respected advertising agencies, television stations, production companies and publishers from around the world. This year, the competition drew more than 12,000 entries from all 50 states and five continents.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Winnebago Makes Senior Leadership Moves

Winnebago Industries announced several leadership position shifts.

Amber Holm joined Winnebago as senior vice president, chief marketing officer. In the newly

created role, Holm will drive marketing and branding efforts at the enterprise level and engage the company's stakeholders from a communications perspective. Holm will report directly to President and CEO Michael Happe, joining Winnebago after more than two decades leading marketing and brand management for top consumer brands including Rubbermaid, FoodSaver and Ball Canning.

Sri Koneru was promoted to senior vice president, chief information officer (CIO). In his expanded role, Koneru will partner with company leaders in the development and implementation of digital strategies, including customer engagement and interaction, information technologies within products and internal digital

transformation initiatives. As a member of the Executive Leadership Team, Koneru will continue to report to Bryan Hughes, chief financial officer and senior vice president of finance, IT and strategic planning.



Chad Reece was promoted to vice president, government and industry relations. He will be responsible for oversight of ongoing engagement with outdoor industry-related

organizations, state and national level government and corporate development contacts, and awareness of key legislation trends and issues. He will also support various corporate relations initiatives and report to Stacy Bogart, senior vice president and general counsel of secretary and corporate responsibility. Reece is a 34-year veteran of Winnebago and has served in many leadership roles, most recently as director of corporate relations. Prior to that, he served as director of marketing for 15 years. Additionally, he has been active at the board and committee levels with several state and national organizations including the RV Industry Association and was recently elected treasurer of the Iowa Association of Business and Industry.

"As VP, Government and Industry Relations, Chad will leverage his long-term government and industry relationships to further enhance Winnebago Industries' leadership in the outdoor recreation industry," said Bogart. "He will continue to be a great ambassador for our company, and I look forward to collaborating with him in his expanded role."

Horizon Global Hires New CFO

Horizon Global named Jian James Zhou as its new chief financial officer (CFO).

Zhou most recently served as executive vice president and CFO for Joyson Safety

Systems, a global supplier of mobility safety components and systems. Prior to Joyson, Zhou was vice president and CFO for Tesla China and supported Tesla's entry into China's electric vehicle market. He previously served in divisional CFO roles for Ingersoll Rand and General Electric.

"We look forward to James's immediate contributions to Horizon Global," said Terry Gohl, Horizon Global CEO. "James brings tremendous global operational finance leadership across multiple industries, as well as substantial capital structure and business development expertise, which we expect to

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CONTINUE TO USE THEM ON FUTURE RIGS!"**



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fully draw upon to accelerate our current turnaround efforts."

Zhou replaces Dennis Richardville, who is stepping down and will serve in a consulting capacity through the transition.

KOA Names Assistant VP of Campground Design

"Since joining KOA almost 15 years ago, Doug has been the leading force in shaping and innovating campground design," said Ann Emerson, chief operating officer of Kampgrounds of America, KOA System. "In expanding his role, we're investing not just in the future of KOA as an outdoor hospitality leader, but also in the future of countless KOA owners and guests."

In addition to overseeing all campground design, Mulvaney will develop training and educational resources to aid KOA franchisees in further developing their campground locations.

KOA said its design services are a unique offering in the campground industry. Through these services, franchise owners have free access to a team of design experts to help them make improvements to their business. Kampgrounds of America said it has promoted Doug Mulvaney into an assistant vice president role within KOA's campground design services. Since joining KOA in 2008, Mulvaney has helped hundreds of independent campground owners elevate their investment with thoughtful and innovative design. As assistant vice president of campground design services, Mulvaney will lead KOA's team of design experts as they strive to bring a modern, forward-thinking experience to campgrounds across the U.S. and Canada.

EVENTS

NTP-STAG Unveils 2023 Expo Details

NTP-STAG announced it will be hosting Expo 2023, its annual dealer event, in Aurora, Colorado, Jan. 16-17, 2023, at recently opened Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center. The company says the "spectacular" facility, just 30 minutes from downtown Denver, will provide a scenic backdrop for the two-day, industry only experience.

"Our events team has a tremendous relationship with the management of Gaylord properties throughout the country and with the development of this new Colorado location, they knew that it would be a destination that dealers would be excited to visit," said NTP-STAG Vice President of Sales Fred Petrivelli. "We are constantly striving to produce a unique, exciting and productive event for attendees, and we

are looking forward to spending time with everyone when the industry comes together in Colorado next January."

Six miles from the Denver airport, the Gaylord Rockies boasts nine miles of nature preserve trails in addition to 10 miles of hiking trails while its convenient location presents multiple shopping and dining opportunities. The show itself will take place in a 500,000-square-foot convention space.

"The Expo is about connecting the RV industry—a unique event where the suppliers who produce the industry's leading product can exchange ideas and information with the dealers who sell and install them in their customers' units every day," said Petrivelli. "Along with fantastic promotions and show-only pricing, the educational programs provide invaluable insight to compliment the networking opportunities."

Day 1 of Expo 2023 features RV University, which includes PRO (Professional Retail Organization) Education Seminars followed by an opening reception on the show floor. The following day will include invited NTP-STAG customers from across North America in a full day on the exhibit floor with selected leading industry manufacturers, followed by a closing reception.

RVWA Symposium to Feature Mary Kelly

The RV Women's Alliance (RVWA) is holding its first-ever educational symposium in Chicago on Oct. 10-12, and Mary Kelly is the keynote speaker.

Kelly is a retired U.S. Navy officer who has become a motivational speaker and consultant and written multiple books on leadership topics. Kelly is noted for her relatable, no-nonsense approach in helping audiences bring out the best in themselves, RVWA said, and it is thrilled to have her as a speaker.

The two-day symposium features dual seminar tracks for attendees, based on position in their companies. One track is tailored for first-time and emerging leaders, while the other is tailored for mid- and top-level leaders. The educational tracks will be led by Purdue University. The event will be held at the Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center Hotel, a venue that is convenient to the O'Hare airport.

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RVs Move America Week Triumphantly Returns

JAMES ASHURST, Executive Vice President, RV Industry Association

PHOTOS: RVIA

After a two-year hiatus caused by both the pandemic and restricted access to Capitol Hill, the RV Industry Association's RVs Move America Week returned to Washington, D.C., during the first week of June. The event, which blended a mix of association committee meetings with visits to legislative and regulatory agencies, was well received by its more than 225 participants.

Prior to the pandemic, RVs Move America Week had established itself as one of the industry's must-attend events. Bringing the industry together once again to collectively work to define and tackle the most important issues currently facing a growing RV marketplace reminded all in attendance how well our industry works together.

In addition to the meetings, RVs Move America Week proved to be the perfect venue for the release of the new RVs Move America Economic Impact Study, revealing an overall annual economic impact to the United States economy of \$140 billion, supporting nearly 680,000 jobs and paying more than \$48 billion in wages. This is a 23% increase in economic output in just the past three years.

The \$140 billion total annual RV industry economic impact includes:

- \$73.7 billion generated by RV manufacturers and suppliers
- \$35.7 billion by RV campgrounds and related travel
- \$30.5 billion by RV sales and service activities

In addition to the economic impact, the study showed the RV industry contributes \$13.6 billion in federal, state and local taxes. These are incredible



figures—and they cement the fact that the RV industry is a major player in the overall outdoor recreation economy.

The event also provided an opportunity for the association to highlight RV industry members who have made exceptional contributions to the success of the RV industry. This year was no different, and RV Industry Association (RVIA) Chair Jeff Rutherford presented several of the association's annual awards honoring members in the areas of RV standards, education and service to the industry. Awardees this year included:

- Distinguished Achievement in RV Standards Award: Tim Schlabach, THOR Industries
- National Education Service Award: Doug Gaeddert, Forest River
- David J. Humphreys RV Industry Unity Award: Garry Enyart, Onan/Cummins
- Distinguished Service to the RV Industry Award: Kevin Phillips, Thetford Corporation/Airxcel (posthumously)

Attendees also got to hear from notable speakers during the week including Bret Baier, the host of Special Report with Bret Baier on the Fox News Channel; Amy Walter, publisher and editor-in-chief of the Cook Report; and a special panel on our nation's public and private campgrounds—an area of growing importance as we continue to see the number of new RVers enter the market.

Each year, the Advocacy Day portion of RVs Move America Week continues to grow in both size and importance, and despite some of the challenges to scheduling meetings with lawmakers, this year's event once again proved to be very impactful. Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill is a day that is managed and organized by the RVIA's Government Affairs team, and the day places the RV industry agenda front and center. As the impact of our industry continues to grow, maintaining and building our influence in Washington, D.C., is vital for the future success of the industry.



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Sewn-In Door Pockets Help Secure Cover



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- Provides privacy during camping & protection during storage
- Storage bag included



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Fasteners with
Anti-Theft Tabs



Privacy
Panels



Storage Bag
Included

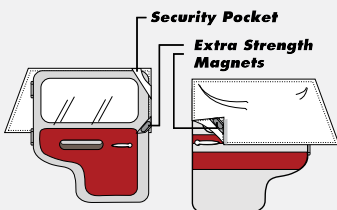


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(L to R): Phil Ingrassia, RV Dealers Association (RVDA) president; Mike Pearo, RVDA chairman; Garry Enyart; Jeff Rutherford, RVIA chairman; and Craig Kirby, RVIA president and CEO.



Bret Baier of Fox News was a guest speaker.

This year's Advocacy Day included 114 participating member advocates and guides, and collectively the group took part in 101 meetings with senators from 27 states and representatives from 54 districts on issues critical to the growth of the industry. The industry advocates met with policymakers to tell our compelling economic story, and to urge members of Congress to support investments in infrastructure and promote outdoor recreation needs and federal reforms the RV and camping industry need to truly thrive. Key areas of focus were on the following:

- Support the bipartisan America's Outdoor Recreation Act (S.3266)
- Support the establishment of grant and incentive programs for state and local governments, as well as the private sector, to build a robust rural network of EV charging stations
- Reauthorization of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program with a six-year or longer renewal term and inclusion of all Indonesian lauan

These are just a few of the issues that make up the RVIA's federal policy agenda, and our discussions on Capitol Hill were extremely positive, as legislators and their staff recognized the fundamental change happening in the way Americans are prioritizing time in the great outdoors and embracing the freedom that comes with RVing.

If you were not able to join your fellow members of the RV industry in D.C. this year, advocacy is a year-round endeavor, and you can still make your

voice heard on these important issues by asking your Congress members to support the \$140 billion RV Industry. The RVIA's Government Affairs team is always available to provide guidance on how to engage with your elected officials, so please do not hesitate to reach out to any member of the team.

RVs Move America Week also proved to be a great venue for the Go RVing team to launch a new national campaign. Moving forward, the second Saturday of June each year will be known as National Go RVing Day! This new initiative is designed to bring further attention to the many benefits of living an active outdoor lifestyle, and it calls on the RV industry and consumers alike to celebrate the joys of RVing by heading out to their favorite outdoor destination for a weekend of RVing. The Go RVing marketing team developed and provided a toolkit for industry partners to use to promote National Go RVing Day to their audiences and consumers, including social media graphics, sample social media copy, an official logo and a social media video. We are excited about building on this year's launch, which was a very positive way to cap off an influential week for the entire RV industry.

The RVIA team was thrilled to have our members back together to participate in this important week of committee and Capitol Hill meetings—the energy was tremendous, and our impact is being felt by lawmakers and regulators alike. If you haven't yet attended RVs Move America Week, we hope that you will pencil in

RV Aftermarket Conference

For RV industry brands active in the aftermarket space, or those who are looking to expand their business footprint through the two-step distribution process, consider attending the RV Aftermarket Conference. The conference, Aug. 8-11 in San Antonio, Texas, focuses on supporting a great parts and accessory purchasing experience that benefits industry brands and, ultimately, the RV consumer.

During the event, suppliers and distributors meet in one-on-one "appointment sessions" to discuss current and new product lines and ways to expand the market and improve visibility of aftermarket products for retail customers. In addition to the individual meetings, attendees will have the opportunity to network with colleagues with a proven track record in the aftermarket and will hear from thought leaders in the RV industry.

The event is open to all RV Industry Association members. Visit rvia.org/events/rv-aftermarket-conference for more information.

the first week of June 2023 into your calendars now and join us next year to engage with the organization and help us steer our agenda to further grow the incredible RV industry. RVIA



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A Little Class for the Class C

East to West's Entrada brings a luxury look and feel to the company's first motorized home offering.

BY JENNIFER KING



PHOTOS: EAST TO WEST RV

An entry level price point with the look and feel of a luxury Class C? Is that possible?

East to West RV, a Forest River division, sure thinks so, and with the release of the Entrada, the company is meeting—and likely exceeding—those expectations.

BY THE NUMBERS

The Entrada is offered in five floorplans, and select floorplans come standard with dual AC service and a Yamaha generator, Tony Young says, which has cleaner energy going to the coach and will extend its life cycle. It also has a pull start, he says, which is important if the batteries are dead and you need to get it started to recharge the batteries. The luxury package includes a 40-inch LED TV, 10.7 cubic foot refrigerator, and backup and side view cameras with a monitor. Roof-mounted solar panels are optional. Visit easttowestrv.com/class-c-motorhomes/entrada for more details on standard and luxury packages, plus optional features.

2200S

Exterior length: 23 feet, 10 inches
Exterior width: 101 inches
Exterior height: 11 feet, 3 inches
Fuel capacity: 55 gallons
Queen bed: 60 inch x 80 inch
Bunk bed: 60 inch x 80 inch
1 bathroom
Interior living height: 7 feet

2600DS

Exterior length: 29 feet, 4 inches
Exterior width: 101 inches
Exterior height: 11 feet, 3 inches
Fuel capacity: 55 gallons
Queen bed: 60 inch x 80 inch
Bunk bed: 60 inch x 80 inch
1 bathroom
Interior living height: 7 feet

2700N

Exterior length: 29 feet, 11 inches
Exterior width: 101 inches
Exterior height: 11 feet, 3 inches
Fuel capacity: 55 gallons
Queen bed: 60 inch x 80 inch
Bunk bed: 60 inch x 80 inch
1 bathroom
Interior living height: 7 feet

2900DS

Exterior length: 32 feet, 3 inches
Exterior width: 101 inches
Exterior height: 11 feet, 4 inches
Fuel capacity: 55 gallons
Queen bed: 60 inch x 80 inch
Bunk bed: 60 inch x 80 inch
1 bathroom
Interior living height: 7 feet

3100FB

Exterior length: 32 feet, 6 inches
Exterior width: 101 inches
Exterior height: 11 feet, 4 inches
Fuel capacity: 55 gallons
Queen bed: 60 inch x 74 inch
Bunk bed: 60 inch x 80 inch
Bunk beds: 27 inch x 72 inch
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Interior living height: 7 feet

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REALLY TRIED
TO FOCUS ON
SOMETHING
THAT’S
PRICE POINT
FRIENDLY.”**



East to West's Entrada is designed for the first-time motorized buyer with a friendly price point.

Tony Young, national sales manager at East to West, worked for years at the motorized division of Forest River. Young says he got a call about starting work on a Class C for East to West in 2020, and—fast forward a bit—they’ve

now been shipping the Entrada for more than a year.

“The response has just been tremendous. Off the charts,” Young says.

The Entrada offers what Young says is a different Class C experience with an



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The goal of the Entrada was to elevate the feel to be “on par” with East to West’s luxury models.

interior and decor that is “on par” with the company’s larger luxury models. He collaborated with Lisa Liegl Rees, founder and general manager of East to West RV, on how the interiors would

look, keeping in mind that lighter colors, especially white, are the trend. But they also consulted with customers who Young says are making the decisions: “That’s the Mrs., usually.”

“We tried to get input from our female audience members and even the females in the RV industry, such as the sales reps out in the field,” he says. “We looked at that across the

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East to West used feedback especially from its female customers to inform design decisions about the Entrada's interior.

board and got input from them.

"I'd like to take all the credit but that's not the case," Young says with a chuckle.

The first-time motorized buyer is the target market for the Entrada, he says. When people first get into the camping lifestyle, they might start off with a tent trailer, then move on to something bigger, such as a single axle and, eventually, a motorhome.

"We wanted to give the option for a couples coach or a family coach," Young says about the Entrada.

The company's demographics are anywhere from millennials to retirees.

"Camping is making a huge comeback from coast to coast," he says. "We really tried to focus on something that's price point friendly."

The way East to West RV accomplished that was by scaling down the options—making the choices simpler.

"We were able to do that by streamlining the processes," he says. "It's an easier thing for us to deal with."

Each of the five floorplans available

is built with Azdel composite backing which, Young says, helps with three things:

1. It is lightweight, so the cargo-carrying capacity will be higher.
2. It is a quieter ride. This material helps reduce road noise.
3. The composite helps the motorhome stay cooler when needed, warmer when needed, and does not wick moisture so delamination will not be an issue.

Young also points out that mold and mildew will not be a problem with the Entrada's exterior storage, which is built with Rotocast compartments.

"We knew the Class C segment is the most popular motorized segment out there, and it's a product that we knew East to West needed to be in to be even more important to our dealers," Young says. If the Entrada is parked next to an East to West fifth wheel, he says, "You can tell right off the bat it's an East to West product. They have similar decors and how we do our branding; it fits in really well."

"IT'S A PRODUCT THAT WE KNEW EAST TO WEST NEEDED TO BE IN TO BE EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO OUR DEALERS."

Lately it's been a little difficult receiving chassis to get products out to the customers as quickly as they'd like, but as of June when RV PRO spoke with Young, he says they're trickling in and the company can't be more excited about the future.

"We're just ecstatic to be able to get [dealers] more product and bring on some partners that we haven't been into yet," he says.

Sounds like they're making good on those high expectations. **RVPRO**



Photo Courtesy of Heartland Recreational Vehicles

TOMORROW

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Keep 'em Coming Back

Burton Campers in Calera, Alabama, maintains a steady increase of sales through economic ups and downs thanks to low turnover and customer service.

BY JENNIFER KING

PHOTOS: CARY NORTON

Looking across the lot crowded with RVs, it's hard to imagine a time when this vast sea of pavement held fewer than 30 units for months on end.

Now, Burton Campers off Interstate 65 in Calera, Alabama, is bursting at full capacity with 130 to 135 units stretching as far as the eye can see.

"We got down to just five to six units at the end of 2020 through the beginning of 2021," says Mickey Price, Burton Campers' sales manager. "I don't think there was a month throughout 2021 where we never had more than 30 units."

But now, production is up and the demand doesn't seem to be slowing down. Despite the rise in fuel prices, the RV business still feels like it's bustling, Price says somewhat cautiously, as if not to jinx the good fortune.

Looking at the statistics from the last several years, Price says he doesn't see a big jump but more of a steady climb. According to Price, Burton Campers sold 369 units in 2018, 380 in 2019, 401 in 2020 and 441 in 2021. As of the end of June, when RV PRO spoke with Price, 281 units had been sold so far in 2022.

"I'm still figuring it's still on an increase," he says. "But we don't know what's around the corner."

As an exclusive Jayco dealer, Burton Campers, which is owned by Lisa Burton, keeps an inventory of new and used motorhomes, travel vans, fifth wheels and travel trailers. The full service and warranty repairs department helps with major repairs and minor maintenance, and a retail store can help get any customer—from seasoned to a first-timer—equipped for the road.



Bob Bell explains the details of a purchase to a customer in the sales department at Burton Campers in Calera, Alabama.



Service is a top priority at Burton Campers and it shows with return customers and loyalty.



(L to R) Jimmy Middlebrooks, Bob Bell, David Burton, Loray Lamar, Mickey Price and Jeremy Mosher are all longtime employees at Burton Campers.



Shaun Corella walks customers through their newly purchased RV, explaining how each feature works before they drive off the lot.

Price, who has been with Burton Campers since 2007, says he believes the steady increase of sales is due to how the company does business, rather than being affected by economic upswings and downturns or, most recently, driven by the pandemic.

He says the sales department tries to do things a little differently.

“When we sell something, it’s a real simple process,” Price says. “We find the customer what they’re looking for, and we’re very fair. We price everything at a very fair price.”

Lately, Burton Campers has had an influx of customers who have sold their homes while the market prices were high, then purchased a camper and a piece of property. These customers are living in their camper full-time permanently, Price says, or temporarily while they build a home on that property.

Their average buyer is still in the age range of 40 to 65, he says, but there has been a broad range of customers coming in. In many cases, customers are the children or even grandchildren of customers who came to Burton Campers years ago. The company has been in the Calera area since 1983.

The dealer also gets a lot of repeat customers who purchase a larger unit when their children are younger and they want to travel with more people, then switch to a smaller unit when it’s just the couple on the road.

“Most of our business is repeat customers,” Price says, crediting that to great service and low turnover among the employees.

There are about 25 employees at Burton Campers and Price says the employees stick around because they are wanted, needed and paid well.

By the Numbers

1971: Founded in Jasper, Alabama

1983: Moved to Calera

25: Number of employees

441: Units sold in 2021

40-65: Age range of average customer



Mickey Price is the sales manager at Burton Campers in Alabama.

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Shaun Gregory works on a roof repair for a customer who had an insurance claim after a tree limb damaged the roof.



"It's a family atmosphere," he says. "We want people to feel good about what they do and want to come to work."

One sticky issue that all dealers—and pretty much everyone in the RV industry—has experienced as of late has been supply chain hang-ups. Price says it has made it difficult to receive parts in a timely manner and while obtaining some parts has improved, now they're finding that other items are coming in slower. Fabrics or material for awnings are the most recent components that are harder to get a hold of.

"It's aggravating for the customer more than anybody," Price says. "We have absolutely no control of it."

While the sales staff is in good shape right now, Price says Burton Campers is always on the lookout for good employees.

As the industry keeps an eye on increasing fuel prices, especially since the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February, Price says he hasn't seen that as a contributor to any downturn on sales—yet.

"I know they're concerned, but it's a nonissue right now," he says.

When asked if he believes people's approach toward how they're living their lives has had a positive effect on the RV industry, Price nods his head.

"If they've always wanted to do this," he says about RVing, "they say, let's just do it. Let's just do our thing." **RVP**



Burton Campers keeps 130 to 135 units on its property—making it shocking when fewer than 30 units were available during 2021.

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From the Ground Up

Robert Weed Corp. capitalizes on its 56-year history to supply the RV industry with strong, high-quality products.

BY LISA DICKSTEEN

PHOTOS: ROBERT WEED CORP.

The Robert Weed Corporation of 2022, with its 250 employees in two locations, would be unrecognizable to its founder, who started it as a distributor of wood and wood composite products in 1966 and was soon supplying multiple industries out of a small Bristol, Indiana, location. By 1969, the company had expanded to the point that an 18,000-square-foot space was constructed.

Born in Erie, Pennsylvania, Robert Weed joined the Marine Corps straight out of high school and served for three years before joining the sales team at BF Goodrich while attending Akron University. After graduation in 1950, he took his experience, and his newly printed Bachelor of Arts in business administration, on the road as a traveling salesman for a series of plywood and lumber companies.

This was the start of the era of manufactured housing and RVs, and Weed saw an opportunity to get out on



Robert Weed has five lamination machines that can laminate vinyl or paper overlay onto various substrates, typically plywood or MDF. Plywood laminated panels are used for interior walls of RVs. Laminated MDF is used in RV pocket doors and cabinetry.



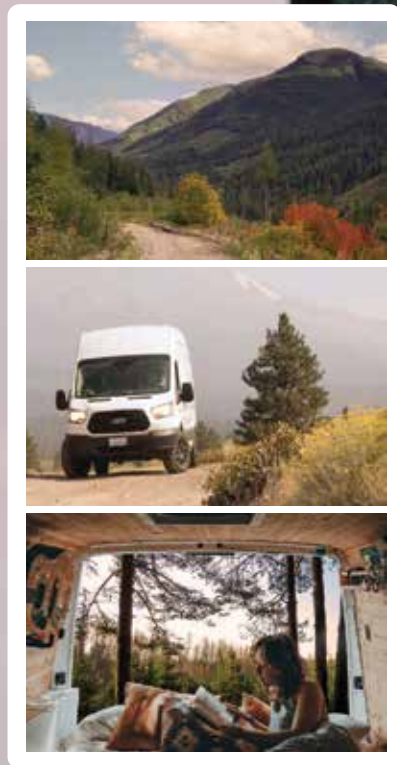
Robert Weed mills profiles for trim and molding pieces using a variety of saw machines. These trim pieces are used as door frames and other uses in RVs.

his own in one of the areas he'd seen in his travels. Thus, Elkhart County became home for Weed and his wife, Rita, and the launching pad for Robert Weed Corp. and the Weed family, which eventually included four children.

Since then, the company has continued to evolve and grow in accordance with the needs of the industries it serves. Marketing Manager Adrienne Latson says the ability of the organization to adapt and stay ahead of changes in the world, the economy and the needs of its customers has fed its consistent expansion and success.

Between 1981 and 2001, Robert Weed Corporation added its Wood Products Division and entered the manufacturing arena (1981); developed the Laminated Products Division and began producing its own panels for applications such as the interior walls of RVs (1986); established fabrication operations for laminated, wrapped and wood products (1992); and created its Moldings Division and installed additional wrapping equipment (2001).

It also saw Robert Weed's retirement and the installation of his son David as CEO.



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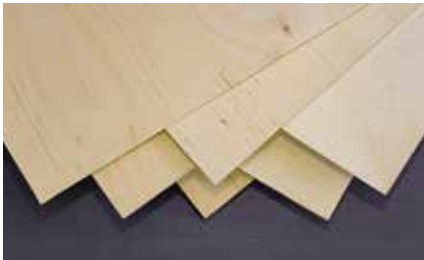
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This is a sink manufactured using the rigid thermoform (RTF) process, which uses adhesive and vacuum pressure to secure the overlay to the substrate. This is often used to create countertops and sinks for RVs.



After the film overlay has been adhered to the substrate, the excess overlay is trimmed off and another quality control check is performed. This is part of the manufacturing process for RV countertops and sinks.



Robert Weed supplies wholesale Luan/ Meranti plywood to the RV industry.

2007 brought expansion and contraction. The need for more space led to the construction of a 60,000-square-foot location in Twin Falls, Idaho, known within the company as the West Division. This was also the year in which their founder died.

In 2020, the Robert Weed 2.0 Transformation Initiative took off, focusing the company even more intentionally on innovation, growth, supply chain discipline and employee and community support.

Today, the company specializes in:

- Wholesale distribution, which provides raw materials such as plywood, particle board and medium-density fibreboard (MDF) to manufacturers throughout North America.
- Manufacturing, which offers lamination services in conjunction with milled and wrapped products and engineered capabilities.

According to Latson, Robert Weed supplies OEMs in the RV, cargo trailer,

marine and cabinet industries, and focuses on creating partnerships, rather than merely transactional relationships, through the application of “the Robert Weed Difference,” which consists of six core criteria:

- Service: The right product at the right price delivered at the right time
- Quality: Recommending, sourcing and delivering the best solutions
- Supply: Transparency in tracking supply from origin through delivery
- Ethics: Doing the right thing, with [the customer’s] best interests in mind
- Compliance: Only sourcing products that meet all requirements
- Pricing: More control through forecasting, inventory and supply chain management

Today, the company works with multiple materials, laminating multiple substrates including thin stock Meranti plywood, fat stock particle board and MDF, and Azdel, with vinyl or paper overlay. Wrapping operations include the wrapping of face frames, MDF moldings and battens.

Cold Press creates laminated panels, aluminum/stainless steel panels and slide-out floors using a combination of adhesive and pressure, while the Engineered Division manufactures

drawer sides, edge banding, shelving, fir flooring and cremation unit components. In addition, there are rip-to-size and cut-to-size operations, grooving and profiling, and computer numerical control (CNC) machining.

According to Latson, these products are “commonly used as interior walls in RVs and cargo haulers.”

Robert Weed’s contributions to Elkhart went beyond the creation of jobs to include support of organizations such as the Wellfield Botanic Gardens, the Elkhart Jazz Festival and the Midwest Museum of American Art.

Among the company’s specific



contributions to the RV industry are “countertops, molding, walls, cabinets, or anything else you can think of, [with an emphasis on] top-quality products, unmatched customer service and vast production capacity...industry-leading processes and supply chain management,” Latson says.

RV-specific offerings include:

- Laminated panels: vinyl and paper laminate for decorative applications on walls and ceilings
- Wrapped products: including wrapped battens, stiles and moldings for decorative applications and interior trims
- Cold press products: manufactured for countertop, divider walls and wall panel applications
- RTF products: ideal for countertops, worktops, stands, doors, backsplashes, tables and more
- Cabinet components: designed for storage and instant drawer construction
- Slide-out floors: western fir plywood cut to exact specifications and machined to fit individual mechanical motors, creating a platform on which to build an RV slide-out unit
- Composite materials: Azdel composite panels, which, according to the company, creates a strong, lightweight, quiet, weather and temperature resistant, odorless and environmentally friendly wall that increases the life of an RV, reduces fuel costs and results in a quieter ride
- Raw materials: Meranti plywood, melamine panels and particle board

The newest innovation in the 56-year-old company’s history is the DiSC program. Latson described the program—which stands for Discipline in Supply Chain—as indicative of “Robert Weed’s commitment to partnering with our customers to create [a] supplier program that meet and exceed our customers’ expectations” and went on to explain its focus on “long-term forecasting, mitigating risk, and providing pricing stability, with the intention of using our expertise in supply chain and wholesale distribution to improve the products and services we provide our customers.”

Today, Robert’s grandson Will has taken the reins from his father and serves as the company’s CEO. [RVF](#)



The cold press lamination process uses adhesive and pressure to adhere an overlay to a substrate. This is often used to create slide-out floors for RVs.



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40 Years in the Making

Gulf Stream Coach continues to capitalize on a shifting RV market, and with 40 years of production under its belt, reveals a few contributions to its ongoing success.

BY JORDAN BENSCHOP

Despite the “unthinkable” changes that have hit the RV industry over the last few years, there’s one thing that has kept Gulf Stream Coach on steady ground: good relationships.

In fact, the Nappanee, Indiana-based manufacturer is celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2022. Phil Sarvari, the company’s president, remembers the exact date of its inception: March 17, 1983. Gulf Stream has since become the largest family-owned RV manufacturer in North America.

“We owe that to our relationships with dealers, many of which are family-owned and have been in the industry for a long time,” Sarvari says. “And our suppliers are great, too.”

In 40 years, Gulf Stream has built and sold close to 400,000 units—ranging from Class C motorhomes to travel trailers and more. But rather than produce what the company wants, long-time success has stemmed from its open ears as the industry shifts and grows.

“We listen to our dealers because they’re on the frontlines,” Sarvari says. “We make what our partners are asking for. They know what’s happening with consumers, and the amenities these buyers want to see.”

In 2020, Gulf Stream’s wholesale RV shipments were up 42% despite the eight-week shutdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, that number rose to 49.3%. The

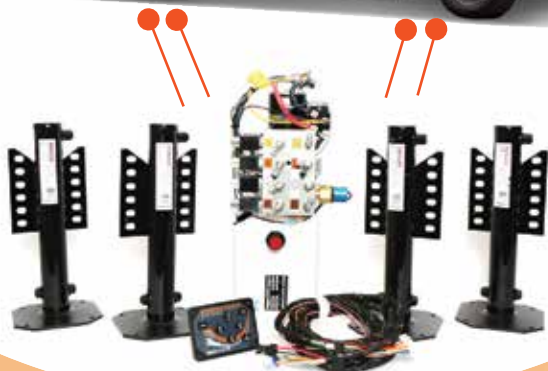


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PDI Manager Dale Shuler looks over trailer exteriors at the PDI facility, a 40,000-square-foot space.

manufacturer has seen “phenomenal” growth in retail market share since last year.

“The mood has been great coming off of 2021, fantastic from suppliers to dealers to manufacturers,” Sarvari says. “Sales have been very strong, and we credit that to our dealer structure.”

Gulf Stream is in full-force this year, reporting a 13.5% spike in retail market share for its travel trailers and a 42.7% increase in motorhomes. The numbers aren’t necessarily surprising, says Sarvari and Dan Shea, the company’s chairman of the board and son of company founder James Shea, Sr. In addition to a solid dealer structure, Gulf Stream’s leadership and team culture are at the forefront of its ongoing success, backed by some employees as tenured as the company itself.

“I think the family-owned business helps in a lot of cases, and I think it is easier for us to attract and retain employees that may be fed up with the corporate environment somewhere else,” said Shea in a 2021 interview with RV PRO. “That helped us to increase our production level (in 2020).”



Gulf Stream has produced close to 400,000 units in its 40-year history.

The Show Goes On

Even as chassis makers have trouble getting product to manufacturers, Sarvari and Shea say sales are strong across the board.

“Our suppliers have done a phenomenal job,” Sarvari says regarding recent supply chain hiccups. “We work

closely with them, have given them longer lead times and forecasted out specific products.”

In addition to supply chain and material sourcing shifts, the pandemic triggered an unexpectedly large crowd of first-time buyers in the RV world—many of which are now looking to

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- Will Webb, Webb's RV; Bangor, ME

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- Chris Block, Superior RV Sales & Service; Conway, AR

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- Toby Cotner, RV City Inc.; Huachuca City, AZ



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trade up for better rigs.

“When I was little, I don’t remember the times I stayed in a hotel or took a flight. But I do remember all the times I was outdoors, making memories camping with my family,” Sarvari says.

That idea is one behind the influx of younger RV buyers, many of whom sought a safer alternative for travelling throughout the pandemic. While Gulf Stream’s consumer demographics are relatively still 35 to 75 years old, Shea and Sarvari note interest in attracting more younger customers, which means paying attention to the price tag.

“Part of our success historically is to move with the markets,” Shea says. “Right now, we’re focusing on reducing the price and increasing the value of our units.”

Paired with the RV industry’s rapid improvement in digital marketing and consumer-focused advertising, he says dealers who are face-to-face with the market’s newcomers should get what they ask for.

DAN SHEA AND PHIL SARVARI NOTE INTEREST IN ATTRACTING MORE YOUNGER CUSTOMERS, WHICH MEANS PAYING ATTENTION TO THE PRICE TAG.

In the Works

Looking ahead, Sarvari and Shea tout potentially four new floorplans being made based on dealer request.

“We are back to providing value for the first-time buyer, who bought a unit in the last two years and is ready to upgrade,” Sarvari says. “Our product offerings need to fit those needs.”

Gulf Stream’s new and shiny are set to debut at the industry’s Open House event, returning in-person this

September to Elkhart, Indiana, after a two-year COVID-19 hiatus. The company is preparing special 40th anniversary acknowledgements, new floorplans and more to unveil during the week-long event.

“We have fresh décor and designs for all products,” Shea says. That includes a grotto-like interior in Gulf Stream motorhomes with trending white cabinetry, he says, along with a full lineup of anniversary edition travel trailers.

The manufacturer’s Nappanee campus drew a “hearty dealer response” to its offerings that were unveiled during last year’s “Open House” event, hosted by the company. Sarvari and Shea said

moods are high for this year’s anticipated turnout.

As Gulf Stream Coach heads into its 40th year in production, Sarvari says he is proud of the manufacturer’s ability to make changes on a dime, and with no debt.

“We’re a very solid company that listens to our dealers,” he adds. “Over the last three years, we have outpaced the market in terms of unit growth and market share growth.”

Looking ahead, Sarvari and Shea see no slowing down of Gulf Stream’s growing success in a rapidly changing market. **RV**



Gulf Stream Coach President Phil Sarvari (left) and Dan Shea, chairman of the board of directors, with the company’s BT Cruiser and Conquest Class C motorhomes.



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EVERY WAY FORWARD

Running Out of Room in the ‘RV Capital of the World’

Manufacturers in Elkhart County and surrounding areas are scrambling to expand to meet demand.

BY AL LEWIS

Steven Clark, general manager of R. Yoder Construction in Nappanee, Indiana, says that at this point, he'd welcome a little bit of slowdown in the RV manufacturing business.

Elkhart County, Indiana, has long been dubbed the “RV Capital of the World” as home to most of the nation's major RV manufacturers—and its economy is on fire. The region is already a sea of pre-manufactured steel buildings, and with RV shipments at record highs, it needs even more pre-manufactured steel buildings to keep up with what seems to be an insatiable demand.

R. Yoder and other construction companies, developers and brokers say they are swamped.

“Right now is the busiest most of us have ever seen it,” Clark says. “I’ve heard more than one RV [manufacturing] business owner say, ‘I could take a little bit of a turndown.’ In fact, I have heard that multiple times in the last week.”

His company erects steel buildings from 20,000 to 220,000 square feet. Its current projects include structures for Aluminum Trailer Co., inTech RV, Right Angle Steel & Fab, and Smoker Craft.

“When we’re talking to owners to build, it’s pretty consistent feedback. ‘When do you

need to be in there?’ And they say, ‘Yesterday.’ ... It’s like, ‘I need to get in there right away, because every day I’m not, I’m losing money. The opportunity cost in this situation is one of the factors that’s driving construction,” Clark says.

Post-Pandemic Snap-Back

Initially, the pandemic crushed Elkhart County's economy, driving its unemployment rate to nearly 28%—one of the highest in the nation at the time. Now it's down to 0.9%, according to a February report in *The Goshen News*, and one of the biggest challenges employers face is finding labor.

“It’s been unique and surprising,” says Clark, an attorney who also sits on the Elkhart County Council. “Everybody realizes the demand is unsustainable and unrealistic. ... Nobody wants to see a significant recession, but a little bit of a slowdown wouldn’t hurt.”

Levon Johnson, president of the Greater Elkhart Chamber, says his group works to address the limits on the growth his community is butting up against.

“Our great restriction point isn’t just people. It’s a place for them to live,” he says. “One of the strengths of Elkhart has always been affordability. And we continue





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to be more affordable than most of the country, but it's definitely a different market than it was two years ago."

Already, an estimated 35,000 people commute to regional employers every day, driving an average of 45 minutes. Higher gasoline prices make the commute more difficult. Developing more housing will be critical for the region to maintain its growth trajectory.

"The challenge right now is that housing hasn't kept up with demand," Johnson says. "But we're making [a] great deal of investments in quality of life to keep Elkhart a desirable place [to] live."

In the meantime, RV manufacturing is driving employment growth not only for itself, but also in all of the service sectors that support the local population. Additionally, Amazon is building an 800,000-square-foot fulfillment center that it says will employ 1,000 workers. Economic development officials are excited that the Amazon hub will diversify their economy, but it also represents a potential drain on a largely tapped local labor force.

"A lot of people were against that project," says Brent Miller, president and principal of Endeavour Construction in Elkhart.

"A lot of people tried to fight it," he says. "They didn't really want it. We don't need somebody like that coming in here and pulling stuff [labor] away. But Amazon is coming anyway."

This Boom & What's Next

RV manufacturers shipped more than 600,000 units in 2021, according to the RV Industry Association (RVIA). That's a 19% increase over the previous record. In the first quarter of 2022, the industry hit another record. In March—the tally available as of this writing—the industry shipped 64,454 units, an increase of 18.7%.

About 85% of the RVs manufactured in North America come from Elkhart. And the companies here aren't just expanding to meet the current high demand.

"Companies are expanding their ability to innovate in the RV space," Johnson says. "There's a need for investing more in automation and robotics, becoming more innovative in

how RVs are made. RV companies are also becoming more intentional about their carbon footprint."

RV manufacturers are also building for a distant future, even knowing the near future could bring somewhat of a downturn.

"There will be another big boom," Clark said, "and they want to be positioned to capture that. They don't want to be trying to build the next plant to keep up."

RV MANUFACTURERS ARE ALSO BUILDING FOR A DISTANT FUTURE, EVEN KNOWING THE NEAR FUTURE COULD BRING SOMEWHAT OF A DOWNTURN.

Decades in the Making

It may be the golden years for Elkhart today, but its dominance in the RV industry goes back to the 1930s.

In 1936, retailer Wilbur Schultz, who had a great knack for promotion, bought Elkhart's Sportsman Trailer Co. from a man named Milo Miller. He grew the operation swiftly and soon had two plants with more than 250,000 square feet, and he boasted production of more than 1,500 trailers in 1937. By 1939, he grew his company to become the largest manufacturer in the industry.

Suppliers and even more manufacturers soon followed his success. The area's railroad links, highways and central location between major markets accelerated the trend.

Today, the county's manufacturing list reads like a who's who in the RV industry: Winnebago, THOR Industries, Forest River, Gulf Stream Coach, Jayco, East to West and North to South RV, and many others.

This history is preserved at Elkhart's RV/MH Hall of Fame. The museum represents a spillover from manufacturing to tourism.

"Our tourist industry has grown up around that," Johnson says. "Almost

Nuway Construction has served multiple markets in the Michiana region since 1975. The company focuses primarily on pre-engineered metal buildings, with projects ranging from 1,000 to 800,000 square feet.

"Since our inception, we have worked with many companies in the RV industry, both designing and building well over 30 RV manufacturing facilities," says Nuway President Andy Nesbitt.

Nuway has held a long-standing partnership with Grand Design RV. Nesbitt says, recently converting more than 80 acres of the manufacturer's campus into nearly 1.2 million square feet of production, warehousing and office space. Nuway is leading the expansion of Ranger Distribution's facilities in Elkhart, and just broke ground on a third building for Genesis Products in Coshen. The company is currently working on multiple buildings for Winnebago Industries and Keystone RV.

"Our latest project to date is the new Way Interglobal headquarters we're currently building in Elkhart. This 800,000-square-foot building—set to be completed this fall—will have 54 truck docks, 20,000 square feet of offices and a state-of-the-art showroom," Nesbitt says.

Despite a slowdown in the RV space, demand for larger and more complex buildings continues to grow.

"Several years ago, a 100,000-square-foot building was considered large. Now we're seeing demand for 200,000 to 300,000 square foot buildings. Companies are also more inclined to make conscious design decisions to prioritize employee comfort," Nesbitt says. "Over the last few years, the typical RV building has become about 50% larger and taller, due to an increased use of mezzanines and crane systems. Buildings are now designed around the manufacturing process, where in the past, the manufacturer would work with the building they had... There has also been more discussion about sustainability in recent years, and we have worked with many of our customers in the RV industry to incorporate more sustainable construction options."

Nuway completed multiple plants requiring climate-controlled conditions and began incorporating environmentally conscious technologies in its recent projects, like geothermal heating/cooling and solar energy.

"We expect a bit of a slowdown in the next 6 to 12 months, especially for some of the smaller projects. But we believe that companies with long-term strategies will continue to move forward with their projects," Nesbitt says. "The RV industry is nothing if not adaptable, and we are ready to meet the construction needs of the industry as it changes, whatever those needs may be."

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PROJECTS ABOUND

As the RV boom continues, the groundbreaking and expansion announcements keep pouring out of Elkhart County. Here's a sampling:

Genesis Products, which makes RV components, is building a new 78,000-square-foot plant in Goshen, Indiana, that it expects to complete by December. The company says the expanded production facilities will create more than 60 new jobs.

Way Interglobal, which supplies appliances, electronics and furnishings for RVs, is preparing to move into a new headquarters later this year. Its new building includes 800,000 square feet of warehousing, showroom and office space, and it will be one of the largest buildings in Elkhart.

Ranger Distribution, which supplies wire, electrical, plumbing and building products for the RV industry, will soon be moving into a new 68,700-square-foot building to expand its warehouse and production capabilities.

MJB Wood Group, which makes industrial wood products, is moving into a new 500,000-square-foot facility on a 37-acre lot near Bristol, Indiana.

Duo Form, a thermoform plastics maker that supplies the RV industry, has added 41,700 square feet to expand its warehouse facilities.

Trim-Lok, which makes seals and trims for vehicles, announced plans to move into a new facility in Elkhart that includes 150,000 square feet of manufacturing and warehousing space, and an additional 5,500 square feet of office space.

inTech RV, a custom trailer and RV manufacturer, is opening a 150,000-square-foot facility for its RV, motorsports and custom trailer operations.

all of the companies allow for RV owner groups to come see how RVs are manufactured from start to finish, get the history and interact with other owners of their brand of RV."

It's like the affinity groups for Harley Davidson or sports car enthusiasts, he explains. "It really creates great bonds, stories and friendships that truly last a lifetime."

The Road Ahead

So far today's RV manufacturers have successfully navigated economic



A number of construction projects have been under way as of late, with Nuway Construction heading up many of them.

obstacles: inflation, rising interest rates, supply chain bottlenecks, soaring fuel prices. Demand for RVs is still on the rise, and manufacturers still need more space. It's a good problem to have, but that doesn't mean it's been easy.

"Last year was superheated and really not too comfortable," says Robert Thatcher, a project manager, estimator and real estate broker for FM Construction Co. and FM Stone Commercial in Elkhart.

His company is focused on the pre-engineered steel buildings that dot the county, but it's also involved in office and retail development, as well as expansions and renovations.

"At one point, our pre-engineered steel building providers had ceased accepting orders," he says. "We were 36 to 38 weeks out to receive a package, which is too long, seasonally. We also saw dramatic pressure on price points."

Companies that wanted to expand suffered extreme sticker shock from skyrocketing commodity prices and crimped supply chains.

"We certainly worked through all those matters," Thatcher says. "But we've been a little more selective in the jobs that we were ready, willing and able to contract for and execute for."

With any luck, the market will pull back just enough.

"I do think we're transitioning from a superheated market with shortages to maybe a much more of a manageable, healthy market," Thatcher says.

But the economic forces that are threatening a slowdown are having a

weak effect, so far, because the pipelines are still full. Miller at Endeavour Construction says some companies are still erecting buildings that they needed quarters ago.

"Somebody might have ordered a building a year ago, and they are finally getting a building now," he says. "Those lead times have come down. Some of the cookie-cutter buildings you can get on 12 to 16 weeks, some of the custom buildings can still take five to six months. But it's better than where we were."

Like many Elkhart County businesspeople, Miller welcomes what he sees as a coming slowdown—but not a sharp downturn.

"In my 28 years [in business], the last several years have brought the most activity I've ever seen. It's been insane," he says. "Everybody's dreading it, but everyone knows we need a little bit of a downturn to get back to normal again."

But normal won't likely mean a sharp increase in available industrial or warehouse space.

What the industry has learned over the past cycle is that manufacturers shouldn't sell buildings during a downturn. It's better to mothball them if necessary and stay prepared for the next boom.

"The whole industry has changed so much with big companies like Winnebago and Forest River, and these guys are so well-healed, they're not going anywhere," Miller says. "They learned their lesson. They're not going to let go of real estate." **RVB**

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THE 2022 Class of Inductees



The RV/MH Hall of Fame in Elkhart, Indiana, welcomes a new group of honorees.

As the RV/MH Hall of Fame in Elkhart, Indiana, celebrates 50 years in 2022, it also welcomes a class of inductees who have given most of their careers to not only running successful businesses, but also advancing the causes of their respective industries. From legislative measures to mentoring the next generation, this year's 50th class honors the heritage of the Hall of Fame and carries on its legacy of outstanding inductees. Without further ado, the RV/MH Hall of Fame Class of 2022.

David J. Carter Sr.

David J. Carter Sr. started his career building houses through his own contracting business. The opportunity came up to work for Southeastern Mobile Home Supply/Riblet Products, where he quickly worked his way up to president.

After being bought out, Carter purchased Century Wire and Cable, the first of many businesses he would run. He invested in various businesses until he eventually concentrated his efforts on his own company, Dave Carter & Associates (DCA).

In only three years, DCA transformed from a regional/southeastern U.S. supplier to a national player with 12 distribution centers throughout the country to meet the MH industry's needs.

His nominator, David Froom, writes, "In 2008, the economic conditions challenged all of us. One of David's favorite sayings is, 'There is always great opportunity in times of crisis.' DCA invested heavily into the RV industry at that time. The results of that investment include a brand-new, state-of-the-art distribution center in Goshen, Indiana, and sales to every major RV producer in the country. Due to Dave Carter's keen business sense and vision, DCA is widely viewed as an industry leader in the manufactured housing and RV industries."





William “Bill” Redmond

Bill Redmond started his career in the oil industry, forming a couple of companies along the way.

“In 1989, I decided I had had enough. I started looking for something else to do,” Redmond says. “I was also in the venture capital business and wanted to do something that was close to home but that didn’t require lots of travel and had lots of business opportunities.”

Enter the RV industry. Redmond purchased Bucars RV Centre in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and got involved in other businesses in the RV industry.

“I’ve enjoyed almost everything about it. I enjoyed the business challenges, the people I worked with, and as I got involved in the 20 Groups and RVDA, I enjoyed all the people I met across North America,” Redmond says. “I’ve also found that with every industry I’ve been in, I can’t sit back and complain if I’m not prepared to get involved and hopefully make it better.”

As part of that belief, Redmond was one of the founding members of the RV Care Network.

“It started out of a discussion I had with a number of other dealers at a convention in Las Vegas. There were a couple guys promoting this amongst some RV dealers and it made sense to me, so I took it back to the 20 Group I belong to. We talked for two years and then formed a network of dealers, 17 at the time. There’s now more than 80 dealers involved in the RV Care Network. It’s a buying group, educational group—it’s a number of different things,” he says.

Redmond’s two sons run the dealership now, but he has other business ventures—one is a campground and he’s also involved in real estate development.

“I also spend a lot of time working with the Rotary Club of Calgary and staying involved with service projects. I also play a little golf,” he laughs. “I seem to stay out of trouble.”

Redmond says his advice to those just starting their careers in the RV industry is to get involved.

“The industry has changed significantly in the 33 years that I’ve been involved. It’s gone from mostly mom and pop



William “Bill”
Redmond

operations to very, very large corporations now. I think that as an independent dealer, industry organizations are a great source of support, information and training,” Redmond says.

During his time in the industry, Redmond was nominated to the Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council, the designated authority from the Alberta government for all things motor vehicle, including car dealerships, body shops, mechanics, used car dealers, independent dealers and others. He chaired the organization for five years, which he says he was able to do because his sons were running the dealership.

“It’s getting involved in the industry at all levels. It doesn’t have to just be the RV industry,” Redmond says. “I think that’s the thing I’ve enjoyed the most in the many industries I’ve been involved in. It’s the interaction with other people in other industries.”



Don Gunden

Don Gunden says his career in the RV industry all started because of the game pinball.

"I played pinball with a guy in college, and he thought I ought to come work in the RV industry," Gunden says.

From there, he found he loved working in the industry.

"It's a very unique industry. It is very people oriented and relationship based. It's all about knowing basically a lot of good people. It's an enjoyable thing. It's essentially selling fun to people."

Gunden started his career in sales for Starcraft. Then the oil embargo hit and the plant he was working at shut down. So, he took some interim jobs, then came back to work with Rockwood.

Gunden has been with Rockwood throughout its evolution into a well-known brand and through its many transitions. He was a founding new business manager when the company was just Rockwood. In 1991, he became the Rockwood motorized sales manager and tent camper product manager, when the company was purchased by Cobra. Five years later, when Cobra filed for bankruptcy and was acquired by Forest River, he became the Rockwood/Flagstaff general manager. He is now group manager for Palomino, Rockwood and Flagstaff, and



had a hand in launching the Puma RV line in 2003 and Columbus RV line in 2012.

When talking about developing and introducing new RVs to market, Gunden says he enjoys all of the different aspects about it.

"Every one of them has a different aspect to it. It's always fun trying to bring something to market that people want. You do whatever you want in a unique enough way, and you'll catch somebody's interest," Gunden says. "When you're totally involved in the evolution of a product, there's no one real part that sticks out more than anything else. From where I started to where we are today, everything has changed. It's been a tremendous evolution."

While Gunden admits there are different levels of involvement in the industry, he's a firm believer in giving back.

"I'm involved in a lot of associations," he says. "It's important to advance our industry and be noticed so people know who we are and what we do."

Gunden has been involved in the RV Dealers Association (RVDA), the RV Industry Association (RVIA) and other industry groups. The Indiana Manufacturers Housing Association awarded Gunden the Citizen of the Year in 2020.

"Our associations are important. It's important that our politicians recognize who we are and what we do and what our intentions are. I remember when people had no idea what the RV industry was. I look at people even in our own area who have never really been exposed to the industry and have no idea how big it is. I think we serve a good function in society as well as providing fun for people and lots of employment," he says.

His advice to those starting out their career in the industry is to "be patient. Find what you enjoy and revel in it."

That's something Gunden plans to do for the foreseeable future.

"Retirement does cross my mind, but I've never really given it any hard thought. I don't know when or where. As long as I can come to work every day and have fun, I don't know why I'd stop. I probably wouldn't have fun every day if I were retired."

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Lewis Shaum

When Lewis Shaum graduated from college as an industrial engineer, he had plans to work for Ford Motor Company. But when his parents, who founded Elkhart Supply Corp. in 1949, asked for him to come work with them to help with the computer system, he wound up staying there.

"It's been neat to see all the changes to the industry and how it's grown up so fast over the past 50 years," he says. "It has dramatically changed from when I first got into it to what it is now."

When his father passed in 1982, Shaum took over as president of Elkhart Supply Corp. and his brother, Gary, took over as president of Shaum Electric Company.

Nominators speak of Shaum's role in creating a just-in-time (JIT) delivery process to manufacturing pockets around the country by establishing ESCO warehouses to serve the on-demand call for materials to build affordable RVs and homes, well before JIT was popular.

His background in electrical engineering created a foundation to help create safety standards that are still being used in the industry.

Shaum is a part of the RVIA, the National Trailer Manufacturers Association and other industry groups.

"Those things are very important. Being involved keeps us in touch with what's going on in the industry," he says.

His advice to others just starting their career in the industry is to enjoy what you do.

"Enjoy the industry. It's an industry that if you don't enjoy it, you better not be in it," he says. "If you do enjoy it, it has great things to offer."

With more than 50 years in the industry under his belt, retirement is on the horizon for Shaum. He has a stepson, Zak Eggleston, who is currently in the process of learning to run the business, and is planning to take over for Shaum.

Perhaps Shaum's greatest contribution to the industry is his investment in the future generations of industry leaders, something his stepson Eggleston confirms in his nomination letter on his stepfather's behalf.

"What is Lewy's legacy? It is us, the younger generation. Coming up in an industry that has to deal with uncertain times, with unruly governments, world trading that squashes the idea of fair trade and a greatly reduced labor pool, Lewy has invested in this younger generation; he values their ideas and abilities to change old-school thinking. Lewy has allowed me, here at ESCO, to empower new, younger employees with the ability to make decisions, good or bad. I am the operations manager here at ESCO, with a great mentor, my stepdad and confident leader, Lewis Shaum," Eggleston writes.

While Shaum has plans to retire, he doesn't have any plans to slow down. He will continue to work his farm and stay involved in community groups.

"I own a farm, so I have plenty of things to do," he laughs.

"Really, I'm very surprised and very appreciative that people nominated me for the Hall of Fame," he says. "It was a gigantic shock and still is to this day."



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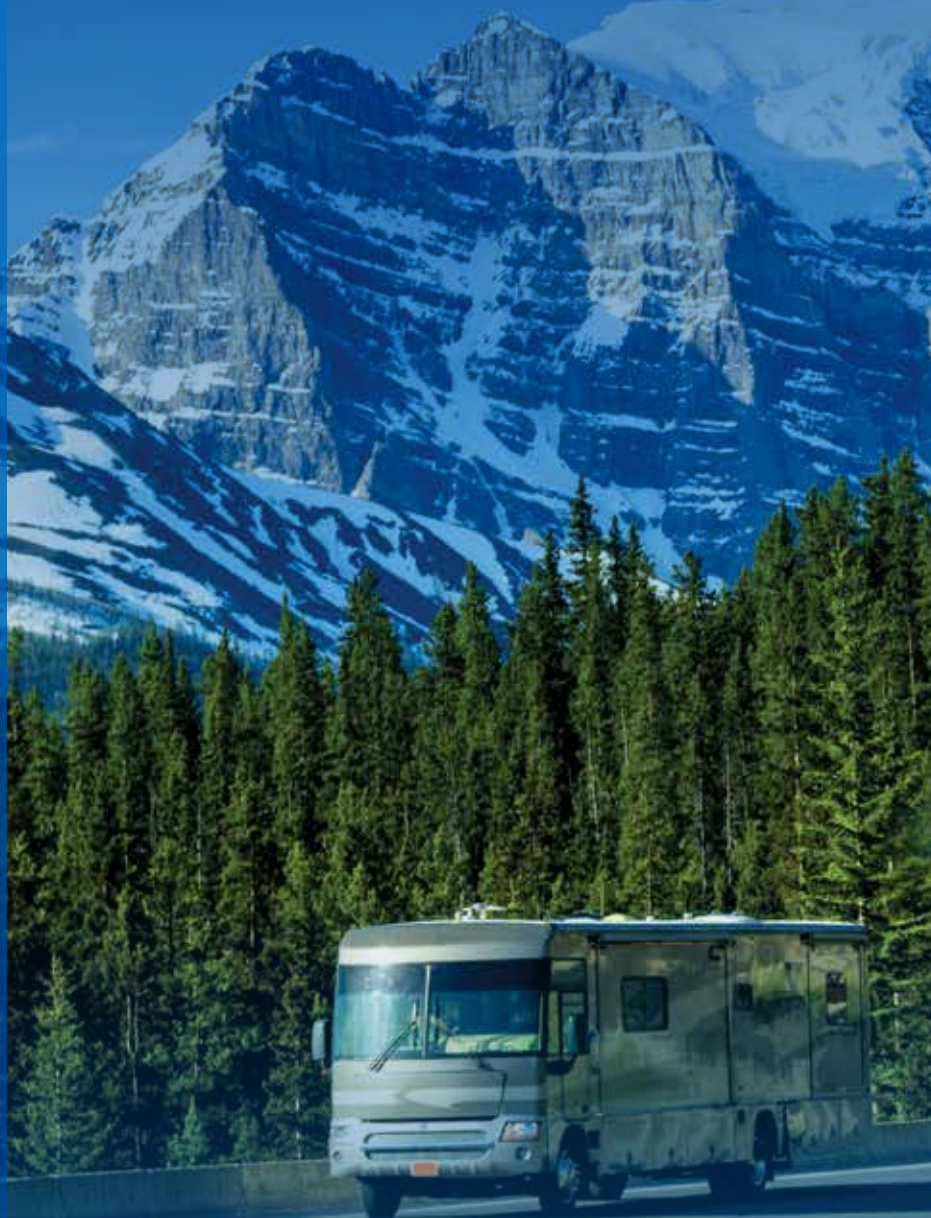
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Raylen Gritton

Raylen Gritton opened his first retail home center in Salida, California, in 1974. He's spent the last 50 years building up the manufactured housing (MH) industry and acting as an ambassador for it across the country.

Gritton has opened and run multiple businesses, but his most recent, Homes Direct, has grown to 13 retail sales centers of manufactured and modular homes and operates in five states.

Gritton has been active in industry associations and with volunteer work, for groups such as the California Manufactured Housing Institute and the Manufactured Housing Institute, and has been a member of multiple state associations, as well as financially contributing to the Hall of Fame.

Nominator Joe Stegmayer writes, "Through the high inflation, high interest rate years of the late seventies, the severe housing downturn in the mid-1980s, and the biggest decline ever in manufactured housing in the early 2000s, Raylen's company not only survived but grew and prospered."

Tim Williams

Tim Williams has spent his 50-plus-year career advocating for the MH industry while successfully building up and running businesses. Nominator Leo Poggione writes, "Tim has volunteered his time and energy into ensuring that manufactured housing continues to receive its due as one of the most important sources of affordable housing in the country."

Williams pushed back against the Dodd-Frank Act in 2010, which brought new lending regulations.

"Tim spent countless hours preparing presentations, crunching numbers, working with national and state organizations/associations and met countless times with state and federal legislators and regulators to ensure that manufactured housing would live on and continue to be treated fairly."

Harry Karsten

Starting out as a trainee at Pan-American Trailer Coach in 1960, Harry Karsten has become an MH icon throughout his 50-plus-year career. An advocate for the MH industry, Karsten was involved in all manufactured housing lawmaking causes by



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supporting his management involved in legislative matters.

Karsten has been honored by the California Mobile Home Park Owners Alliance and the California Manufactured Housing Institute. Outside of the industry, Karsten is involved with volunteer work with the Orange County Cancer Research, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Hoag Hospital 552 Club, Children's Hospital of Orange County and Black Repertory Group.

Karsten is also the president of the Dodger Stadium MH show, with 40 models representing 22 plants and Art Linkletter as spokesman. He has gifted homes to troubled families and helped in countless ways both the industry and the community at large.

His nominator, Barry Cole, writes,

"When you think of Harry, you think of service as the Karsten name. It's synonymous with customer service. He was convinced if you take care of your dealers and customers, that will give you the moral and ethical satisfaction of being the best."

Eugene Landy

Eugene Landy attended the World's Fair in Montreal, Canada, 55 years ago where he learned about manufactured housing. He saw it as a solution for the affordable housing crisis and, in 1968, he founded UMH Properties, and currently serves as chairman of the board. UMH has operated as a publicly owned Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) since 1985, specializing in the ownership and operation of MH communities. For more than

53 years, the company has grown to 127 communities with 24,000 developed homesites situated in 10 states, providing homes for more than 60,000 people.

Providing affordable housing options and quality living is near and dear to Landy's heart. He has served on the Board of Governors of the National Association of Real Estate Investment Trusts.

His nominator, Christine Lindsey, writes, "Eugene created the UMH Properties Rental Home Program. With a portfolio of 8,700 rental units, this program is helping mitigate the affordable housing crisis by offering quality manufactured housing at an average rental rate of \$820 per month, as compared to apartment industry competitors' average rental rate of well

Congratulations to RVDA's

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Veronica “Ronnie” Hepp

Ronnie Hepp’s first contact in the RV industry just happened to be with an RV industry legend: Mike Molino. Hepp worked for him in an administrative position, while her husband, Bob, was stationed in Germany with the U.S. Army.

Upon returning to the U.S., Hepp knew Molino was living in the same area, so she reached out to him while searching for a job, and he hired her for a position in the RVDA. Hepp worked for Molino until he retired in 2012.

Hepp spent 27 years in the industry before recently retiring. She says the key to enjoying your tenure in your profession, no matter the industry, is to like what you do.

“The important part is to like what you’re doing (in any job) so that you end up performing all your duties and tasks to the very best of your ability,” Hepp says. “It’s equally important to get to know the people you are serving and the people with whom you are serving. When you like what you’re doing and you like the people you’re doing the job with and for, it’s fun to go to work. When it’s fun to go to work, life is good!”

Hepp worked closely with board members of four corporate boards during her 27 years at RVDA. During that time, she was able to play a part in decision-making and actions taken by providing some history of events to either emulate or avoid.

“I may have even convinced some individuals to stretch beyond their delegate or director role into becoming an officer of the association...eventually the chairman.”

As the vice president of administration, Hepp says she wore many hats, including administration for the boards, meeting/event planning, human resources responsibilities and building management, to name just a few.

“I did my best to establish a good rapport not only with the chairmen and members of the boards, but also with the people who managed our convention exhibit hall, the exhibitors, the hotel staffs that made our events happen, the plumber, the landscaper, the HVAC team and the good people who took care of our IT needs. It really is all about the people and treating each with the respect they deserve,” Hepp says.

Spending her career in an industry organization, Hepp knows first-hand how important it is to be involved with industry groups.

“Being a member of the RVDA is a benefit to the dealers who join, as they have access to very valuable education and certification programs through the RV Learning Center, help with dealer/manufacture relations, help with keeping abreast of legislation in their respective states, access to join dealer 20 Groups and more,” she says.

Overall, Hepp says she’s most proud of the relationships and rapport she’s established with board members over the years.

“It really is all about the people,” she says.

Mick Ferkey

Mick Ferkey

Mick Ferkey has worked nearly every possible position in an RV dealership, starting at 17 years old washing and prepping new units for an RV dealer down the road from his current dealership, Greeneway RV.

"My brother started at a competitor down the road, and they were looking for help. I worked there a couple years and then a new owner bought Greeneway and had some openings," Ferkey says.

He worked his way up from mechanic to service manager and then made his way into sales, eventually outselling the owner at the time.

"That's what I like to do. I have a good gift to gab with people," he says.

Ferkey eventually purchased Greeneway RV, becoming its owner and growing the business. But that's not what makes Ferkey a Hall of Famer. Beyond running a successful dealership for so many years, Ferkey has had his hand in so many victories for the industry as a whole, including the revitalization of the Hall of Fame itself.

Ferkey is a founding member and chairman of the Wisconsin Recreational Vehicle Dealers Alliance (WRVDA) since its founding in 2016. He has been an RVDA Wisconsin delegate every year that he was not a board member, from 2001 until now. Ferkey has served on the board of the national RVDA and in other roles with RVDA, including a board member of RVDA's Mike Molino Learning Center since its inception.

In 2014, Ferkey co-chaired a task force that led to the formation of the RV Learning Center's Society of Certified RV Professionals. These are just some of the many initiatives and accomplishments Ferkey has accomplished throughout his career. He's served in the military, been a part of community organizations and more.

"My philosophy is that you always get more out of life than what you put in. When you see other people donating their time and how busy they are, it makes you want to do the same," he says. "I got to nurture a lot of dealers in the business, and I got to help a lot of people. And they've helped me. I love the RV business and I wouldn't change anything."



Ferkey credits much of his success to his wife, Lora.

"She's worked with me since I started at Greeneway. That's 40 years this year. She's probably the one who should be inducted," Ferkey laughs.

He plans to retire at the end of the year and his son, Matt, will take over the business.

"I will miss the people when I retire at the end of the year. I will miss networking with all of these amazing people," he says. "It's been phenomenal to see all the changes over the years. From the first slides to now. My son is a lot techier than I am. I'm an old-fashioned type of guy. It's time to turn it over to someone in the 20th century."

Just because he's retiring, doesn't mean Ferkey has any plans to slow down. He plans to continue giving back to his community through work with nursing homes, the YMCA and more.

"You gotta stay busy. I love giving back to the community. I get a high out of helping people. It's just so much fun. I feel like Santa Claus sometimes," he says. "I'm very humbled by this award but I don't do it for the awards. I do it because I love to do it, and I love to help."

Safety Solutions & Ride Control

Safety is a top priority when hitting the road. RVers need reliable safety-focused products for peace of mind and hassle-free experiences, wherever their adventures may go. From brake controllers to camera systems and tire pressure monitoring system (TPMS) solutions, these devices help keep consumers safe during road trips and offer an additional point of sale in the retail shop.

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



ASSIST RAIL

Stromberg Carlson, Traverse City, Michigan, offers the Lend-A-Hand Assist Rail, which provides RVers with support to go up and down the stairs. It secures in an open position to make entering or exiting the RV easier, and it conveniently folds to the side of the RV for travel. Available in three lengths (22 inch, 27 inch, 37 inch). No tools required for securing the rail in open or closed positions. The rails are designed to maintain balance but will not break a fall. Made in the U.S.A.

strombergcarlson.com



TRAILER TIRE/SPOKE WHEEL

Kenda Americana Tire & Wheel, Columbus, Ohio, offers the Trailer Tire/Spoke Wheel. Kenda's Karrier ST radial KR35 tire offers a smooth, quiet ride as a high-quality, mid-range trailer tire providing exceptional stability and handling in all-season applications. Its silica-infused tread compound increases ride control in wet weather supported by sipe angles and pitch count, forcing water dispersion to reduce hydroplaning. Plus, its five-rib design supports smooth, even wear across the tread footprint for extended mileage. The product is pictured assembled with Dexstar steel wheel.

americanatire.com



RV Whisper, Owings, Maryland, presents the RV Whisper Monitor Station. With 11 different types of wireless sensors, RV Whisper delivers several safety capabilities with both text message and email alerts. Safety capabilities include remote monitoring for: pet safety (temperature, shore power status and air conditioner status), tire safety (tire pressure and temperature sensors), food safety (fridge/freezer temperatures, propane level sensors), door open/close sensors and motion sensors for physical safety and security. All RV Whisper sensors are wireless (Bluetooth) making them easy to install in RVs, no wiring needed.

rvwhisper.com



TIRE PRESSURE & TEMPERATURE MONITORING SYSTEM

Lippert, Elkhart, Indiana, offers the Tire Linc TPMS, the easy-to-install, always-on tire pressure and temperature monitoring system. Integrated with Lippert's OneControl app, you can monitor your fifth wheel RV, travel trailer, motorhome or towed vehicle's tire pressure and temperature from your smartphone—don't mess with additional dashboard interfaces again.

lippert.com

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A black and white photograph showing a spare tire mounted on a metal telescopic storage rack. The rack is designed to fit under a vehicle's frame. The tire is positioned vertically, and the rack's telescopic arms are visible.

A black and white photograph showing a spare tire mounted on a metal telescopic storage rack. The rack is designed to fit under a vehicle's frame. The tire is positioned vertically, and the rack's telescopic arms are visible.

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ELECTRIC BRAKE CONTROLLER

REDARC, Adelaide, Australia, offers the Tow-Pro Liberty Electric Brake Controller. A true workhorse, the electric brake controller provides safety for any load. Featuring an easy-to-use, in-dash mount remote head, the Liberty installs quickly. With the main unit installed behind the dash, this ensures customers won't be knocking their knees and overcomes the potential interference with lower air bags in newer vehicles. Designed for everyday towing and built to last a lifetime. Vehicle specific install accessories available.

redarcelectronics.com



PROPANE/CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM

Safe-T-Alert, Destin, Florida, offers the Slim Line CO/Propane Alarm, a double-duty alarm designed for the rugged RV environment that detects both propane gas and carbon monoxide. This alarm is a universal replacement for all brands/models of LP gas detectors and dual CO/LP gas alarms. Alarm can be used with or without the included trim ring. Rapid recovery sensor resets when silenced or reactivates alarm if dangerous levels of propane or CO remain. Meets RV Industry Association (RVIA)/National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) requirements.

mtiindustries.com/



BREAKAWAY CABLE

Progress Mfg., Provo, Utah, offers the ZIP Breakaway Cable. A replacement for your damaged or frayed cable, the company's Fastway ZIP eliminates cable fray and protects fingers from loose, sharp wire. It keeps your cable off the ground and out of harm's way while towing and is a safer, more reliable connection from your tow vehicle to your trailer.

fastwaytrailer.com/zip-breakaway-cable



SUSPENSION SPRINGS

SuperSprings International, Carpinteria, California, presents the Trailer SumoSprings, manufactured from the company's micro-cellular polyurethane that reduces vibration by 68%. This zero-maintenance suspension upgrade is designed to remove sway, body roll, and hop from the trailer or fifth wheel, and increases overall driver control and ride comfort when towing.

superspringsinternational.com



WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION HITCH

Weigh Safe, Lindon, Utah, presents the True Tow Weight Distribution hitch that can distribute loads with ease. With the company's continued efforts in revolutionizing the towing industry and offering customers towing peace of mind, Weigh Safe now offers a complete weight distribution system called "True Tow." Instead of one hitch for one specific tow vehicle and trailer, it's now one hitch for all tow vehicles and trailers.

weigh-safe.com



WIRELESS CAMERA

Camera Source, Muskego, Wisconsin, offers the OEM Mount Wireless Camera. This wireless camera is not like your typical system, as it's designed to work with your factory screen, on-demand. The company stocks them for Ram, GM and Ford, and you can also go with an external monitor if you want the ability to monitor constantly. Check out the company's website for compatibility information.

camerasource.com

OE TRAILER TIRE

Tredit Tire & Wheel, Elkhart, Indiana, offers the Rainier ST, a fitted OE trailer tire with a design that incorporates a light truck appearance with a rugged and time-tested construction, ensuring it will withstand the rigorous and diverse demands of trailers. Features include a six-year limited warranty, the Guarantees Simplified Program (first year coverage on all tires and wheels) and the Tredit Advantage Program (four-year coverage) that offers a 24/7, on-demand roadside assistance app.

tredittire.com



UNIVERSAL WIRING KIT

NSA RV Products, Iola, Kansas, presents the Universal Wiring Kit. Mount the 3 1/2-inch LED light bars under the back of any towed vehicle or trailer. This universal wiring kit connects to any four-way flat trailer connector on the back of the towing vehicle. User friendly and reliable.

readybrake.com

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TIRE PRESSURE MONITORING SYSTEM

Advantage PressurePro, Harrisonville, Montana, offers the PressurePro FX (TPMS). Everything rides on your tires, and it's proven that maintaining proper tire pressure remains a critical component to both safety and savings during travel. PressurePro FX arms users with the real-time tire performance data needed to help drivers maintain optimal pressures and aid in improved handling and braking, extended tire life, improved fuel efficiency and more. FX installs in minutes and adds 24/7 reporting and alerting direct to your smart device, making tire pressure monitoring easier than ever.

pressurepro.us



REAR ANTI-SWAY BAR FOR FORD F-53

Roadmaster, Vancouver, Washington, presents the Ford F-53 Rear Anti-Sway Bar. Roadmaster's auxiliary Rear Anti-Sway Bar kit for the popular 22K Ford F-53 Class A motorhome chassis offers a remarkable improvement in handling and control. Featuring a solid steel, 1 5/8-inch one-piece induction forged bar, this kit bolts in place in addition to the factory rear bar, increasing tension and dramatically reducing sway. The kit includes all necessary mounting brackets, hardware and urethane bushings for long-lasting, squeak-free operation. Roadmaster offers its Anti-Sway Bar kits for most popular motorhome applications.

roadmasterinc.com

SPARE TIRE AIR HOSE

Truck System Technologies, San Antonio, Texas, offers the TST Spare Tire Air Hose Kit. The company's TPMS can help protect from tire-related issues with real-time pressure and temperature monitoring. But what about the often-forgotten spare tire? TST's Spare Air allows you to easily check your spare tire air pressure and add air when needed without dismounting the spare or crawling underneath the vehicle. You can even add a TPMS sensor to monitor the spare in real time. Works on towables and tow vehicles. Made in the U.S.A.

tsttruck.com



PORTABLE AUXILIARY BRAKING SYSTEM

Hopkins Mfg., Emporia, Kansas, presents the Brake Buddy Select 3, the only portable auxiliary braking system with the power to choose between proportional or full braking technology, providing greater control over the braking response. An interactive remote allows adjustability on the fly while providing alerts from the braking system. TruFit Risers adjust to fit any floor plan, producing optimal performance. The Quick-Lock clevis easily adapts to fit any brake pedal for a quick and secure fit. The patented AutoStart feature ensures the system and vehicle are ready to tow.

brakebuddy.com



RV TIRE PRESSURE MONITORING SYSTEM

Minder Division of Valterra Products, Stuart, Florida, presents the TireMinder i10 RV TPMS with color display, designed to continually monitor up to 20 tires, with the ability to swap up to four different vehicles for a total of 40 tires. This TPMS simultaneously displays up to 10 tires at once, automatically swapping between the front (towing) and rear (towed) vehicles. Standard external or flow through transmitters are available, both with IPX7 waterproof ratings. Signal booster included with all kits for increased range and reliability.

tireminder.com





LIGHT ALERT SYSTEM

TowMate, Rogers, Arkansas, offers the "Move Over Pro." Don't wait until you find yourself on the side of the road without protection. The Move Over Pro will get traffic moving over effectively with its three flash patterns/color combinations (red, red/blue and amber/white). Not to be used as vehicle lighting, the magnetic and rechargeable MO-PRO grabs the attention of passing motorists and makes them aware of your presence with its brilliant bright light. It can also be useful around camp with a steady-on 1,000 Lumen area light.

www.towmate.com



DROP HITCH

GEN-Y Hitch, Nappanee, Indiana, presents the PHANTOM Flip 12K Drop Hitch, which is fully adjustable and designed with the

GM Multi-Pro Tailgate in mind. By flipping and

storing the hitch under the truck, the drop hitch allows for your tailgate to be fully extended while not interfering with the hitch. When in the stored position, customers can also safely go through a car wash without removing the hitch, can fit into tighter parking spaces and protect shins from any impact it may have with the hitch.

genyhitch.com



WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION HITCH

Curt, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, presents the TruTrack weight distribution hitch with sway control as one of the most advanced weight distribution hitches available, because it combines the functions of weight distribution and sway control into one. It actively levels and keeps the trailer aligned with the tow vehicle for a safer, smoother ride.

curtmg.com

www.marshallexcelsior.com/rvandcampingequipment

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ASYMMETRIC ANTI-SWAY SYSTEM

Tuson RV Brakes, Vernon Hills, Illinois, presents the Tuson Sway Control (TSC). The product's patented asymmetric system (independent left- and right-side braking) continuously monitors trailer sway and applies braking force on one side of the trailer, directly counteracting trailer sway with minimal speed loss and greater stability control. The TSC comes with a wired red/green LED light to indicate system status and fault codes. It wires directly into the trailer's braking system with no adjustment or maintenance needed.

tusonrvbrakes.com

FLAT TOWING BRAKE SYSTEM



RVi, Castle Rock, Colorado, offers its RVibrake Shadow installed braking system for flat towing a car. It features patented Tow-Mode Detection technology that knows when your customers are flat towing, so no user setup is required. Traditionally, installed braking systems require 6 to 8 hours to install, but Shadow's plug-and-play design allows you to install it in under two hours. Receive instant feedback for peace of mind on the Command Center tablet, which comes with the RVibrake Shadow.

RVidealer.com



TIRE BLOWOUT PROTECTION

TYRON, Tampa, Florida, offers the Run Flat Safety Device, which prevents tires from coming off the wheel due to a tire failure.

tyron-usa.com



RIDE CONTROL FOR TOWING VEHICLES

Hellwig Products, Visalia, California, presents the Steel Helper Spring, which is designed to maintain level ride height under heavily loaded conditions, providing enhanced control, maximum comfort and driver confidence. Easy installation with no maintenance required, Hellwig Helper Springs are a "set-it-and-forget-it" load control solution. Level load support ranging from 500 pounds to 3,500 pounds. Features and benefits include a tunable spring rate and simple, bolt-on installation, plus a limited lifetime warranty.

hellwigproducts.com

BRAKE CONTROLLER WITH LED DISPLAY



Horizon Global, Plymouth, Michigan, offers its Prodigy iD, a first-of-its-kind brake controller that seemingly integrates a color LED display into a vehicle's dash, providing easy-to-read diagnostics and alerts. Enjoy fingertip control using the rotary knob to easily adjust settings. RVers can put control in their hands by downloading the Tekonsha Edge mobile app. With the ability to switch between proportional and timed braking, the Prodigy iD is designed to meet RVers towing needs.

tekonshaprodigyid.com

SPACE Exploration: A New Frontier

Five steps for creating an organized, clutter-free dealership parts department storage area.



By Mel Selway

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

If you have an organized, clutter-free parts department storage area with plenty of room to add more goods, receive and ship goods, and transfer goods to the retail showroom, you may not need to read this column.

However, if any of the following situations exist in your parts department storage area(s), here are tips for the important aspects of the storage and workflow associated with RV parts operations.

Some questions to consider:

- Are the aisles narrow and difficult to traverse?
- Does it occasionally require more than one parts associate to locate an item?
- Are inventory items lying on the floor?
- Is it difficult to find room in which to place new inventory items?
- Is the receiving workstation and surrounding area crowded when shipments arrive?

Application of the SPACE acronym—explained in items 1 through 5—could assist in achieving an organized, clutter-free parts department storage area. These five primary steps will jumpstart your SPACE explorations. Keep in mind there could be additional tasks required for your specific project.

1. Separate the wheat from the chaff.

Apply the management by walking around (MBWA) concept. With a notepad in hand, walk through your parts department storage area(s) and workstations. Record items that don't belong such as:

- damaged items
- empty cardboard containers
- computer components from a previous system
- other unnecessary or unidentifiable items

Create a to-do list for the appropriate disposition of these items. Do not keep items of sentimental attachment—at least not in your storage areas. Items must be capable of generating short-term income to qualify for a place in your renovated storage area(s).

During your MBWA tours, you might find saleable items and useable equipment that you were unaware of owning. These goods and equipment should be included in the plans for your organized, clutter-free parts department.

Now that you have opened some “holes” in your storage area(s), move on to Step 2.

2. Poll your associates.

Solicit their input as to how and where the remaining inventory and

“Create a to-do list for the appropriate disposition of unneeded items in the parts department storage area. Do not keep items of sentimental attachment—at least not in your storage areas. Items must be capable of generating short-term income to qualify for a place in your renovated storage area(s).”

support goods should be placed and how traffic patterns could be arranged.

These are the folks who must place and retrieve the goods and materials. They might have some suggestions as to the most efficient locations and methods for storing the goods and materials.

3. Ask questions.

Talk to associates about the parts department storage area(s) and the contents. These questions could include:

1. Where should the receiving workstation be located?
2. How much open floor space is required for a normal day's shipments?
3. Is there a drawing of the parts department display and storage areas to show the placement of each display fixture and storage unit? Is it updated to reflect any changes in these areas?
4. What factors are considered when placing goods in the storage area(s)? Would size/quantity be one of those factors?
5. How do you allow for the addition of new items and the elimination of items that are no longer incurring demands? Could you apply the “skipped letter/number” concept for assigning bin locations?
6. How and where are batteries stored? What safety requirements must be met?
7. What are the policies for each supplier as to the retention of warranty items? How are these items stored during these retention periods, so they can be easily found when needed?
8. What are your procedures for handling take-off items that have been removed from an RV and you have decided to retain for possible future use?
9. Where will the service tech parts associate (STPA) workstation be situated? Is there direct access



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to the service work area?

10. How and where will special items such as battens be stored? Because of the length of these items, transport from receiving to the storage should be considered.

4. Contact equipment vendors.

This is a very important step in your SPACE exploration project. There are many manufacturers of storage equipment and related materials. And there are even more companies and individuals that represent these equipment manufacturers.

It is important to realize that some of these suppliers and representatives sell storage equipment and that some of them sell storage equipment solutions. Those that sell storage equipment will usually ask for the size of the room(s)/area(s) in which the storage equipment will be placed. These suppliers and their representatives are not interested in providing you with a unique solution to your storage equipment and workstation needs. In most of these equipment installations, all shelves are spaced the same distance apart without consideration of the type of goods that will be placed on each shelf.

However, those suppliers and representatives that sell storage solutions will ask you many of the same questions that you have listed in Step 1 of the

SPACE acronym. These suppliers/representatives could be familiar with the RV industry and with many of your storage requirements. If they are not, they will ask about your special storage needs and most likely schedule either an in-person visit or will suggest a video-visit to view your current facility and the goods contained therein.

After identifying at least two storage equipment solutions sources, you should request quotes from each of the sources. These quotes should include, at the least:

- specific quantities of all storage equipment, such as shelves, uprights, shelf bins and their internal dividers, modular drawers/cabinets and their internal dividers/partitions, assembly hardware, hooks/hangers, etc., that will be required to complete the storage project
- labor required to install the equipment
- shipping costs from point of origin to your location, including any allowances for split shipments and which party is responsible for the cost of any split shipments
- discounts and when these discounts apply—e.g., discount only applies if entire order is submitted at one time



- taxes, if applicable
- promise times and the penalties incurred if these are not met

After receiving these quotes, you should evaluate each supplier's quote—line by line—because sometimes accidental errors are made by the suppliers. These accidental errors could incur substantial increases to the original quote.

Of course, these may not have been intentional errors to obtain your order by coming in as the lowest bidder—but caveat emptor, i.e., the buyer is responsible for checking the quality and suitability of goods before purchase. Once you have committed to a supplier's product, you are locked into completing the project with that product.

5. Execute your plan.

If you are renovating an existing facility, this step will most likely have to occur as a planned series of operations because you must support the daily needs of the dealership.

For example, you could coordinate an after-hours renovation project that might take three weeks. Or, maybe you have scheduled the renovations over a long holiday weekend and the parts associates and volunteers from other departments have agreed to

work to hasten the christening of the organized, clutter-free department. Whatever solution you choose, this requires careful planning and brainstorming to identify the sequence of events.

If you are moving into a new facility, these same five steps can be applied to ensure the success of your SPACE project. For instance, in Step 1, you won't want to transport unnecessary items to the new facility.

Step 5 might involve a different set of decisions because you will be able to fabricate/erect any new equipment without interfering with the daily dealership operations.

However, if you have decided to incorporate some of the existing storage equipment in the new facility, the dismantling-transfer-erection of this equipment will need to be considered.

You will still need to plan for the removal-packing-transport-placement of all of the goods and support materials/equipment from the current facility to the new one. In fact, this could be the subject of another column, because you will want to process a smooth move.

There are possibly more details related to your SPACE project that could be included in this column, but unfortunately, I have run out of SPACE! **RV2**

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By Chuck Marzahn

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

You're Safe!

It's time to "play ball" in the shop safety game.

It's been a great start to this year's baseball season. My beloved Yankees are leading the MLB. Aaron Judge is smacking the ball out of the park with every hope that he will smash the all-time home run record. As the umpire shouts, "Safe!" I'm thinking about how many shops in the RV game can be called in a similar manner. Or would your call be "out"?

Batter Up

Safety is one of those topics that is so mundane as to be ignored. But if ignored, it is at the peril of the employee, the owner and the business itself. A heavy price can be extracted through litigation or through the fines and penalties assessed by the government.

Continuing the baseball metaphor, let me give you several easy pitches that you can hit to improve your batting average. Let's start with the fundamentals. All shops have several areas that can be reviewed and

immediately improved. One area is compliance. Another is training.

You Might Have a Friendly Umpire

One of the easiest ways to get an eye on the ball is to ask your dealership's garage keeper's insurance carrier for a safety audit. If you want a safe shop, it's like getting a base on balls. Most carriers will do an audit for no charge and with no penalty in premium expense level. They'll do an audit and give you a report of items that need attention. The understanding is that you will correct the items they find. It helps them and it reduces your claims experience. The result is a safer shop.

While we're talking about inspections and audits, you might be aware that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has been going through RV dealerships. It can be more than a little scary if they show up out of the blue. You might feel like a hitter that's facing a new pitcher



Don't let my seemingly flippant attempt with the baseball metaphor diminish the importance of having a safe business. It is vitally important. I hope you never have a reason, a claim or an inspection that proves just how important it should have been.

for the first time. Be assured this audit process can result in some heavy fines and penalties. The word from the members of our 20 Groups is that these OSHA visits need to be taken seriously.

Go For the Easy Outs

There are some areas that always seem to pop up. Do you know what the most dangerous tool in the shop is? Likely the bench grinder. If you look closely at yours, you will probably see the guards removed, the wheel in poor condition and the tool rest, if installed, out of alignment. It's easily one of the most likely pieces of equipment to cause an injury. Trip hazards; fire extinguishers; first aid kits—these are all on the roster of usual players. You are likely familiar with those and many others—start there.

While we think about compliance, vendors have made it a ton easier to keep a set of Safety Data Sheets (SDS). We used to have to keep and constantly update a binder. Now there are vendors just a click away with resources to solve that problem.

One of the regulations that's often ignored in our shops is fall protection. Regulations make it clear that a tech working on top of a motorhome is at risk of falling. Some of the solutions for fall protection are more expensive. Many opt for a manlift with a harness. But what's the cost of a lawsuit? Or the loss of production from a great tech who is out of work for a long period due to a fall?

Don't Let the Ball Get Past Your Infield

Hand and glove with compliance is training. It matters. And it matters in ways you may not have considered. One of my dealers mentioned that the

first item the OSHA inspector looked for was a record of safety training. Next was the SDS documentation. It seems that missing those will set the tone for the entire transaction (and fines) to follow. If there is a clear effort to provide safety training and compliance on available safety information, it shows the inspector that the business cares about the safety of the employees. If it is not present or covered, it needs to be dusted off like home plate because overlooking it sends the message that safety has not been important. Catch this—it sends a message to your players, too. They are more likely to care about safety if they know you care about it, too.

The Play is Most Critical at Home Plate

Creating a culture where safety isn't a game takes some focus. It starts with the business owner and quickly moves to the managers. When you have a shop meeting, make it a matter of firm policy that at least some of the time is spent on a safety presentation. Show it as part of the agenda—make it a permanent part of your roster and batting order. And, when you hold a meeting, take attendance. Have the players give you an autograph on the roster (agenda). Then file it away—but file it away in a place that you can easily retrieve it to show it to either an OSHA investigator or an insurance claims adjuster. That will surely go a long way to seeing that either of those two will make the call in your favor.

Don't let my seemingly flippant attempt with the baseball metaphor diminish the importance of having a safe business. It is vitally important. I hope you never have a reason, a claim or an inspection that proves just how important it should have been. **RV2**

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Grow Service & Parts Operations with Sales Management

Impactful strategies to increase net profits by managing sales.



By Don Reed

Don Reed is the CEO of DealerPRO Training Solutions in Columbus, Ohio. For more information, visit dealerprotraining.com or call 888-553-0100.

The term service absorption has been around for a long time, yet there remains some differences in our industry as to how the calculation is made. I prefer to use the formula we used in my 20 Groups, which applies to all franchises and is defined as the percentage of a dealership's total expenses less new and used variable selling expenses that can be paid for by the total fixed operations gross profit (total dealership expenses minus variable selling expenses).

At DealerPRO, we analyze RV dealers' fixed operations performance across the United States and Canada and find that most dealers are averaging somewhere around 59% service absorption. With that being said, I would hope every dealer, general manager and fixed ops manager would make it their mission to put forward a plan to move aggressively toward achieving 100% absorption.

Let's look at some strategies that will enable any dealership to do just that. Our focus will be on the retail service customer because that is the greatest opportunity for increasing gross profit. It all begins with your perception of how the service and parts departments should be structured and managed. Do you have a culture of administration or a culture of sales? For example, do you employ service writers (administrative clerks) or service advisers (salespeople)?

Do you have a high percentage of one-item repair orders (administration) or a low percentage of 15% or less (sales)? Are you experiencing a declining customer pay repair order count (administration), or is your customer base expanding (sales)? Are your sales per retail repair orders (RO) the same as last year's (administration) or are they growing by 20% or 30% or 40% (sales)? Is your technician productivity still at 50% (administration) or increasing year over year with a goal of achieving 100% (sales)?

Is this starting to make any sense yet?

To aggressively work toward that worthy goal of 100% absorption, a fixed operations director must be a good sales manager and employ many of the same management strategies used in the front end by the general sales manager. Because you can't effectively manage what you do not measure, you must identify the performance metrics that guide successful sales operations. The chart at right is a comparison of these metrics for both departments.

Every one of these metrics requires some form of sales management for both managers. In working with many dealers across the country, I have found that most dealers do a fine job of devoting their time, resources and capital to support and evaluate the




performance of their sales management team and hold them accountable for their results. However, far too often when it comes to doing the same for the fixed operations team, there seems to be a different set of standards.

So, how about you fixed operations directors make the commitment to start measuring the performance metrics of your service and parts team? Get out of that administrative chair and focus your efforts on managing sales. Try these nine tips:


1. Take a walk through the shop and observe your technicians performing multipoint inspections on your customer's RV.
2. Show those technicians that you care, and thereby reinforce the notion that the inspection process is important to you and your customers.
3. Start your day with a brief daily sales meeting with your service advisers reviewing yesterday's performance and today's plan for reaching your goals on hours per repair order (HPRO), profit margin on parts and labor, up-sell penetrations, closing ratios, etc.
4. Next, how about observing the customer reception process and maybe shake a few hands with a "Welcome to our dealership, I'm your service director, how can I assist you today?"
5. Coach your advisers on their walkarounds, their menu presentations and their customer communication skills.
6. At the end of the day, spend some time during the active delivery to observe your advisers' review of

General Sales Manager	Fixed Operations Director
N & U Gross per Retail Unit	Hours per Repair Order
Salesperson's Closing Ratio	Service Advisor's Closing Ratio
N & U Inventory Turns	Parts Inventory Turns
N & U Days Supply	Technician Parts Fill Rate
F & I Turnover Ratio	Technician Inspection Ratio
F & I Finance Penetration	Advisor Menu Penetration
F & I Gross Per Retail Unit	Dollar Sales per Repair Order
F & I ESC Penetration	Labor & Parts Margin
Units Sold per Salesperson	Technician Productivity



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the "Three C's" with each customer and ensure that the customer's RV is always brought to them versus sending them out the door to find it for themselves.

7. Make sure those advisers are scheduling the customer's next appointment based on time and or mileage before they leave this one.
8. Shaking a few hands with a "thank you for your business" would be a great way to end your day.
9. Show your employees that you are a "proactive leader" to instill a sense of confidence in them, as well as a sense of accountability for their individual performance.

When was the last time you met with your parts team to review the status on special order parts and discuss how you can get those parts delivered faster? Are you using a "triage" process at time of reception to get the needed parts on order before the repair process begins?

Every day, fixed operations managers must focus on managing sales opportunities that increase gross profits and results in more net profit. Technicians must always look for sales opportunities by performing a complete and thorough multipoint inspection with every repair order. Service advisers must always walk around the customers' unit looking for sales opportunities and review the unit's repair and maintenance history as well as appliances and generators for other opportunities. Both of these processes result in recommendations for proper maintenance and/or repairs.

It's important to note that we never want anyone trying to sell a customer anything that they don't need. Fixed operations directors should ensure that every customer is properly advised of their unit's repair and maintenance needs. This has to be your company policy—no exceptions. The same holds true for the sales department.

Fixed operations directors, service managers, body shop managers and parts managers are hardworking individuals and face some tough challenges in our competitive marketplace. Take the time to sit down with your dealer and review your departments' needs for the coming year (training, working capital, equipment, inventories and personnel). Establish your sales goals for all departments and outline your plan for implementation. Think big, be bold and measure everyone's performance daily.

You must lead, coach and train your fixed operations team to remain focused on their goals and processes so they can all become top performers. Most importantly, do not tolerate underachievers; you must replace them now with salespeople not administrators. 100% service absorption is now coming into view—it might take a year or two or three—but you will get there. It all starts by becoming a fixed ops sales team to ensure that every customer leaves your service department driving or towing a safe and reliable RV. **RV**

The New Normal: A 12-Month Show Cycle

There are more opportunities than ever for dealers to connect with prospects long after an RV show is over, but the right systems—and old-fashioned follow-through—are key.



By Bob Zagami

Bob Zagami has been writing, speaking and consulting in the RV industry since 1996. He has served as the executive director of the New England RV Dealers Association (NERVDA) since 2013 and is the principal consultant at RV Insights, a media, marketing and consulting company serving the RV and outdoor hospitality industries. He can be reached at bobzagami@nervda.com or 617-974-3739.

When I first started writing about the RV industry back in 1996, the typical consumer RV show was just that—a show.

There were a few busy days where consumers could see, touch and buy a new RV. Then the show would end and consumers would go home and dealers would return to their lots, never to speak again for another year unless the consumer drove on to the dealer's lot.

Back in those days, it was a true “selling show” with all hands on deck and closing as many orders as humanly possible because dealers were afraid they would never see that person again. A large amount of the dealers’ annual business would be written in the consumer shows they participated in each winter and spring once they got past the holiday season.

The good old days are likely long gone—at least in that format or in that volume of sales, when the spur-of-the-moment emotional buys saw non-RV'ers become real RV'ers in the blink of an eye when they fell in love with a motorhome or towable they just “had to have.”

There certainly wasn't a lot of pre-show engagement with possible prospects because most dealers didn't know who those prospects were until they walked through the door. And there wasn't a lot of post-show

engagement, either, because the fledgling internet was still a novelty and most companies had no real idea of the impact it would have on their business in the years ahead.

Fast forward to 2022 and, unfortunately, many RV dealers still view these shows as just that: shows. Nothing could be further from the truth. Shows certainly are not three- to four-day events with people simply wandering through large venues and looking at all of the new RVs on display. Or, at the very least, they shouldn't be anything close to that.

Shows in the Digital Age

Some dealers will complain that “shows aren't what they used to be”—and they would be right. However, the next conversation should be about what changes they have made at the dealership to reflect the digital transformation of RV consumers and how they behave today.

If you look at RV shows as the starting point of a 12-month plan to communicate with all of the new prospects identified at the show, then the importance of a show becomes a more serious discussion at your dealership.

While the first objective of any show or open house event is to sell more RVs, it could be argued that equally



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Instead of three- or four-day sales events, today's consumer RV shows offer opportunities for dealers to connect with prospects long after the show is over, provided dealers keep customers' contact information and follow up with those contacts.

important is the need to identify all of the people who you didn't sell to at the show. Even if they didn't buy at the show, they certainly declared their interest in RVs and the industry by showing up at the door.

What, if anything, are you doing to collect valuable information from visitors that can be entered into your digital media solution (DMS) or customer relationship management (CRM) system? If the answer is nothing, then it is time to have a serious discussion with your staff about changing your view of the show and the objectives of your sales team if they are not successful in selling visitors an RV during shows.

There is incredible technology available in the industry today to collect, input, analyze and act on the data that will drive communication with that prospect over the next 12 months.

The 12-Month Cycle

I can only speak to the experiences of successful dealers who tell me that they write business throughout the year—right up until the next show rolls around. Amazingly, I also have dealers that tell me a particular show was not successful and they will never come back again.

Both dealer groups saw the same people, both groups had an opportunity

to decide how they were going to communicate with everyone who came into their display, and both groups had an opportunity to collect data that would continue to drive the communication—if they had a plan to collect information that would drive their follow-up strategy and then implemented that strategy for all shows.

Several dealers tell me they write business in December with prospects they met 11 months earlier at a January show. The only way this happens is if there is an ongoing conversation between the dealer and the future customer—and that is driven by the data collected and communication with the prospect throughout the year.

There are many inexpensive capture systems—both hardware and software—that allow for information collection when communicating with a prospect, whether it is at a show or at the dealership. For example, smartphones and tablets can be equipped with data capture software, barcode or QR code scanning, and even software that can read business cards, badge information or a radio frequency identification (RFID) chip and populate a DMS or CRM database software. In fact, there is software that will do all of that and read it in 25 different languages.

The tools are out there, the systems are out there, and the ability to capture

You can't get the sale if you are not communicating with prospects every month after the show to keep your dealership name at the top of the list and the tip of their tongue. Be the dealership that earns their business and don't sit back and wait for them to find you again after they leave the show.

data, interpret information and analyze those statistics to maximize your ability to communicate more effectively are ready and waiting for you to implement at your dealership. Once you have these systems in place, you can then design a marketing and communications campaign to stay in touch with these prospects throughout the year.

The Follow-Up

Lead follow-up is not a strong point for many dealerships. Having an effective CRM component to your dealer management software will go a long way to bringing discipline to this often neglected, but extremely critical, process in your business operations.

Everyone knows that a journey starts with a single step. For RV dealers, it's fair to say that many new prospects meet dealers at the consumer RV shows for the first time, but if they don't buy right away, often it's because retailers never take that next step to building a relationship in their first year of exposure to the dealership.

Why not take that first step now? Design a new process that will be implemented at your next show or open house. Start collecting information and turning that data into dollars with new sales throughout the year that started at that RV show. You can't get the sale if you are not communicating with prospects every month after the show to keep your dealership name at the top of list and the tip of their tongue. Be the dealership that earns their business and don't sit back and wait for them to find you again after they leave the show.

In the words of serial entrepreneur Mark Cuban, "Information is power. Particularly when the competition ignores the opportunity to do the same."

The information is there if you ask for it. Most RV enthusiasts will provide the information you ask for if there

is a genuine effort to bring them into your systems so that you can serve them better. The best time to ask for that information is when they visit your display at the RV show. They are on your turf, so don't let them leave without getting what you need.

Turn your three- or four-day show into a 12-month conversation, and you will capture a return on the investment you made in that RV show. Trying to calculate a return on investment on the volume of business you did during the show is only done accurately by those calculating the ROI on the prospect information you gathered, in addition to the units you sold at the show. *RVP*

Ideas for Follow-Up

Communication with prospective customers could include:

- Invitations to open house events
- Inform when you pick up a new product line
- Alert them to new floorplans
- Let them know about important events or changes at the dealership
- Include them in customer surveys
- Schedule a personal call from their assigned sales rep every three months to gauge their interest
- Keep them up to date about new developments that may accelerate their purchase decision

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Who's Camping? 8.3M

The 2022 Camping Report released by The Dyrty—a camping resources and connections app—found that 8.3 million people went camping in the U.S. for the first time in 2021.



"Salespeople need to be curious, investigative reporters to get all the information needed to show their customers the RV that makes sense for them and nothing else."

—Thomas Morin, veteran corporate executive, business owner, career coach and a top RV salesperson at Alpin Haus in Amsterdam, New York

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\$48B



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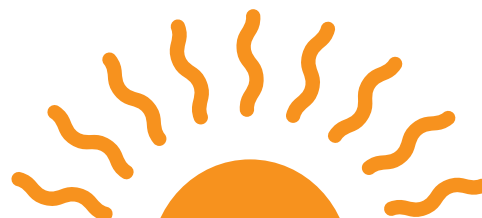
Source: RV Industry Association



50,529

Total of May 2022 RV shipments

Source: RV Industry Association



Heat Safety Tips From OSHA

1. Drink cool water even if you are not thirsty—at least 1 cup every 20 minutes.
2. Take enough time to recover from heat given the temperature, humidity and conditions.
3. Take breaks in a designated shady or cool location.
4. Wear a hat and light-colored, loose-fitting and breathable clothing if possible.
5. Monitor yourself and others for signs of heat illness.

Signs of Heat Illness

If a worker experiences:

Headache or nausea
Weakness or dizziness
Heavy sweating or hot, dry skin
Elevated body temperature
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Decreased urine output

Take these actions:

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Move to a cooler area
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Do not leave alone
Seek medical care if needed

Source: Occupational Health & Safety Administration

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FOR 2 IN 2023!**



For registration and information visit:

www.LNSdistributionevents.com

WHY LYNX[®]?

WE ARE THE **ORIGINAL**
RV LEVELING SYSTEM

Established in 1993

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

30 Years of Product Development

With Lynx Levelers[®] at the core of our product line, we've developed multiple products that enhance the leveling and stabilizing experience.

Made in the USA

All Lynx leveling and stabilizing products have ALWAYS been proudly manufactured in America.

ALWAYS



OUR INTERLOCKING **OCTAGON** DESIGN

Strong Octagonal Shape

The shape provides maximum weight dispersal, with an impact rating of up to **40,000 lbs**

Porous Interior

Maintains durability, increases strength and is light weight

Backed for 10 Years

We believe our products should last a long time, so we back them with a 10-year warranty

DESIGNED WITH
THE **USER** IN
MIND

FROM LEVELING TO LIVING

LOOK FOR THE **ORANGE...** LOOK FOR **LYNX[™]**

TRI⁴ LYNX

INTRODUCING

SUPREME GREEN

LIQUID FORMULAS &...

NEW



go GREEN off-grid!

BLUE MAX

Travel
Jon®

Glitter Glamping Edition!

Add some
glitter to your
glamping!



SEPTIC
SAFE
SPARKLE!



SIGN UP TO MEET WITH US AT THE 2022 RV AFTERMARKET CONFERENCE

EARN \$\$\$ FOR THE THINGS YOU LOVE!

DEMCO

Sell a System



+

Install a System



DEMCO TOW BAR



DEMCO BRAKING SYSTEM



DEMCO BASEPLATE



QUALIFYING PART NUMBERS

9511008
9511012
9511013

QUALIFYING PART NUMBERS

9599007 9599019
9599006 9599020
9599004 9599021
9599018 6271

QUALIFYING PART NUMBERS

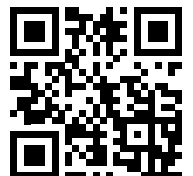
Any Demco Baseplate

**\$50 to
Sales Associate
and \$50 to
Technician**

HOW TO GET YOUR MONEY:

**Must sell and install all three components on same invoice to qualify*

- 1 Scan the QR code to the right
- 2 Complete all required fields, upload a copy of the service order with qualifying products, and include the name of sales associate and technician
- 3 Both sales associate and technician will receive a re-loadable VISA gift card with spiff amount after first qualified submission. Cards will begin being mailed August 1, 2022, and reloaded each month after qualifying submission(s).



** Valid July 1, 2022 through October 31, 2022*

OZ COUPLER®

SEWER HOSES and KITS



EXTENSION HOSES

- 18 mil hoses with UV protection
- Hoses collapse for easy storage



SEWER HOSE KITS

- Use a single 10' hose for dump station convenience
- Use our 20' Kit & connect both hoses for a 20' connection



DUAL TANK KIT

- Includes a hose wye and two 10' hoses
- Use our 20' Dual Tank Kit to dump 2 tanks at once!



➡ **DOMETIC**

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ALWAYS ALERT.

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