

September 2022

RV PRO

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A Grand Vision

Grand Design President & CEO Don Clark reflects on the company's 10th anniversary, values & culture.



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ABOUT THE COVER:

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Let me tell you, if you're new to the RV industry, come work on the Model Preview section of RV PRO for the September issue, and you will quickly come up to speed.

Through phone calls, emails, text messages and more, the editors of RV PRO and our cadre of talented freelance writers contacted dozens of brands to bring you what we hope is a comprehensive inside look at what's to come at Open House in Elkhart, Indiana, and the surrounding areas. In total, we wrote nearly 30,000 words and collected dozens of photos to highlight all of the upgrades, improvements and game-changers—a popular word in the industry—that will be on display during the last week in September.

We also spoke with several industry insiders who are feeling optimistic about the RV market, even as we experience a downturn in sales. As the RV Industry Association reported in August, there was an 11.7% decrease in shipments in June 2022 compared to June 2021.

"Four factors are challenging our industry: interest rates, fuel, inflation and war," says Dutchmen President Kyle Kwasny. "All four of those things you think would severely negatively impact the RV industry, but this is going to be a top five year out of the last 60 years, even when these things are happening."

Read more about the newest offerings that will be unveiled at Open House, and how industry professionals are viewing the state of the market, starting on page 46.

Speaking of industry professionals, it was an honor for me to interview Grand Design CEO and President Don Clark, who graciously took my Zoom call while I was sitting in a Panera Bread parking lot trying to get Wi-Fi service while on vacation in Lake George, New York. I learned a lot about how he conducts business—and why it's important to not be ashamed to learn from mistakes—and what he views as the most important asset a company can have: its people.

We think you, dear readers, are indeed the most important assets at your workplace and, in order to help you grow as leaders, or help your managers be the best leaders they can be, we have dedicated a section of this month's issue to leadership training articles, starting on page 126. We hope you find these articles enlightening and inspirational; don't be afraid to post them in your breakroom or share them with coworkers via our digital edition.

We hope to see you all in person at the end of this month at Open House; please be on the look out for RV PRO Managing Editors Jordan Benschop and Tony Kindelspire, as well as Associate Publisher Chris Cieto and Account Executive Rebecca Tittel. I will be there for a short visit before I head to my sister's wedding (or suffer being expelled from the family), but I sure hope to get back there soon for a longer visit.

Until then, go look at what's to come for this new year! I'm sure you will be impressed, too.

As always, thanks for reading!

Jennifer King

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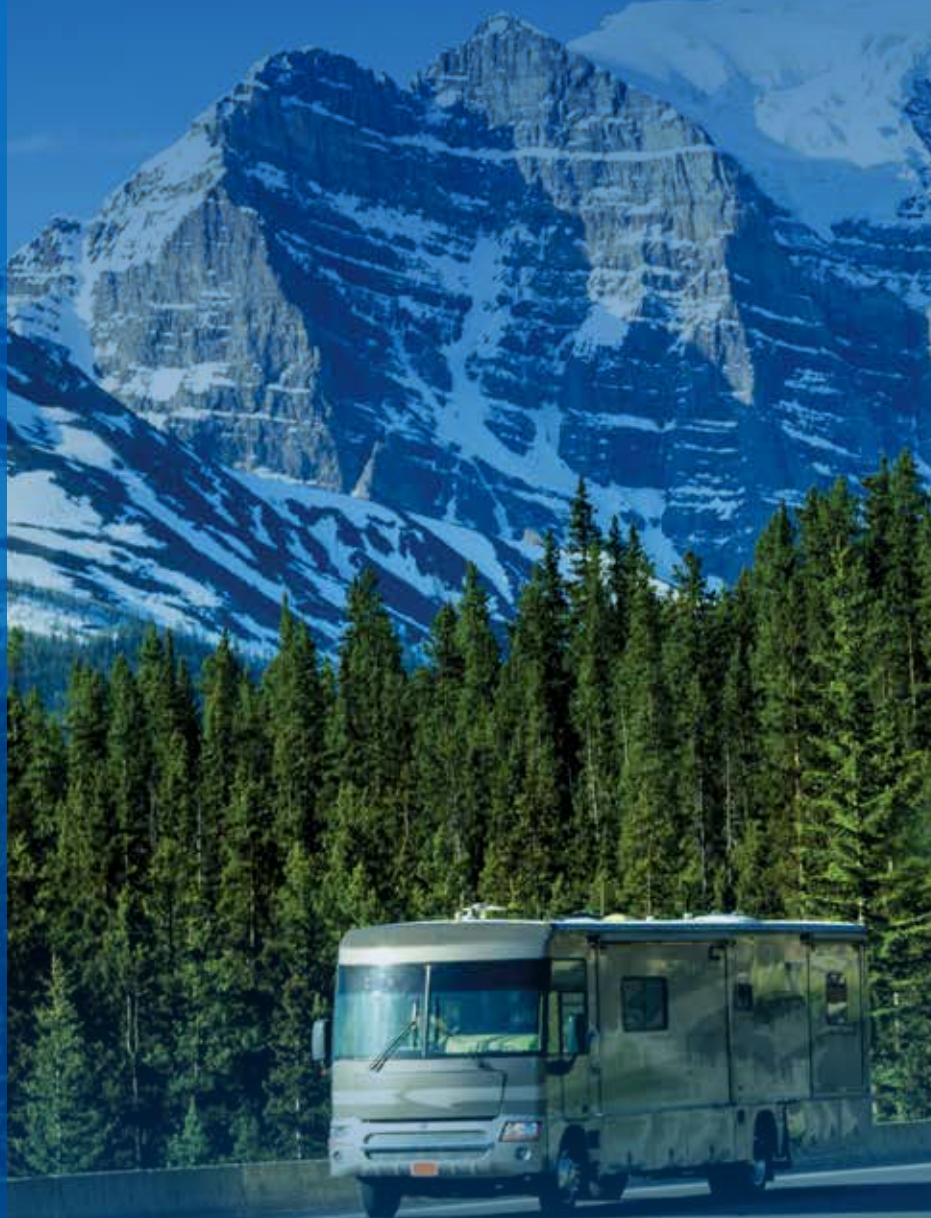
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DEMAND THE BEAR

In Memoriam

Industry, Colleagues Mourn Loss of RV Advocate Rep. Jackie Walorski

The RV industry lost a beloved advocate on Aug. 3 after U.S. Congresswoman Jackie Walorski, 58, (R-Ind.) was killed in a car wreck with three others near Nappanee, Indiana.

According to the Goshen News, the incident occurred just after noon. Walorski, who represents Indiana's 2nd District, was traveling with two of her staff members, Zachery Potts, 27, of Mishawaka, her district director; and Emma Thomson, 28, Washington, D.C., her communications director. Potts was driving the group's Toyota RAV 4 when, for unknown reasons, it crossed the centerline and collided head-on with a vehicle driven by Edith Schmucker, 56, of Nappanee. She also died at the scene.

The RV Industry Association said that as a founding member of the RV Caucus, Walorski was "a true friend and champion of the RV industry and she served as a passionate and powerful voice for all of her constituents in Indiana's 2nd District."

"The drive and enthusiasm Congresswoman Walorski had for the RV industry and the people of Indiana's second district was unmatched," said RVIA Chair Jeff Rutherford. "There is no one who more consistently advocated on behalf of the RV industry in Congress and we as an industry are better off for it. This is truly a sad day for all who knew her, and we wish to express the heartfelt condolences of the entire RV industry to Jackie's family and the families of Zachery and Emma during this incredibly difficult time."

RV Women's Alliance President Susan Carpenter noted that Walorski was set to be



on hand in Elkhart, Indiana, that week to hand out certificates for the first all-female RV technician class.

"We at the RV Women's Alliance are saddened by the great loss of Jackie Walorski," Carpenter said. "Representative Walorski was always supportive of our efforts and was a champion of everything the RVWA set out to accomplish. She was a great advocate for the industry and an example of true servant leadership to our members and is already greatly missed."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ordered the flags at the U.S. Capitol to be flown at half-staff in honor of Walorski.

"As the representative for the RV Capitol of the World, Congresswoman Walorski had a deep understanding and passion for the RV industry and the people in it," said RV Industry Association President and CEO Craig Kirby. "She championed numerous RV-related endeavors on Capitol Hill, including founding the House RV Caucus, sponsoring and introducing key legislation on behalf of the

industry, and delivering positive testimony during congressional hearings. Jackie not only lit up a room with her passion for Indiana, she commanded any room with her incredible intellect and understanding of how business and manufacturing drive the U.S. economy. She has left an indelible mark on the RV industry, and we are very grateful for her service to her district and the country."

Phil Ingrassia, RVDA president, said Walorski was a strong proponent of the recreation industry.

"Rep. Walorski was a thoughtful and energetic leader for her constituents and the entire RV industry. She understood the RV business and how RV travel enhances the lives of millions of Americans. As a member of the Ways and Means Committee, she was truly one of the driving forces to improve funding for outdoor recreation across the country," he said. "RVDA sends its condolences to Rep. Walorski's family, friends, and colleagues as well as those of her district director, Zachery Potts, and communications director, Emma Thomson. May they rest in peace."

Walorski's office released a statement, stating: "She has returned home to be with her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

"Please keep her family in your thoughts and prayers," the statement continued. "In addition to the devastating loss of Congresswoman Walorski, it is with a broken heart that I announce the passing of two dedicated members of her staff, Zach Potts and Emma Thomson. They were the epitome of public servants who cared deeply about the work they performed on behalf of the constituents of Indiana's Second Congressional District."

Additional Comments From Local and National Leaders

U.S. Congressman Jim Banks (R-Ind.):

"My heart is broken for Dean, the Walorski family and all who knew and loved my friend Jackie. Jackie was a true public servant – selfless, humble and compassionate. She was a devout Christian, a passionate advocate for life and a leader among Hoosier representatives. Everything Jackie did was to serve others. Before Congress, she served in the Indiana Statehouse and she and her husband served as missionaries in Romania where they provided impoverished children food and medical care. From my first day in Congress, Jackie showed me kindness and grace. She had a heart of gold, and I will miss her dearly. Please join Amanda

and I in praying for her Jackie's loved ones and the friends and family of her two staff members who also lost their lives in this tragic accident."

Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb: "Janet and I are devastated by the tragic loss of our friend Congresswoman Jackie Walorski and her two staffers – Emma Thomson and Zach Potts – earlier today. Our broken hearts go out to her husband, Dean, and the entire family during this time of unimaginable mourning. At every level of public service Jackie was known to be a positive force of nature, a patriot, and a relentless policymaker with an unwavering loyalty to her constituents. Jackie's record of

achievement is impossible to quantify. She will be remembered as a fighter with a huge heart that always went the extra mile, and I'll treasure the times we walked a few of those together. Every waking moment for her was energetically devoted to improving the lives of all Hoosiers, the epitome of a good and faithful servant. She, and the example she set, will be missed every day forward."

Elkhart Mayor Rod Robertson: "I am shocked and saddened to learn of Rep. Jackie Walorski's passing and the passing of her staff members. This is a devastating loss for Elkhart, Indiana, and for the nation. Jackie was a warrior for Hoosiers in Washington and

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her collaboration and passion was felt right here in Elkhart. Her dedication to serving our community will be hard to replace. Her family, her colleagues and her staff are in my prayers."

U.S. Sen. Mike Braun, Indiana: "Jackie Walorski was a tireless advocate for the Hoosiers she represented and a kind friend to everyone she met. She faithfully served her constituents and her Lord and Savior, and I trust she is now wrapped in the arms of Christ. Please join me and Maureen in praying for the families and friends of those lost on this tragic day for Indiana."

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Lippert Announces Tim Schultz as VP of Innovation



Lippert has promoted Tim Schultz to vice president of innovation. In his expanded role, he will assume responsibility over the Lippert Corporate Innovation Team to create OEM and aftermarket products for the RV and marine industries.

"I am excited about the opportunity to work with the teams to drive innovation throughout the company and deliver the best products," Schultz said. "There is a real opportunity to continue to make the experience better for our customers and I am thrilled to be leading the charge."

Schultz earned his Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering from Kettering University in Flint, Michigan. He has 17 years of experience within the RV industry. He started his career with Lippert in 2016 as director of Chassis Engineering Group.

"Earlier this year, we developed the foundation of our four pillars that we will aggressively build this organization out on for the future," said Jason Lippert, CEO of Lippert. "Innovation, both through products and processes, is one of those pillars and is something that Lippert has always prided itself on throughout its 66-year history. Tim will most definitely drive this pillar from a product development standpoint. His long history in the RV industry will help innovate products that improve the customer experience. With all of the new RVers and boaters that have entered the industry since the pandemic, it's paramount that we innovate new products and new features to existing products that make our customers' experience better and will help make RVing and boating a permanent part of their lifestyle."

Added Ryan Smith, group president of Lippert's North American OEM markets, "Tim has proven over his time here at Lippert that he can lead our most important projects from an engineering standpoint. Putting Tim in this role will help him focus on driving our new and existing product innovation to new levels while still giving guidance to our engineering teams. John Ryhmer will also be staying on with Lippert in a consulting role and will no doubt be a great asset for Tim in this new role."

Winnebago Industries Names New President of Newmar



Winnebago Industries has appointed Casey Tubman as president of Newmar Corp., effective Aug. 1. Tubman will report to President and CEO Michael Happe and will be

based in Nappanee, Indiana. Newmar, established in 1968, is a manufacturer of high-end motorized RVs and it became part of the Winnebago Industries family in 2019.

Tubman joins Winnebago Industries after more than 25 years in a variety of leadership and executive roles at Whirlpool Corp., a multinational manufacturer of home appliances. He most recently served as vice president and global platform leader of laundry where he was responsible for product development strategies and execution across five regions and all countries worldwide. Tubman previously ran Whirlpool's North American laundry and dishwasher businesses where he drove revenue and profit growth and improved brand differentiation, his new company said.

"We are extremely pleased to have Casey join our executive leadership team and take the reins at Newmar," said Happe. "Casey is a purposeful leader with a strong record of caring for employees and customers, resulting in consistent delivery of exceptional market and financial results. He will be leading a proven and dedicated management group and employee team at Newmar, and his experience driving operational excellence as well as brand and product innovation will enable Newmar to continue to be an industry leader in premium motorhomes. With Tubman assuming the role of president, the existing Newmar leadership team will continue intact and dealers as well as retail customers can expect the same level of unwavering commitment to quality, service, and innovation they have come to expect from Newmar."

"We are appreciative that the strength of the Newmar management team enabled business stability and allowed us to be

thoughtful and deliberate in our search. This brand is one of the true jewels of the outdoor recreation industry. We look forward to the contributions Casey and the entire Newmar organization will drive in the years to come," Happe said.

Lazydays Announces John North as New CEO



Lazydays Holdings has appointed John North as CEO and a member of its board of directors, effective Sept. 6.

"It is an honor to welcome John North to Lazydays," said

Chris Shackelton, chairman of the board.

"John is an accomplished executive with an admirable track record of driving success across multiple companies. We could not be more excited about the combination of John's operational strengths, paired with a disciplined growth orientation. John brings a deep understanding for building durable scale in multi-unit, high ASP dealership models, with superb judgment in allocating capital through business cycles. This combination is highly relevant for Lazydays, as the company assesses a widening range of compelling investment opportunities to drive shareholder value. Furthermore, as a leader of large public companies, John has a stellar reputation and history of developing strong relationships with investors and capital sources. Importantly, John is a collaborative leader whose skill set will complement and amplify the talented Lazydays team."

"Lazydays has built one of the most respected businesses in the RV industry," North said. "It is a privilege to join the company at such a pivotal moment. The Lazydays foundation is solid, and well positioned for a long runway of shareholder value creation. With a healthy balance sheet, strong brand, loyal customer base, and fantastic team, I am excited to help lead the company to an even brighter future. I look forward to working with my new colleagues and the board to ensure the business reaches its full potential."

Shackelton added, "Lastly, on behalf of the board and our shareholders, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Robert DeVincenzi for his leadership as interim CEO. Effective with the appointment of John, Robert will return to our board serving as a non-executive director."

North most recently served as chief financial officer of Copart, a member of the S&P 500 and a leading provider of online auctions and vehicle remarketing services. Previously, he served as the CFO of Avis Budget Group.

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Ladies Only

Two industry organizations launch the first all-female RV technician training, garnering a turnout that far exceeded expectations.

BY JORDAN BENSCHOP

When women come together to learn and accomplish, the outcome becomes even larger than individual goals and dreams.

Such is the case with a new RV technician course for ladies only, launched this month by a partnership between the RV Women's Alliance (RVWA) and the RV Technical Institute (RVTI). The two originally opened 12 spots in the pilot class—not expecting to double that number after receiving 110 applications.

"It kind of went viral online," says Susan Carpenter, president of RVWA. "We were able to get (participants) from a campground, supplier, dealership, full-time RVer... we even had eight women from outside the industry."

The week-long course provided RVTI's Level 1 tech training free of charge for participants, along with a hotel stay for those traveling to the class's location in Elkhart, Indiana. And while RVWA only budgeted for 12 rooms, Carpenter says there were enough Indiana locals with accommodations to support more seats in the class.

Students tackled intense training and testing for five days. Their comfort level and enthusiasm for learning was contagious, Carpenter explains—and that wasn't the only thing she was "mind blown" by.

"At night, the ladies had study groups in the hotel lobby. They did that on their own," she says. "You want to talk about camaraderie, right? We learned, and had suspected, that when you take down that barrier to entry, women come out to play."

Participants took home more than just their certifications on Friday, Aug. 5. Carpenter says RVWA's partnerships with companies such as Lippert, Camping World, Forest River and THOR Industries supplied a list of job openings in need of a Level 1 RV technician—a field currently lacking enough qualified workers.

"That was a great giveback to our partners," she says. One student exchanged info



with a dealership for a potential marketing internship. Another woman and full-time RVer wasn't expecting to apply her new knowledge in a job, but gained connections to Lippert's consumer-based Scouts program.

Lunches sponsored by companies including Mobile RV Pro, Pinnacle Appliances, Truck System Technologies, Go Power! and more sent representatives to offer students insight from all industry segments. Cocktail receptions were grounds for participants to mingle further with industry members.

"We knew it would be good, but it was phenomenal," Carpenter says. "It was just mind-blowing what these women were able to accomplish, and how they did it—with grace and style and enthusiasm."

Setting Sights High

The right participants for RVWA and RVTI's first all-female tech training was intentional, Carpenter says. The alliance's five-person team voted on candidates that covered different market segments.

"This class will be our grounds to launch many more classes," she says. "We surveyed these ladies, who will help develop upcoming programs for next year. We want their input and ideas as a sounding board."

Carpenter says the class already expressed a desire to complete RVTI's Level 2 training as a group. That bond is being furthered in other programs, she says, such as RVWA's own "mini-LinkedIn" software for female RV techs, where women can exchange info and share experiences.

Upcoming classes are in the works for 2023, with programs planned to stretch nationwide, Carpenter says. The Pennsylvania Recreation Vehicle and Camping (PRVCA)

has already offered its training facilities for a potential future course. Scholarship money for travel expenses and training will be limited and based on application, but Carpenter says the classes themselves will likely be open to all women who have the means to pay for it.

Although Friday was a day to celebrate the pilot class's accomplishments, Carpenter touches on the tragic news of the recent death of Congresswoman Jackie Walorski, who represented Indiana's 2nd District and planned to hand out certificates to the class.

"[Walorski] was a huge supporter of RVWA. She came to Drab to Fab, our breakfasts, anything we invited her to. She was a huge champion for us," Carpenter says. "She fought Capitol Hill for anything RV and lived and breathed our industry. You can't find that these days. It was a gut punch for all of us."

Rep. Walorski, whose district was home to most of the RV industry's manufacturing sector, and two of her staff members were killed in a car accident on Aug. 3. Carpenter says the alliance plans to keep her spirit alive in its future endeavors.

To read more about the first all-female tech training class, visit the RV Women's Alliance or RV Technical Institute pages on Facebook. Also, visit RVTI.org to find out how to become a certified RV technician for as little as \$300.

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RVDA Perspective: Navigating the Road Ahead

PHIL INGRASSIA, RVDA President

PHOTOS: JORDAN BENSCHOP

RV dealers have been through a whirlwind of change over the past 12 months. Inventory levels are up, especially on the towable side of the business, and now dealers must contend with a softening market due to economic challenges beyond their control.

Through all of this, the National RV Dealers Association (RVDA) will continue to be the voice of the dealer on an array of issues impacting RV retailing and the entire industry. Some of the issues that RVDA will be working on in the coming months include:

FTC Proposed Rule on Sales/ Financing Process

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is proposing new regulations that could have a major impact on the motor vehicle financing and sales process as well as require expanded disclosure on optional products typically sold in the F&I (finance and insurance) office.

The agency is also considering requiring dealerships to provide an “Offering Price” for any specific vehicle they advertise. Some in the industry have termed it the “out-the-door” price the dealership would charge to purchase the vehicle, exclusive of any government taxes and fees.

RVDA is in the midst of conducting a thorough review of the proposed rule, and on the surface, the FTC’s initial draft regulation would impose redundant and ineffective requirements that will hurt buyers through increased prices, extending sales transaction times, requiring additional paperwork and signatures, and making the customer



RVDA President Phil Ingrassia (R) announces the March 2022 retirement of Veronica (Ronnie) Hepp, former RVDA vice president of administration, at the 2021 RVDA Con/Expo.

experience more confusing. Ironically, the FTC complains that the current amount of paperwork confuses the customer.

The proposed rule clearly includes RVs along with all types of other vehicles. In the rule, motor vehicles are defined as: any self-propelled vehicle designed for transporting persons or property on a street, highway or other road; recreational boats and marine equipment; motorcycles; motor homes, recreational vehicle trailers and slide-in campers, and other vehicles that are titled and sold through dealers.

Clearly, no one condones misleading advertising or unfair practices in the sales or financing process. However, the FTC already has the authority to combat deceptive trade practices and has used these regulations to go after dealers who do not comply with existing rules.

During a time when the industry is working to simplify vehicle sales and pricing, streamline transactions and improve the customer experience, this type of rule goes in the opposite direction. It focuses too much on a vehicle sales model of the past and fails to consider remote sales scenarios and future developments in the industry.

Repair Event Cycle Time (RECT)

Service capacity remains a major issue within the industry and RVDA is working with industry partners on reducing Repair Event Cycle Time.

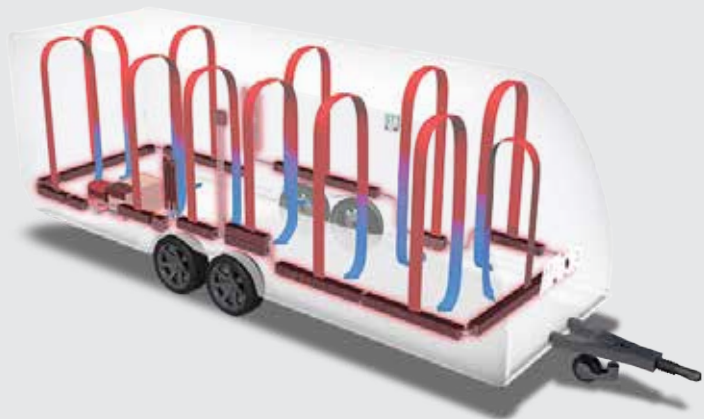
Manufacturers, suppliers and distributors are working together to help support dealers with several new initiatives, including parts drop ship programs, parts lists and easing warranty processes to help get customers back on the road. Of course, there’s much more to do and RVDA is working with industry partners on its “RECT Progress Report” that lists various initiatives by various stakeholders.



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- In-floor heating
- Heated towel rails
- Cab heater
- All-season capability



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Industry colleagues mingle on the expo floor at the 2021 RVDA Convention/Expo.



RVDA President Phil Ingrassia. Photo from RVIA.

To help measure progress, volunteers from the RVDA Board of Delegates have formed task forces to work with the major Dealer Management Software (DMS) providers to help improve RECT reporting.

The Mike Molino RV Learning Center has also developed two online programs to help dealers improve their service management efficiency—one for RV service writers/advisors and one for parts personnel. These programs empower dealers to take their fixed operations department to the next level and improve RECT.

2022 RV Dealers Convention/Expo

The RV Dealers Convention/Expo in November is quickly approaching and the RVDA Convention/Expo Committee is working on enhancements to provide exceptional education as well as additional opportunities for networking with dealers, manufacturers and suppliers.

The exhibit hall will be full of industry partners looking to enhance and form new and profitable partnerships with dealers. Beyond what I've discussed here, we'll also be updating members on other important issues facing dealers to help everyone in the industry successfully navigate the road ahead. **RV2**

RVDA Convention/Expo 2022: Workshops & Keynotes

Nov. 7-11, Las Vegas

1. Management and sales training expert David Martin

will deliver back-to-back workshops for dealers as part of the sales education track. "Order Takers No More!" is scheduled for 8:15-9:15 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 8, designed to help dealers and their sales staff get back to the basics. Martin will discuss the best responses to customer objections that will inevitably occur. He will also share the eight most powerful questions to ask customers, as well as the psychology behind them. Finally, Martin will identify how to use social media and other prospecting methods to cultivate a never-ending flow of prospects.

2. Jane Saxon, a CPA who specializes in RV dealerships, will present a workshop on managing working capital as part of the dealer/GM track. "The Right Balance—Optimizing Working Capital and Cash in Your Dealership" is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 10. It's designed to help dealers determine the right amount of liquid assets to keep in the dealership. Saxon will explain how to calculate working capital ratios, teach techniques to find the optimal level of working capital for a dealership and assess if a dealer's current working capital/cash is too high, too low or exactly right.

3. Leadership trainer Pete Smith will present "Rockstar Manager: From Valued Colleague to Significant Leader" as a special session for RVDA's Leadership Roundtable.

"We are proud to continue our sponsorship of the RVDA Leadership Roundtable course at the RV Dealers Convention/Expo," said President of Gulf Stream Coach Phil Sarvari. "Gulf Stream prides itself in supporting the development of the next generation of RV dealership leaders."

According to organizers, Smith has helped individuals, teams and organizations improve their leadership and personal growth for more than 25 years. He is the author of "Dare to Matter," which ranks at or near the top on most business book best seller lists in both the human resources and personnel management and business motivation and self-improvement categories.

During the discussion, Smith will highlight the most important relationship that exists within any organization: the one between an employee and their immediate supervisor.

The Leadership Development Course is scheduled for 8-11:45 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 8. This half-day course is offered in conjunction with the convention/expo for an additional \$119 fee and is made possible by Gulf Stream Coach. Attendance is capped at 50; early registration is encouraged.

To register for workshops or the Con/Expo, visit rvda.org/convention.

2022 RVDA CONVENTION EXPO

NOVEMBER 7-11
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KEEP PACE WITH AN EVER-CHANGING INDUSTRY

The convention/expo brings together dealers, manufacturers, suppliers, and RV industry business partners for the premier dealer education and networking event of the year. For 2022, the RVDA Convention/Expo Committee and staff are working to provide a diverse education program that will have content segmented based on dealership size, management structure, and revenue in addition to focusing on things dealers have in common. Here are just a few of the topics that will be offered this year:

Parts & Service

- How top performing service departments improve RECT - Repair Event Cycle Time
- Text messaging
- How to sell parts & accessories online
- Unconventional hiring strategies
- Turning an RV buyer into a lifetime advocate of the dealership

Digital Marketing

- Content marketing and online reviews
- Digital audits
- Cross-platform marketing communications
- Leveraging Go RVing digital assets
- Working with digital marketing vendors

Dealer/GM (Leadership, Management)

- New employee orientation and onboarding
- Effective inter-departmental/inter-store communication & collaboration
- Managing liquidity
- Cybersecurity
- Train-the-Trainer
- Economic outlook for talent

Legislation & Compliance

- Legal considerations regarding dealer warranty reimbursement
- Costs & compliance with the revised Safeguard Rules
- Mediation

Discover new products & services in the expo hall, meet vendors, network with other dealers, and get reinvigorated during this five-day event. In addition to over 150 exhibiting companies, the expo hall offers a number of opportunities to network, including a daily lunch break and opening reception that provide dedicated time to visit exhibitors and socialize.

Follow on social media using #RVDAConEx

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A Grand Vision

As Grand Design celebrates its 10th anniversary, President and CEO **Don Clark** reflects on its values, culture and what it means to be “all about people.”

BY JENNIFER KING



The Grand Design RV 2021 national rally in Elkhart, Indiana. (Photos: Grand Design RV)

I'm not only thrilled with where we are on product but also with the positioning of the company," says Grand Design RV President and CEO Don Clark. "We haven't compromised our business model or value proposition to our dealers in the 10 years since opening our doors."

After a decade in business, any company employee at any level would be proud to say the same about where they work. It's no different for Clark, who co-founded Grand Design in 2012. The company's success in the industry is admirable. Clark says Grand Design is known as a premier brand in every segment it produces, but how the company relates to its employees, dealers, customers and the larger community is also something to emulate.

"Getting closer to not only the dealers and the customers has been personally and professionally rewarding," Clark says.

As he sees it, Grand Design, which is located in Middlebury in Elkhart County, Indiana, designs and builds products that, in many cases, will be the largest investment a customer may ever make, second to buying a home.

"People save up a lifetime to travel in retirement, and we know we're going to make an impact on our customers' lives, and we want it to be a positive one," he says.

In addition to a positive impact on its customers, Grand Design strives to help people in need.

Fostering a Caring Culture

"To us, it's just not about a paycheck," Clark says. "It's about making an impact in our community, helping move the needle for our industry in a positive direction, and, certainly, having a positive impact on our customers' lifestyle."

(top row, left to right): Mark Desrochers, VP of Operations; Mary Minix, VP of Human Resources; Steve Stuber, CFO; Natalie Bussard, Director of Marketing; (bottom row, left to right): Peter Kinden, General Manager; Rob Groover, General Manager; Don Clark, President & CEO; Jerry McCarthy, Sr. VP of Customer Service Operations; Brad Smith, Director of Customer Service; Eric Landis, Imagine Product Manager; Greg Cody, Transcend Product Manager; Tommy Hall, Solitude Product Manager; Tony Lizzi, Reflection Product Manager; Lance Lees, Momentum Product Manager





Grand Design owners take part in a fireside chat during one of the national rallies.

Clark credits the Grand Design team members—which totals about 2,500—with their passion for helping others, noting the time the Middlebury food pantry needed donations. By the time Grand Design's employees had pitched in, they were able to give a semi-truck full of food. Clark said the food pantry volunteers were so touched, they cried.

"That's the kind of community spirit that our people have," he says.

As for creating a caring and giving company culture, Clark says many things have happened over time in the decade since the company was founded to bring that culture to fruition.

Grand Design's Pre-Delivery Inspection (PDI)

Don Clark is clearly proud of his company's PDI process, which he notes is a 312-point inspection. Rather than shipping a unit directly to the dealer, Clark says it is first shipped to their PDI department and every system is "fired up and tested," from plumbing, electrical, appliances, TVs and more. "We don't make our dealers be the last 50 yards of the production line," he says. "They [the units] can be delivered to customers in less time."

"WE'RE 10 YEARS OLD NOW, AND WE'VE NEVER ASKED ANY OF OUR PRODUCTION FACILITIES TO WORK SATURDAYS."

"We're 10 years old now, and we've never asked any of our production facilities to work Saturdays," he says. "We know there's a balance between home life and work life. The career needs to support the family, and in turn, if Grand Design supports the family, the family supports the career."

He also notes that if a tool is needed to do a job well, the tool is provided. He says, "We allow our employees to run the company."

Even though Grand Design's location is in the extreme northern part of Elkhart County, Clark says the company continues to attract the best of the best in all disciplines of producing recreational vehicles due to their reputation.

"We value our team members and treat them accordingly. We are fortunate to garner the reputation of being one of the top businesses to work for in our industry," he says.

Vision and Values

Grand Design's reputation has no doubt helped it become a popular place to work, and the company's values contribute to that.



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Our BXR Series 5th Wheels have a true kingpin connection. No adapters required.

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21,000 gross towing capacity. 5,000 lb. vertical load limit



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Toys collected by Grand Design employees for the Toys for Tots program.

On the company's website are listed eight key characteristics that the company strives to embody:

- Long-term value
- Customer focus
- Staying connected
- Experienced workforce
- Exceptional product design
- Class-leading warranty
- Raising the quality bar
- Superior service

"We know the purchase of a recreational vehicle is an emotional experience for our customers. That is why it's even reflected in how we name our brands: Transcend, Imagine, Reflection, Solitude and Momentum," Clark says.

"Most companies only talk about quality—at Grand Design, we put our money where our mouth is," he continues. "We've developed quality gates and implemented detailed PDI processes that continue to be unrivaled in the towable segment of our industry. Our people truly care about customer satisfaction.

"It all interconnects. Our ultimate goal is simple—provide a great ownership experience. The more satisfied customers are, the more they'll spread the word—and word of mouth spreads faster than a billboard.

"Retail consumers have greater expectations than ever before. Meeting these expectations helps our industry's

The Power of Loyal Customers

Click on the Owner Support tab on Grand Design's website (granddesignrv.com), and there's an option for Owners Rallies, which are hosted by owners who tout the website's name "GDRV4Life" (gdrv4life.granddesign.com). The website provides articles ranging from reasons why Grand Design owners should attend a rally, to helpful tips and tricks about maintenance, repairs and even how to pack. There are photo galleries, recipes and information about how Grand Design owners have given back to their communities. The events page lists dozens of rallies scheduled for locations from California and Colorado to Georgia and Florida, scheduled as far in advance as October 2023.

"Grand Design doesn't manage or run the rallies," Don Clark says. "It's the owners that do that. They started the rallies and asked if that would be OK. We thought, if you want to get together with other Grand Design enthusiasts, absolutely!"

Clark says he is impressed that every year they choose to come to the Middlebury area to have a connection to where the company is located. The president and CEO says he welcomes that connection with the company's customers; it's one opportunity to get suggestions and feedback directly.



“AS WE’VE GROWN, WE’VE BEEN VERY CAREFUL NOT TO BECOME BIG. THERE’S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BECOMING BIG AND GROWING.”

customer retention which, obviously extends the reach of our industry.”

RVs allow families to experience new adventures and build memories. Clark knows this personally, as his own three children embark on their own adventures—Courtney is a fifth-grade teacher, Caitlyn is a junior at Belmont University in Nashville, and his son, Austin, recently joined the sales department at Grand Design.

“As we’ve grown, we’ve been very careful not to become big. There’s a difference between becoming big and growing,” Clark explains. “We’re investing back into our business and investing into a long-term future for Grand Design.”

Looking back, Clark says he’s happy he has learned from his mistakes—noting he believes people learn more from their mistakes than from their successes. “If you want to build a great company, surround yourself with great people,” he says. “I’ve been in the industry for almost 40 years, and I’m just as enthused as I’ve always been. It’s a great time to be in the business of recreational vehicles.” **RVF**

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ON THE CUTTING EDGE

BURLINGTON GRAPHIC SYSTEMS

delivers its standout graphics for RV exteriors using innovation, informed design trends and an artist's eye.

BY ROB MERWIN



Custom Class A wrap created to look like an old camper similar to what Cousin Eddie owned in the movie "Christmas Vacation." (Photos: Burlington Graphics System)

BEING ON THE CUTTING EDGE—literally and figuratively—Burlington Graphic Systems (BGS) designs and produces the many decals and stickers that adorn the sides of RVs today, working closely with manufacturers large and small to deliver what's hot and trending, keeping tabs on market changes and dictating many of those developments as an industry innovator.

"When it comes to the RV manufacturers that we have as customers, it would be easier to list those that we don't have," says Doug Graham, vice president and general manager of BGS, who leads the company's Elkhart, Indiana, operations, which are comprised of two facilities that service the RV and marine markets, including a new 7,500-square-foot showroom and design center, as well as a new state-of-the-art manufacturing facility.

"Our hands touch every manufacturer

at some level with some brand," Graham says.

Sixty percent of BGS' business is with RV manufacturers, 20% is marine, while the remainder is OEM, such as Harley-Davidson and Case New Holland Tractors.

Most of BGS' RV printing is done via a screen printing press, though there is also digital printing.

"Just imagine a massive printer sitting next to your computer that's capable of printing vinyl stickers large enough for the sides of RVs," he says, adding that the vinyl comes in two varieties: printed and nonprinted.

The company has two dozen stock colors—reds, blacks, whites, grays, etc.—for which there is no printing; only shapes are cut. Screen printing involves applying multiple colors onto the vinyl for the "print effect" seen on the sides of RVs. Screen printing is applied to white vinyl.

Graham is quick to note, however,

66

MOST OF BGS' RV PRINTING IS DONE VIA A SCREEN PRINTING PRESS, THOUGH THERE IS ALSO DIGITAL PRINTING.

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that BGS also offers “dimensional products,” which are often referred to as autochrome, best described as car badges, such as those found on hoods of vehicles as a 3D nameplate. The majority of those products are how BGS services the marine market.

In addition, BGS also recently purchased new equipment to print and produce caution-warning and alert stickers: notifications for exits, fire alarms, GFI (ground fault circuit interrupter), etc. “It’s the nonglamorous, nonsexy commodity end of the graphic business that we’ve been attacking for the past 12 months.”

Playing it close to the vest without giving away too much to competitors, Graham says the best way to describe the creative process for its products is that BGS is a “design company, first and foremost, and our designs just happen to be applied for stickers—design is how we win business. Nobody comes to us and says, ‘Here’s a design that we need you to produce for two years.’”

MARKET DIFFERENTIATION AND INNOVATION

Where does BGS stand among the competition—good, better, best?

“Best,” says Graham without hesitation. “We’re the market share leader in the RV industry for designing graphics. That’s undisputed. I’ve actually been using the term, ‘boutique



A Ferrari F12 custom wrap for Luxury Auto Collection in Scottsdale, Arizona. The car was used in the 2022 goldRush Rally.

design house’ lately. The manufacturers leave it up to us to drive and develop design as the experts.”

BGS customers typically provide a budgetary range that they’re trying to keep their graphic package within. For example, a stick-and-tin product line will have the lowest spend on graphics, while a fifth wheel toy hauler will have the highest.

“We’ll come up with a design based on a manufacturer’s budget constraints,” he explains, but adds that there is no design fee. Clients are charged for BGS’ end products applied to every unit. “We design for many people, and we might not win them all, but our designs are free of charge knowing that the end game is to get the graphic business.”

And while the RV world and other industries were impacted by supply chain challenges after the onset of COVID-19, BGS was well positioned to absorb any hiccups and keep producing for its clients, thanks in part to its vinyl developed in partnership with a supplier.

“We kept our entire customer base stocked with product,” Graham says, “and as a result, business grew exponentially. We are the only graphics supplier that uses a product called Arlon.”

Arlon was the pioneer of air-egress vinyl technology, which eliminates bubbles during sticker application, initially and specifically targeting the stick-and-tin market approximately 15 years ago.

“Arlon developed that technology with BGS, and now 3M and everyone else is using it. However, we’re Arlon’s largest customer, and we have exclusive rights to that material for the entire RV industry.”

In addition to preventing bubbles, Arlon is also easy to apply.

“Not only is it a premium product, but it’s also made in the United States. Arlon is dedicated to us.”

For more than 35 years, BGS was a graphics supplier only. Today, it also has a full installation team.

“We have five installers on staff, and we’re pushing into the world of full-vehicle and trailer wraps (using similar vinyl used for its stickers), covering every square inch of a unit as



Exterior shot of the BGS’ Indiana design and showroom center and production facility

GRAPHICS AND WRAPS



AUTOCHROME



DESIGN CENTER AND SHOWROOM



BGS

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Interior shot of the Indiana production facility where RV orders are finalized, processed and shipped.

an alternative to full-body paint, which has a process that's very constrained. There's not enough capacity in the market to paint everything that everyone wants painted—cost is high and repairability in the field is extremely expensive."

Full-body wraps, however, are faster and less expensive with a better design than paint, he says. They are also easier to repair. If there's a tear in the wrap or damage, often it can be repaired using a heat gun. "This is our biggest growth opportunity in the future—and one of the largest shifts in design coming for the next few years. It's completely taken over the automotive world, and it's time for it to take off in the RV industry. And we're the only supplier ready for it with an entire facility in Elkhart to accommodate it."

BGS also has a new retail full-body wrap center for a variety of recreational vehicles, as well as cars. "Wraps are literally like installing sheets of wallpaper," Graham says.

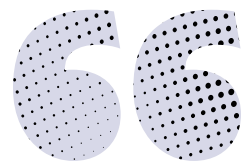
THE DESIGN PROCESS

Typically, an RV sales/product manager might decide to change the exterior appearance of their product and will begin the design process with BGS' team of artists.

"Sometimes the product manager will give a lot of direction, or none, as to what they're looking for. They'll usually tell us what color palettes they prefer, and if they like a linear or a 'Nike swoosh' look. Our artists will then begin designing a product template—which can take up to 40 design variations, or we nail it out of the gate, and it just becomes a revision process. It's usually a three- to four-month process," Graham says.

"Our entire design team lives what we're designing by staying close to trends and keeping a finger on the pulse of what's coming next."

The prototype follows. Once a design is agreed upon, a complete set is printed and BGS' team of installers works with a specific product line's plant to apply the "proto-package" on an RV's exterior.



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Caution/warning labels by BGS



(top left & right, bottom right) Screen-printed custom designs samples

At that point, a manufacturer's operational team becomes involved and might make slight changes depending on their specific production line assembly.

"They'll either sign off on it or it might return for revisions—or we might start over from ground zero."

Revisions can include color changes, size alterations and removal of design content from a unit if the manufacturer deems it unnecessary. Front caps where the parts transition from a unit's front to side is where there's potential for considerable revision.

DESIGN AND SHOWROOM CENTER INNOVATIONS

When BGS begins its design season for next year, it will have installed a life-sized, 50-foot video screen—think New York City's Times Square—in its showroom that features 3D capabilities

to allow for real-time designing and tweaking. It will also showcase BGS' portfolio for prospective customers.

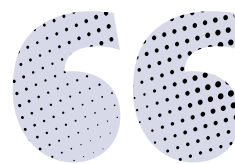
"The real win is going to be the reduction in prototype time. Right now, we're showing designs to customers on computer screens, which has to be visualized as applied to a life-sized unit—it's going to be a game-changer for the industry."

HOW RV DECAL DESIGN AND COLORS HAVE EVOLVED

Since Graham has been in the business, he says shapes and colors have remained constant for as long as he can remember, ebbing and flowing over the course of time.

However, approximately five years ago, BGS began pushing the trend of linear designs. But that, too, is coming full circle, now.

"The industry went from the



WE STAY
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'Nike swoosh' to more of an 'Adidas' look, which is the simplest way I can explain it. As a company, we stay really close to what's happening in the automotive space, and we bring those trends to the RV industry.

"Now we're cycling back to the more traditional 'swoops,' though colors have remained similar for 35 years, such as blue, which is always a hot-button color. But in the past five years we've seen people moving toward more monotone colors—blacks, grays and silvers—that we still see today."

Graham notes, however, that the biggest recent development has been the emergence of matte and satin finishes that have a "flat" appearance, rather than high-gloss.

Again, he says, this is reflective of what's trending in the automotive industry.

"But we also pay attention to what automotive is doing with wheels, as well as interior design trends as far as stitch patterns are concerned in seats and dashes—we try to bring all of those elements into our exterior design flow."

QUALITY CONTROL AND TESTING

BGS conducts full-weather and UV testing on all vinyl that's delivered to its manufacturing facilities. Before any products are printed or cut, they are subjected to stabilization testing.

"Every roll of vinyl that comes in we test and keep a retain (sample) so we have the ability to go back to it if there's a problem that arises in the future," Graham says. "I can tell you, though, that the number of customers that call with issues is basically nonexistent."

Our warranties either meet, or exceed, a manufacturer's warranty on any given unit. Any warranty-type situation that might occur comes only from application processes."

Continuous improvement is built into the company culture.

"We're always striving for a better product, newer and cooler products—and excitement. We're a lifestyle company, from RVs and boats to motorcycles and golf carts and more. We develop synergies throughout the leisure spectrum and cross-pollinate among our customers' interests and products.

"From a design standpoint, we're really good at those sweet spots and at what we do." **RVF**

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How to Choose the Best Brake Controller

Helping customers understand their options provides top-notch service.

BY K. SCHIPPER

If you're a dealership or repair shop selling and installing brake controllers, you're aware this is a good news/bad news product.

The good news, of course, is that more people are buying and towing more trailers than ever, boosting the need for controllers. The unwelcome news: These devices are easier to install and use, meaning anyone with a bit of mechanical skill can take one home and put it in themselves and successfully use it.

Even worse, some truck and SUV manufacturers are offering them as an accessory on their vehicles, although companies that manufacture brake controllers agree they don't live up to the quality of those sold on the aftermarket.

Technology that's been improving over a handful of years is making the difference. Not only are companies eliminating the knee-bashing location of their units near the steering wheel, but some manufacturers are going the remote route with phone apps.

A Big Question

Many of us learned as children that towing can be fraught with problems. Hauling a wagon behind your bike seemed like a promising idea until the first stop sign, when the result would often be scrapes and bruises.

Multiply that by highway speeds, a fifth wheel and a truck large enough to pull it, and the possibilities for injuries and property damage soar. Fortunately, most vehicle buyers understand the need for a brake controller and that, unlike the hitch, wiring harness and transmission cooler, it's not standard—at least yet.



(top and bottom) CURT's Echo trailer brake controller
(Photos: CURT Manufacturing)

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Whether the average buyer knows which brake controller is best for his trailer and how he's using it is a big question, however. The two different types of brake controllers help drive that.

"Proportional brake controllers determine the vehicle's rate of deceleration and apply the trailer's brake to match it," explains Derrick Webb, senior product manager with Plymouth, Michigan-based Horizon Global Americas. "With a time-based brake controller, when depressing the brake pedal in a tow vehicle, the brake controller generates an output signal that increases over a set period of time, applying braking power at a predetermined fixed rate."

There are advantages to each. For instance, a proportional system provides smoother braking and because both systems are doing the same amount of work, it reduces the amount of wear on each vehicle's braking system. A time-based system is typically less expensive and easier to install.

Helping a customer determine which system is best for his or her needs is the key service that a dealer can offer when selling brake controllers. However, Jesse Bauer, director of product development for Lippert Automotive, which includes the Eau Claire, Wisconsin-based CURT Manufacturing, notes that many brake controller buyers are now doing their own research online.

For those who don't, Bauer says important questions to raise include:

- How big is the trailer?
- How many axles does it have?
- What kind of weight is being pulled?
- What types of driving scenarios are they going to face?

"It really comes down to what's important to them," Bauer says. "There's always a question of what price point do they want to buy at, but it usually comes down to safety and ease of use."

Selling Understanding

The issue of driving scenarios is a big one, and a question that first-time buyers of trailers may answer differently over time.

Although many manufacturers offer both types of controllers, one that doesn't is the South Australia-based



Tekonsha Prodigy iD (Photos: Tekonsha)

REDARC Electronics. The company just sells proportional braking solutions, but Erich Ross, the company's sales manager for the eastern United States, says REDARC still recognizes that not all trailers—or towing experiences—are equal.

"People's tendencies do change," Ross says. "You might be a regular, everyday camper who's going to nationally known campgrounds and spots and experiencing everyday towing conditions. But, over time, some people decide they want to do something different and get off the grid."

With today's improving technology, still another consideration is whether a buyer is going to buy a single controller that might be used in multiple combinations of vehicles and trailers.

"We have a brake controller that can be set up in different combinations," Bauer says. "A person is driving an Ford F-250 with a fifth wheel trailer on the weekends, and a Ram 1500 with a landscaping trailer during the week."

"Especially if they've never towed before, it can be to your benefit to help them do the research and understand what works for them best in a controller," he adds.

With evolving technology, Bauer says that CURT is particularly proud of its Spectrum and Echo models. Spectrum takes the proportional brake controller and mounts it under the dash, then adds a button to the dash to allow for the manual override and lets the user see his settings.

Echo utilizes smartphone technology to create a Bluetooth brake controller that uses radio signals to become the



interface for the trailer brake operation. It doesn't require a traditional wiring connection, but instead plugs in between the vehicle-trailer seven-way.

However, the system is available with a separate manual override button that's also Bluetooth enabled that can be stuck to the dash. And, Bauer adds, "We'll soon be launching another one; there's another Echo coming."

Both Bluetooth control and the ability to switch controllers between vehicles, as well as adjust settings on a proportional brake controller, are available in Horizon Global's newest Tekonsha Prodigy iD brake controller, Webb says.

Used with the Tekonsha Edge app, it provides users with the ability to quickly switch between present trailers using the Edge application. Again, with mounting below the dash, it gives users a color LED display in the dash that provides diagnostics and alerts.

Even more important, it allows users to switch between proportional and timed braking.

"Typically, users would benefit due to the price point alone," Webb says. "There is, however, the need for a timed-based brake control when using the brake control primarily in off-road applications."

REDARC's Ross agrees. Designed for both on- and off-road towing, REDARC's Tow-Pro includes what it calls "user control mode," which turns off the accelerometer inside the brake controller and through a knob on the dash allows the user to control the braking.

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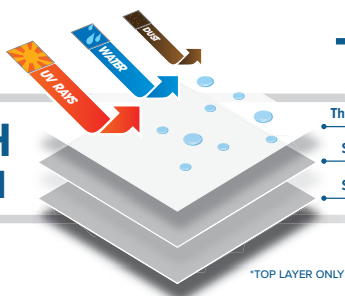
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sand and you don't want a lot of braking forces that will cause the trailer to anchor deeper," he says. "But, if you're in situations with steep, rocky switchbacks and more of an off-road environment, you can turn the controller up a bit."

Although the company hasn't yet gotten into using some sort of process to cut the wiring between the tow vehicle and the trailer, "We are looking into some of those technologies," Ross says.

Adjustments are no problem for Horizon Global's InSIGHT Plug-In Simple! brake controller. Dan Scheller, director of marketing for the Emporia, Kansas-based Hopkins Manufacturing Corporation, says as with its competitors, the actual controller is mounted under the dash and away from knees and can control up to eight trailer brakes.

"The display is mounted on the dash for safety as drivers can view trailer braking details while maintaining peripheral vision on the road," Scheller says. "The manual slide can easily be mounted in the dash area and requires no drilling at all."

MANUFACTURERS SUPPLY DEALERS WITH MATERIALS TO HELP EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF THAT BRAKE CONTROLLER.

Easy Enough?

Once a buyer has determined which brake controller is best for his or her personal towing needs, the ease of installation—especially with proportional brake controllers, which have a reputation for being difficult to install—may cut some sellers out of that part of the equation.

Ross, for instance, says REDARC has made its system almost foolproof because the accelerometer has three axes, so mounting it in almost any position is no problem.

"It's designed for a very easy install," he says. "We have vehicle-specific wire harnesses, so everything is plug-and-play.

It can be a 15- to 20-minute install."

Other manufacturers are a bit more cautious. CURT's Bauer, for instance, says it really depends on how comfortable the vehicle owner is with the project. On one hand, that person may not be comfortable mounting the controller under the dashboard. However, that company's electrical components are also in what it calls "a quick-plug, vehicle-specific harness."

"If they're not comfortable, they should probably at least seek the advice of a technician," Bauer says. "We do a lot of installation videos that we offer to our customers."

Sometimes it's not the installation, but the use of the controller, that's the concern, says Hopkins' Scheller, particularly if it's a time-based model.

"Understanding how to set the controller is key," he says. "Each trailer event could vary regarding the weight they're towing, and the braking force required for safe braking. Our dealers typically provide training for how to use the brake controller and advanced settings."

As for keeping those techs trained and at the top of their game, the manufacturers say they handle that through a mix of sales and company reps that offer training during visits to dealers, along with training materials, presentations and videos.

"Even if it's a new tech, they're pretty handy and they can pick up on things pretty quickly," Bauer says. "Plus, there's almost a constant flow of training materials from us, and when we do new videos, they're very readily available."

Along with training, the manufacturers make sure to supply their dealers with a steady stream of marketing materials to help explain to new trailer owners the importance of that brake controller and the differences in models.

"Each dealer/customer's needs vary, but we partner with each of them the best we can, rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach," Scheller says. "We provide aid in developing front-of-store assortments. Our packaging was created to help each shopper choose the right product for them. We integrate QR codes to guide them through the features and user experience."



REDARC's Tow-Pro Elite Application
(Photo: REDARC)

REDARC's Ross agrees that merchandizing needs vary by dealer, with the company providing everything from small cardboard displays to floor stickers and "shelf-talkers." However, the star of the company's marketing materials is a countertop interactive display.

"It's great for the salesperson or technician to actually operate the brake controller, but you can walk through it with the customer and say 'this is how this works,'" he says. "When you start talking about the user-control mode, it can get a little confusing in a customer's mind, but this is fully interactive and simulates actual braking."

The most important thing dealers need to be aware of is that the brake controller market is going to continue to change, say the manufacturers.

"The technology is really advancing, especially the sophistication of the microchips available," says Horizon Global's Webb. "That means brake controllers will be able to do more and incorporate more advanced features as new products are brought to market."

"Ten years from now, the brake controller market is going to look a lot different than today," Ross says. "A lot of vehicles are coming with some type of brake controller installed in them, but they're not the highest technology or the highest quality, because the auto manufacturers just want something that works. However, the brake controller manufacturers are going to be a couple steps ahead in the technology because we have to be. Even in those cases, it's still worth having an aftermarket controller because of the technology." **RVF**

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Fresh From the Farm

What started as a heated hose to help water livestock grew into a company now featured in RV dealerships across the U.S.

BY STEPHANIE PATRICK



Horses on farms were the intended beneficiaries of PIRIT Heated Products' hoses when the product line was introduced in 2009. Farmers in New England and other places known for harsh winters needed the 50-foot heated hoses to maintain waterlines for their livestock and make winter farming easier in general.

However, enterprising farmers quickly started using them on their RVs to extend their camping opportunities to more of the colder months. They also began to demand smaller versions of the hoses, and Vermont-based PIRIT (pronounced pirate) found itself galloping into the RV industry.

"We were one of the fastest-growing aftermarket part products in the RV world," says Steve Kohn, PIRIT's chief operating officer and vice president of sales. "By 2015, we were in one in every four RV dealers in the country."

PIRIT Heated Products got its start providing heated hoses for farmers in New England. (Photos: PIRIT Heated Products)



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PIRIT made numerous adaptations to its hoses to better address RVers' needs and continues to make tweaks. Its 25-foot hose is designed for RVers and accounts for 40% of the company's sales now. It prevents freezing in temperatures as low as -42 degrees F, features nickel-plated brass fittings and is 180 watts. Recent improvements include adding multiple layers to the hose extrusion to make it tougher and better able to handle the rigors of being dragged to various locations. Additionally, the company has improved the handles to withstand constant installing and uninstalling and improved the tubing to fight against abrasion and improve water quality.

Sales of the 25-foot hose have surpassed those of PIRIT's original hose, which continues to be popular in the farm community. PIRIT also introduced a 12-foot hose for RVers at 90 watts, which is growing in popularity.

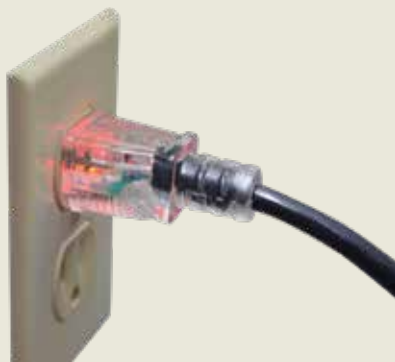
"We continued to try and find ways to make hoses easier to transport," Kohn says. "What we found is that there were different applications for different types of RV parks."

For example, many dealers and parks in the Midwestern and Rocky Mountain states do best with a mixture of the 25- and 50-foot hoses because there tends to be more space between the vehicles and the water hookups, he says. Meanwhile, East Coast dealers and parks usually favor the 25- and 12-foot hoses.

"We developed the 12-footer with those close, easy-to-park connections in mind," Kohn says.



PIRIT hoses also are used in mobile homes, steel smelting plants and in the gas and oil field services industry. The company, which operates with four employees, ships directly to 900 dealers in the United States and Canada; both hardware and farm stores also offer the 25-foot hoses and a smaller number of 12-foot hoses, and their sales often spur the local RV dealerships to purchase the



The plug features a light so customers can easily see when it's plugged in and active, says Kohn.

products months later, the company says. PIRIT's client roster includes about 1,700 accounts in the RV and mobile home industries, but some only order the niche product occasionally.

"We have a lot of weather-based sales where dealerships that may only be ordering a couple case packs per season will have a winter storm and suddenly need a couple pallets," Kohn says. "That is very common."

He says the industry needs to move away from the three-season mindset when serving customers, and dealers need to keep their parts shops open all year. With the proper products and instruction, there's no reason RVers shouldn't confidently be able to travel to Michigan for Thanksgiving or visit Montreal for Boxing Day.

PIRIT's work in 2022 included improving the inner tubing of hoses to a level that it doesn't require Prop 65 labeling. Officially known as the Safe Drinking and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment reports it protects the state's drinking water sources from being contaminated with chemicals known to cause cancer, birth defects and reproductive issues.

"The biggest thing every year is coming up with better ways to seal and contain all the electronics and splice our wiring together and connect all the nuts and bolts of the mechanics of the hose," Kohn says. "We've also been beefing up the nozzle assemblies and trying to improve the waterproof capabilities of everything and make all those components more durable." **RVB**

WINTERIZATION ADVICE

Kohn's advice to dealers when discussing winterization or fixing weather-related problems:

- Show customers good ways to insulate slide outs, especially kitchens with exposed plumbing underneath. "Around 70% of our customer service calls are our customers [who] don't have water in their RVs, and they don't know why," he says. "They assume it's the hose, and then they go outside and find that the hose is still working fine and that something inside the RV has frozen up."
- Focus on the long-term relationship, not the immediate sale. Inquire whether the customer is ready for winter long before the winter months. "That is a great sales opportunity for the parts department, but it's also a great way to build that relationship with the customer so that they continue to look for answers and support," Kohn says.
- Impress on each customer the need for heavier-duty or nontraditional skirting options that provide better insular value. Full-time, year-round users in Canada often use plywood and foam board to build well-insulated panels to help trap as much heat as possible; it doesn't travel well, but it works if the RV is parked for the winter. "Any RV dealer willing to think a little bit outside the box and provide those supplies is going to make a huge impact on the winter RV customer's costs," he says.
- Communicate with your vendors. If a customer has good experience or a bad experience with a product, let the vendor know. "We are so focused and niche on our product that we're able to make those changes, and we're able to do things quickly," Kohn says. "Our hose is not the same hose year to year; we're constantly making those tweaks so that it works better for next winter."

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THE 2023 MODEL YEAR PREVIEW

By Darian Armer, Mike Harbour, K. Schipper, Ronnie Wendt and the RV PRO team

After a two-year hiatus caused by lingering pandemic concerns, Elkhart's infamous Open House Week is returning to Indiana this September. Manufacturers of all sizes and shapes are preparing to debut their new-and-shiny at the "largest RV dealer show on Earth."

Prior years have seen record-shattering production, consumer demographic shifts and gaps to fill in a "new" RV marketplace. While the industry catches its breath and begins to slow down, OEMs are still focused on bringing dealers (and RVers themselves) what they're looking for on the road.

Read on to learn about the new floorplans, technology and product upgrades that manufacturers have in store for dealers who plan to attend this year's Open House, slated for Sept. 26-30, with brands from THOR Industries, Forest River, Winnebago Industries and many more.



FOREST RIVER

NO BOUNDARIES | RPOD | IBEX

RV PRO asked Cody Schade to tell us more.

"No Boundaries is the first brand to go full Beast Mode for 2023," Cody Schade with Forest River says. "We're offering an all-new Aspen frost interior and exterior cosmetic appointments for a crisp, fresh, but familiar look to 'Nobo.' The Nobo's Beast Mode package includes premium flooring, accent lighting, live edge countertops, premium upholstery, 2,000-watt inverter, 30-amp controller, 200-watt solar panel, TST tire pressure monitor system, all-terrain tires and solar on the side. Nobo will be the first of the three brands to feature the Beast Mode Suspension.

"RPOD will also be offering the Beast Mode package, which will include a large solar panel, 2,000-watt inverter, 30-amp controller and largest in-class refrigerator," he says. "Beast Mode package will also include the standard tire pressure monitoring system (TPMS) sensor with integrated color display, exclusive wheel upgrade and dual pane acrylic front window with integrated shade/screen system.

"Look for RPOD to add the Beast Mode suspension system when components become available this fall along with offerings from our Unplugged

package, which includes a premium lithium battery system, 3,000-watt inverter, easy-view control panel, 500-plus watts of onboard solar and a high-efficiency AC system to allow the customer to use AC off grid."

As for the IBEX, Schade says there are interior and exterior changes in store.

"As IBEX rolls into its third season, our offering becomes even more robust," he says. "The new 'Cinder' interior and exterior upgrades will get your attention first. For the first time in 2023, IBEX will offer a unit under 3,000 pounds as well as multiple new floorplans to complement the winning lineup. The Beast Mode package will again be available on IBEX, as will the Beast Mode suspension system once supply chain allows these components to deliver later in the fall.

"IBEX will also feature new ice blue interior accents along with its unique live edge butcher block countertops to round out its Cinder interior. On the outside, our updated, automotive-grade wrap has some eye-popping new chrome features, and if you look closely, you may see the beast ready to tackle any terrain in its path."

ROCKWOOD | FLAGSTAFF | COLUMBUS

RV PRO tapped Karl Miller to fill us in.

WHAT'S NEW WITH YOUR PRODUCT LINES THIS YEAR?

Miller: "There was a lot of backlog and now a surplus of inventory. We figured mixing in a lot of new products was probably not the best thing to do, especially in our brands that offer 70 to 80 floorplans already. We did add a couple floorplans that are new, but that was only two new floorplans across the whole lineup, from tent campers up to fifth wheels. We focused more on fine tuning the floorplans we do have. Updating how the cabinets are designed, storage areas, updating doorways and how they

function to improve the product we're currently offering today and make sure it's in the best shape.

"We have the LCI OneControl panel that is touch and can be paired with an app on your phone to control and operate the slide out, awning, those sorts of things. It's all via Bluetooth. That's across the board on Rockwood and Flagstaff.

"One of the biggest pushes at our brands, especially in the last year and year prior, is customer service and quality structure. We want better service for the customer and dealer and, in doing so, streamline and document what we're offering so we can

get parts out to them faster when they need them. The best way to have customer service is to build a product that doesn't have problems or need parts as often. We want to be a better support to our dealer and retail customers."

WHAT ARE THOSE NEW FLOORPLANS?

Miller: "The fifth wheels are the area we spent the most time on as far as changes. We changed the countertop colors, undermounted sinks, and made once optional day/night roller shades a standard. Everything now has a solar panel on it. In the slide out floor we went from regular carpet to a marine-grade carpet. That's a big upgrade.

"The Rockwood 829ICL rear kitchen floorplan has triple seating and a bed slide. The 2092WS is a revised bunkhouse floorplan. Those floorplans are also available in Flagstaff as the 8529CLBS and 529RWS. We've done an all-new graphics package on Rockwood and Flagstaff in the certain lines. Inside we did a main fabric change. We went to a standard 15K air conditioner and won't even offer the 13.5 anymore. We want everyone to be cool."

ANYTHING NEW IN COLUMBUS THIS YEAR?

Miller: "We did some big changes in Columbus this year. We took the C-series and the regular Columbus, which was more of a package-loaded high-end fifth wheel and combined the two. We took away features we felt weren't adding value and added features we felt needed to be in every unit to create a middle of the road price point. We went to a wall structure constructed of all-Azdel with double thickness Azdel on the exterior. It's the best fifth wheel construction in the industry. We started offering a third air conditioner prepped standard and offered as an option.

"On River Ranch we've been working on a redesign of the exterior graphics. We redesigned the front cap and the whole look of the exterior changed. We're working on the entry steps and how they function in that product. There are some interior cosmetic changes like a residential island with a built-in wastebasket.

"We went to a heat pump standard on all units. People are trending more toward electric heat. We want them to be able to plug in and not worry about it."

SUNSEEKER | FORRESTER

RV PRO spoke to Kary Katzenberger about the Sunseeker and Forrester.

WHAT'S NEW IN YOUR PRODUCT LINES THIS YEAR?

Katzenberger: "Obviously, we're still not making changes this year; reason being we're super challenged with the chassis situation. The whole Class C industry is very challenged. We rely on Ford for the majority of our units that we build for Ford. With their struggles supplying their dealerships, they're shifting their allocation to building Ford trucks rather than building our units. It's going to be a struggle this year so there's nothing until next year for a major model change.

"One of the major things we are working on, starting on our Mercedes side and transitioning to the rest of the units we build, is eliminating generators and going with a total lithium package with second alternator that will help charge the lithium battery systems. You'll be able to operate your air conditioner up to six to eight hours without having to recharge your actual lithium batteries. That's done through the actual Mercedes engine. Once we get going on Mercedes, we'll be able to offer it on Ford. The generators in the next five years are going to become an issue in our industry since California won't allow the use of gas generators.

"We're in a different situation than on the towable side. We're still struggling to build and supply our dealer body. It's not the time to make major changes."

WHAT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT?

Katzenberger: "The lithium project is what we're most excited about. We'll be able to offer that first quarter next year to our dealers.

"The Class C market is still very, very strong, and we're super excited about where it's going in the future. In the last 60 days the consumer outlook has seemed to be improving. We're talking with dealers and regional activity is increasing."

EAST TO WEST

TANDARA | AHARA |
ALTA | ENTRADA

TANDARA

This midprofile fifth wheel, launched two and a half years ago, will have a new exterior graphics package and interior décor enhancements, says Mark Krol, sales manager for Tandara and Ahara at East to West. The unit will still feature the "artisan maple" décor, but will have a different bathroom vanity top, new backsplash, new flooring, and woven flooring on the slide outs.

"Our décor has been a homerun from day one, so [we said] let's do a couple tweaks to take it up a couple of notches," Krol says. He notes that one of the greatest assets for East to West is founder Lisa Liegl Rees' experience with interior décor. Krol says she chooses designs that are "on point with current trends, and you can tell when someone is good at décor how everything just goes together."

That décor, and the symmetry in the floorplans, has made the Tandara a popular model, Krol says. Now it will also feature a 190 W solar panel with 30-amp controller and a 16-cubic-foot, 12V refrigerator. Krol says the larger refrigerators now popular in the market have proven they're "fit for the challenge."

"We tend to evaluate new technology and see how it performs in the market before we jump on it," he says.

East to West will also release a new floorplan for the Tandara—the 340RD—which has two sofas and a theater seat. Krol says this is geared toward the possible full-time RVer or seasonal camper.

"The whole structure of East to West is based on simplicity and only building the best floorplans," Krol says, noting the Tandara has only seven floorplans. "We have limited bullets to load in the chamber, and we choose them very carefully."

AHARA

As for this luxury fifth wheel, which was launched at the end of 2021, Krol says he will keep some specifics about what folks will see at Open House close to the vest. The company recently released the 378BH, a bunkhouse that dealers will have in stock when readers receive this September issue, he says. A new front living room floorplan—the 380FL—will be revealed at the expo in late September.

"This is going to be fantastic for us because this will be the first time dealers will be able to see Tandara and Ahara if you haven't yet," Krol says about Open House. "They were born during a pandemic and have never been to an expo. We've had dealers visit the factory and look at the products over the last two and a half years. But this will be our first opportunity to really show our product to dealers from the Canadian market or people who don't have a relationship with East to West or Forest River."

Krol says the Tandara and Ahara have done well so far, and there's a lot of optimism, especially with the support of Forest River.

"We've got our work cut for us, but we all feel like we're up to the challenge," he says. "In a down market, if a dealer is looking for a way to gain market share, the best way is to deliver hot new products."



ALTA

Last year, Alta had a big model change for its graphics package and interior décor, says Todd Grubb, general manager of Alta at East to West. This year is more of subtle change, he says, and the brand is bringing two new models to market.

A popular change for the industry, the Alta will now feature a tankless water heater. There will also be an increased solar package, which will help with components such as the 12V residential refrigerators that customers want.

"Solar has been on travel trailers for probably four or five years, but it's really become mainstream in the last couple of years," Grubb says. "People

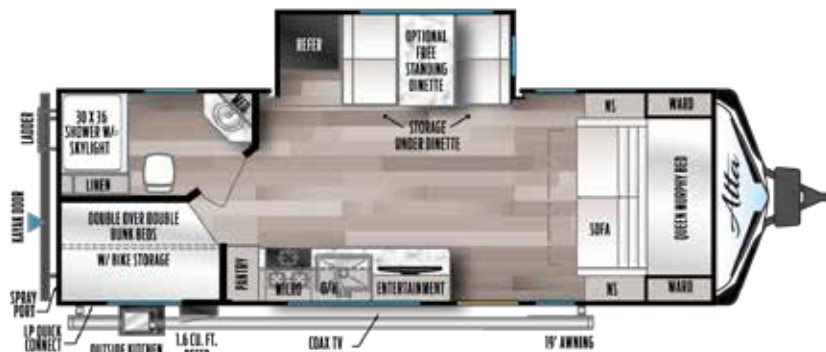
are trying to do more and more with it."

One of the new models—the 2210 MBH—is a murphy bed floorplan with a slide out. Grubb predicts this configuration will be popular since it can be pulled with an SUV or midsize truck.

"We think it will get a lot of traction," Grubb says.

"It's the third year for Alta," he notes, saying the brand stays true to producing "a quality built unit with a lot of features, not many options, at a very competitive price."

"Our plans are to continue that trajectory; we've had a pretty astronomical ascend into the market in three years," he says. "It seems to be working; people are liking what they're seeing."





ENTRADA

The big news for the Entrada Class C motorhome at Open House will be the debut of the M Class, says Tony Young, national sales manager for the C Class segment at East to West. This will be a new Mercedes-based product with a Mercedes Sprinter chassis.

As a couples coach with a diesel chassis, 3.0 liters, V6 engine, 180 horsepower, Young says this will get significantly better fuel mileage.

"Typically, 24 feet in length, a couples coach is a really great option for a couple who's going to be doing a lot of touring," Young says. The M Class would probably not be used like a large family coach that would be plugged into a campground for the weekend.

The Entrada M Class will also feature standard high-gloss fiberglass side walls, premium roller shades, an integrated dash with voice functions, dual swivel seats, backup side view cameras, 15 K AC and 3,000 BTU furnace. It comes with 12V tank heaters and standard comes with a 12V TV.

"We've given you a very



competitively priced Mercedes option with a lot of no-nonsense features that lets customers enjoy the camping experience without driving up the cost too much," Young says.

Also in the standard Entrada, the brand will debut the 2950LK floorplan, which has an outdoor kitchen.

"We did do some crowdsourcing through the Entrada owners' forum and retail customers and even from our social media influencers," Young says. It was clear that "they want to be outdoors; they don't want to be stuck inside using the microwave oven."

He projects this model will be very popular with tailgaters.

"Here at Entrada, we are thrilled with the direction we're heading after the last 48 months," he says. "It's been very difficult because of supply chain issues and chassis availability. It's been

very difficult to keep up with consumer demand on the Class C motorhomes. But chassis are starting to come in from Ford and from Mercedes, so we're seeing an influx from that.

"Dealers do not have an overabundance on the Class Cs, so the trajectory is nothing but up."

And Young is looking forward to reconnecting with dealers and all Open House attendees.

"It's a great opportunity for us to reconnect with those dealers we haven't seen in quite some time," he says. "Our dealers are calling us and they're excited and some are even coming in early to check things out, partners that we haven't seen in maybe two or three years."

"It's a chance to get in front of these people and let them know we care and see how we can be better partners."

Grubb says there will be more to come about the other new model, which will be a toy hauler. This is a natural progression for the brand and a hot segment right now, he says, which makes sense since "the whole point is to enjoy being outside, so if you have a golf cart or a couple of motorcycles, then this way it allows you to take all the goodies and have a great camping experience."

Grubb says now that the market is going back to pre-pandemic levels, brands that have great features at a quality price will shine and make a difference.

"Before [customers] were in a position where they bought what they could get, but now they have more choices so they can shop," he says.

Working with dealers for balance is key right now, Grubb says, since the market slowed and inventory on the dealer side has risen.

"The industry as a whole is being responsible and trying to let the inventory rightsize itself."



COACHMEN

APEX | NORTHERN SPIRIT

RV PRO spoke with Andy Brock about these brands.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST NEW FEATURES IN THE LINEUP?

"We have a big, huge new feature, something called the Stargazer. When you hear Stargazer, most people think it's a normal, small skylight. This one is 26 inches wide and 48 inches long. It's huge and really cool. We worked with Lippert on it. There's a screen across the top with a roller shade if you want to darken it out. You can also leave the window open all night if you want. It provides that camping feel that sometimes traveling in a camper takes away. It will be an option in the Nano lineup—our lineup under 5,000 pounds. It's roomy and gives a nice breeze."

Brock says there will also be a 30-amp solar watt panel standard on both Apex and Northern Spirit. The Stargazer will be standard on Apex.

ANY NEW FLOORPLANS IN APEX?

"There's a new floorplan in the Ultra Lite, the 243FKS. It has a nice spacious front kitchen and front profile. We did a new fiberglass cap for it to make the window extra large and created the ability to have the first ever bedroom slide. It should weigh about 5,700 pounds."

The new Apex Nano 201RBS has a rear bath, rear entry dinette slide and murphy bed slide. It weighs 4,500 pounds and gets a sofa and a dinette, where most floorplans in that size can't offer that. We're a true Ultra Lite in that everything is fully laminated. Lots of people have the front kitchen floorplan, but we'll be the lightest version of this."



WHAT NEW FEATURES ARE THERE IN NORTHERN SPIRIT?

"The Stargazer will be standard in the Northern Spirit XTR. The interior changed to a new, light, modern and trendy look. It's a lighter earth tone with gray fabric that's contemporary. We're upgrading solar to a 190-watt solar and 30-amp controller. Our top feature is our bed. We're the innovators of max-bed storage, which completely opens up and creates a walk-in closet. We were the first to do that."

ARE THERE ANY NEW FLOORPLANS?

"The 2965RK. It has a large U-shaped kitchen area. There's a 55-inch TV and fireplace."

Brock says they'll also be using Azdel on the interior and exterior of their products.

"Apex was one of the first to use Azdel. We have woodless walls, which is great for moisture. You don't have to worry about window leakage. It extends the life of your RV and also adds a little more insulation and deadens sound."

Some other additions this year include a bathroom organizer.

"Smaller units tend to have very little bathroom storage."

There will also be a solar package on every Apex that uses a 190-watt solar panel and 30-amp control charger.



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Low Profile



High Profile



COACHMEN

CATALINA LEGACY EDITION | CATALINA SUMMIT SERIES | CATALINA TRAIL BLAZER | CATALINA DESTINATION SERIES | EXPEDITION BY CATALINA

RV PRO spoke to Matt Eppers about this lineup of brands.



WHAT'S NEW WITH YOUR PRODUCT LINES THIS YEAR?

"The biggest changes this year will be in the Legacy line and bringing back our Summit 8 line. We're adding in true solar charge so a customer can wire up to 600 watts. With that we increase our solar option from a 100-watt panel to a 200-watt, 30-amp panel with solar controller. You can indefinitely run 12V systems in the unit with that. We're believers in solar and where it's going.

"This year we're also adding the Magnadyne 4G LTE connectivity with Wi-Fi booster and extender, allowing the customer to have access to 4G LTE. There's a SIM card in every unit installed. All an AT&T customer has to do is call up and pay \$15 each month for a much stronger unit that can handle up to 10 devices streaming. What we've found is that more than 50% of people are working when they go camping, and more than 50% of those people say the most important thing when looking and evaluating campsites is the Wi-Fi. The cool part is even though it's an AT&T SIM card, the system is unlocked so it works with any other major carrier. All you have to do is go in and switch out the SIM card for whoever your provider may be, and you can access the same functionality.

"Each product line is going to a full linoleum slide and removal of all carpet. It's changed the look and functionality. There are less smells, it's easier to clean, and there's no more vacuuming. The jackknife sofa now has easy access storage that now has a removable tote. We added a top-of-the-line owner's box and added bedroom slides, and interior

and exterior storage doors to traditional storage areas.

"The last two big features for this year are the LCI OneControl panel and the Siphon 360 roof vent. For the OneControl we went with analog instead of touch screen. You can control the slides, the lights and other aspects of the unit from your phone. That's standard on all products.

"The Siphon 360 roof vent is instead of just having a black tank exhaust. It helps pull those smells from your tank and exhausts them out of the unit. It actually pulls out the smell to provide a cleaner smell in the unit and more positive experience.

"We've also added a full JBL entertainment package that includes a JBL head unit, two interior speakers and two exterior speakers, and added a new graphics package on all the products this year."

ANY NEW FLOORPLANS?

"In Legacy we added the new 263FKDS. It's 29 feet, 11 inches overall, which is nice. It's a front kitchen and the first unit with a front windshield on it. It has a standard camp kitchen, two entries, bedroom slide and lots of kitchen storage. We're also introducing the 313RLTS. It's a larger unit at 36 feet, 6 inches overall. It has a kitchen island, bedroom slide and washer/dryer prep.

"In Summit 7 we have the 184FQS. It's one of our newer additions. It's a single-axle couple's coach with slide. The Summit 7 164BH is a nonslide unit at 3,000 pounds. It's a great price

point and perfect for younger families getting out for the first time. You can tow it with a ton of vehicles, and it has a sleeping capacity of four to six.

"In Trailblazer we're reintroducing the 26th back into the lineup. We're also moving to 4,000 Lumen interior lights, which makes the interior brighter."

WHY ARE YOU BRINGING BACK SUMMIT 8?

"Summit 8 had been on a temporary hold. We stopped manufacturing it during COVID because of materials shortages and trying to increase output. We've actually kind of remixed and redesigned the whole product. Everyone knows that prices increased pretty dramatically during COVID. We're looking at that blue collar worker making a monthly payment price point buyer and trying to find a way not to cheapen quality or pull out the meat and bones. We wanted to find a lower price point to be able to make Summit 8 more readily available to consumers, so we redesigned it and kept the quality really high. We didn't mess with construction features. We found out how to make it an entry-level camper without taking away bells and whistles.

"We were focused on that price point piece for our customer so they can go out and experience camping, find a love and have everything they need to have a comfortable and successful

camping trip at a price that's affordable for them.

"The Summit 8 will have the same floorplan lineup it did, with one new addition, the 271DBS. It's a play on the traditional setup. Instead of bunks facing north-south, they face east-west, with stairs up to them and a jackknife sofa in the front. It's a double-over-double floorplan."

WHAT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT THIS YEAR?

"We're excited about the Summit 8 line. We're seeing higher prices across the industry, so we made the cognitive decision to revamp and redesign to achieve a higher price point but not take anything away. We want to make camping much more accessible to more people and didn't want to delete the quality construction. It's cool you can still get a quality and well-built unit for a much lower price point. Customers are going to love the added functionality and creature comforts.

"Again, we're also really excited about the 4LTE connectivity. There are a lot more nomads and people working from the road. We're giving them full-blown connectivity and adding an adequate solar system so they can run with all 12V units.

"We're excited about one of the best bundled Catalina packages we've had in a long, long time. I'm excited to get it out to our dealer base and customers."

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EVERY WAY FORWARD

COACHMEN

MIRADA | PURSUIT |
ENCORE | SPORTSCOACH

Thanks to Zach Eppers for giving RV PRO insight on these brands.

**WHAT'S NEW WITH
MIRADA THIS YEAR?**

"Intent for this year is to provide a bit more of a modern look with more linear lines in our décor, with touches of black and gold in the vinyl, flooring and wallboard. We warmed it up a bit. We'll be adding TPMS standard on all Miradas going forward."

**WHAT'S NEW WITH
PURSUIT THIS YEAR?**

"Similar to Mirada, we really wanted to focus on décor. We have new exterior graphics on our Pursuit. On the inside we have all new flooring and new countertops. We've gone to solid surface in our Pursuit. It gives it even more of a pop and higher-end look. The other thing we're doing now not only on our Pursuit, but also our Mirada, we're adding smart TVs into all our lines. If people want to add aftermarket antennas or anything like that it's going to be a lot easier to access those things with a hole that will run from one of the cabinets to the roof with a steel plate and plug-in for whatever that aftermarket part is. It will be a lot easier to mount it and run cords."

**WHAT'S NEW WITH
ENCORE THIS YEAR?**

"This year the Encore gets all-new, full-body paint schemes with more linear lines. On the inside we wanted to update décors. We're still going with pops of gold, a full-wall backsplash and solid surface. In the Mirada and Encore we're switching to a full European drop-down bunk that holds more weight. We're the first, and one of the only ones, to use this bunk in the industry. We've also added TPMS that will be standard."

"We're going to offer the Freedom Package, a hybrid lithium package, on all Encore floorplans. That upgrades the inverter to the coach, upgraded batteries and upgraded solar. You can run the air conditioner off batteries, allowing you to do more remote camping for longer periods of time. There will be 200

watts of lithium power, and also upgrades to the solar panel from 200 watts to 300 watts. Another new option available in the Mirada and Encore will be Sumo Springs. We had a lot of customers adding these springs aftermarket, so we partnered and decided to make it standard. We'll also upgrade all TVs to smart TVs."

**WHAT'S NEW WITH
SPORTSCOACH?**

"We're introducing a new rear cap. We wanted to introduce a new, more aggressive and more automotive-looking cap than what we'd been using before. We have new, full-body paint options on SRS and RD models. We've totally redone the interior décor and upgraded all TVs to smart TVs. Those Sportscoach lines will also receive the new European bunk. The SRS will have TPMS as a standard feature."

**WHAT ARE YOU MOST
EXCITED ABOUT?**

"I'm excited with what we're doing with our décors and going more linear in our lines. We're really focused on trying to create décors that make our units pop. From the Pursuit all the way to the Sportscoach lineup, they all have new similar interior décors. Décor is what we've really worked our hardest on. We really wanted to work hard to make our coaches look a lot nicer but do it where it wouldn't break the bank or increase costs dramatically."





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COACHMEN

VIKING | CLIPPER

Doug Lantz filled in RV PRO about Coachmen's Viking and Clipper



WHAT'S NEW IN YOUR PRODUCT LINEUP?

"This year on the Viking/Clipper travel trailer side we are in the process of rebranding ourselves and focusing on being the premier single-axle solution for our dealers. There are a lot of companies that build dual axles or bigger trailers and then build a few small ones. We're doing the opposite. We're building primarily single-axle floorplans and focusing on specific sizes, ranges and price points.

"We'll have 16 floorplans at the Open House. We'll have 11 single-axle floorplans and five dual-axle or larger trailers. We want Viking/Clipper to be the No. 1 lightweight small RV brand out there, and so we're going to be doing what we call different series. We'll have the 3K, 4K, 5K and 6K Series. We have new interiors, a new focus and new branding."

TELL ME ABOUT THE 3K, 4K, 5K AND 6K SERIES.

"In the 3K and 4K Series, we're going to be focusing on those target markets of SUV and small truck owners, first-time buyers, small families, smaller trailers for state parks and lower tow-capacity vehicles. We're targeting the most popular SUVs in 2021.

"We looked at sales of the most popular SUVs and a lot of them only have 3,500 to 5,500 pounds towing capacity total. So, we came up with five single-axle floorplans that are under 3,000 pounds in total weight.

"We have six single-axle floorplans in the 4,000-pound

range, that's 11 floorplans under 4,000 pounds. The 3K Series line will be 7 feet, 7 inches wide. We're focusing on the economics with entry-level pricing. It's smaller, lighter, narrower and easier to tow. The 4K are 8 feet wide. We have couples' coaches and family coaches. We're targeting millennials, Gen Xers, and first-time buyers.

"In 4K we created some floorplans not common among other manufacturers. We utilized a unique U-shaped dinette and murphy bed design in four of six floorplans. It's a U-shaped dinette in the front during the day and then flip down the murphy bed over it at night. Then they don't have to sleep on the dinette. As they move up in the series they get more room, more space and more features.

"In the 5K Series we have three new floorplans and the 6K series has two floorplans."

WHY FOCUS ON LIGHTWEIGHT SINGLE-AXLE UNITS?

"There is a big void in the industry right now. Manufacturers aren't focusing on these lightweight units, specifically in the 3,000-pound range. As we looked at all our competitors, we saw we will have the largest lineup of single-axle trailers under 3,000 pounds. We have the largest number of single-axle floorplans.

"We see gas prices rising and see more electric vehicles coming into the market space. It promotes a bigger demand for these vehicles and for travel trailers in that 3K range.



"What people love about our units is their towability and affordability. Now we're adding this caveat of unique floorplans and designs."

WHAT ELSE IS NEW THIS YEAR?

"We changed wood color this year. We went with more of a modern light interior with light gray and darker accents in the countertops and hardware. We feel that we've got this light, bright modern feel to our product. It falls in line with what we're trying to sell here.

"One thing about these smaller products is they have always had really small fridges in them. We worked with a supplier to develop a 4.3-cubic-foot double-door fridge in the 3K Series double wide. It gives more capacity and provides a freezer.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE CAMPING TRAILER SERIES?

"We developed three toy hauler floorplans in a series called V-Trek. We're working to develop more of a toy hauler in the pop ups.

"We have a new solar package we're looking at in the tear drop series. We've added a new power lift system for the roof in the tear drops and a new roof rack system that allows you to put accessories like kayaks, bikes and canoes on top.

"Both camping trailers and tear drops have off-road packages. That's an axle-lift kit system and larger off-road tires. That's available in the LT series of camping trailers, all of the tear drops and all of the V-Treks. We find more people want to take the camping trailers a little more rugged and off-road. They're boondocking. That's why we're offering some 12V solar packages

to allow people to get off the grid.

"One of the biggest developments we've made is a new floorplan in our tear drop series. We have the 9.0 and 12.0 series. We're developing the new 12.0 Pro. It's designed to provide the ultimate off-road camping experience. It has a new pull-out exterior kitchen system that pulls out to allow them to cook, have a portable 12V, 110V cooler freezer combo and griddle cooking system, along with storage. It's a whole rack that slides out. It's not just mounted to the exterior. We've been working on that for quite some time.

"With the new 12.0 Pro we're solving some of the issues that came up during COVID, and that is that people want their own bathrooms, which is difficult to put into a teardrop series. That's the unique feature of teardrops. Roofs lift up and you can stand inside of them. We have a shower and cassette toilet combo. People want to get off the grid and have some kind of restroom facility. The 12.0 Pro was developed off feedback coming out of COVID.

"Another problem we're solving is fitting our TD series in a garage. The TD series is too tall with the air conditioner on top. That's why we developed the new 9.0 TD compact series. People will be able to put their 9.0 compact series in a standard garage opening. We're thinking about these demographics: people who live in mountainous states, the average family of today."



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CARDINAL LX | CARDINAL LE

RV PRO spoke with **Todd Grimm** about the Cardinal LX and the Cardinal LE.



WHAT'S NEW WITH YOUR PRODUCT LINES THIS YEAR?

"For 2023 we've upgraded the solar package on the LX and added solar to the LE. We went from a 190-watt panel to a 260-watt panel on the roof, with the option to add a second. Units will also be prepped for an inverter.

"We listened to customer feedback and added TPMS to both lines. We've also gone with a flush floor galley slide. We've done away with the carpet. Customers wanted larger windows, so we added larger and more windows throughout all the floorplans."

DID YOU ADD ANY NEW FLOORPLANS THIS YEAR?

"We added a rear-living floorplan to the Limited Edition and redesigned the 320 in the luxury segment. There's a new control panel that's Bluetooth capable and pairs with an app on your

phone. There's a new graphics package with a new front cap paint design featuring silvers and blacks."

Grimm says the LE lineup went from a six-point electric leveling system to a six-point hydraulic auto level.

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CHEROKEE

WOLF PUP | GREY WOLF |
CHEROKEE | TIMBERWOLF

Collin Spickler spoke with RV PRO about what's to come for these brands.

TIMBERWOLF

"There are no new floorplans, but the exciting part is we're building in our new facility. We've finally got stuff rolling through that line and upping production as we speak. It's been rough not having it operating."

WOLF PUP

"We have a new Wolf Pup, the 16CW. It has a walk-around queen bed up front and gives you a nice huge bathroom in the back and a big outside Wolf Pup kitchen. It has a U-shaped dinette slide so you can sit around and have a big amount of space for such a little guy. It's targeted toward couples or starter families."

"We've partnered with Furrion to do the new tankless water heater they've got. It's going to be nice. You can get your hot water on demand and not have to go through as much hot water as in years past to get there. We did a full interior update this year with new cabinetry colors, mimosa maple, and new fabrics, and new wall board. The décor is European champagne maple. We pretty much went through and spiced everything up to a lighter and more contemporary look. We also did a refresh on the exterior. We

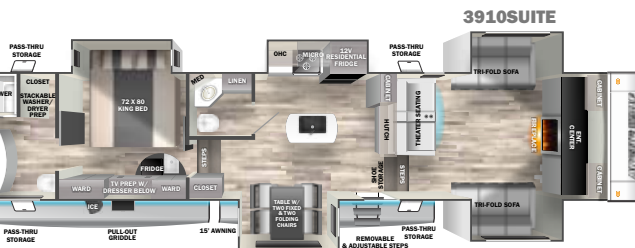
have exciting new windows. It's going to be something nobody's seen. The new window project will be on display at Open House."

GREY WOLF

"It has all the same new stuff as the Wolf Pup, and also an upgraded solar package for the year. We're doubling the size and going to 100-watt panels across the board there."

"We have new bunk storage features. On all of our bunk models across the board we went through and added a bunch more storage and storage access. Dependent upon the floorplan there will be more interior access underneath the bunks. We've added opening spaces, crawl spaces, carved out nooks, and in some places, you can lift up the bed. It's carved in nooks and crannies where we can find bonus space."

"We partnered with DB electronics and did some new Bluetooth speakers inside the unit. It makes it a lot more user-friendly to pair to cellphones and other Bluetooth devices. Those will be inside and outside. There will also be a new interior and exterior just like Wolf Pup."

WHAT'S NEW WITH
YOUR PRODUCT LINES
THIS YEAR?

"We did a refresher on the interior color palette this year. We held the line for the last three years on our color palette and it was time to bring it up to what people are searching for in the housing industry. We made it a more residential look. We've gone with more of a light brown cabinet. We were a gray palette. I would call the new color scheme a nice mix of gray and brown."

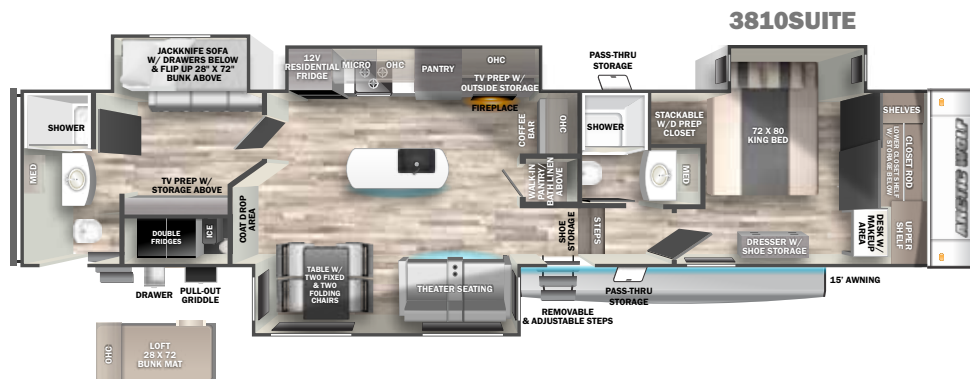
"We have a new graphics package for the exterior. It's the same color palette but a little different design. It's more linear and what customers are attracted to today. So many products have gone with a white exterior that you almost can't tell them apart. We've been a gray exterior and we're staying gray. In a sea of sameness, we are standing out."

"We upgraded all of our outside kitchens in Alpha Wolf. It's still a hot topic in the industry today. We had nice outside kitchens that just weren't full blown. Now we're as full blown as possible and have larger outside kitchens. Some of the outside kitchens will contain a double fridge setup, labeled mine and yours. Theoretically, spouses can have their own fridge if they want or a fridge for the kids."

CHEROKEE

"The 263GDK floorplan is a bunkhouse with walk-through bath, tons of storage in the bedroom, big, huge windows on the door sides, an outside kitchen and has the two double-size bunks across the back. It's a very open floorplan."

"What we're really working on in the Cherokee line is bringing down the overall length. We're working on a lot of smaller units. We've been missing that. Traditionally they've been larger, bigger floorplans, so we went after some of the smaller floorplans."



CHEROKEE

ARCTIC WOLF | ALPHA WOLF

RV PRO spoke with Jeff Cripe about Cherokee's Arctic Wolf and Alpha Wolf brands.

DO YOU HAVE ANY NEW FLOORPLANS?

"In Arctic Wolf we have two new floorplans. One is a four-slide, multisleeper with two full bathrooms. It's the 3810Suite. We do exceptional in the bunkhouse fifth wheel brand. We've been listening to customers over the past few years. We have bath-and-a-half models, we have loft models, but we didn't have that full, two-bath model. We did it and were able to keep the big slide on the campsite side. We have all the windows on the door side, which is typically not the case. The living space is fantastic. Usually, with bunk models you sacrifice space, and with this one you don't.

"The second one is a front living plan, the 3910Suite. It's the first front living plan out there with a full outside kitchen. That's unique. The amount of under floor storage on it is, I would go so far as to say, is the best in the industry. It also has a bath and a half. Fifth wheels, as you know, are built up in front with the bathroom and bedroom on a raised floor. We did that in the rear where the bedroom is. We built that back area up to give space for an outside kitchen and massive pass-through space. Since the bed is in a slide and above the floor, you have all of that space underneath as well." Cripe says they've upgraded their solar to a 100-watt panel standard.

"The nice thing about the system is that it's fully customizable so customers aren't paying thousands of dollars for something they're going to personalize anyway. We want to give the tools to the customer."

Cripe says they've also expanded their Bluetooth capability on the inside of the unit with the LCI OneControl.

"It can sync with your phone on the app and can control all of your tanks, battery levels, slides, auto leveling, and run all your electronics from the app.

"I think that with the way the last two years being what they've been with hand-to-mouth delivery and supply chain issues, and not really being able to develop and change as you would in a normal year, this year we put a lot of emphasis on that. We're looking at our build and trying to save as a group, from production to purchasing and design."

"The living space is fantastic. Usually, with bunk models you sacrifice space, and with this one you don't."



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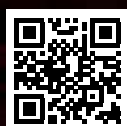


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COACHMEN

FREELANDER | LEPRECHAUN |
CONCORD

Luke Handyside gave RV PRO the details on these three brands.

WHAT'S NEW IN FREELANDER THIS YEAR?

"Freelander gets an all-new interior this year. It's a new whitewash maple called Appalachian. We've revamped the whole interior for Freelander. It's different from top to bottom. We updated the graphics package on both the Freelander and Leprechaun. We also standardized our basic build and will be offering a platinum package now, which can make any floorplan a premier-type unit. Some highlights of the Platinum Package include CarPlay radio, sideview cameras, Wi-Fi, a molded fiberglass front cap and auto gen start. The package will be an option on all the Freelanders and Leprechauns.

"Graphics packages are going to be along the lines of what we currently have, but more linear. Not swoops or anything like that."

ANY NEW FLOORPLANS THIS YEAR?

"Floorplan-wise we're not introducing any new floorplans, but we do have the Concord coming back out and the new Super C Maverick. The Maverick is going to be built on a Chevy Silverado 5500 medium-duty chassis with diesel engine. We really felt that there was an entry level spot for Super Cs that was being underserved. It's still going to be a well-equipped coach. It

won't be cheap by any means, but a lot of supers are pushing \$300,000 MSRP. Between \$280,000 to \$300,000 or a little over is where the bulk of Super C units are. We're aiming to be below those products price-wise, but feature and content-wise we intend to be right in there with that kind of content. The intent is to grow the line to at least two to three floorplans.

"The first floorplan in the Super C Maverick is the 330DS. It's 33 feet, 10 inches long with a double slide. A couple of the key features in it are some unique items not currently being offered in the Class C market. We'll have a power inclining king bed in it and a washer/dryer combo unit

available. The other notable thing is it will be four-wheel drive in addition to being diesel.

"A new floorplan in Concord is the 321DS on the Ford Econoline 450. We went to a straight wall design on it, so right now we have one floorplan with the intent to have two or three floorplans. The straight wall design opens it up to more floorplans being available because of the straight wall design versus the old curve wall.

"We'll also have an optional dishwasher, wine chiller and washer/dryer. It will also have a free-standing dinette. That's different for the Class C market. It will have the power inclining king bed and power dual recliners."



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SURVEYOR

Ben Holdread gave RV PRO the scoop on Surveyor.



WHAT'S NEW WITH SURVEYOR THIS YEAR?

"Our goal every year is to improve the aesthetics of the product and make a better-looking product and more residential. Customers are trying to get away from home but have the feel of home and the amenities. Every year that's the goal. The product has a sexier look. It's quality-built and what we try to do every year.

"From a feature standpoint the goal was to add more value for the customer and dealer without going up in price. We worked really hard over the last six to eight months to partner with certain vendors that would be cost effective and allow us to lower our cost but still add value. I'm proud of what we did. We're giving our dealers a better price, better features and exclusive features, too. Adding value to the dealer and customer was a two-fold thing we did. We're adding features and lowering the price point. We're also rolling out a brand-new entry-level sub segment, the LegendX."

TELL ME ABOUT LEGENDX

"We want to bring more value to our customers by coming to market with the new LegendX series. We're going to expand on this segment of entry-level units. It's designed to be entry level. We're really excited to roll out that segment this fall and produce in the September time frame. We recently did a private release and saw a good response from those dealers.

"The 17RBLX floorplan is the first floorplan in the lineup. It has a rear corner bath, is under 23 feet, and at our lightest weight between 3,700 to 3,800 pounds. We wanted to come out with something that was going to be the lowest price point we could offer."



ANY OTHER NEW FEATURES IN YOUR PRODUCT LINES THIS YEAR?

"We'll have a standard roof-mounted, 80-watt solar system on the roof with a 10-amp controller. We're continuing with that for 2023. In addition, this year there will be a tire pressure monitoring system standard supplied by Truck System Technologies. It's a very cool system that will allow the customer to not only monitor tire pressure while going down the road, but also monitor the temperature of the tires and set it up to send certain types of notifications like if there is a fast or slow leak so they can get off the road on time.

"We just debuted a brand-new rear kitchen as part of the Grand



“Customers are trying to get away from home but have the feel of home and the amenities. Every year that’s the goal. It’s quality-built and what we try to do every year.”

Surveyor series—the 263RKSS. Another new floorplan in Grand Surveyor is the 253RLS. We’re also debuting a bath-and-a-half bunkhouse, the 303BHLE in the Legend Series.

“We had a bath and a half before, but because of COVID and labor issues we had to slim down our offering like a lot of people did. We’re now in a better labor position and able to produce more of these bigger floorplans. We’re slowly bringing some of these bigger floorplans back to market. For us, we’re always trying to expand our offering to the dealer so we can help them grow their market share and grow their lot as a brand. A bath and a half was something we were missing from our lineup.

“I encourage customers to do their research when searching for lightweight products. We’re one of the best constructed lightweight products out there on the market. We’re a true half-ton towable across the board. We’re using more aluminum and Azdel to protect our customers from moisture and water intrusion. I encourage them to do their research on how we’re built because I think they’re going to like what they see.”



THOR

JAYCO

STARCRAFT | HIGHLAND RIDGE

Jayco has never been one to rest on its laurels, and its sister brands Starcraft and Highland Ridge are no exception.

Both brands have increased their offerings on the West Coast, touting more floorplans and flexibility for West Coast dealers, along with a special new package to be unveiled at Open House. Beyond that, the brands are bringing new floorplans, enhanced technology and fresh looks to its entire customer base.

CONVENTIONAL TRAVEL TRAILERS

There's a floorplan for everyone in the stick-and-tin (conventional) travel trailer lineup.

"Everyone is looking for small, especially with gas prices these days. Something you can tow with your F-150 or GMC Yukon," says Jason Martin, product manager for Starcraft and Highland Ridge. The latter brand will unveil its new 188BHS in the Open Range line—a smaller, single-axle trailer measuring 23 feet 6 inches in length, with an entry-level price tag of \$28,500 starting MSRP.

The stick-and-tin line is getting a "facelift," Martin explains, including updated front profiles that appear more rounded and have darker-colored accent metals. Martin says a smooth, white metal will give Open Range conventionals a "cap effect," paired with upgraded, edgier graphics packages.

"The front profile increase allowed us to increase our strip closet area and gave us a better bedroom area, more storage and hanging space," Martin says. "It's a better fit and feel than we had before."

For Starcraft, the new 28BHS will offer a larger stick-and-tin floorplan on the heavier side. The unit boasts a double-over-double bunk separated from the main bedroom, an outdoor kitchen, big U-dinette and jackknife sofa. The floorplan has a gross GVWR of 7,500 pounds and a dry weight of 6,000 pounds, measuring in at 33 feet, 8 inches long.

"It's a little longer for a typical conventional, but it gives you flexibility with more area for movement, storage, wardrobe,

entertainment center—it's all-around a good unit for a family," Martin says. "If they hit some rain, they can be inside without it feeling cramped. It has a slide out." The 28BHS starts at \$40,000 MSRP and has a carrying capacity of 1,400 pounds.

All conventional trailer interiors will see lighter wallboards, different slide out accent walls and all-black bathroom/faucet fixtures. A new backsplash in stick-and-tin models gives the illusion of 3D tile, Martin says.

"All single-axes now have an enclosed underbelly standard," he adds. "And all conventional trailers went to the LTI salad step?? on the main entrance, which isn't just a traditional fold-down step. Entry doors have the friction hinge and slim shade prep, which makes it easier for customers to buy shades that just snap on."

Solar power is now a reality for the brands' conventional trailers, with the company's new Extend Solar 1 package offering one 200-watt panel and a 30-amp solar controller as an option. The lines now also include ladder brackets, prepped on the back of units to accept extendable/retractable aftermarket ladders, and offer a smart TV option.

"We haven't just kept staying the course and building units, we've been developing units and extending our lineups," Martin says. "We expanded our conventional floorplan lineup."

LAMINATED TRAVEL TRAILERS

The brands' laminated offerings will also see a new look, more floorplans and updated gadgetry.

"Starcraft, on the laminated side, went through exterior changes this year. We went from a silver-gray-brown to more of a white with a new graphics package," Martin says.

The brand will debut its new



225CK in the Super Lite lineup, offering a lighter-weight coach measuring 26 feet, 8 inches long. Designed as a couple's coach, Martin says the floorplan provides "a lot of floor area and a nice kitchen layout," with a starting MSRP of \$43,000.

On the Highland Ridge side, which often offers bigger products, the new 296BHS will debut in the Open Range Light series. The bunkhouse unit is a "popular floorplan," Martin says, with a queen double-over-double in the back that runs the width of the coach. The floorplan measures 36 feet, 2 inches long, with a single slide and "a lot of amenities" for a starting MSRP of \$62,000.

All laminated products will sport new tech, Martin says, including a JBL stereo system with interior and exterior speakers. The Extend Solar 1 package is available, and for more power, the Extend Solar 2 package offers two 200-watt panels, a 30-amp controller and an 1,800-watt inverter.

"This gives customers the flexibility that fits well within that 296BHS/ (Open Range) Light series. People want to go off-grid and not use up the LP if they don't have to," Martin says.

Everything from both brands' conventional trailers to the Light series under Highland Ridge will have inverter pre-wire on both sides of the unit, so RVers are prepped for certain outlets to hook up to an 1,800-watt inverter.

"With the pre-wire, it allows customers to have that dealer install, or get (solar power) through the Extend 2 package," Martin says. "They can run the fridge going down the road. The truck will charge batteries, and the batteries convert to an inverter to run power out to the fridge."

HIGHLAND RIDGE WIDE BODY

A prototype for a lighter weight, smaller fifth wheel is set to hit Highland Ridge's wide-body lineup this fall, bringing more convenience to the brand's Open Range and Mesa Ridge customers.

"We're in the process of developing something that will be competitive within the market," says Randy Graber, product manager for Highland Ridge wide-body products. "We also tweaked some floorplans to make them more accommodating and user-friendly."

The mid-bunk 371MBH model will sport more interior kitchen counter space, and the outdoor kitchen for all wide-body Highland Ridge units will see a larger griddle. The brand also received interior refreshes with updated wallboards and fixture colors. Mesa Ridge will look a bit different on the outside, with its previously dark grey exterior now touting a bright white and new graphics.

"We're staying up with the new developments in electronics and interiors that we see out there," Graber says. "... We just had our Highland Ridge club rally with 140 members there and got a lot of feedback from them."

In addition to aesthetic upgrades, the brand will debut a new stereo system, smart TVs and more USB outlets across its lineup. Customers will also have access to Voice Link, an offline voice activation system developed with BMPRO that acts as a toggle switch for the coach's interior lighting, furnace and A/C, along with special modes for customized lighting.

"Things have slowed down a bit, but we're constantly talking to dealers to understand where market segments are leading," Martin says. "We feel confident with what we're able to show at Open House."

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FEATURES

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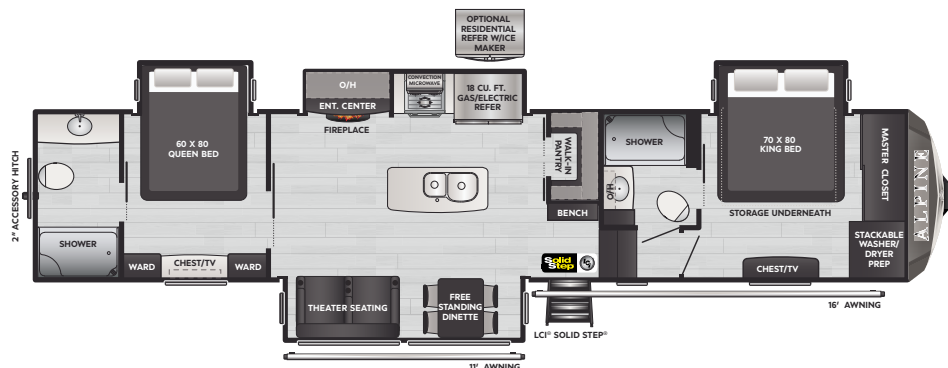
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THOR

KEYSTONE

ALPINE | OUTBACK



ALPINE

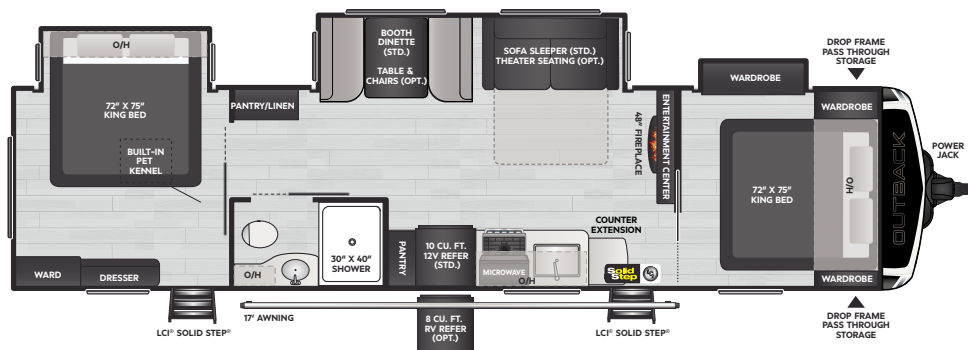
This year, Keystone is introducing a rear suite in Alpine's 3912DS, which includes a full-height ceiling and full-width bath. Christy Spencer, Keystone's director of marketing and communications, says customers are looking for big bedroom suites.

"The big, luxury bedrooms seem like where it's at right now," she says.

"The headroom feels enormous. In the bed slide, we added two large windows in addition to the windows on either side of the bed," says Dustin Tavernier, former Alpine product manager. "At the foot of the bed we were able to add two supersized wardrobes that include shoe storage and two deep shelves. To meet the storage needs of full-time campers, we topped these with a massive bank of five cabinets."

The ceiling height in the shower, which also features a skylight, is at 7 feet. Another popular feature in other models, the butler's pantry, is included in the 3912DS, as well as a vestibule bench with shoe storage, coat hooks and a decorative backlit glass panel.

Spencer notes that Alpine fifth wheels are equipped with Best Buy's Insignia range and cooktop, which can be serviced at Best Buy locations, an added level of convenience for owners. There is also an 18-cubic-foot residential Samsung refrigerator, hardwood cabinets and solid surface countertops.



The Alpine, like all Keystone RVs, comes with SolarFlex factory-installed solar power systems and optional Dragonfly Energy Lithium-ion batteries.

OUTBACK

Two king-sized bedrooms in a travel trailer? That's what Outback has in store for this year. This fifth wheeler introduced the farmhouse aesthetic to the RV market in 2018, Spencer says, then last year debuted a matte black interior. The latest model, 343DB, features Outback's first double bedroom, both with king-sized beds so that owners can travel with in-laws or friends with equal comfort.

"In the past year or so, we've seen owners really focus on and

prioritize bedroom spaces," says Nick Ebenroth, Outback product manager. "While there will always be a market for bunkhouses, adult buyers are looking for options that accommodate longer travel without making compromises on comfort. This model runs right at that trend."

A sleeper sofa is also included for more guests, and the 343DB features Norco 7-3 seven-point auto-leveling, on-demand hot water, a 48-inch fireplace and a chef's kitchen. Spencer points out the modern soft gold hardware complements the matte black interior. Wider doorways and fewer pitch points, in addition to switching swinging doors to sliding doors, provide easier access, she adds.

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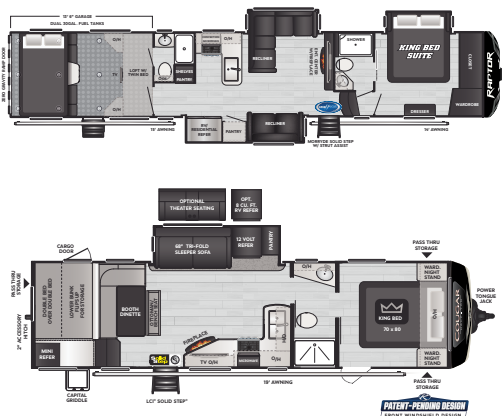


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THOR

KEYSTONE

RAPTOR | COUGAR



RAPTOR

The new Raptor 431 full-size toy hauler is Keystone's largest toy hauler ever at 44 feet, 11 inches. The extra length allowed Brand Product Manager Colin Clark to move the camp-side slide out, which pulled the recliners forward and nearly tripled the pantry size. The company says this creates a more comfortable living area with the recliners nested in the L-shaped sofa. Entertainment also reaches another level with a "giant flatscreen television and new Kicker sound system with two amplifiers, 8-inch upgraded speakers and subwoofer."

The layout also includes freed-up garage space since the washer/dryer hookup is at the front of the unit. The garage is 13 feet, 8 inches—Raptor's longest, the company says.

"In 2021-22, the toy hauler segment moved to shorter models and emphasized the garage as a flexible living space," Clark says. "As we look to 2023, we wanted to build a brawny, but livable model for the traditional toy hauler buyer and power sports enthusiast."

"Everything about the 431 is beefed up and ready for owners to go big with their toys and their crew. Higher-end buyers are -likely to be more resilient to shifts in the economy. For that reason, we expect the 431 to be a valuable addition to dealer inventory this year."

This model will also feature a tire pressure monitoring system, iN-Command SMART RV control system, Furion side cameras with a 7-inch screen, and onboard air compressor and 50-amp electric cord reel. The Girard on-demand water heater will also now be included in all Raptor models.

COUGAR

A new floorplan for the half-ton travel trailer Cougar 30BHS took its cues from tiny homes, the company says. Cougar Product

Manager Scott Taylor said he's "fascinated with the idea of multipurpose furniture and multipurpose spaces."

"More and more families are continuing to camp together as children longer," he says. "With the 30BHS, we've designed a floorplan that comfortably sleeps tots to teens and easily reconfigured for big family dinner, to game night, to serious Netflix binge-watching. It's like getting three or four floorplans in one."

The floorplan's open-concept, double-over-double bunk in the back has windows on all sides. The bottom bunk flips up to allow for cargo storage, which is accessible from the side and rear cargo doors. The company says the space is perfect for bicycles and larger gear.

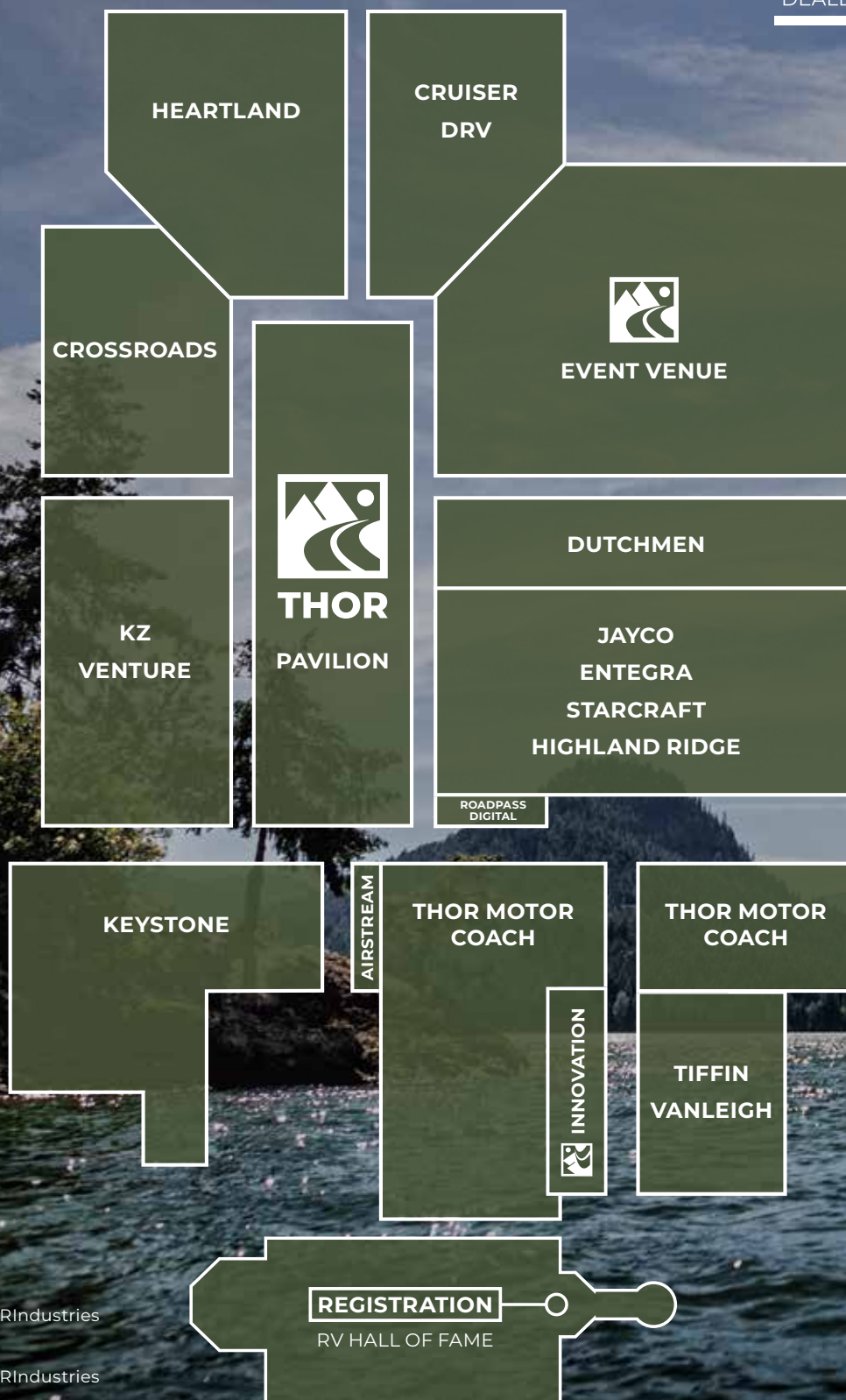
The L-shaped banquette can seat five to six people with a free-standing table and bench ottoman. When just using the ottoman alone, the banquette becomes a lounge; but with the extra cushion stowed in the banquette base, the table can be adjusted and now there's an extra sleeping space. The company says the table can also be used as a kitchen island, TV tray, or coffee table in front of the theater seats—or even moved outdoors for prep space with the outdoor kitchen.

"Week after week, both paid and organic social media posts about the 30BHS wildly outperform all other content in terms of reach, clicks, and cost per click," Spencer says about the response to the floorplan. "The traffic to the model page is more than double any other Cougar floorplan. If this is any indication of the retail response, it feels like we have a tiger by the tail."

I think we are pumped," Spencer says about Open House and the release of Keystone's new offerings. "The last few years opened up RVing to a huge segment of people who never considered it before; it just wasn't part of their travel. That isn't going to go away. Those people who have been exposed, they now know about RVing. We think a lot of those people will stay in the industry. It set us up for generations of success and a new level of success for years and years and years."



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THOR

KZ VENTURE

ESCAPE | CONNECT | DURANGO |
VENOM**ESCAPE**

New exteriors and interiors for Escape are in store for this year, says Nick Francis, product manager, towables. The brand went with a Euro-style look on the interiors to take the brand up another level. The Escape is tied to KZ Venture's class brand, so they wanted to take it a notch above. With 10 floorplans available, sleeping from two up to eight people, the interior features residential-grade linoleum, Amish-crafted rail-style cabinet doors with modern handles and a light-colored flooring.

"The Escape is super exciting because it's going a new direction with the look," Francis says. "I think it'll be exciting to get that out there and target a new crowd or bring some people in that wouldn't normally be an RV buyer."

CONNECT

A new exterior for the Connect features new graphics and a painted front cap, plus interiors upgrades such as new countertops and linoleum. Francis says the Connect's aesthetics have definitely been refreshed.

"We make sure the look doesn't get outdated," he says. "We stay on top of it so it doesn't go stale."

Connect has 11 floorplans that sleep from three up to 10 people with king-size beds offered in every model and theater seats in two. Lighter-colored décor is also featured in the Connect, as well as a 21-inch stainless steel range, 12V USB ports in the bedroom, 36-inch storage units in the dinette and an optional off-the-

grid solar package, which is also available in the Escape.

DURANGO | VENOM

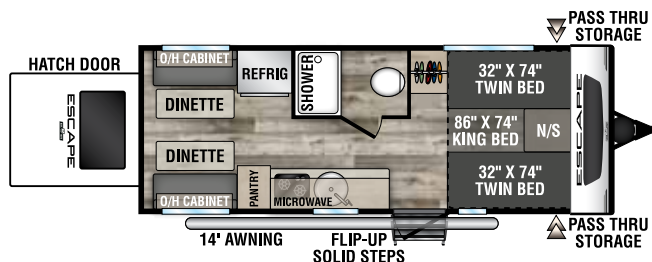
KZ Venture's fifth wheels are also seeing some major upgrades.

On the fifth wheel side, we looked at some popular features in the higher-end brands and brought them down to the lower priced brands to enhance them, says Brent Froman, general manager, fifth wheels and travel trailers.

Across the board, KZ made the oversize folding grab handle, which makes it easier to get in and out of the unit, standard, Froman says. They also added frameless windows on the exteriors of the Durango and Venom V series, since the others already had frameless windows.

"Last year we went to a modern farmhouse cabinetry," Froman says. "This year on the interior we did linoleum flooring extended in the slide outs." Historically, slide outs had a different flooring, such as carpet. Froman says with the linoleum, it makes the room feel bigger.

"There's no lines of the floor



that break it up; it just all flows and looks fantastic," he says.

Also on the interior, the new RV Airflow AC system takes air from the air conditioner and forces it into duct work at a higher rate, which improves the air flow that comes out of the ducts in the coach, Froman says. This feature was added last year, but this year it was expanded farther and added an air filter, similar to what you'd have for a residential home.

Another change Froman



KZ VENTURE

ESCAPE | CONNECT | DURANGO | VENOM



notes is they now feature curved hardwood steps instead of hard-pressed steps—another nod to a more residential-inspired look.

This year the brand will also offer on-demand tankless water heaters.

"Two years ago we jumped into the on-demand tankless water heater and offered it in four out of five [fifth wheels], and this year we added it to Durango half tons," Forman says. "It helps separate us a little bit from some of the other brands out there."

Another highlight for the Durango half ton and standard Durango models is the outside kitchen. Forman says they were redesigned to include an outside griddle, hot and cold water ports, a storage shelf and, most excitingly, a pellet smoker and table.

"There's really not anyone out there that's doing that," he

says, noting KZ partnered with a company that's producing the pellet smoker for them. "It's a small little pellet smoker, and we've got a table—the legs pull out so it's at optimum height."

A couple models have kitchens that have the pellet smoker standard, and others are standalone options to add the pellet smoker and table.

"The basis for a lot of the decisions that we make is really the residential world," Forman says. "When we're at shows and we're talking with customers and different people, this probably started three or four years ago, everybody said they wanted an RV that was like their home. That challenged us—it challenged the industry."

"We're trying to push the envelope and not make the fifth wheel so 'RV-ish,'" he says.

"We're that steady Eddie," Forman says about KZ. "We didn't put up any new plants or do anything crazy. We just kept increasing our production rates,

kept the quality high and just kept chugging along."

The company's No. 1 priority is quality, he says.

"We'd rather sacrifice a little bit of output to focus on quality," he adds.



THOR

DUTCHMEN



In honor of its 35th anniversary, Dutchmen has a number of improvements and upgrades in its "35th anniversary editions," says Kyle Kwasny, company president.

"This is our 35th year in business. That says a lot about our ability to hopefully take care of our customers," he says.

In celebration of the anniversary, all units will be labeled as the 35th anniversary edition and many features will be included standard. This includes the solo command system, says Kwasny, which is an automated system that runs the unit from the slides outs, awning and stabilizer



Standard backup cameras will be another addition on many of Dutchmen's products, as well as 60,000 BTU on-demand hot water heater. This is a customer pain point, Kwasny says, as typically hot water only lasts a short amount of time. The company is trying to eliminate pain points and make units easier to use.

"Everything we're doing for Open House is tailored around trying to make camping easier—ease of ownership, ease of setup, ease of use," Kwasny says.

Many of the models have seen full interior and exterior overhauls, such as the Voltage and Yukon, which will debut lighter wood cabinets and darker floors.

"We have a full-time designer, which she attends kitchen and bath and home décor shows," Kwasny says. "She's on the cutting edge in the residential space."

In addition to multiple new models for its eight brands, Dutchmen will also offer 25 "innovative" floorplans, he says.

"I think we have a good understanding of the segments

that currently exist, so when it comes to new floorplan offerings it's predominately through the dealer feedback," Kwasny says, noting they survey their dealers often, asking what they are hearing from customers. "We have a good handle on the floorplans and features the dealers and customers are asking for."

"I think what makes us excited is knowing that we have a tremendous foundation of taking care of our customer."

We serve both the dealer and the customer."

As for the market slowing down a bit, Kwasny isn't fazed by the latest economic developments.

"We're very excited about the fact that, when the market gets a little tight and slows down a bit, which is what a lot of OEMs are experiencing, that's when we shine," he says. "We have spent a lot of time and money over the last 10 years developing processes to get the customers back on the road."

He touts the company's ability to make service and repairs after the sale a smooth process for customers.

"We work a lot of time to make sure after sale support is there for the customer," he says.

"Nobody wants it to slow down per se, but our industry is incredibly resilient," he continues. "Four factors are challenging for our industry: interest rates, fuel, inflation and war. All four of those things you think would severely negatively impact the RV industry, but this is going to be a top five year out of the last 60 years even when these things are happening."

"The customers who have chosen this lifestyle stay in it, and a lot of people found this lifestyle because of COVID. Even though it's normalizing a little bit, the dealers are still very optimistic that the runway for the next five years is very, very good."

jacks, to a command center for water levels and more.

"It will work off your smartphone and it will be across the unit for every product that we produce," the president says.

Another standard feature will be slide toppers, used to protect the seams for slide outs and prevent leaks.



THOR MOTOR COACH

THOR Motor Coach's big news for Open House is a new product line of Class A motorhomes. John Krider, vice president of marketing and product planning for the company, says it will be a budget-friendly first step into class A motorhomes.

"We want to try to usher in as many people into the camping lifestyle as possible," he says. "As you go up in price point, the pool of people becomes smaller. As we look at products that we can bring down in price, they can be more affordable to more people."

The new Class A is smaller but still has room for the family. Krider says people in their 30s and 40s, perhaps with kids in elementary school and middle school, may not be traveling to Europe or going on a cruise, but going to the national parks or going to see family is in the cards.

"The goal is not just to sell motorhomes but to sell the lifestyle and give people the outlet that people are looking for," he says. "As we look at mental health, what do we need outside of the home? [People] get a lot of enjoyment, a lot of interpersonal time, to be off social media and away from the day-to-day activities that can weight them down."

Krider also says THOR Motor Coach is very focused on the van market.

"In the last two years, we went from not being in the market to being right at the top of retail market share," Krider says. "We continue to do that by bringing out innovative floorplans and being conscious of what the cycle looks like."

Scope and Rize entry lines—which feature the 1500 RAM ProMaster chassis—have another floorplan coming out. Krider says this will bring those brands to three floor plans total.

"They really speak to that younger buyer, or any buyer, but it's really a couples coach at that

point. You can park it anywhere and commute in it back and forth," he says.

"We continue our strategy of more electrification in our van products, moving away from traditional generators, less noise, more sustainable energy, using alternators on the chassis, using solar panels on the vehicles," Krider continues.

There are two female designers at THOR Motor Coach who each have interior design degrees. Krider says, "I think that's really a feather in our cap as an organization; we found people who know the market and know the trends and are able to pull that out of housing market."

The company is producing modern interiors, Krider says, that are away from the "RV look and into what it would look like in your house."

Lithium battery package options are available in a lot of products, Krider notes, pointing to the Sanctuary Transit and Tranquility Transit that are good for the off-the-grid lifestyle. The Sanctuary and Tranquility come with the option of a Mercedes Sprinter or on a Ford platform—so a gasoline or diesel-powered engine.

"I think the energy is up 100%," Krider says about the RV industry. "The last two years have been very successful in the market, and the biggest thing we continue to fight with—is the supply chain

issues. We're buying chassis from Mercedes and Ford, and there's still some trouble getting the chassis from the manufacturers. You're not seeing a lot of inventory on the automotive dealerships lots.

"We've been able to deal with it as an organization quite well," he continues. "We will probably have to deal with it for the next year. But we'll keep steady and keep moving forward."



THOR**CRUISER RV (BY HEARTLAND)****HITCH | MPG | RADIANCE**

New interiors run throughout all three of General Manager Dave Burroughs' brands: Hitch, MGP and Radiance.

"We've done a complete makeover on Hitch," he says. "You'll see the differences; we have more doors, drawers and cubbies than our competition. The coaches are smaller but consumers still need storage."

Now offering four floor plans, new décor on the interior and new graphics on the exterior, Hitch also offers 15-inch all-terrain off-road tires.

"We look a little 'off-roady,' if that's a word," Burroughs says, "but we're still very light and offer a lot of standard features, such as solar prep."

"You can be that person who wants to be off-road or that person with a Subaru that only has a 3,000- to 10,000-pound towing capability that wants to go camping but not in a tent. We put a lot of comforts into the Hitch."

For MPG, Cruiser RV's mid-level ultralight, there are 12 floorplans from 19 feet to 36 feet. This year they will debut new interiors, new wood colors, flooring, wallboards and furniture.

"We went through a complete change for MPG," Burroughs says.

With murphy bed floorplans, Burroughs says the company was able to keep the coaches shorter and lighter—both are under 5,000 pounds. The 1900RB will be 8 feet wide with all standard-build features. Burroughs says it is a couples coach with a slide out.

The 2200BH has a murphy bed in the front, is 8 feet wide, with a double-over-double bunk. This model has a rear storage door in the back for kayaks, bicycles, coolers, etc.

And in Radiance—the luxury ultralight for Cruiser RV—major upgrades can be found in the kitchen with solid surface, seamless countertops, a full

height backsplash and more, Burroughs says.

"It's just packed with features that your discerning consumer wants," he says.

The Radiance comes with standard features such as Goodyear tires, underbelly storage and a king bed.

"Not everyone sees the value of Goodyear tiers unless you've been researching or are second-time buyers," Burroughs adds.

"All of our changes have been consumer and dealer driven," she says. "We listen to our consumers and our dealers."

"We didn't just go out and start changing our coaches, we listened to our dealers, and we asked our dealers. We look at the blogs and webpages, and we see what consumers are really wanting in an RV and we're trying to hit those marks."





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LAUNCHING LIFE'S JOURNEYS

THOR

Continued

CRUISER RV (BY HEARTLAND)

SHADOW CRUISER | STRYKER

Innovative floorplans with features that consumers are looking for—that's Cruiser RV's target for the Stryker toy hauler, says David Dilworth, general manager of Stryker and Shadow Cruiser.

"We call it the ultimate toy hauler for the ultimate adventurer," he says, noting the running gear is one of the unit's most important features with 16-inch E-rated tires and the only toy hauler that includes gas piston shocks at each axle, not to mention Goodyear tires.

This year at Open House, the company will also show off a wardrobe area with "store anywhere" design that allows easier access to storage areas and storage under the bed. The unit will also include a porcelain toilet, cubbies in the wardrobe with easy access for CPAP machines, and an energy management system that allows for dual AC operation.

Dilworth points out that there are no rear wells in the storage area, allowing for easier loading the large garage.

For the Shadow Cruiser, Dilworth notes this is the most affordable unit at Cruiser RV.

"Dollar for dollar, it's hard to compete with," he says. "You're not going to get more for less." This couples coaches with bunk comes in 22 to 23 feet and sleeps from four to 10-plus. Dilworth says there's more storage offered in the floorplans, and most have a walk-in pantry or bonus closet in the primary bedroom. There's the "store anywhere" bed base and a CPAP cubby as well.

In addition to a new fiberglass front cap, the Shadow Cruiser will also feature a new entertainment center design with soundbar integration.

As for new floorplans, this unit will debut the:



228RKS with a rear kitchen, open concept floorplan and space with adinette and theater seating
225RBS was revised with the refrigerator in the slide out to give more livable space inside, plus an improved kitchen area with a lot of counterspace

260RBS is a 30-foot couples coach with a massive rear bathroom, walk-in pantry and bonus closet in the bedroom, plus a compact outdoor kitchen with a griddle

280QBS is a bunk model that sleeps up to 10 and has a revised outdoor kitchen with an awning that goes overhead

DRV LUXURY SUITES (BY HEARTLAND)

At Open House this month, Heartland will debut a brand-new floorplan—the Orlando—for Mobile Suites, says Shawn James, general manager of DRV. This floorplan has flipped the traditional layout with the beds upstairs on the upper deck of the unit and a desk in the center separating the bunks. James says that during the pandemic, a lot of customers were looking for ways to stay safe, and the bunkhouse trend became very popular. With the front-bunk model, there will still be a half bath up front, then a living room downstairs with a gourmet kitchen, James says, and the primary bedroom with the larger bathroom will be at the rear of the unit.

Whether a customer is traveling with children, or homeschooling on the road, or adults need a place to work, James says you can sit on either side of the desk with this layout, and you have your sleeping quarters there also.

Another new offering will be the 360-degree view that will be provided by the camera system from ASA Electronics—a Heartland partner. James says just as you'd see in a Ford F-150 pickup truck, they now have the capability of producing the same 3D image of the top of the vehicle in the company's towables. The camera system will be plug-and-play in GMC trucks and in other brands, it will be compatible with a separate monitor.

"It's really a neat system," James says. "At Heartland, we've always been very innovative, so we always want to be that first kid on the block to be the latest and the greatest. When ASA brought it to our attention and we got to see the finished product, we were blown away."

James also mentioned the new paint color—high octane—that will be available on their Full House toy hauler.

"It's a little bit edgier—we're known to be a little safer because we're high-end, but the demographics are changing," he says. "We're getting a lot more of the younger generation coming into our product, so we want to make sure we keep up with them."

Heartland and DRV are still faring well in this market, James says.

"In the high-end, we haven't been affected like some of the other brands. We're more geared toward the full-timer, and those customers haven't been affected like maybe the weekend camper. It's hasn't affected us as bad as some of the other types of fifth wheels.

"COVID was definitely not a good thing, but I think it allowed retail customers a different lifestyle of living," he says, "this has brought an entire different lifestyle of travel."



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| MOBILE SUITES

THOR

HEARTLAND

BIG COUNTRY | ELKRIDGE |
SUNDANCE

"I'm excited because we have not seen our dealers for the past two years," says Heartland's Cruiser RV Senior General Manager John Jones. "We're excited to see our dealer partners and show them some of our new products."

This sentiment was echoed by all representatives of Heartland and its brands, as the company prepped for Open House at the end of the month.

"Coming into it, there's a lot to showcase of what we've done over the last year," Jones says. "We've been diligent with our production people as well as the general managers to get the products dialed in even more than it is today."

In addition to offering new floorplans, Jones says the company will debut a solar package for all of its units that it calls SOL prep. There will be 180 or 380 panels standard across all of the builds, Jones says, with a 30-amp battery controller. SOL prep will be an "easy plug-and-play application" for dealers, he says, to build value with customers for whatever their needs are.

"We're also excited to release some new looks and new features that will revolutionize the way our customers cook in their kitchen," he says.

Buyer demographics have changed over the last few years, Jones says, which has influenced what they want to offer, like ease of use, functionality and technology.

"We feel pretty confident where we are this year," Jones says. "It's all about how you maneuver through this. I say to my guys all the time, when I talk to the dealers, we're an RV manufacturer, and you're an RV dealer, and we're going to get through it."

**BIG COUNTRY | ELKRIDGE |
SUNDANCE**

There's a lot going on at Open House this year for Heartland—including a replatforming for its fifth wheel Big Country, says Tim Markel, director of sales.

"We have dropped the price point of it significantly to get into the meat of the market," he says.

New interiors, including furniture, and new exteriors will be unveiled for Big Country at Open House, and solar will become standard on all of the brand's units. Markel says the new floorplan offerings will broaden that reach into what the consumers in that market are really looking for.

The Elkridge will also show off new interiors; Markel says with white and black cabinetry, marble countertops and new furniture, it's a brand-new look.

"We're going with a more modern, industry type of feel," he says. "This is an entirely different and updated look for the Elkridge brand."

With Sundance, consumers will get a utilitarian type of camping experience, Markel says, since this unit allows people to take along, and easily store, everything from kayaks, bicycles, grills, and more. The unit still provides comfort with a full bedroom and rollover sofas in the back to create more sleeping space.

"The residential industry is researched heavily to find out what the trends are; a lot of people want to take their home on the road with them," Markel says.

The units are now featuring white and natural decors and more modern, up-to-date fabrics that make them feel more residential.

ROAD WARRIOR | GRAVITY |
MILESTONE | BIGHORN

The Road Warrior will be featured at Open House, says General Manager Mike Depositar, with new interiors and exteriors, in addition to an exciting new add-on feature called the Warrior Rack. This rack will allow consumers to store kayaks, spare tires or even additional tables and attach to the back of the coach itself—not inside.

"No one's done this yet and it should provide additional storage and functionality to a toy hauler that you used to not be able to do," Depositar says.

New interiors and a new floorplan for the Gravity will also be unveiled—the GR3950—a triple-axle with a 15-foot garage, bed slide out and island kitchen. Depositar says this is something their dealers and customers have been asking for. The Gravity is at a value price point, but the company wants to still offer all of the features that customers want.

"Rarely do you find in this price point the triple-axle and 15-foot garage," he says.

For the Milestone, Depositar says they will feature new exteriors and interiors, in addition to it being Wi-Fi ready, not just prepped, so all consumers need to do is decide which service provider they want to use. New offerings also include marble countertops, a smart TV and a JBL sound system.

The Milestone offers "the floorplans that people want at a price point that anyone can afford," Depositar says, adding it's one of the fastest growing fifth wheels on the market.

"We've done a lot of research, but we've listened to a lot of customers over the last two years—so [the changes] are customer inspired," he says.





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THOR

BIG HORN

Big Horn is launching several key feature initiatives for Open House that the company is excited to debut to dealers, but Director of Sales Kyle Miller says those features are “top secret” for the moment. In addition, the brand will unveil new exterior graphic designs, interior cabinetry colors and new floorplans to round up its lineups.

“As a company, we are investing in some great new product features. Sol—Powered by the Sun, our new solar package, will be standard on all Big Horns, as well as others,” Miller says.

Another upcoming standard feature for travel trailers is The Vault, a “little black box” that will centrally house all 12-volt wiring connections, solar fuses and power breakers. Sister product The Vault XL will include color coding unification for Heartland and Cruiser fifth wheels.

“The Vault protects 12-volt connections and components from weather and the elements, and streamlines accessibility to 12-volt components,” Miller says.

Users can disconnect 12-volt power moving from the battery to the RV, which helps the battery maintain its charge while parked or in tow, but power will still flow to the breakaway switch to maintain safety standards.

The Vault will also house solar fuses, allowing solar-connected batteries to charge even when 12-volt power is disconnected.

“This will make it easier for all of our campers,” Miller says.

Big Horn’s aim is to create products its dealers and customers are looking for.

“Big Horn will have a new elegant overall look with adjusted price points to meet the needs of both our dealers and customers,” Miller says.

Some of the top new exterior features from Big Horn include Goodyear Endurance Tires with spare, Blockbuster laminated main floor, electric power cord reel and Winegard Wi-Fi 5G hot spot antenna. Interior features are high-end prime choice appliances, Miller says, in addition to an entertainment package featuring power theater seating with massage, spa bathrooms with instant hot water and oversized walk-in shower with teak seat.

“Big Horn will have a new elegant overall look with adjusted price points to meet the needs of both our dealers and customers.”

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VISTA | SOLIS | HIKE 100

Winnebago will debut new interiors on all of its towable models and unveil a new National Parks Foundation version of the Vista coach and Solis camper van.

"This is a chance for us to show them to the industry and to vendors and suppliers and other dealers," says Kelli Harms, marketing manager for Winnebago.

Winnebago released a National Parks Foundation version of the Travato camper van a couple of years ago, Harms says, and now this is Winnebago's opportunity to partner with the National Parks Foundation for two more models. Harms says both the Vista and Solis have "great graphics and interiors that pull in that whole national parks feel."

The Vista NPS edition comes in two available exterior graphics: Glacier and Canyonlands. The floorplan sleeps up to five people, includes a slide out and is 30 feet in length. MSRP is \$221,034. Features include an armless patio awning and batwing awning, standard 320-amp hour lithium-ion battery, charge controller and three solar panels. The interior has a "Town and Country" design with Salinas oak cabinets and trim; frameless, tinted windows; and the exterior kitchen includes a refrigerator, sink and LP Quick-Connect portable stove or grill.

The Solis NPS edition will be available this fall, and the overland-style drawer system, wheels and suspension will come complete with custom graphics. The floorplan includes a removable pedestal table, wet bath, murphy bed and plenty of storage.

For Winnebago's towables, in addition to all-new interiors and decals, there are a few changes to floorplans as well. Winnebago Marketing Specialist Noelle Flora says the new interior is very modern and light.

"This is exciting because we have had the same interior since 2020," Flora says.

Answering a dealer request, the Voyage will feature a larger shower at 30 inches by 36 inches. The company also added built-in ladders for the bunks in the Voyage.

The Micro Minnie will now zero-degree axles to accommodate lowering the stairs—a customer request, Flora says.

And on dealer lots soon will be the HIKE 100—a lightweight, full-height trailer traveler that Flora says can go off the beaten path and tow behind a smaller SUV.

"Our booth will also be showing off a number of other technology and product innovations that we talked about at our dealer meeting as well," Harms says. Winnebago is working on connectivity for its coaches



and a concept vehicle will be on display to show dealers and other attendees what that connectivity will provide.

"We're hoping to work on a fully connected coach," Harms says. "We want to show dealers that we have a great product lineup and how customers can have touchpoints between our company."

To continue supporting customers and dealers after the sale, Winnebago released an app in July in which customers can load their vehicle and access services such as find a dealer, videos with how-tos, service locations and more. Harms says there is a lot of "RV 101" information, such as how to level your coach—anything a customer needs to prepare for and have a successful trip in their coach. The app is available for Apple and Android users.

"It's been a really great tool for people to stay connected," Harms says.

"Safety is still important to us at Winnebago, but it's really exciting to get back to open house and start engaging with our customers and dealers and media and everyone in the industry,"



WINNEBAGO INDUSTRIES

NEWMAR CORP

DUTCH STAR | ESSEX

WHAT'S NEW ABOUT THE DUTCH STAR?

Newmar is offering two new floor plans for the Dutch Star, the 4071 and the 4370. Those models include a standard Euro-booth dinette facing the patio and an HWH slide-out mechanism above the floor. A new option available in specific floorplans is a convertible dinette, which has a rotating table.

The kitchen features a three-burner gas range or induction cooktop, a residential refrigerator, and an optional dishwasher. A washer and dryer are also optional. There are four new décor choices with new furniture packages, new window treatments, new bedding, and new exterior graphics. The company takes a great deal of input from its dealers and consumers when changing both the interior and exterior looks of all its units.

WHAT'S NEW ABOUT THE ESSEX?

New floorplans featuring dinettes that look out at the patio on the door side, inside-a-slide room now feature full height baggage doors. This was made possible by making the Euro-booth dinette standard and engineering an HWH slide mechanism into the slide room.

The 4595 floorplan offers the option for a beverage center with stemware rack and wine cooler. It also features a high-quality Bosch refrigerator. The master bathroom features a 40-foot by 32-foot glass-enclosed shower, a washer housed in a cabinet, a pair of wardrobes and a vanity with two sinks.

An innovation being introduced in Essex is the ability to tilt the coach to the off-door side, to drain the holding tanks more efficiently.

The cab of the Essex features heated and cooled seats, a blind-spot detector with six sensors and a redesigned driver's side window.

Both units include a lithium-ion package provided by Lithionics that includes two 320-amp-hour battery packs and a surge guard switch. The feature is an option



on the Dutch Star and a new standard feature on the Essex. The Essex also comes with two inverters.

WHAT NEW TECHNOLOGY OR ACCESSORIES ARE INCLUDED IN THE DUTCH STAR?

The lithium-ion battery by Lithionics now offers a battery system with two 320-amp battery packs, and an option for a third that will allow users to run an air conditioner without running the generator. The new dashboard has a nine-inch monitor screen and radio.



WHAT NEW TECHNOLOGY OR ACCESSORIES ARE INCLUDED IN THE ESSEX?

Inside, a newly designed dashboard provides driver and passenger side consoles with recharging stations. The new Axera touch screen dash radio with 10-inch monitor includes Apple CarPlay and Sirius XM capability.

WHAT'S THE COLOR SCHEME OR PAINT GRAPHICS FOR THE DUTCH STAR? INTERIOR DESIGN?

The exterior front and rear caps have new designs, and there are new exterior graphics and color schemes. The headlights are new and so are the seals on the baggage doors, to make them come down easier. The interior features upgraded Lappato floors that give a semi-gloss look. The new models also feature redesigned backsplashes, slide out fascia and new window and ceiling treatments. Four new color combinations are available.

WHAT'S THE COLOR SCHEME OR PAINT GRAPHICS FOR THE ESSEX? INTERIOR DESIGN?

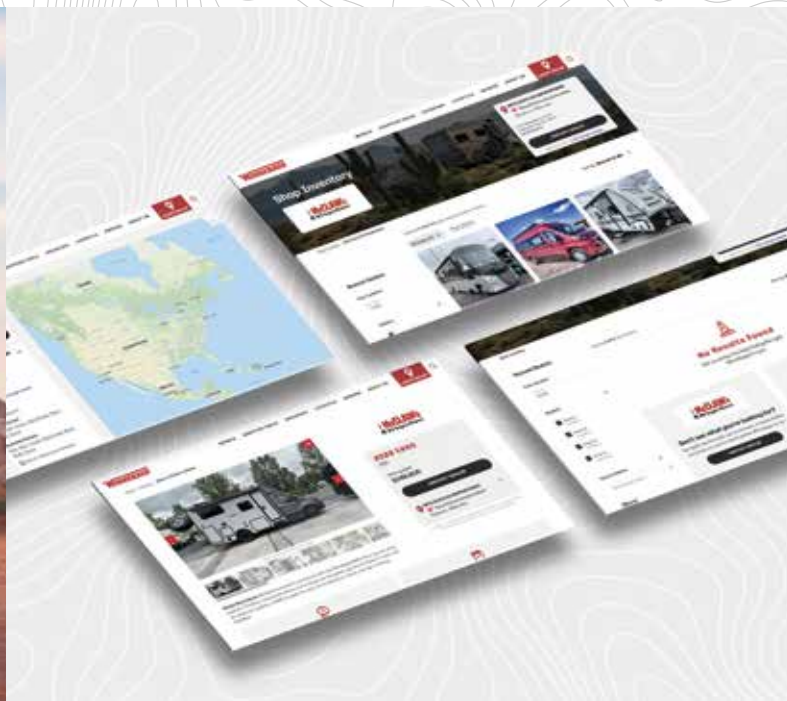
Again, the front and rear caps were redesigned. Inside, there are four new color options. The half-bath sink is now glass, as are the backsplashes. The kitchen countertops and bathroom vanities are highly polished solid surface material. New fabrics appear on windows, throw pillows and bedding.



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GRAND DESIGN

SOLITUDE | MOMENTUM

WHAT'S NEW

New floorplans are the name of the game for Grand Design RV for Open House this year. Rob Groover, general manager for Solitude and Momentum, says the company has implemented running changes to its units throughout the year, so not everything top to bottom has changed.

"With the supply change disruption, it's made it extremely difficult," Groover says. But Grand Design has still done significant overhauls on the exteriors and interiors with not all, but most of, its brands.

Groover says they have stayed connected to customers through social media and a number of rallies, and the feedback they are getting is that people are using their units differently from before.

"There are a lot of first-time buyers," he says, "not only do they consider using it more from a work perspective than previous

generations, but they're dedicated to using their coach wherever they can in every aspect of life."

SOLITUDE

For Solitude, customers can expect to see three new full-body paints—pearl, midnight and aurora—a new exterior decal package and logo wing change, new interiors including flooring, furniture, woods and walls, and a Furrion on-demand hot water heater. Soft-close cabinets and an ABS system are other new additions.

Many more people seem to be choosing to live in their RV, Groover says, something Grand Design took into consideration when choosing lighter interior colors and providing additional functionality, such as desks.

In addition to built-in desks and new storage solutions, Groover says the features they're offering mean customers are not having to modify their units.

"There was kind of a movement with younger generations," he says



of this post-pandemic period. "They don't need all the stuff; they need the necessities built well."

MOMENTUM

In the Momentum this year, Grand Design will feature new color and style of furnitur, lighter wallboard, lighter-colored hardwood cabinetry and linoleum and a shiplap headboard accent. In addition to a Furrion tankless water heater and ABS system, the Momentum will offer a solar package upgrade as well. This fall, Momentum will also launch two new full-body paint options, three new fifth wheel floorplans and a new travel trailer floorplan.

"We're more excited for this Open House than we have been for quite a while since we haven't had it the last couple of years," Groover adds. "We're ready to get back to whatever the new normal is. It's been a very long time since we've gotten to spend any significant time with our dealers."



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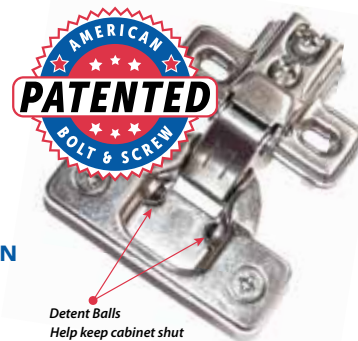
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REFLECTION | IMAGINE |
TRANSCEND XPLOR

“We definitely saw a record influx of first-time buyers. They still wanted to get out and recreate with their family or friends... Hopefully we can just retain a small portion of the new people.”

REFLECTION

Peter Kinden, general manager for Reflection, Imagine and Transcend says he is looking forward to getting in front of people again too—especially to celebrate Grand Design’s 10th anniversary.

“In the last couple of years, we’ve been really restricted,” he says. “We had ideas and plans to come out with new stuff, but because of the supply side and the challenges our purchasing and supply teams faced every day, we had to hold back.”

The one upside, Kinden says, is getting to introduce people to fresh new look, which he says emulates the lifestyle change inside and out.

In the Reflection, people will notice a lighter interior, a new decal package and matte black rims, an addition of an ABS system and a redesigned monitor panel to control the water pump, 12 V heat tank pads and more interior lights from the Compass Connect mobile app.

There will also be three new models: the 270BN 150 Series, which is a couples coach under 30 feet with a breakfast nook. The bathroom, bedroom, and refrigerator can be accessed with the slide in. There is also an outdoor kitchen.

The 296RDTS travel trailer is a couples coach under 34 feet and features a wardrobe slide in the bedroom.

And lastly, the 310MKTS TT is a bed-slide couples layout

with a dedicated desk area and outdoor kitchen.

“We definitely saw a record influx of first-time buyers,” Kinden says about recent customers. “They still wanted to get out and recreate with their family or friends. Hopefully a lot of those first-time buyers realize ‘I’m not just doing this during COVID.’ Hopefully we can just retain a small portion of the new people.”

IMAGINE

In the Imagine, look for new interior décor, including linoleum, wallboard, ceiling panel and valance, countertop, kitchen faucet and cabinet hardware and more.

This fall, the company will introduce **AIM—Adventure in Motion**. This is Grand Design’s first single-axle offering, aimed at midsize SUVs and features an 8-foot-wide platform, four seasons artic package, outside cooking griddle, power awning, StepAbove entry steps, 15-inch tire and wheel assembly, a 12V

refrigerator, walk-in showers and a roof-mounted solar panel.

“We are honored to introduce the all-new Imagine AIM sub-series to our valued dealer partners and customer base,” says product manager Eric Landis. AIM—“Adventure in Motion”—represents GDRV’s debut into the ever-popular and growing single-axle segment. Focused but not limited to the medium-sized SUV market, AIM set out to offer unique floorplans designed on a traditional 8-foot wide platform without deviating from our highest of quality standards our customer’s demand. Ranging from 3,500 pounds to 4,200 pounds, AIM floorplans and features will appeal to the off-grid enthusiast as well as the get-out-of-town weekenders.”

TRANSCEND XPLOR

With the first private bunkhouse for the Transcend brand, the double-slide bunkhouse model includes a front kitchen and non-slide couples coach with plenty of storage. The bunkhouse is 26 feet, and the unit also features a brand-new murphy bed floorplan, large bathroom, outdoor kitchen, and plenty of countertop space



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*According to Statistical Survey tracking of retail registrations in the U.S. for the calendar years of 2021 and 2022.

REV GROUP

FLEETWOOD | HOLIDAY RAMBLER

RV PRO spoke with Doug Miller, Fleetwood RV's product and inside sales manager, about these brands.

WHAT DOES FLEETWOOD AND HOLIDAY RAMBLER HAVE IN STORE FOR 2023?

"Let's start with our entry-level gas coaches. The latest changes to our Flair and Admiral family is a gray topcoat for a much more modern exterior appearance. We'll have the gray sidewall, the gray luggage and entry doors, plus new front caps in gray. We've found a lot of our accent colors tend to be on the darker side with the merlot or wine colors, as well as our cobalt or navy blue colors. Those both accent very well in the gray. We've also got a new floorplan in the Flair product called a 33B6. It's a nice bunkhouse floorplan with great access into the lav and good seating."

ANYTHING NEW IN THE GAS CATEGORY?

"On display for the first time at a major event such as this will be our new Fleetwood Flex and Holiday Rambler Eclipse motorhomes. They were actually a product that came to life out of necessity and something we thought would bring some value to our entire portfolio."

"The lineup was getting really large and the larger those floorplans got, the more options were offered on those. We were no longer competing with our competition out there at lower price points because we were overbuilding what we had in that segment, so we made a decision to split the floorplans and make a dressier line of those products."

"These coaches will have larger floorplans, full body paint, chrome accents, LED lighting, plus inside trendy composite flooring. Plus, the Flex and Eclipse will have larger multiplex panels as well as solid-surface tops. There are four different wood choices, too."





WHAT CHANGES ARE COMING FOR YOUR MIDDLE AND TOP GAS UNITS?

"The Fortis and Invicta will have new interiors as well as new exterior graphics with sharp lines. We've also done the same with Bounder and Vacationer; both will have new interior and exterior treatments.

"We'll also be displaying the Bounder 35GL, which debuted at the 2022 Florida RV SuperShow in January. It's a really nice, true mid-entry coach. This unit has a nice horseshoe galley, a comfortable dedicated living space that incorporates the driver-passenger seats in there, a very well-sized master bedroom with a very convenient bathroom.

"The nice thing about the location of the entry door on that floorplan is you come in just inside your galley and in front of your lavatory. It's gotten a lot of reviews from the dealers who have seen it and it made a nice splash at Tampa from the retail standpoint. Southwind will have this floorplan, too."

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOUR DIESEL COACHES?

"Pace Arrow received a lower body facelift with new luggage doors, as well as a new bunkhouse floorplan, the 35BP.

"We also were forced out of necessity to change our platform provider and, in doing so, took the opportunity to also change how we construct it. We were able to redesign that lower basement area to where we could increase our storage capacity, increase our access through the luggage door openings and, in doing so, we could reposition our tank configuration so we could increase our holding tank sizes.

"Our Frontier and Nautica now have a lighter and less costly platform: the Freedom Sport Foundation. Changing the platform allows us to open a lot of doors on the lower side of the coach. It also let us keep our center of gravity low and a lot of our weight is now below the beltline.

"We'll also introduce the GTX versions of those coaches and they'll be available in two floorplans, the 37RT and the 39TA. There's nothing we've seen that's ever been done like this. The 37 has a full master walk-in closet at the rear. That's the standard. It's absolutely fantastic for those who want to full time



REV GROUP

continued

FLEETWOOD | HOLIDAY RAMBLER

and want to take everything plus an extra kitchen sink with them. It even includes a hamper.

"The most exciting part is what we did to accommodate people who work from home and homeschool: The Corner Office. We took half of that walk-in closet at the back and put in a big window in the sidewall, made a place for a 24-inch monitor either on the wall or mounted on a swing arm, added plenty of outlets, and created a wonderful desk area for a laptop and a printer. Drawers are large enough for files, and we've got overhead cabinets for other office or teaching supplies. Sliding barn doors allow The Corner Office to be closed off from the rest of the coach, too.

"The 39TA has a single slide on the road side of the coach for the sofa and then a wardrobe slide on the same side. We intentionally left the entire patio side of the coach with no slide outs. On this particular floorplan, we wanted to make sure to put some focus on true resort and campground experiences, so the awning stretches out almost the entire length of the coach with plenty of space for chairs and tables underneath. We didn't really compromise any room on the inside because we went with the Adap-Table dinette configuration as the standard. That allows that dinette to do a bunch of different things, including the ability to be stowed, giving you a lot more floor space inside the coach."

HOW ABOUT THE REST OF DIESEL LINEUP AND AMERICAN COACH?

"The Endeavor and Navigator, as well as the Discovery and Discovery LX, will receive new decors and new wood choices as those coaches are still inside their product lifecycle. What we're really excited about is the new floorplans for American Coach.

"We've always thought of the American Coach customer as going to see America. They're always out on the road, driving from Point A to Point B, like all of our other customers are, but what we found was they like to spend a little bit more time in the places they really, really enjoy.

"That's why we're introducing the 45T (Tradition), 45D (Dream) and the 45E (Eagle). We created a floorplan that we really want the customer to walk in and see a hugely expansive opening that provides both great seating and a great entertaining area. The master occupies 35% of the coach and provides tons of storage, a private bath and a large shower.

"The island has a six-bottle wine chiller and our studio bar with big picture windows that are free of screens and bars for an unimpeded view. The bar chairs are raised, too, giving occupants a great view. This is a true destination coach."



LANCE CAMPER

Thanks to Bob Rogers, director of marketing for Lance Campers, for speaking with RV PRO about their offerings.



WHAT'S NEW WITH LANCE FOR 2023?

"There will be one to two new floorplans for travel trailers. We'll have some new standard and optional features. Probably about six to eight months ago in our '22 model year product, we transitioned about 80% of our optional features into standard because we built our product loaded anyway. As a result, our base MSRP went up substantially, but it's pretty much optioned out and we're going to carry that strategy over into '23 because that's how people want a Lance.

"Our dealers and customers this year asked us to hold the line on the changes from '22 to '23. We do a lot of running changes and they said, 'Let's get the changes settled down and let's just work on quality.' So, quality has been our primary focus and we've hired some new people in that department and all new processes. The REV Group has dictated all the manufacturing units to apply Lean manufacturing and the 5S system, so we've really focused on that and it's really helping our quality. We had pretty good quality before, but we want to make sure it continues and try to ratchet it up, if possible."

ANY NEW MODELS FOR 2023?

"The big news in all new product is the 2023 Lance Enduro. That is really exciting for us because we don't introduce new segments to the market too often. It's an

adventure trailer and it's designed for the off-the-grid boondocker who leads a very active lifestyle. It'll have an all-new construction technique that neither the trailers or the truck campers utilize. It's all composite and will be a very small, self-contained unit. The Enduro consists of a 12-foot box with a 19-foot overall length.

"The floorplan is a basically a front U-shaped dinette that converts to a queen bed with a rear wet bath with a cassette toilet and a shower. The kitchen is on the exterior across the rear. It'll also have a drop-down twin kids bunk over the dinette, so it'll sleep up to four inside. The rear exterior kitchen has a two-burner propane range with a Truma electric cooler-freezer. It'll also have a Truma Combi water heater system, which we use in some of our products today. There's also full solar capabilities with up to two 190-watt panels, a 2,000-watt inverter and up to two 100-amp hour lithium batteries. The Enduro also has 17-inch off-road wheels and 31-inch off-road tires.

"It also has some pretty cool

options, including a nice bike rack and a water filtration system, which is really unique because you can filter water from any source you have into drinkable water. It's got a rooftop tent option, so you can throw another two people on top. We'll also offer an optional 12-volt smart TV on the inside as well as an air conditioner option.

"The GVWR target range is 3,500 pounds, dry is 2,500 pounds, so figure a cargo weight of 1,000 pounds. Estimated MSRP is somewhere in the mid- to high-\$40,000 range."

WHAT WILL CUSTOMERS LOVE ABOUT THE ENDURO?

"We actually took the prototype to the SEMA Show last year. The second prototype is in production right now and that's what we'll be showing at the Open House. The 3,500-pound GVWR is a pretty aggressive target to hit, but we're going to try.

"I've been attending, with Lance, the Overland Expo Shows for seven years now, so I'm very familiar with the market.

I participate in the market personally, and I've seen it grow and it continuing to grow. I pushed pretty hard that we have a product like this. Looking at Stat Surveys, it'll tell you that the traditional teardrop market has had substantial growth over the last three to five years. When we started this project two years ago, there weren't that many but since then, you've seen it just explode. It was kind of internally developed based on us just looking at the market, not so much Stat Surveys, but more looking at the overland market.

"At SEMA last year, we got some voice-of-the-customer feedback there and it was off the charts. We heard, 'build this thing and when can I have it?' We came back and figured we've got to get this to market. Quite honestly, we should've been there a year and a half ago, or at least a year ago, but fortunately, there's nothing exactly like it.

"We're probably the first mass-producer to, in my opinion, build it right. Our demographic will go down by 20 years, at least, which we're really excited about."



REV GROUP

MIDWEST AUTOMOTIVE
DESIGNS

Jake Stephenson, director of sales for Midwest Automotive Designs, spoke with RV PRO about what's coming up for the company.

WILL MIDWEST DISPLAY ANYTHING NEW FOR 2023?

"We're not showing any new floorplans, but we have gone through and refreshed the entire interior of each model. We'll be showing all-new cabinetry and soft goods matched with them in new colors, as well as flooring in new colors, too. The inside look and feel of the units will be completely different because they're not the same colors as we've used in the past.

"Also, we went from a high-gloss finish on our cabinetry to a satin finish, which gives our interiors a real cutting-edge, modern look. It's indicative of what's going on in high-end luxury vehicles, yachts and airplanes."

WILL YOUR CLASS BS HAVE ANY MAJOR CHANGES MECHANICALLY FOR NEXT YEAR?

"We'll be showing an upgraded lithium package that's going to have double the power of our current offerings. Lithium is becoming more and more popular. It just makes the coach real usable because you can go out and dry camp. You don't have to go to a place that has services. You can be at a game, you can be at the beach, you can be anywhere you can drive the vehicle to and still have use of all

your amenities. We're bullish on lithium, and we're moving forward with a huge upgrade to our lithium offering.

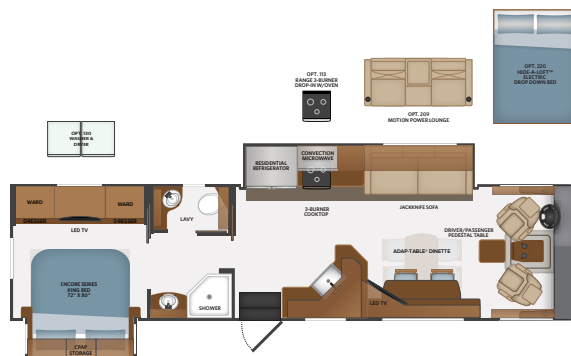
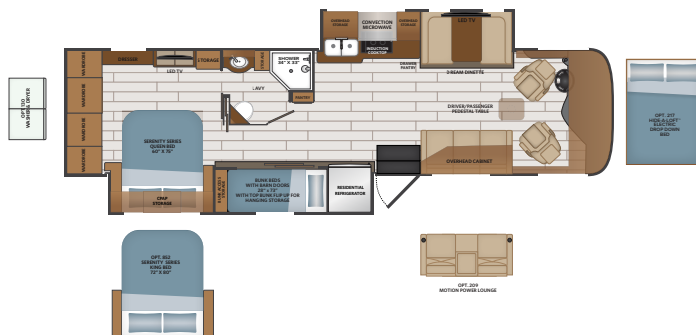
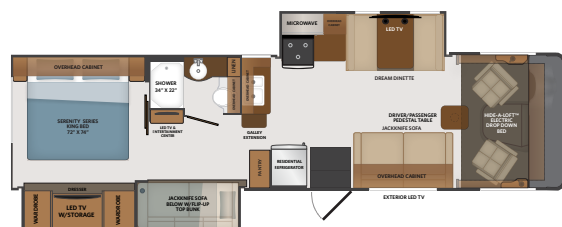
"Having that lithium upgrade is something we've had a lot of requests for, both from dealers and from customers. We came out with our lithium package probably three years ago, so it's definitely time to add some more power to it."

WILL THERE BE ANY EXTERIOR CHANGES ON YOUR 2023 MODELS?

"We already go the extra mile and paint all our cladding and bumpers and we do all the extra things out there that a lot of our competition doesn't do. Our units are all the way dressed out on the exterior to a high level of finish.

"We don't necessarily wait for new model years to make changes. If there's something that a customer asks us to address and there's a better widget out that's useable, we use it. We don't wait for a model year to make that change.

"Sometimes, too much change will take you off course from your key demographic and who you really are and who you're trying to sell. We're building top-end, high-quality, and the most beautiful Class B RV in the industry, so the changes with our product are probably a little more subtle than the manufacturer that's just trying to get in there and figure out who he is."





Workspace, technology— and a view the boss would kill for.

Introducing The Corner Office™
exclusively from Fleetwood.

The Corner Office™ turns the affordable Frontier GTX into the ultimate away-from-home office. An L-shaped desk, built-in monitor and plentiful outlets give you the technology, privacy and convenience you need—all in front of a large window. The Frontier GTX also features a spacious floor plan, increased storage and residential-quality appliances, all mounted on the high-performance Freedom Sport Foundation and innovative Freightliner Custom Chassis XCR chassis.

Step into The Corner Office, and see the rest of the amazing Frontier GTX at the Elkhart Dealer Open House.



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REV GROUP

RENEGADE RV

Dwayne Kazmierczak, Renegade RV's director of sales and marketing, spoke with RV PRO about its latest offerings.



WILL 2023 SEE ANYTHING NEW FROM RENEGADE?

"Our Valencia is getting a facelift inside and out, plus a new floorplan. That's really going to be our showcase. In everything else, we freshened some wood or accent colors since nothing else was due for any major revisions."

WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT THE NEW VALENCIA FLOORPLAN?

"It'll be called 36SB, and it's been an industry standard-type floorplan that we've had a ton of success with. It's a front entry design that gives you a good kitchen and a fair amount of storage. While there's nothing that will make someone say, 'I've never seen this before,' it just works. Year over year over year, we sell more of this floorplan in our Verona as the 36VSB than any other floorplan in any product we build. Nothing else is close. That's our No. 1 seller."

"It's got a king-size bed in it and a walkthrough-style bathroom where the toilet and the shower are separated so you have privacy there, but you can still get to the sink. The floorplan also has a big washer and dryer area or, if people chose not to use that, now it's got a big closet. It's laid out very proportionally to living. There's plenty of storage. In the back bedroom, you've got closets on either side and a TV in the middle."

WHAT ABOUT THE FACELIFT FEATURES?

"We had a big, cumbersome-looking boxy type of an overhead cab fiberglass piece on there. Now it's designed like the Verona, which got rave reviews for its cabover feature. It's much more sleek, more aerodynamic, it has the window in the front, and it looks more high-end. The rear cap is new as is the exterior paint. Our matching interior décors look better than previous years and are more contemporary, too. The estimated MSRP for the Valencia 36SB will be about \$320,000."

ANY NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR 2023 RENEGADES?

"We are doing a generator-delete option in the form of a lithium upgrade package available across the brands. The upgrade replaces the two standard 12-volt AGM batteries with four 120Ah low-temp lithium batteries. The inverter is upgraded to 3,000 watts plus the engine gets a second alternator. The unit also receives a 12-volt air conditioner. Without a generator, we can offer more storage, too."



PASSAGE



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Greatness is evident in the details. Our heritage reimagines luxury in form and function, bringing eye-opening transformation to what you may have expected. Midwest Automotive Designs' signature craftsmanship results in refined, distinguished, and precision-engineered luxury and comfort. Midwest starts with the legendary quality, performance, and engineering of the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter- the most advanced commercial vehicle today.

Midwest's experienced team will customize options and features to create a unique Sprinter vehicle that matches demanding needs and interests of today's discriminating buyers. All Sprinter models are fabricated throughout our in-house seating, wood, paint, and engineering facilities that have been optimized for high quality standards. This level of craftsmanship sets Midwest Automotive Designs apart within the industry- the reason we've been chosen by Mercedes-Benz as an approved upfitter of Sprinter vehicles.

MIDWEST AUTOMOTIVE DESIGNS
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Product will be on display at Elkhart Open House.

SEPTEMBER 2022 RV PRO 101

INDEPENDENTS

GULF STREAM COACH



For Gulf Stream Coach, Open House 2022 will be a bit of a birthday celebration.

"This is actually Gulf Stream Coach's 40th anniversary year. The anniversary year is 2023, so we start celebrating this October," says Paul Campbell, Gulf Stream's director of marketing. "The company started in 1983, and we decided to launch a new anniversary edition of our mainline travel trailers. These are conventional construction—what they call stick-and-tin—they range in size from 26 feet to about 40 feet, and it's at least a dozen floorplans that are going to have this anniversary edition designation. There will be some kind of commemorative edition graphics and interiors, new décor, and they'll have an enhanced list of standard features.

"Typically at Gulf Stream Coach we have a pretty long list of standard features, and there

are certainly options in addition to that. But when we try and build the balance, we put more weight on standard features and typically a shorter list of options. We want people to get a unit that is ... well-equipped. This will enhance that. People that are looking at the anniversary editions will be looking at well-equipped, luxury units."

That milestone marker is sure to attract eyeballs in Elkhart, but Gulf Stream Coach will also bring updates to its motorized coaches.

"We are building two different motorized lines of product now—the BT Cruiser and the Conquest Class C," Campbell said. "Both of those are getting major interior redesigns, with new interior wood, new upholstery, new flooring, new window treatments, walls, soft goods; just like we did a few years ago, everything is tailored to look like what is going into residential construction. Or what I call, resort construction.

"If you look at current design in (RVs), you are seeing the kind of thing that's found in hotel rooms, or hotel lobbies, or resort spaces—that kind of thing. They are certainly as up to date as most residential construction

is, and that's a good way to characterize the design decisions that are being made for interior space in our (units). This is 'resort wear'—you could call it that."

Back to towables, Campbell says the company's smaller, lighter-weight units have been gaining traction in that market.

Gulf Stream Coach will introduce three new floorplans to its entry-level category in the new model year. These are single- and double-axle units, Campbell said, and fall in the 21- to 26-foot range in length.

"They are filling the plants here, they are filling our production schedules and they are filling the parking lots on dealer lots," Campbell said of the company's decision to introduce the 192BS, the 178RB and the 177BH floorplans.

In the fiberglass laminated towables category, Campbell said a backlog continues on the company's popular Vintage Cruiser and Vista Cruiser, so no news there, but the SET series is getting eight new floorplans,

several of them in the 26- to 38-foot range, which will give a chance for original SET owners to upgrade.

"Most of those have not been built yet," Campbell says, but they'll be teased in Elkhart.

Also look for a Gulf Stream project getting a rebirth: stick-and-tin toy haulers.

"The way I put it is these are toy haulers for the rest of us," Campbell says. "These are not 40-foot palaces. These are 24- to 28-foot workingman's toy haulers."

The target audience? Those who want to take the money they'll save on their toy hauler and spend it on the toys they are hauling, Campbell says.

As the company gears up for its ruby anniversary celebration, Campbell says he and his team take pride in not only its staying power, but its ability to continue to produce high-quality products for its dealer-partners and consumers.

"Gulf Stream has emerged as the biggest family-owned manufacturer out of a field of what we figure were a couple of hundred builders back when we started in '83," Campbell says. And, he added as a justifiable point of pride, Gulf Stream Coach, of the five biggest names in the business, was the "fastest growing builder of conventional travel trailers and Class C motorhomes through last year," according to Statistical Surveys. "And we're maintaining that pace this year."



ALLIANCE RV

It's hard to believe Alliance RV only just launched in 2019.

The company wasn't long out of the gate when COVID-19 hit, which threw time out of whack for most everyone on the planet for a short while. But after a brief shutdown in spring of 2020, the company has been going like gangbusters and has since cultivated a solid footprint in the towables market with, first, its Paradigm, then its Valor and, last summer, the Anthem.

"Where we've been going with the product has really hit the nail on the head the last couple years," says Jeremiah Dumka, Alliance's GM of its Paradigm and Valor divisions. "We went to a top-selling brand in a short two-year span."

And given that this will be the company's first official Open House Week—thanks to cancellations the past two years—the team is excited to be showing product first-hand to dealers who know it and those who don't.

"This year we are doing some exterior revamps and interior revamps," Dumka says. "So what you'll see is a brand-new exterior at Open House. Still, the main focus on the front is the Alliance branding—nice, subtle, you'll still be able to tell it's a Paradigm but we have an all-new graphics package on that exterior. Also on the exterior we've added a full-body paint, which we're really excited about, to be able to capture some additional sales at that price point. Very nice, clean in design, same color pattern as what you'd see on the fifth wheel itself with a graphics package."

On the interior the Paradigm in 2023 has been "softened" up a little bit; lightened to go along with market trends, Dumka says.

But that's not the biggest interior change in the unit, says Dumka.

"A highlight through the Paradigm [line] is we've added a 20-cubic-foot, 12-volt refrigerator with a 320-watt solar panel and a 20-amp charge controller; that's standard on every single model. That was the last [model] to switch, but we're 100% invested in 12-volt refrigerators. We have had enormous success with the Valor, and with the Avenue, and now we're following suit with the Paradigm. It's just a better fridge—cools down quicker; it is by Norcold, who has been supplying us with the gas and electrics. They feel like this is the wave of the future, and as I've said, we've already seen noted success on both of our other products."

Dumka said two new Paradigm floorplans will debut at Open House, one of which is brand new: the 395-DS.

"It's a double suite, so it's got a king bed suite up in the front with a bedroom/bathroom, and it's got a queen bed suite in the back with a loft overhead with a bedroom/bathroom. We're super excited about it, really nice, full-timing coach. Anybody that doesn't want to put their kids in a bunkhouse, or you've got that full-timer with a teenager, or multifamily where you've got a couple in-laws."

"On the north end, up at the head of the unit, you've got a bedroom and then on the south end you've got a bedroom, U-shaped kitchen, massive pantry, tons of storage—inside and out—and then it also has a loft in the back."

The 382RK—an upgrade on the 372RK—has a rear kitchen and what Dumka says is the company's No. 1 selling bed/bath deck. It comes with a front batch, plus a half-bath and a "massive" kitchen. Three different seating arrangements are available.

"Those are just now starting to trickly out onto dealer lots; I'll bet 25% of them will have one by the



Open House, and then that 395 will be heading out right at Open House," he says.

As for the Valor, Alliance is getting into the travel trailer market in the coming year but Dumka notes the units will still have "that Valor exterior look."

Look for three new travel trailer floorplans for the Valor in Elkhart in late September.

As for the Avenue, it just came out last July so there aren't a ton of tweaks to report, according to Ab Saleh, general manager for that division.

What is new is the Avenue All-Access series, he says.

"It's us trying to redefine the category," he said.

"We want to be very transparent with what our focus and our goal is with this product, and it's primarily two things: its

length—so this category will range from 28 to 32 feet—and its pin weight. We want to make sure that we're focusing on our pin weights and our length. That's what we've found is most important to consumers in this category. It's not necessarily weight. So that's what All Access is—All Access simply means more accessibility—getting into state parks, getting into national parks, tighter spaces, RV storage, etc. Those are always things that come up with consumers and they are what we have done with this particular category."

Alliance is just starting to roll the All-Access units off the line, Saleh said. The initial floorplan, the 46RD, is being followed by a couple more that should be finalized and ready to show by Open House Week.



INDEPENDENTS

EMBER RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

Having cut the ribbon at its brand-new manufacturing facility in Bristol, Indiana, in November 2021, Ember Recreational Vehicles is still very much the new kid on the block in terms of manufacturers.

"Our product has kind of been in continuous development since we began," says Chris Barth, vice president and chief operating officer. "We were really in the mode of—this year so far—continuing our launch and getting to the first floorplans that we planned out; that took quite some time, to get through the first five floorplans that were in the launch. There was a sixth floorplan that came about from a huge amount of consumer demand."

Given that this is the company's first Open House Week, Barth and co-founder Ashley Bontrager Lehman are excited to be able to get their products in front of dealers who haven't had the chance to see them firsthand yet—and in fact, perhaps pick up a few partners, as the company still has wide-open sales territories in some states.

Ember launched with two basic models, the Overland and the Overland Micro Series. One thing the company has learned in the past year is that demand for the Overlands has been much heavier than with the Overland Micros.

Early on, Barth says, the founders decided they would attend and bring product to Overland Shows, which draw a slightly different crowd than traditional RV shows. They're huge shows, he says, and the crowd is a good match for Ember's products. The company is attending four this year.

"Ashley has done a fantastic job of cultivating a pretty wide social media umbrella for us, so there's lots of good stuff where we see interactions come in where we're trying to ask customers and ask potential customers to give us more feedback," Barth says. "So, we got a lot of feedback that developed into another product that we call the 191MSL. And that 191MSL—which our team affectionately called 'the missile,' MSL—is a Murphy bed unit with a specialty sofa slide and then a rear locker. And this is the one that we've taken to some of these overland expos.

"Ashley initially challenged our team to do the best Murphy bed concept in the industry. She gave us some characteristics and directives about making sure there wasn't bedsheets hanging out and all sorts of complicated latching systems. The whole idea of a Murphy bed is to make it look like it disappears into the wall. I think when Ashley and Sherlin Miller, our director of sales, and

myself were on the road during show season, I think we found out we may have done almost too good a job. We had a lot of customers who'd come into the coach, and it would either be myself or Ashley or Sherlin explaining that there was a bed hiding in there—because they didn't see where it was on the wall. So we felt like that was a big win, and also one of those things where we had to bring customer awareness to what we did there."

The 191MSL is now in its second run and Barth traces its popularity to just how versatile it is.

"They're loving on the 191MSL—what I called the 'missile' because of its special rear locker—no one else has ever done this in the industry. It's got an adjustable bunk area that can become storage shelving, that can become a desktop, that can become straight up your hauling area, your storing area. You can get the e-Bikes in there, a kayak, a personal watercraft or any of that other gear you can load in there. Or your own outside, deluxe kitchen gear. People got very, very excited about that and it was really them asking us again and

again, 'Hey could I get it this way? I'd really love it if you'd do this, I'd really love it if you'd do that,' and we wanted to give them what they wanted."

Both industry veterans, Barth and Bontrager Lehman started planning what they call a different kind of RV company way ahead of the day that ribbon was cut in Bristol in 2021, and so far, a year into it, they seem to be succeeding.

"As a company, our goals are different than are others that are within the industry," Barth said. "We are trying to establish our first relationships and partnerships with dealers on the ground, as well as getting those first customers excited and interested in what we think is a little bit different way of RVing—more off-road ability, more off-grid ability—and really the idea that maybe you don't need a traditional campground the same way or maybe your camping style can be highly customized to your experience."





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INDEPENDENTS

NEXUS RV



2022 was a very busy year for NeXus RV.

It built two new buildings since January—one to house its welding and lamination departments and another to be fully devoted to manufacturing its Class Cs. Built on a Ford chassis, this has been a big seller for the company and devoting a building to it will ease production on it and other lines immediately, according to Dave Middleton, the company's co-founder and president.

But the big news that visitors to the NeXus camp at Open House will discover is the new Super C being manufactured at its current facility—called the Silverado Super C.

Built on the Chevy Silverado chassis with a Duramax diesel engine, Middleton said he expects this one to make a big splash in the market.

"It will be by far be the most aggressively priced Super C diesel in the market by \$25,000 to \$30,000," he says. "It's going to be well-equipped. The 4 x 4 market is taking off in the Super C category, and we felt that with rising prices, and the categories that we currently offer continuing to go up, [it was time to] introduce a new brand, which we will be showcasing at the Open House, which is a 28-foot full wall slide with a washer/dryer, and a 32-foot double slide with a washer/dryer.

We're excited about that product; we are going to be calling it the Silverado Super C, and it will be on the Chevy Silverado package with a 4 x 2, and then we will be offering a 4 x 4 as well."

This is not the only new thing NeXus has up its sleeve but it's the one Middleton said will likely draw the most attention. The company's research has shown there's a market for it and that's the audience NeXus is going after.

"This will be a very basic unit. It will be fully equipped, with 50-amp service, A/C, furnace, electric awning, refrigerator, inverter—but it will not have full-body deluxe paint. We're not going to load it out with solid-surface countertops, all upgraded plush furniture, because we found that there is a market for that basic Super C. And the fact that someone can get into a Super C for \$30,000 less than what's on the market, and it's equipped with a Duramax diesel, it'll tow 15,000 pounds, it has rear air ride, OnStar, along with our construction of all high-strength, low-alloy steel, fiberglass

seamless roof, ducted A/C, side-opening compartment doors—it's going to be fully equipped for them to enjoy at a price they can afford."

Attendees to Open House will notice changes across the entire family of NeXus RVs.

"The other thing we've done throughout this year is all new paints—all exterior paint schemes on all our lineups; all new interiors—new cabinetry, new flooring, new furniture, new faucets, new hardware, new handles," Middleton says. "We really freshened up our look throughout our lineup. We're excited because no matter what product you come to look at you're going to see a new product from the outside and a new look on the interior."

In Elkhart, NeXus will be displaying its products in what it calls a "camping simulation area"—a relaxed indoor setting that will offer a welcome respite in case the weather turns sour. There is one other change the company went through that won't be front-and-center noticeable at Open House, but it's one its dealers are sure to like.

"With the way the vendors are in these crazy times we're in, we have simplified it," Middleton said. "So instead of choosing three different cabinetries, four different floorings, four different fabrics—it's all been all over the board—now, we've streamlined it to say, 'OK, here's the two best looks.' We've had people come in, look at it, and say 'OK, if you're going to go with slate cabinetry, here's the fabric, here's the valances, here's the flooring.' And then if you go with frost, which is our new cabinet—which is a white interior with a black trim—here's your fabric, here's your flooring, here's what that will look like."

"So from a standpoint of production, the quality will be increased, we'll streamline on ordering parts so we'll have less shortages, and all around it's just more convenient for us to make sure we have the materials on hand to build consistently. The dealers like it because it's easier to order a product, and it's what they've been ordering 90% of the time anyway."



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INDEPENDENTS

LEISURE TRAVEL VANS

Leisure Travel Vans, a brand of Triple E RVs, promises a couple new products when the company makes its pre-Open House Week appearance at the Hershey Show in Pennsylvania.

As of this writing details were still being finalized, but the company shared some features to look for in model year 2023.

Start with the exterior paint options for both the Wonder and the Unity. They include Euro Sport, Atlantic Blue, Champagne, White Suede and Glacier.

Opening the door and stepping inside, Leisure Travel Vans feature Ultraleather upholstery, a high-performance fabric, as the company describes it, "with ultimate comfort intertwined. Ultraleathers create uniquely sensorial and soothing surroundings. Ultraleather unites Japanese craftsmanship, state-of-the-art technology, and innovation focused on sustainability."

The company's cabinetry options for the 2023 model year reflect what it calls "the unwavering oak trend." All Unity and Wonder models are now

available in White Oak, Rift Oak, and Mocha cabinetry options.

For flooring, the vans both offer soft grey concrete tile that the manufacturer says is "the perfect yet subtle statement with any of its cabinetry selections."

In terms of décor shades: in the Unity, updates include Dove replacing Fog, Clay replacing Mountain and Mocha replacing Espresso. For the Wonder, it's Sand replacing Earth, Atlantic Blue replacing Denim and White Oak replacing Cashmere.

Looking closer at the Unity in 2023, you'll find some new standard features, including:

Multiplex wiring control systems—The company says it is designed to make monitoring and controlling all of the RV's various electrical components simple. Battery and tank level settings, lighting and climate control settings and water pump operations can all be controlled with a mobile app using Bluetooth.

LED ceiling light panels with dimmer—Soft, diffused lighting along with strategic accent lighting create just the right mood for any time of day or night.

Coach-to-cab floor extension—With the extension of the surface of the coach, the step-down has been removed to create a level living surface throughout the entire unit, and in fact, the usable floor space has been increased.

Not to be outdone, new standard features on the '23 Wonder include:

2022 Ford Transit's updated SYNC 4—The latest generation of SYNC 4 features an all-new 12-inch screen, and also the Intelligent Adaptive Cruise Control and Intersection Assist.

Relocated entry door with additional passenger-side window—The company says that repositioning the entry



door opens up the dinette area, making meal times more comfortable and roomy. The additional window adds more natural light and provides a more expansive view of the outdoors.

And like the Unity, the Wonder features the coach-to-cab floor extension, offering more usable floor space and an easier coach to clean with no step-down into the cab.





TAB 400

The 2023 floor plan for the TAB 400 features a one-of-a-kind hidden bunk bed. This innovative new set up allows sleeping for up to 4 people when you're out on an adventure.

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INDEPENDENTS

NUCAMP

This Sugarcreek, Ohio-based manufacturer is primarily known for its distinctive teardrop campers, and it has long claimed the mantle of the world's top manufacturer of this unique style of towable.

A couple of years ago the company branched out and added truck campers to the mix, and today offers two models of them.

A few things in nuCamp's upcoming model year units will be shared across all styles

and models. First, through a partnership with Battle Born, every unit will offer an optional lithium-ion battery package. All of the units will also be fitted with new Wago connectors, "which really makes operation and troubleshooting so much easier from an electrical standpoint," says CEO Scott Hubble.

"Those are the changes that are universal for every teardrop and truck camper."

The rest of the major changes in '23 are coming in two particular models: the TAB 400 teardrop and the 820 travel trailer.

All of nuCamp's teardrops will be going with a hard-sided underbody panel versus the corrugated underbelly they've had up until now. That will better protect from road debris, Hubble says.

But fans of the TAB 400 will have much more to dig into with the new model year—particularly on the interior.

"We're going to eliminate our second floorplan option; there will be only one floorplan for the 400," Hubble says.

"Currently, you can choose between a three-way fridge and



a two-way fridge. No longer, we're just going to be just giving the 12-volt compressor fridge, standard. So the three-way fridge is no longer an option.

"That allows us to do a number of things. One of the things that we've done is redesign the bathroom for some greater function. And that trickled over into the dinette, where we're introducing a hidden bunk, something you can't see, but everybody's going to get it. It's not an option. ... So, we'll have sleeping for four.

"In the sleeping area, we're going to have a drawer underneath the bed. Currently it's storage that you have to lift up the mattress to access.

"And then underneath the bed, towards the rear, is where we would be housing the Battle Born lithium package, and in the 400, it's 400 amp-hours with a 3,000-watt inverter."

nuCamp added European-

inspired travel trailers to its product mix in 2019, seeking to carve out a new niche in the overall market.

Today it offers two models, the 620 and the 820, and while new model year changes are minimal on the 620, that's not true on the latter.

"On the outside, we've had this signature ABS (a thermoplastic material) cap on the rear of the unit since the inception back in 2015," says Hubble. "That's going to go away. We're going to emulate the rear design of the 620.

"We're also going to install some lights under the rear bumper to sort of produce underglow for nighttime functions. And we're also going to incorporate a new ladder, so there's some slight design changes on the outside.

"On the interior, we've redesigned the dinette. We're moving to a raised dinette,



which allows for greater seating capacity—so it's a little more functional—more leg room, and then more importantly, we've got new battery storage directly below.

"We had a bunch of overhead storage, and that cabinet piece is curtailed back into a storage shelf, and the cabinets that were for storage above are being moved below. So there's standard storage as well as storage for the Battle Born system.

"Also, the 820 will be deleting the three-way fridge that we've had and we'll be rolling with the same two-way compression fridge that is available now in the 400 unit.

"The Battle Born package in this unit is going to be 500 amp-hours with a 3,000-watt inverter."

Hubble said to look for nuCamp at Open House near the RV/MH Hall of Fame, close to the Aliner setup.



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INDEPENDENTS

INTECH

InTech has showcased its wares at the annual Open House for many years, but this year it plans to do things differently.

The company recently built two new facilities, so instead of setting up displays at the RV Hall of Fame, InTech plans to invite dealers to visit them there.

InTech RV recently opened a 150,000-square-foot facility for its RV, motorsports and custom trailer operations. The new facility includes 150,000 square feet of manufacturing space and an attached two-story corporate office building.

"We started this project a year before the pandemic. With construction and supply chain delays, we are just now moving into it," says Keith Fishburn of InTech. "We went from being very tight in our old 47,000-square-foot space to having some room to grow. It will give us room to spread our wings."

The new facility also helps the company meet its commitment to quality and builds in room for added creativity.

"If we want to change or tweak something, we can do it here with our own people on our own equipment," Fishburn says. "We've added additional CNC machines, edge banding machines, and more to elevate our products to even higher quality."

The company also will debut a host of new product offerings at the Open House. Visitors will see a completely revamped Flyer product line with a fresh look and features.

The company also will officially launch the OVR, which Fishburn describes as an "upscale adventure camper" with a rugged, off-grid setup. The line will offer trailers to toy haulers that range in size from 23 feet to 30 feet.

Because the company designs its RVs for off-grid camping, it builds every unit with all-aluminum frames and cage constructions that are welded together. "We have a very robust design and build that people are familiar with," Fishburn says. "The OVR has even more strength. We designed it for intense situations. It offers a large ground clearance and other things that allow people to get off the beaten path. It has a rugged exterior finish but inside it's a very elegant camper, with finishes much more in line with our Terra line."

The new products meet growing consumer demand for off-grid campers in more compact designs.

"Our 30-foot OVR toy hauler version is the largest RV product we offer," he says. "Most of our stuff is single axles in the 20- to 25-foot range. And with the high-quality, strong build of the product, we do not limit users to just paved roads. They can go into more remote areas."



The new unit will offer a fairly robust solar system. Fishburn says the company also plans to introduce additional solar programs.

"Right now, our robust solar systems run the entire unit," he says. "But we plan to introduce smaller solar systems that give users access to some power in a smaller, more affordable version."

The OVR comes in several floorplans. The toy hauler version will offer 14 feet of garage space with an east to west queen bed. "Occupants can walk around the foot of the bed, but the design is a little more compact to keep it from becoming a 35-foot trailer," he says. "The toy hauler will feature a kitchen and wet bath design as well."

The OVR also comes in a 23-foot version with a twin bed configuration up front, a large dinette area in the back, and a drop-down bunk.

"We made it a little more family friendly and up to five people can sleep inside that unit," he says.

The 27-foot OVR layout will draw from the popular Terra line, which offers a queen bed designed for walking around, a dry bath and a large dinette area in the back.

"A neat thing about all OVR RVs is the focus on windows," Fishburn adds. "Every unit has a lot of windows to bring in plenty of natural light."

InTech sets up all RVs units with 2-inch receivers on the back with 175-pound ratings so users can bring their bikes along. A focus on storage allows users to bring all gear needed for outdoor adventures.

"We try to provide ample storage spaces so users can do all these activities and have plenty of room to put their gear when they're not using it without taking up space within the camper," he says.



ECLIPSE RV

A new “attitude” is coming to the market from Eclipse RV, based out of Riverside, California.

Eclipse is introducing a fresh new look for the interior and exterior of its flagship Attitude toy hauler, including a new front cap, says President Joanne Trealoff.

“We have a new gel-coated front cap that is UV coated. It’s an Enduro product that is acrylic-based, high-gloss and scratch resistant. It will be eye catching,” Trealoff says.

The Attitude often makes an appearance at Polaris ATV’s RZR weekend. If you look at Eclipse’s website, Attitude is the official

toy hauler of RZR toys. National Sales Manager Kevin Flores often attends the event.

“When RZR makes any modifications to their off-road vehicles, they will let us know, so we can make sure to update our garages and what we are building,” Flores says. “We actually changed our 2023 models to make sure they fit the new toys.”

Flores also noted that the off-grid packages for the Attitude are much beefier than most others on the market.

“We have a 330-watt solar panel that we went outside the industry for our customers. Depending on the model, we can fit up to nine panels that use a Vitron MPE controller for two 3,000-watt Vitron inverters. It allows customers to run two to three air conditioners at once,” Flores says.

Trealoff shares that, in one

demonstration of what Eclipse can do off-grid, they ran a unit 24-7 for six months.

From a technology standpoint, RV technicians will notice that Eclipse models will have a more simply wired system that is centralized for easier service. Some models will come with residential-style appliances and TVs. On the roof are 13,500 BTU low-draw, 30-amp, high-efficiency air conditioners made by General Electric.

Trealoff says that Eclipse is moving toward greater technology advances to meet state regulations. RVs in California are to be generator free by 2024.

“We are testing high-amp lithium batteries that can help meet standards,” Trealoff says.

The Attitude, like all their models, comes in the LE, ProLite and WideBody series with roughly a half dozen floorplans for each, so that consumers can find the Attitude that fits them.

The Stellar toy hauler will also come with new graphics and interiors. Flores says each change is based on changing

customer needs and feedback. The Stellar will also have new cabinet doors and fabrics. The interiors come in Redondo, La Jolla and Delmar styles.

The Iconic toy hauler rounds out their lineup and, like all their toy haulers, comes in both travel trailer and fifth wheel classes. The Iconic comes with the Golden Gate, Pismo, Carmel and Manhattan interiors.

The interiors have always been a point of pride for Trealoff.

“Dating years back, I was coming up with ideas for updated interiors. I would attend home shows and keep up to date on trends,” Trealoff says.

Dealers can find Eclipse RV at the Hall of Fame site during Open House week.

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INDEPENDENTS

ROADTREK

RV Pro talked with Len McDougall, head of sales for Roadtrek.

Roadtrek Inc. has always specialized in Class B motorhomes, although founder Jac Hanemaayer didn't necessarily have that in mind when he began designing his own model with Home & Park Vehicles Limited in 1974.

However, the company has always been focused on combining the comforts of a larger motorhome with a compact and easy-to-drive van.

The focus of Roadtrek really took shape when Hanemaayer redesigned the vehicle to have the sweeping roofline, lowered floor, and three-section floorplan for which its models are known. Today, its full line of Class B coaches is built on Mercedes and RAM Pro Master chassis, which range in size and style to suit any RV lifestyle, including this year's newest offering, the Pivot.

WHAT STANDS OUT ABOUT THE PIVOT?

Built on the RAM 3500 HD EXT, the new Roadtrek Pivot provides great storage convenience for adventurous travelers and four-passenger seating. The forward-facing bench seating directly behind the cab area keeps conversations and meal-time cozy and very social. The Pivot chassis is packed with many of today's progressive safety, entertainment and technology features, including blind spot monitoring, digital rear-view mirror, auto high beams, a 10-inch touchscreen, GPS and Apple Car Play. A favorite feature of the Pivot is the wide-tread power fold-away entry doorsteps that make getting in and out of the van safe and easy.

A real highlight of the new floorplan is the Duo Space bathroom design, which helps minimize the overall floorplan space needed for the bathroom. The user will have the space and comfort desired for the toilet stall and can also create a separate shower. The unique design features a concealed swivel wall panel that can pivot closed to allow showering without getting the vanity, toilet and other amenities wet, or pivoted back to expose the other bathroom amenities. The bathroom also features a round white basin, storage alcoves for toiletries, a shower column with plexiglass cladding, showerhead and towel rail. The Pivot features a cassette toilet convenience unique to this model, which expands the travel options for finding a convenient facility to empty the waste tank.

Other features include heightened opposing rear bed base cabinets, a fold-away mattress system, Trauma Combi Plus Heating/Hot Water System, Firefly tablet-style coach control panel, induction stove, 600-amp lithium battery system, 3,000-watt inverter, 300-watt solar, and Roadtrek's popular door screen system. The optional Pivot Slumber pop-top provides upper-level entertainment and additional sleeping space.

WHAT ARE THE PIVOT'S TOP FIVE FEATURES?

The social-friendly four-seatbelt-equipped cab area; abundant interior storage; the innovative duo-space bathroom; luxury exterior styling, including stealthy full-body paint and powered entry steps; and the high-capacity 600-amp lithium-based battery management system.

WHAT HOLE OR NICHE DOES THE PIVOT FILL IN THE MARKET?

The Pivot is built to be versatile, easy to drive and adaptable. Pivot also symbolizes the starting point of a new life journey fueled by the free spirit for adventure and self-fulfillment.

WHAT WILL CUSTOMERS LOVE ABOUT THE PIVOT?

Customers will love how sensible the balance of smart floorplan design blends with providing practical amenities. The ease of operation and well-thought choices for travel conveniences, such as great storage, high-capacity battery reserves and premium luxury appearance will reward owners with peace-of-mind travel.

WHAT KIND OF FEEDBACK DID YOU GET FROM CUSTOMERS TO CREATE THE PIVOT?

We are listening to an overwhelming free spirit of people eager to Pivot away from routine. These customers are passionate for change and ready for a new journey of adventure and self-fulfillment.

CAN YOU SUM UP WHY ROADTREK IS EXCITED ABOUT THE PIVOT?

The Pivot model is a new direction away from our current floorplan designs and with the introduction of several new components we look forward to giving customers more choice of conveniences that may be uniquely beneficial to their specific journey.

Roadtrek is also making updates to other selected models, including the Roadtrek Zion, Zion SRT, Chase and Zion Slumber. They include several optional exterior custom paint packages, a new Willow Sage interior décor designed to be calming with soft hues of sage green door fronts, against a light backdrop of grey-white base cabinetry. Those models will also feature Truma Appliances, including the Aqua Go Comfort Hot Water System, and the Vario Heat Comfort Furnace System.

Updates to the Play, Play Slumber and Play SRT include an interior featuring a creamy malt as a subtle canvass of modern décor. The Play Series models will also be available with optional Solar Panels and bundled TV package.

The SS Agile will also feature the new Willow Sage interior décor and Truma Appliances, including the Aqua Go Comfort Hot Water System, and the Vario Heat Comfort Furnace System.

All Roadtrek Promaster models will come with two-year free emergency roadside assistance, a two-year Roadtrek warranty and a five-year or 60,000-mile powertrain limited warranty, and three-year, 36,000-mile bumper to bumper coverage.

Roadtrek will be located along the Executive Parkway on route to the RV Hall of Fame.

TRAVEL LITE

Travel Lite is getting even lighter these days, according to National Sales Manager Keith Lessner.

The truck camp manufacturer will be creating a new product called the Atom 400, representing the atom as the smallest amount particle of an element.

The Atom 400 is designed to be under 1,000 pounds. According to Lessner, the unit is designed for the Jeep Renegade, Toyota Tacoma, Nissan Frontier and Ford Maverick series of trucks.

Truck camper product manager Trevor Fonfara says no one else is operating in this space.

"It has an aluminum structure along with a foam composite frame to get the wood out," says Fonfara.

The Atom 400 will have removable jacks and will be brand new to Travel Lite's lineup. Also new will be the company's 24SUR toy hauler.

The 24SUR will come equipped at 3,500 pounds and will be rated to hold up to 3,000 pounds, which means it can be towed by a mid-sized SUV. The toy hauler will be able to hold a four-seat Polaris RZR. It will come with all aluminum cabinets that are outdoor rated. It has Azdel composite material and hydro-lite walls with a one-piece fiberglass roof.

Lessner says, "We got almost

all the wood out of it. It will come with heavy-duty side-mounted stabilizer jacks, a 13,500 BTU air conditioning system, and an option for a patio kit rail option."

The unit will retail for under \$60,000 MSRP.

The 24SUR travel trailer will have a floorplan that includes a front bedroom with a mid-kitchen that sleeps three.

The 2023 Rove Lite travel trailer will come as a mid-model year change that comes standard with Tuson Sway Control, 4-inch square aluminum tube within the bumper for sewer hose storage and backup camera prep. Two

options include an offroad package with 15-inch wheels and a \$2,000 option to have it remote controlled for late model editions.

"The remote-control aspect is attached to the unit, so you can control it when you get to the campground (after you have unhitched) and back it into place within the campsite. You get to avoid those couple arguments as you show up and try to back it in," Lessner says.



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INDEPENDENTS

SUNSET PARK RV

There's nothing better than a photo-worthy Sunset in the great outdoors—a Sunset Park RV, that is.

The Indiana-based company's travel trailers and toy haulers are hard to miss, even miles off the grid. The colorful and quirky units are often being posted on social media by Sunset Park owners, who prefer the North American wilderness at its heart.

"We're a niche product. We build floorplans that not a lot of other companies build to begin with," says Bobby Fish, the manufacturer's vice president of sales and marketing. "...We try to fill in gaps at dealerships with extra colors. They're getting ultra-light, small floorplans."

The company's new Volt series will debut at Open House this

year, with two new floorplans in its Sunray line. The fully off-grid, 12-volt travel trailers have aluminum frames and chassis, fiberglass sides and "do everything from heating, cooling, hot water, A/C, cooking" and more entirely off-grid, Fish says.

"They're solar powered with inverters to use gas, solar and battery," Fish says. "We're looking at keeping it under 2,000 pounds for a 20-foot trailer. It's ultra-lightweight."

Sunset Park offers three product lines: the Sunrays, which are lightweight and sporty off-grid campers that often catch the eye of Jeep owners and alike; the

Sun-Lites, a standard build with rear doors; and toy haulers, made in smaller batches.

The majority of Sunset Park units boast a 6-inch lift and sport tires for extra clearance, Fish says. Custom orders coming from its 150 dealers across the U.S. and Canada are common, as are exteriors with bright red or orange, rich blues or crisp black and white.

The Sun-Lite brand is in the sunshine, too, with one new floorplan that Fish says isn't a common one. The 21-foot, quad-bunk trailer is a lightweight unit that was debuted in the past and is making a reappearance at Open House.

"You get on social media and there's a lot of young couples, solo campers and Jeep people who buy our trailers. That's really who we go after," Fish says.

"The RV customer has a routine. They buy small, then get into bunkhouses and bigger units. Then one day, they trade it in for something smaller when they're older. It's a good life cycle, and we fit in either right in the beginning or right in the end."

Sunset Park RV will debut its new floorplans at its factory during Open House week.





Sunset RV's travel trailers and toy haulers are hard to miss in fun, bright colors that appeal to young couples and campers and "Jeep people," according to Bobby Fish, Sunset RV's vice president of sales and marketing.

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INDEPENDENTS

XTREME OUTDOORS

**LITTLE GUY TRAILERS**

As the founder of Little Guy Trailers and now director of sales for Xtreme Outdoors, Joe Kicos knows small trailers and campers don't have to be small in amenities or comfort. The Little Guy Micro Max came online early this year and has already won plenty of plaudits. Manufactured at the Xtreme Outdoors plant in Somerset, Pennsylvania, Kicos says there's nothing undersized about the newest addition to the company's "Max" line.

The Micro Max was named as one of RV PRO's Best New Models of 2022.

WHAT'S NEW ABOUT THE MICRO MAX?

It's something that's been on the table for a few years now. The idea is to produce a smaller version of our other Max trailers but with a full line of features.

WHAT STANDS OUT THE MOST ABOUT IT?

It's small, it's lightweight and it's garageable, which is a big deal. We're talking about 1,800 pounds, so you're getting to the point where a Subaru or Jeep can tow it. And you can put it in a standard 7-foot garage, which is important for people who live in condominium associations where you can't park something in the driveway, or it must go into storage. The other thing is that if you're 5 foot, 10 inches, you can stand up in it.

WHAT ARE ITS FIVE TOP BEST FEATURES?

The garageability is a big one, and being ultralightweight at 1,800 pounds, is another. Being able to stand up is especially important. The floorplan, which allows you to seat six adults at two dinettes or sleep three is a big selling feature. And it's all synthetic composites. The floor is fiberglass, and the walls and roof are gel-coated fiberglass with Azdel. The composites are built for longevity.

WHAT ARE THE SPECS FOR THE MICRO MAX?

- Dry weight: 1,860 pounds
- Tongue weight: 245 to 260 pounds
- Overall length: 15 feet, 11 inches
- Overall width: 6 feet, 8 inches
- Exterior height: 6 feet, 10.5 inches and 7 feet, 2.5 inches
- Interior height: 5 feet, 9 inches
- Fresh water: 12 gallons
- Grey water: 8.5 gallons

WHAT NEW TECHNOLOGY OR ACCESSORIES ARE INCLUDED IN THE MICRO MAX?

It has the same technology we use in all our models. That includes Euro-style acrylic windows with integrated shades and screens, dovetail construction maple hardwood cabinetry and a 19-inch Jensen TV on an extending mount.

WHAT'S THE COLOR SCHEME OR PAINT GRAPHICS? INTERIOR DESIGN?

For the exterior, you can have white sidewalls and a white roof to have an all-white unit, or you can have an all-silver unit, or

white and silver. There are also different accents you can have on it. The interior is going to be all maple hardwood, and we have 4-inch padded cushions with marine-grade vinyl upholstery.

WHAT HOLE DOES THIS FILL IN THE MARKET?

We're coming into some extremely high gas prices, but people still want to get out and they still want to camp. They may not want to buy a new vehicle to pull a brand-new trailer, but they can use their existing car and buy one of our units and still go camping, still go outside and still be able to tow it.

WHY WILL CUSTOMERS LOVE THIS UNIT?

They're going to love the overall functionality and they're going to love the floorplan because it's so open and we're utilizing every inch of it in this unit—just like our other Max units. And, what they'll like most is the quality. We're a low-volume, high-quality builder of luxury teardrops.

WHAT KIND OF CUSTOMER**FEEDBACK DID YOU GET TO HELP CREATE THIS PRODUCT?**

There's a segment out there that wants lightweight units, and they want garageability. They also love to be able to stand up. At the same time, they like the versatility because it has everything they need—air-conditioner, sink, stove, appliances, all with a residential feel.

WHY IS THE COMPANY EXCITED ABOUT THIS UNIT?

It's incredibly unique. You can put a grill on the outside, you can have your TV outside and you can have speakers outside. It has an external hot water shower, as well. You can really load this up with accessories, but the main thing is you have a Subaru or a Jeep and you're looking to go out camping and have everything you need and could possibly want, the Micro Max puts it all in a 15-foot trailer. It has everything going for it.

Time permitting, we will have another floorplan available to be seen at Open House. It will have a new and different floorplan that includes a cassette toilet.



ATIA RV

Atia TIA-RV will be on hand at Elkhart Open House week with six floorplans ranging from the GU-147 to the GU-187QB.

All ATIA-RVs are garage-able units, hence the "GU" at the beginning of the floorplan designation.

Each unit is a different take on the pop-up, with these units extending from 80 inches to 95 inches with a 6-foot, 3-inch

interior height. Owner Iva "Nick" Nicholas believes in keeping things simple and not creating floorplans just to have a floorplan.

"The GU-147 is one on our most popular that fits well for mom and pop. It's a great unit if you have never owned an RV before," says Nicholas. "It's just over 2,000 pounds with a 14-foot box and 16-foot length, so it's easy to tow."

The GU-147 comes with front dinette and bed conversion. All units have an 8,000 BTU in-wall air-conditioning system, 40-inch tub, 6-gallon water

heater, 20-gallon freshwater tank and a 20-gallon grey and wastewater tanks.

The largest unit, the GU-187QB, has a queen walk-around bed and weighs under 2,600 pounds dry weight, with a GVWR of 3,500 pounds. It can easily be towed by a lightweight truck. The unit comes with an 8,000 BTU furnace and a solar package that can be designed with the customer in mind.

"We design the solar package to fit what the customer is looking to do," Nicholas says.

Other popular models include the 167BH and 177BH, which are each bunkhouse models for young families. Each one come in at under

2,600 pounds and includes 28-inch by 72-inch bunks.

For the interior solid color fabric, customers have a choice of: Geronimo Chocolate, Broadway Graphite, Manuella Taupe, and Jaleco Pebble. Printed fabric choices include Linwood Linen, Bumblebee Ash, Wendover Graphite, Switchback, Kendall Aegean and Checkers Chestnut.



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INDEPENDENTS

CHINOOK RV

Take a trip to Peru during this year's Open House—Indiana's home to Chinook RV, maker of Class B and Class B+ motorhomes.

The manufacturer will unveil its all-new Maverick and Summit B+ Motorhomes at its facilities in Peru, Indiana, located just south of Elkhart.

The Maverick Built on the

Ford Transit chassis with all-wheel drive, boasts a 3.5-liter Eco-Boost Turbocharged engine and 10-speed transmission. The Summit is built on the all-new Mercedes Benz chassis, offering all options possible from Mercedes.

"The sports car of motorhomes' continues to deliver quality and style to the marketplace, and the all-new Maverick is nothing short of that," says Seth Buchheit, sales representative for Chinook, in a press release. "... The Maverick, much like our Summit, built with the Mercedes Benz chassis, uses the best foundation and construction techniques."

Featuring a 2-inch by 4-inch welded metal tubular substructure mounted on rubber isolator pads, the new unit has a one-piece 3/4 floor decking with sound dampening and insulating

Hush-mat on the bottom, plus a fiberglass moisture barrier. The sidewall construction is equally as tough, welded together with rolled metal wall tubing and thick block foam insulation.

"The unique part is using formed 0.055 metal sidewall skins bonded with Silka adhesive instead of typical flat fiberglass," Buchheit says.

The 5-inch-thick roof is built with welded metal trusses at 16 inches O.C., insulated with rolled fiberglass insulation and covered with 3/8 decking, then topped

with a 0.055 metal outer skin.

Both the company's Summit and Maverick use the Truma Combi plus furnace and water heater combo, tested to ensure their four-seasons capability.

"They have been tested by Truma at their cold chamber facility and earned the Gold Star certification. They both exceeded expectations during test phase, one example being below zero degrees outside, while our coach reached 75-plus degrees inside."

See how the manufacturer's Maverick, Summit, Countryside and Bayside products are built in Peru, Indiana, from Sept. 26-30 during Open House week. Chinook will feature live tours and lunch for dealers from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. The company's facilities are located at 1482 N. Eel River Cemetery Rd.



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RIVERSIDE RV

Riverside RV will be at the Hall of Fame location for the week of Open House.

Known for its colorful Retro units, the company came under new ownership in May 2021 and has steadily increased production.

Kent Chadbourne, president of Riverside RV, comes from an automation and residential construction background. He says he believes that knowledge has helped Riverside grow. The company went from two units per day and to now up to 10 units for double-axle units, and 15 per day for single axles.

"We reorganized the production line, eliminating extra motions. We wanted to create efficiencies that would inherently increase productivity," Chadbourne says.

They also restored a large portion of the Amish workforce that they had pre-pandemic and combined them with the current production team members to create a fantastic work environment that would thrive under the new management team.

Chadbourne also mentioned that coming from the high-end residential side reset their vision for quality as they began to build. "Obviously, the expectations for the residential market are high when dealing with homes, in terms of how the fit and finish come together," Chadbourne says.

RETRO

While the manufacturing process has been updated, Riverside RV is still "Retro." Two newer additions to the Retro brand include the 165 couples coach that weighs in at 2,800 pounds. It comes with a queen bed, dry bath, kitchenette, and dinette as standard. The 245 tandem-axle model has a floorplan with a rear bath, while the 210 comes with a slide and a ton of living space for such a short tandem axle unit.

INTREPID

The more modern Intrepid will come with an all-new graphics package and a lighter, airier feeling on the inside, including

lighter wood and shiplap. Before the pandemic hit, the Intrepid was the third fastest growing brand, according to Sales Manager Jamie Embry.

The new outdoor package, inspired by the Outdoor Channel, will come with camo graphics by PRYM 1. It will also have a lift kit, off-road tires, and solar prep. It will come with Azdel composite and 10 different floorplans that range from 13 feet to the 32-foot 290BH model, which sleeps four in the rear. The 290BH model is a 32-foot unit that can still be towed by half-ton.

XPLORER

The Xplorer has now adventured out on its own as a brand.

Embry says, "Xplorer used to be under Intrepid, but since October of 2021, it has become its own full-fledged brand. It allows us to deliver product to

more dealers. This will be the first Open House with Xplorer as its own brand."

This year's Xplorer will come with a new mountain graphics package and front cap.

"We have 11 different floorplans," Embry says. "Six single-axle and five double-axle models."

The new Xplorer brand will appeal to the off-road-minded customer without the price tag.

To see Riverside RV at the Elkhart's Open House, visit the RV/MH Hall of Fame location.

"We will be right next to the THOR parking area, so you can't miss us with our three brands," Chadbourne says.



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INDEPENDENTS

HELIO RV



The Helio trailers are one of the lightest travel trailers in the market with our innovative molded fiberglass technology.

It doesn't get much lighter than Helio RV's ultralight travel trailers.

Founded in 2014, the company is based in Lanaudière, a region in central Quebec, Canada, and has a dealer network stretching from the Great White North to the U.S.

Helio's upcoming model year will include three floorplans in the new O Series, described as a "mini trailer for outdoor enthusiasts." The units average 14-feet, 2-inches long and weigh less than 1,550 pounds.

"The Helio trailers are one of the lightest travel trailers in the market with our innovative molded fiberglass technology," says Jean-Roch Lacroix, co-founder of Helio. "It can be towed by small cars, SUVs and electric vehicle (EV) cars. So, you have a significant fuel savings."

The O2, O3 and O4 floorplan names indicate sleeping capacity for each unit, which all have a GVWR of 2,000 pounds. The line will feature new interior design

that Lacroix says is sleek and modern. A large bed, toilet and shower, kitchenette, dining area, automatic ventilation and storage system are included in the units.

Taking the title of lightest on the market, Helio will also unveil its new HE3 Series. The line's two floorplans are even smaller than the O Series at 11 feet long, weighing less than 675 pounds—with one layout touting a 456-pound dry weight. The series

offers a queen bed that converts into a sofa, front storage space, large windows, a roof ventilator, solar panel outlet, A/C and more.

The "featherweight" micro-travel trailer is a 100% molded fiberglass monocoque (gel coat) structure with an aluminum chassis, ideal for traveling light and over long distances to save fuel. The company's website says the HE3 is "perfect for small cars, hybrid and EV cars, motorcycles, three-wheelers and ATVs."

Helio RV will debut its offerings at Open House on the main campus this year.

"We are very happy to be going there for the second time... Like in 2019, we want to add Helio dealers for strategic states, where we will have a lot of requests for the Helio," Lacroix says.



ATC TRAILERS



WHAT'S NEW FOR YOUR BRAND IN SEPTEMBER AND THE COMING YEAR?

We've introduced the new, 2023 Plă ATC toy haulers. The new models—Plă 500 Series and 700 Series—feature high-quality, fully integrated aluminum construction with added convenience, comfort and aesthetic features that separates Plă from other toy haulers.

WHAT STANDS OUT MOST ABOUT THIS PRODUCT?

We're setting new standards in convenience and comfort. The addition of the Firefly Integrations system offers easy access to system controls and can be operated from an interior touchscreen or a smartphone. Contemporary aluminum cabinets and décor add upscale appeal. The 700 Series has configurable furniture on a track system, along with movable partition walls to open up space or enhance privacy. Flooring can be sprayed with a garden hose for easy cleaning and peace of mind knowing there's no wood to damage in ATC's construction.

WHAT ARE THE PRODUCT'S TOP 5 FEATURES?

1. All aluminum construction—6-sided welded aluminum box with no mechanical fasteners or wood, resulting in an industry-leading five-year structural warranty
2. Firefly Integrations touchscreen control user interface
3. Modern décor including kitchen and bath backsplash extending from countertop to overhead cabinets, plus removable woven vinyl floor covering throughout the living area
4. A solar energy package containing a 200-watt solar panel, 1,000-watt inverter, and 20-amp mppt charge controller standard, with two upgrade levels available
5. Lightweight and easy to tow with an industry-leading carrying capacity

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT SPECS OUR READERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?

- Nine Plă base models (six travel trailers and three fifth wheel toy haulers)
- 26 feet to 46 feet, 3 inches—the range of exterior lengths available in the new Plă Series
- 96 inches—rear opening width can fit a Jeep Wrangler
- 4,000 pounds—the weight rating of the rear ramp door made from recycled materials
- 5,040 to 9,750 pounds—the range of industry-leading carrying capacity available on Plă toy haulers
- 200 gallons—freshwater capacity in the Plă fifth wheel SUT models, (100 gallons in travel trailer SUT models)

WHAT NEW TECHNOLOGY OR ACCESSORIES WERE INCLUDED IN THIS PRODUCT?

Touchscreen user interface from Firefly Integrations enables ATC owners to effortlessly control and monitor many core functions and features of their RV—operate the lights, awning, slide out, leveling jacks, water tank levels, thermostat, generator status, battery levels, and programmable auto generator start when battery levels get low. Even, indirect lighting can be controlled for added ambiance.

WHAT'S THE COLOR SCHEME OR PAINT GRAPHICS? INTERIOR DESIGN?

The new Plă Series kitchen and bath backsplashes extend from the countertop to the overhead cabinets, a feature many of our customers have suggested. Bedrooms include a contemporary accent wall. Luxurious cashmere gray and linen beige decor packages accentuate the interiors. Clean, elegant exterior graphics complement the high-end design of Plă.

WHAT HOLE DOES THIS FILL IN THE MARKET?

The Plă Series sets a new standard for high-end aluminum toy haulers. Owners will have a toy hauler they can enjoy for years, with a high-resell value if they decide to upgrade to a new ATC model.

WHAT KIND OF FEEDBACK DID YOU GET FROM CUSTOMERS TO CREATE THIS PRODUCT?

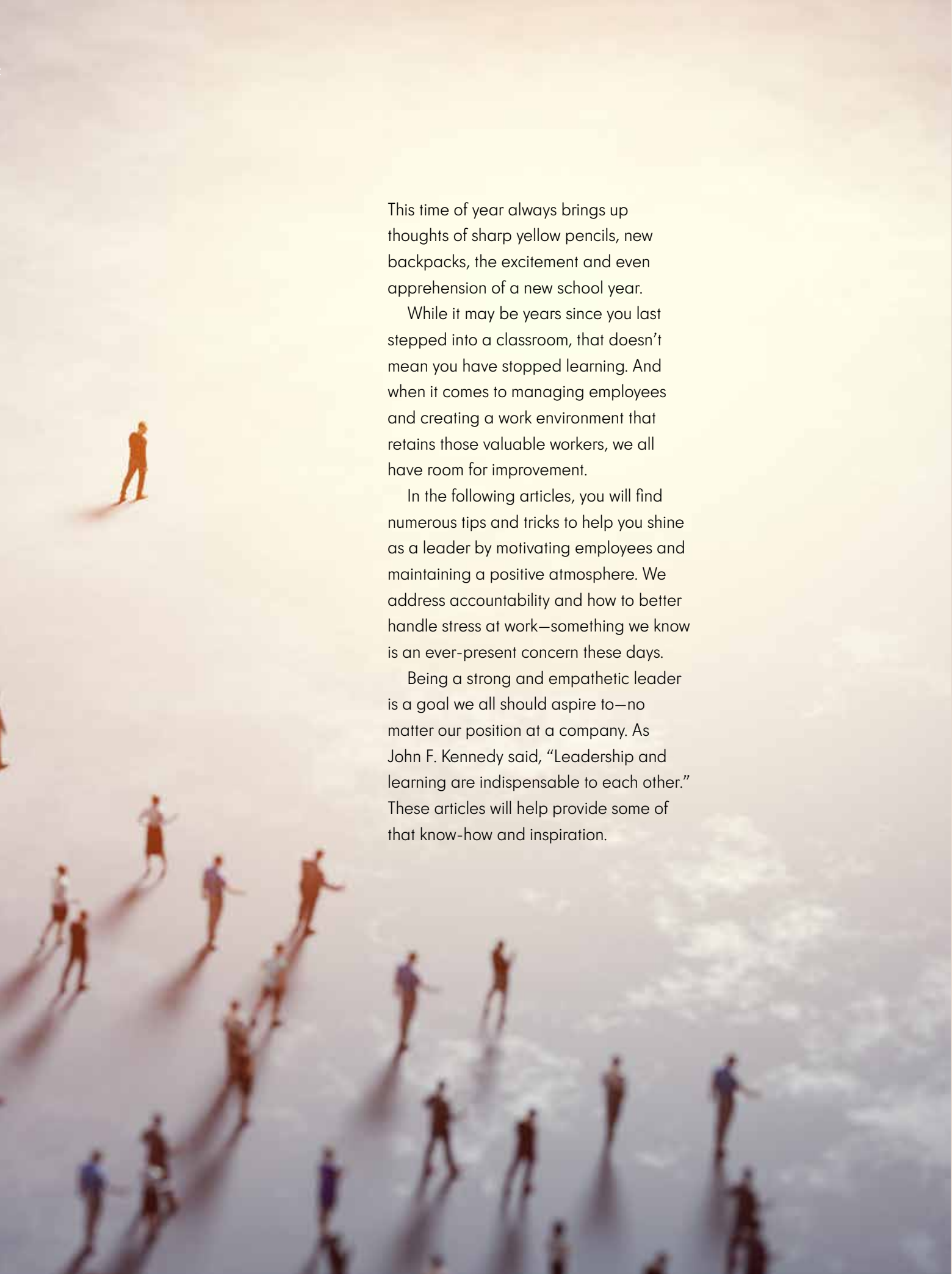
We are always listening to feedback from our customers on every aspect of our product design. Their input has a direct impact on future designs, from aesthetic touches like the extended backsplash and interior decors, to 700 Series features like adjustable shelving and Goodyear tires.

CAN YOU SUM UP WHY YOUR BRAND IS EXCITED ABOUT THIS?

The Plă Series is the latest toy hauler innovation from ATC. It builds on our rock-solid foundation of highest-quality aluminum construction delivering exceptional strength and durability with well-planned design and high-end convenience.

LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

Grab a notebook or a laptop and get ready to learn more about how to be a good leader, whether you're technically a manager or not. These tips will help you get a leg up and retain great employees.



This time of year always brings up thoughts of sharp yellow pencils, new backpacks, the excitement and even apprehension of a new school year.

While it may be years since you last stepped into a classroom, that doesn't mean you have stopped learning. And when it comes to managing employees and creating a work environment that retains those valuable workers, we all have room for improvement.

In the following articles, you will find numerous tips and tricks to help you shine as a leader by motivating employees and maintaining a positive atmosphere. We address accountability and how to better handle stress at work—something we know is an ever-present concern these days.

Being a strong and empathetic leader is a goal we all should aspire to—no matter our position at a company. As John F. Kennedy said, "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." These articles will help provide some of that know-how and inspiration.



LEADERSHIP

The Law of Intentionality: Reaching Goals Through Intentional Effort

Learn the 6 key characteristics of an intentional leader

BY JIM MATHIS



The secret of our success is discovered in our daily agenda.” —John Maxwell

The law of intentionality: No accomplishment or goal of worth is reached by accident. It requires an intentional effort to reach our goals and have a maximum impact on our lives and add value to others’ lives, too. Intentional leaders are in the people business first, and their industry second, to add value to everyone they encounter.

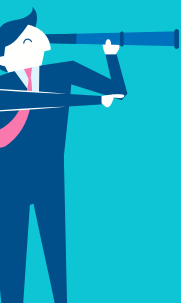
Not a Genius

I have a confession to make. In high school I wasn’t the smartest person in my class. I had high grades in a very competitive environment. I made the dean’s list and the

honor roll frequently, but I didn’t score high enough to be at the top scholastically.

I was, however, one of the most intentional students in a structured military school. My sophomore year, I decided to run for “Funniest Man on Campus” and won by a landslide. (Is anyone surprised?) The next year, I entered the race for school vice president, and I had to write an article about the race from an insider’s view for the school paper. Once I figured out how to get students to vote for me, I won again. I graduated as the most decorated ROTC officer in our school.

I was very active in church. I participated in choir, drama productions and community activities—all with a goal attached to them: to use my intentional creative skills to add value to others—and that continues today.



The clients and leaders who bring me in say their people seem to lack the motivation to develop a productive daily routine. They know what they ought to do but allow other concerns to get in the way. It speaks to priorities and self-discipline, but often indicates a lack of focus. Many people don't live intentional lives.

Our daily routines are often interrupted by distractions. If you have been working from home during the

INTENTIONAL PEOPLE ARE SELF-MOTIVATED AND MOMENTUM HAS BECOME THEIR BEST FRIEND.

pandemic, you are realizing what most of us who worked from home knew for years: home offices lend themselves to distractions. It is hard to be intentional when minor disturbances constantly call your attention away from accomplishing major tasks.

If you live an intentional life, you will find yourself ignoring many distractions that will eventually take care of themselves. Intentional people know that if they focus on their purpose for business (or life), everything else will fall in line behind their priorities.

Momentum Makers

Intentional people are self-motivated, and momentum has become their best friend. Motivation often makes large problems smaller. Motivation makes you excited to accomplish each task and see it through to the finish. Motivated people generate their own momentum—and momentum takes care of many distractions.

Are you a “momentum maker?” Intentional leaders are momentum

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makers. I compare it to something you have in your house. Look at the thermometer in your work area. What is the temperature? The thermometer is influenced by what the thermostat is set on for that area. Many people are thermometers, allowing something else to influence their mood or environment.

A thermostat influences the thermometer. It tells the thermometer what to do. I would rather be a thermostat instead of a thermometer, merely reacting to what happens around me. Are you a thermostat or a thermometer?

"The world is a dangerous place. Not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing." —Albert Einstein

Intentional leaders have a passion to be significant and contribute to the lives of others. They seek to add value to the world around them with their talents and skills. They want to make a difference.

Check out these six characteristics of an intentional leader.

1. Intentional Leaders Are Purpose-Driven

They know their purpose in life and want to take steps to accomplish that purpose every day. They know who they are and what they can do to add value to others.

If they are good at their purpose, then they have found a way to contribute and get people to pay them for it. They don't wait to get "good" at something to start accomplishing their purpose.

What are you good at doing? Don't wait to start until you're good at it; start now to become not just good, but better. Know your purpose and start using what you have.

Spend time each day or each week getting better at your strengths. Put aside your weaknesses and focus on getting better, just as an artist practices drawing simple objects or a hockey player practices taking the shots they are great at making.

2. Intentional Leaders Are Never Satisfied With the Status Quo

They work outside of their comfort zones. Stretch yourself to gain new ground every day. Be so uncomfortable with yesterday's accomplishments that you want to exceed them today. Never rest on your laurels (recognition, trophies, awards or successes).

Consider how many championship teams fail to repeat the next season. They sit back, sign autographs and lose the competitive edge.

Repeat champions never forget what got them to the top. They stay in shape, keep their daily routines and set a repeat as their goal.

3. Intentional Leaders See Success as an Ongoing Journey, Not a Destination

This speaks to your view of success. If it is a destination, you will almost always fail to reach it—or put off getting there. However, if you see success as a journey, each day holds a new step to take.

Prioritize the important tasks that it takes to be successful daily. Jim Rohan suggests making an "I should" list. These are things you should do. It has more impact than a to-do list.

Make an "I should" list and start on it today. You can look at most people's daily agenda and tell if they live intentionally or bounce from one circumstance to another like a pin ball.

4. Intentional Leaders Arrange Their Daily Agendas According to Their Purpose & Never Defer From It

Show up each day ready to accomplish something, whether it is your sales goal for the day, your management goal to train others to grow in their abilities, or your service goals to help a specific number of people get better service from you. Add value to others and you will always find a sense of accomplishment and gain momentum. I guarantee that if you spend your time helping other people, you will have an improved attitude and success each

5 Leadership Books

According to Forbes, these are must-read leadership books.

- "Learning to Lead: The Journey to Leading Yourself, Leading Others, and Leading an Organization" by Ron Williams with Karl Weber
- "Developing the Leader Within You 2.0" and "Leadershift" by John C. Maxwell
- "Humble Leadership: The Power of Relationships, Openness and Trust" by Edgar H. Schein and Peter A. Schein
- "Disrupt-It-Yourself: Eight Ways to Hack a Better Business—Before the Competition Does" by Simone Bhan Ahuja

day. Remember, you're in the people business and you do it through the RV industry.

5. Intentional Leaders Are Self-Disciplined

They are strong in setting personal boundaries. Their goals stretch them and are attainable with effort. Where do you want to be in three years, five years, next year? What steps will it take to get there before tomorrow to start that journey? How can you be an intentional individual in your field or on your team? How can you be so goal-oriented that even the distractions are in awe of your purposeful actions? What sacrifices need to be made to focus on what is most necessary to meet your goals?

6. Intentional Leaders Are Passionate About Being the Best They Can Be Daily

Think about how you drive over speed bumps. You slow down, take the bump slowly and move on. Do you ever look back at the impediment? Of course not! Intentional leaders turn roadblocks

into speed bumps and move on, never looking behind.

Remember the last time you made a sale? Or the last time you achieved an award for outstanding service or recognition? Remember how great you felt with the next task? That was a choice you made based on your feelings. Intentional people know how to make the same choice every day. They do not allow their feelings to make it for them. That is self-discipline at its best. Your passion for success sets the pace for intentionality.

"No one stumbles upon significance. You have to be intentional." —John Maxwell

How can you be intentional about closing more sales today? How can you be intentional about being better at leading and equipping others today? How can you be intentional about giving better customer service to the next person you encounter? How can you turn the RV industry into the people business?

Most importantly, how can you be intentional about your attitude toward work, the people you work with, the clients you meet and the circumstances that arise today? What can you do to take control and live intentionally each moment going forward?

As you live intentionally, you will continually find that your passion is what carries you and that life matters more each day. **RV**

Jim Mathis, IPCS, CSP, CSML is the Reinvention PRO, an International Platform Certified Speaker, Certified Speaking Professional, Certified Speaker and Trainer with the Maxwell Leadership team and best-selling author of "Reinvention Made Easy: Change Your Strategy, Change Your Results." To subscribe to his free professional development newsletter, send an email to subscribe@jimmathis.com with the word SUBSCRIBE in the subject. An electronic copy will be sent out to you every month. For more information on how Jim and his programs can benefit your organization or group, call 404-922-8199, or visit the updated website at jimmathis.com.



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Reason in the Era of Flight

How to identify and drive the right motivators within your organization.

BY GREGG M. SCHOPPMAN

Ask any leader what they think the most common reason for employee flight is and you will hear a common refrain: money. Between being amid an employee-driven market and within an industry that historically may have had trouble attracting younger entry-level workers, it is easy to see how leaders might garner this impression.

When an employee puts in their two weeks' notice, and the leaders asks, "Why are you leaving?" the knee-jerk answer is usually something like, "I'm going to Brand X to make a few more dollars." Hardly a controversial subject and one that we can all relate to.

However, most studies show that employees often leave for a more personal reason: the relationship with their immediate supervisor. It's regularly taught that employees and managers alike should "leave on a high note" or "never burn a bridge," so the safe response comes back to money.

Employee flight is not a concern that's exclusive to the any particular industry. Right now all industries are dealing with the ramifications of the "Great Resignation." As if macroeconomic forces weren't already wreaking havoc on costs, wage increases are another factor that must be considered. However, is money the ultimate motivator?

There is no question that businesses are actively recruiting and, in some cases, offering obscene salaries and compensation packages to some candidates, which makes it hard to

compete against. However, there are also other factors that must be considered. The list below is a summary of drivers that provide motivation to employees:

- **Achievement**—Seeing favorable results of one's work for the customer
- **Recognition**—Attention or praise for successful work
- **Work itself**—Nature of the work (varied, challenging or interesting)
- **Responsibility**—Empowerment over projects or business units
- **Advancement**—Promotion in rank within organization
- **Total compensation**—Total salary, bonuses and benefits
- **Growth**—Opportunity to rise in company or enhance skills through development
- **Relationships**—Interactions with peers, supervisors, others
- **Status**—Pleasure derived from position or stature in organization
- **Job security**—Stability of job, low fear of loss of work

While, undoubtedly, there are other themes, this list must be force-ranked. Forced ranking is the controversial process by which employees are graded against each other instead of judged against performance standards.

For instance, ask each employee to develop their own list of priorities. Then compile a companywide average

and compare this list to your own beliefs. How far apart are you from your own people?

Now What?

First, it is highly unlikely that every person within an organization has identical motivation. There is always one person who receives satisfaction from promotions and another who receives more motivation through simple verbal affirmation.

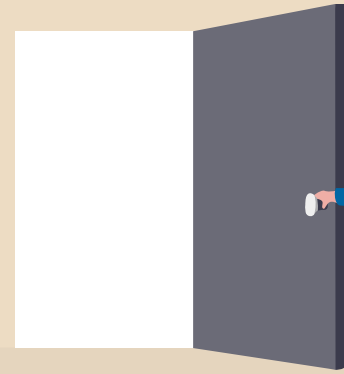
This proves one thing: Management of a team is not a one-size fits all concept. If compensation is used as the primary, or potentially the only, carrot you can dangle, you may be missing the mark for a large part of your team. Becoming a superior employer requires a multipronged approach. For instance, assume the top five force-ranked drivers from the group average are:

1. Advancement
2. Recognition
3. Total compensation
4. Growth
5. Relationships

Based on this feedback, the company's response might involve these specific strategies and tactics:

- **Advancement:**
 - What do career paths look like for all levels of employment?
 - What type of internal development is provided to move employees forward?
 - What feedback process is in place to guide employees throughout their career?

EXIT





• **Recognition:**

- How well does your team “catch” people doing something right?
- Is there a formal mechanism in place to provide nonmonetary rewards?
- How do you balance individual recognition and team recognition?

• **Total compensation:**

- What is the company’s overall compensation strategy? (i.e., “We want to be in the 85% quartile of total compensation.”)
- Is your performance compensation defined or nebulous to the employees?
- How does it balance the reward for both individual performance and team performance?
- How do you manage expectations when times are good and when the market is down?

• **Growth:**

- What is the organization’s response to training?
- What is the organization’s response to individual development?
- How is training and development administered?
- How practical is the training?

• **Relationships:**

- What is the internal culture the company is striving to achieve?
- How does it promote positive internal relationships

across the business?

- What are the barriers to strong relationships?

This does not have to result in eight to 10 different strategic initiatives, but rather a comprehensive talent-focused solution to maintain the right culture within the organization.

There is no single response to the talent crisis we are facing. Years from now, there will be plenty of armchair quarterbacks who will have the solution in-hand, all from the benefit of hindsight, of course. Leaders today must take the temperature of their organization to ensure they are playing offense effectively.

Consider this: If a company’s safety scores were declining, it would take appropriate measures to pivot and recover. Whether it be hiring a safety director or safety training across all departments, a company would take decisive action. The scenario in this article—driving the right motivators and establishing a strong talent-first culture—is no different, and will require an intentional response to win with the best team in your market. **RV**

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Are You a Problem or a Problem-Solver?

6 steps for establishing employee accountability and empowerment.

BY GEORGE HEDLEY



Do you find yourself answering calls from your team of supervisors all day, addressing stupid questions and solving small problems? They continually ask you to make simple decisions for them. It seems like they won't do much of anything without checking with you first. Why? Are they afraid to make a mistake? Supervisors keep calling you because you like to solve their problems.

You have trained them to not make decisions without your input. The more problems you solve for others, the more problems they ask you to solve. And the cycle continues.

Because you can make these decisions quickly, they call you rather than do research and solve their own problems. And out of habit, you continually answer these calls and fix their issues. It's no wonder you can't find accountable help—you won't let them be accountable or responsible for anything. You tell them they're empowered to get things done, but to check with you before making any decisions.

In a recent poll, 66% of employees were asked to make

decisions. But only 14% of them feel empowered and trusted to make the decision. They're afraid their boss will yell at them if they make mistakes or the wrong choices. So, rather than risk it, employees don't take on more than they are asked to.

The following are six steps to help your teams become more accountable and responsible, clearly understand expectations and feel empowered to get things done without your help or input.

1. Establish a clear understanding of expectations.

The first and most important step is to clearly explain what you expect of your employees. When asked, more than 66% of employees didn't know specifically what they'd been asked to do, what the deadline was or what their boss wanted them to accomplish.

Go ask your people the top three things you want them to accomplish both today and this week. Do you both agree on the answers?

2. Create scorecards and tracking systems.

In order to make people accountable and responsible, there must be simple milestones, deadlines and results to achieve and track. Your team members need to know where they stand in order to meet goals and expectations. Without clearly written goals, regular updated tracking systems and scorecards, people can't be accountable for results.

To hold people accountable, supervisors must be given daily knowledge of their current progress. At the beginning of each project, get the team together to discuss the goals you want to track and achieve.

3. Ask them for solutions instead of solving their problems.

When people call you to solve their problems, rather than give them a quick answer, ask yourself the level of decision or problem they are inquiring about.

- **Level 1: No brainer**—Don't ask, just do it. The person asking you for help with a decision is 100% authorized to solve this simple and unimportant problem. Tell them to stop calling you regarding these types of decisions. They should take care of it themselves without having to ask for help. When you are asked a "no brainer" question, tell them to handle it on their own, without giving you a report on their decision or solution.

- **Level 2: Solution first**—Decide, discuss and act. Never provide immediate solutions to mid-level problems without asking for a solution or alternatives first. The person asking you for help is attempting to delegate their responsibility to you to solve problems and be accountable. In other words, they want you to do their job for them. When you get these calls, listen and then ask: "What's your solution?" or "What do you think is the best way to handle this issue?" Put solving these problems back onto them rather than providing the solution yourself. Transfer the accountability to them by encouraging, mentoring and coaching them to research alternative solutions, call other people or dig in a little deeper. Then, when they have come to a solution, you can tell them to go ahead with their decision.
- **Level 3: Major decision requires approval**—Important, strategic, contractual decisions will require research, alternatives, options, discussion and approval before taking action. These problems can have major liability, impact, financial risk or are over the person's level of authority.

4. Define levels of authority.

To avoid confusion, misunderstandings and build trust with people, they must clearly know what their level of authority is. Can they buy materials or tools? How much can they

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spend without approval from their boss? Can they commit the company, hire or fire, or make contract agreements? What decisions are they authorized to make on their own?

I learned a long time ago that my people make better decisions than I do. They're more careful with my money than I am. Given clear rules and parameters, your people will become great team leaders and empowered employees. Given no or little authority keeps them unaccountable and irresponsible.

What's your spending limit without checking with you? Is it more than \$0? When I increased the maximum spending limit to \$1,000, the foreman working for me on a construction project was able to handle most of the little day-to-day decisions without my involvement. This allowed them to grow and become fully accountable team leaders.

5. Be a coach, not a controller.

People want to be coached, not controlled and told what to do all day. The best coach usually wins the most games. When your crew isn't accountable or responsible, it's a reflection of the coach's total control and dictatorship. The more you control, the less your people do for you. The more decisions you make for them, the less decisions they make. The more questions you answer for them every day, the less they have to think and learn. Is that what you want?

Good coaches train their people regularly. Have team meetings to review progress. Ask their team leaders to think

for themselves and call their own plays. Even great head football coaches don't call their own plays.

Your job is to explain what's expected and then provide feedback on their progress. Use regular check-in times, follow up and stay in touch. But don't do it all for them.

6. Celebrate and reward success.

When accountable and responsible employees achieve great results, they need to be thanked and rewarded. It's your job as the leader to set up a fun, competitive and simple system to reward success. At your regular job or company meetings, pick out two people to recognize for a job well done. Start a weekly award for the person who saves the most money, does something excellent, has the best attitude, makes the best decision or goes the extra mile for the customer.

Stop solving other people's problems and let them be accountable and responsible. By implementing these simple steps, your people will grow and want to take on more responsibility. **RV**

George Hedley, CSP, CPBC, is a professional construction BIZCOACH and industry speaker. He helps contractors build management teams and get their businesses to work for them. He is the bestselling author of "Get Your Construction Business To Always Make A Profit!," available on amazon.com. For more information, visit hardhatpresentations.com.



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Stress Less in Leadership

Reducing stressors to increase resilience, improve health and power productivity.

BY PATRICK JEFFS



The World Health Organization (WHO) has referred to stress as the 21st century health epidemic. Over the last two years, 67% of people living in the United States have reported a significant increase in stress. More than 70% stated that this affects both their physical and mental health. A 2022 survey by the American Psychological Association listed the top three stressors at work as:

1. Rise in prices due to inflation
2. Supply chain issues
3. Global uncertainty

Given all this, let's explore how to reduce stress at work. According to the American Institute of Stress, the job itself—as well as issues related to the work environment and creating a work-life balance—is a significant cause of stress.

Stress is the body's physical, mental and emotional reaction to adapt and respond to changes, whether positive or negative. People can experience stress from what happens day by day in their environment, in their bodies or even in their thoughts.

This reaction is generated by the human body's autonomic nervous system, resulting in psychological changes that allow the person to be attentive, motivated and avoid danger. Known as “fight or flight,” this mechanism is an emergency physiological response that prepares the body for physical action (fight) or to run away (flight).

However, when a person is constantly facing challenges without rest or the possibility of recovering, this can turn negative, generating excessive tension.

LESSEN THE STRESS

It's a fine line keeping yourself awake (stimulated) when working long days, because at some point that stimulation causes its own stress. Try to dial it to a minimum while keeping enough energy to stay focused.

DIAL DOWN TENSION

By scanning your body, you'll notice that you might be using extra energy by tensing in one or many areas of your body that don't need to. Notice and relax just in those areas.

EASE YOUR FOCUS

Most of the world can't imagine the focus it takes to do your job. After a long day, allow your brain to rest. Stare off into the distance. See what you notice around you. Use your senses to see what you're curious about. Keeping your mind overly active with technology will make things worse.

Keep Track of the Important Things

1. Sleep
2. Steps
3. Screen time
4. Water
5. Whole foods (versus processed)

These factors can be difficult to manage in life. But keeping track and making sure you're hitting the minimums and possibly increasing your goals will help keep you in balance.

Physical & Mental Consequences

Prolonged activation of the stress response can affect both the body's physical and mental health. When it slips out of balance, it can turn into chronic anxiety and, in the worst case, lead to suicidal thoughts.

Anxiety is a normal emotion that can appear from time to time when facing a problem or test or before making an important decision. When the stress level is high, anxiety disorders may appear, which are included in the group of mental illnesses. They prevent the person from leading a normal life.

Anxiety disorders can be manifested as panic attacks when you feel you are about to die; social phobia, when you feel overwhelmed by everyday social situations; other phobias; and generalized anxiety disorder, when the person has exaggerated worry and tension for no apparent reason.

In addition to the mental effects, the activation of fight-or-flight mode involves chemical changes in the body, which can alter the person's metabolism. This can cause long-term effects, leading to diseases like diabetes or high blood pressure. Chronic stress can also cause other problems such as arthritis and inflammatory diseases.

The WHO has warned of the high levels of concern and unhappiness in today's world that are causing an epidemic of stress. Stress has become part of people's daily lives, affecting productivity and causing health problems, which at first may remain silent, but may eventually get worse.

Signs of Stress

If you feel anxiety, fear, sadness, frustration or anger, you could be suffering from stress, which could also be worsened by physical symptoms. In addition to emotional changes, stress can manifest itself through changes in your behavior and body.

When you're stressed, you behave differently, such as becoming withdrawn, uncompromising, aggressive or more angry than normal. You can experience sleeping problems, you can be irritable or tearful, and even your sexual habits can be affected. Some people start smoking, consume more

alcohol and even take drugs. Stress can also affect the way you interact with your family and friends.

The body also suffers from symptoms such as headaches, nausea and indigestion. You can increase the respiratory rate, perspire more than normal and feel palpitations or different types of aches and pains. If the stress motive wears off, you will return to normal quickly with no side effects; but if it persists, you could start experiencing long-term effects.

Stages of Stress

If you are suffering from stress, you may be able to identify five stages:

1. **Alarm**—At this stage, the body prepares itself in the best possible way to deal with the stress you are going through. You can have wake-up calls, like almost getting in a car accident or starting to forget tasks or deadlines.
2. **Resistance**—Here, the body tries to return to its normal state, responding to some changes that occur in the alarm stage, such as inflammation. Anti-inflammatory hormones are released to relieve it, but they are usually temporary responses that do not solve the underlying problem.
3. **Recovery**—If the cause of stress disappears or you are able to temporarily pull away from it, your body will begin to recover, returning your systems to normal levels and starting the stress resilience.
4. **Adaptation**—If you do not act in time to recover—either by moving away to rest or solving the problem that is causing you stress—you will enter the adaptation stage, which involves accepting it as part of your daily life. Stress becomes chronic and takes control of your health, generating, for example, sleep problems, lack of energy, changes in your eating habits or difficulty in dealing with your emotions.
5. **Exhaustion**—With chronic stress, the body begins to get sick, nutrients are depleted and you may require hospitalization, psychiatric assistance or begin dealing with symptoms of depression.

Burnout

When you reach the exhaustion stage, what occurs is commonly called burnout. You feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained and unable to respond to any demand. This can lead to lost interest and motivation, reduced productivity and increased feelings of hopelessness, resentment, despair and the feeling that you have nothing else to give.

Burnout can have very negative effects in all areas of your life, including your home, social life, health and work. At work, it might even cost your position, lead to being fired, or if you feel that your energy is low and you have nothing left to give, it can lead you to quit.

Stress Management Strategies

To deal with stress, there are several techniques and strategies that may be related to action (do something to change the situation), emotions (change your perception over a stressful situation) and acceptance (used when dealing with situations you cannot control). The following strategies summarize how to deal with stressful situations.

1. **Be assertive**—You need to clearly communicate what you want, what you need and what is bothering you. If you do this with empathy and respect, but firmly, you will be proactive and start altering what is stressing you.
2. **Reduce noise**—Slow down by switching off technology, screen time and stimuli. Try to have quiet moments every day to distinguish the urgent and the important things. You need time to recharge to avoid stress.
3. **Manage your time**—Organize your tasks so you are not covered up with tasks and busy the entire day. Create a routine that includes enjoying yourself.
4. **Creating boundaries**—Set rules and establish time for yourself and others. Prioritize and do not let others' needs become more important than yours. This will help you take control and respect yourself.

5. **Stop thinking**—Avoid doing too much analysis. Reorient yourself to parts of your environment, noticing pleasant things out a window or taking a walk to relax your mind.
6. **Attend to your body first**—Listen to the signals of stress your body gives you naturally, such as increased heart rate or shallow breathing. By inverting these and learning what lowers your heart rate or making it a practice to pair deeper breathing with increased stress, you'll be able to better handle the moment in front on you. These actions build our resilience.

Building Resilience Into Your Organization

A key factor to building a more resilient organization is to not put the responsibility on individuals. There is significant value in leading discussions in leadership and management meetings on how to best implement these resiliency principles into "the way of doing business."

This will begin to create a culture of resiliency, increase value for employees, drive employee retention through reduced burnouts and will signal to employees that leadership understands the root causes of burnout and how to address these in a systemic nature.

To succeed with these strategies, you can implement techniques such as keeping a positive attitude, accepting situations that you cannot change, practicing relaxation techniques like meditation or yoga, exercising, making time for hobbies and interests, sleeping and taking time to rest, limiting the use of alcohol or drugs, spending time with friends and family, and looking for professional assistance like a psychologist or a mental health doctor. **RV2**

Dr. Patrick Jeffs founded The Resiliency Solution in 2018 to help combat the impact of chronic stress in the workplace. Jeffs has worked with healthcare professionals, government officials, executives, entrepreneurs and many others to improve their day-to-day stress levels and to enhance their organizations' capacity, ultimately enabling these individuals, teams and organizations to maximize their performance. Visit theresiliencysolution.com.

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Managing Motivational Methods

4 tips for improving employee morale and keeping workers engaged.

BY JOSH MILES

Motivating employees is something that concerns many leaders, especially when the lack of motivation can lead to missed deadlines. While some delays are normal, many managers have wondered if other delays are because their workers are not motivated enough to get the job done. Many studies have indicated that employees require various motivational techniques to stay engaged. However, applying this knowledge can be difficult in a fast-paced, high-pressure atmosphere.

Managing motivation is a moving target. It's constantly changing depending on the phase of the project, but you need to be in tune with it because unmotivated workers will find another opportunity to make equal or more money elsewhere.

Consider the following ways you may want to adapt your approach to motivation that can improve morale and keep workers engaged.

1. Maintain a Positive Attitude

Managing a team can be exhausting and stressful, but your attitude will rub off on your employees. If you're unhappy about being at work or are too exhausted to stay positive, your employees will pick up on this, and it can rub off on them. How managers carry themselves can influence how the rest of the team carries themselves.

Displaying positivity can help improve the overall work atmosphere and help motivate your workers. Negativity is infectious, and when it spreads, people are more likely to quit. To help prevent negativity from spreading, avoid taking your frustration out on your employees. If the client is pressuring you to stick with the schedule, try not to put too much negative pressure on your team even if there was a considerable delay. If there is something you can do to help them make the deadline, do it. But keep in mind, exhausting your employees can lead to accidents. Your workers need to be well rested to work efficiently and safely.



2. Acknowledge Hard Work

Most employees never receive any recognition when they do a good job, and often the employees who do get that recognition do not get enough of it. What gets noticed more often is when something goes wrong.

When people are never recognized for doing a good job, they may not think it matters if they only do the bare minimum. People want to be paid well, but they also want to know that they matter and are not just faceless, replaceable cogs in the machine.

Giving your team random recognition, like a compliment or a pat on the back, is a good start, but you need to make sure you are not leaving anyone out when you focus on more random recognition. Did someone get a job done in much less time than normal? Compliment them. Did they do an exceptional job on something? Compliment them. Take the time to do it often, so your employees feel like they matter.

A weekly or monthly recognition of an employee who does their job well can help keep them motivated. It can be as simple, but you might see better results if you create a more formal process, like an employee of the month program. This will make your employees want to work hard enough to get that recognition and can help motivate everyone.

3. Communicate Expectations

Many managers will simply tell their employees to try their best and work hard. While this is not necessarily a bad thing, workers really need to know what you want them to do and the desired results.

Everyone wants to know what they should be doing and if they've done a good job. You're going to get a better outcome if you relay the purpose of the task so workers know what to aim for, and then offer feedback.

By communicating to your employees what you expect from them, you will get better results. For example, tell them you want part of a project to be 100% complete by the end of Friday. This tells them what you want, when you want it and if it needs to be complete or just partially started.

However, it is also important to keep in mind that sometimes things just cannot be done that quickly.

Talk to your team about your expectations and be willing to listen to their input. There might be a problem that will prevent them from completing the work in that time frame, or they might have a suggestion that will work better. Either way, hear them out. If you listen to your employees, they will feel more loyal to you, which will motivate them to work harder and to stick with your company.

4. Engage & Challenge Employees

Your employees need to feel like they are important to the big picture of the overall project. Inviting them to learn the details of what their work will accomplish will increase engagement. Tell them why the project matters and the role they are playing in making it happen. They do not just want to feel like they matter; they want to feel involved in the process. It might take more time to explain everything to an employee, but when they understand the "why," they are likely to care more.

You can also keep workers engaged by introducing new challenges. Most workers won't feel great if they're just doing the same thing day after day. Teach them how to do another skill to add on to what they're already doing. Make them feel part of the bigger picture and, ultimately, add more value to the project and projects in the future. By changing things up, they will be more engaged in their jobs because they are doing something new.

Having an upskilling or on-the-job training program is also crucial. How can you make your team better? What additional skills can they learn on the job? Give them some exposure to other duties to keep them engaged.

A motivated team will complete projects more efficiently. **RVP**

Joshua Miles is a business development executive at Aerotek with nearly 15 years of experience helping construction firms overcome staffing challenges. Miles joined Aerotek in 2008 as a technical recruiter and has progressed through various sales and management roles in the organization due to his valued leadership skills and industry knowledge. His expertise has earned him the role of divisional lead for construction, environmental and energy. Contact Miles at jmiles@aerotek.com. Visit aerotek.com.



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HEAVY-DUTY RV COVER

ADCO by Covercraft, Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, offers the Designer Series UV HYDRO RV Covers, an RV dealer exclusive featuring protection against all the elements. UV Hydro 4-layer fabric outperformed competitive fabrics in tear strength, UV resistance and water repellency. Features include zipper entry on both sides of the RV to allow slide outs during storage, superior wind resistance with patented wind channels and user-friendly red interaction points for easy installation. Sizes to fit any Class A, Class C, Class B vans, fifth wheel, micro trailer/R-Pod, travel trailer, toy hauler, tent trailer, truck camper and Hi-Lo trailer.

adcoprod.com/uvhydro



ANNUAL MAINTENANCE KIT

Aqua-Hot, Frederick, Colorado, offers the Annual Service Kit. Annual maintenance is an integral part of keeping Aqua-Hot hydronic heating systems performing optimally. The Aqua-Hot Annual Service Kit includes everything needed for yearly maintenance including a fuel filter, diesel nozzle, electrode adjustment tool, burner gasket, portable refractometer and 1 quart of concentrated boiler antifreeze (green or pink) in an easy-to-store tote bag. Aqua-Hot also has a network of over 300 authorized service centers coast to coast where RV owners can have their annual maintenance completed.

aquahot.com



AIR PURIFYING GEL

Kanberra Group, Lancaster, New York, offers the Kanberra Gel, which contains an all-natural blend of premium certified tea tree oils. The gel purifies your air by eliminating odors and then keeping them away. Use in homes, autos, RVs, boats, gym bags, ventilation systems, litterboxes, diaper pails and more. Provides long-lasting 24/7 protection and safe to use around kids and pets. The 100% pure Australian tea tree oil is used to clean your home and keep your air healthy.

kanberragel.com

SEALANT KITS

Dicor Products, Elkhart, Indiana, offers the Seal-Tite Kits. Whether you're winterizing your RV for storage or preparing it for winter camping, use Dicor Seal-Tite kits to ensure a waterproof, weatherproof seal around windows (Window Foamcore Kit), rooftop accessories (Rooftop Accessory Kit) and corners (Corner Seal Kit) to prevent costly damage caused by leaks in your RV. The Seal-Tite line also includes products for exterior RV maintenance including cap sealant, butyl foamcore and corner seal tape.

dicorproducts.com/product-category/seal-tite-products-and-kits



MOLD AND MILDEW STAIN REMOVER

Iosso Products, Elk Grove, Illinois, offers the Mold & Mildew Stain Remover. Zap mold, mildew, leaf stain, tree sap, bird droppings and tough dirt from every washable surface with Iosso's Mold and Mildew Stain Remover. Safe on fabrics and colors. The DIY product is easy to use and economical at \$15.35. The concentrated powder makes three gallons of solution. Shipping is easy because there are no liquids to spill in transit or on the shelf. Shipping is also less costly due to less volume.

iosso.com

WINTERIZED ANTIFREEZE

Century Chemical Corp., Elkhart, Indiana, offers the Winter-Pruf Antifreeze, a solution to winterize any potable water system. Winter-Pruf brand nontoxic antifreeze is made from materials generally recognized as safe (GRAS) by the U.S. government and provides burst protection down to -50 F when label directions are followed. This product is safe to use in drinking water systems for winter storage to prevent frozen lines and has a wide array of applications. Also available in ready-to-use -100 F formula and concentrate.

centurychemical.com





RV WASH SYSTEM

Bitimec RV Wash-Bots, Greenwich, Connecticut, offers the 626-EZ RV Wash. The machines are self-contained RV Wash systems with footprints of only 15 square feet. A single operator walks the self-powered machine around the vehicle while it applies soap, power-brush washes and rinses, and uses minimal water and detergent. The machine works in two directions. It is available in electric, diesel, gasoline, hybrid and battery power.

wash-bots.com



MAINTENANCE REMINDER

Diamond Shield, Rochester, New York, presents its RV maintenance products. Diamond Shield's worry-free RV Pain Protection Film has two easy steps to ensure it will be looking it's best when you take it out of storage. Give the Diamond Shield a quick wash; using a soft cotton or lambswool mitt, wash the Diamond shield with a nonabrasive automotive soap, making sure to wipe off any bugs, dirt or debris. Apply a fresh coat of wax; using a soft applicator pad or mitt, apply a coat of our Advanced RV & Auto Wax to the Diamond Shield. Other waxes are safe to use as long as they are polymer or synthetic liquid or spray waxes.

diamond-shield.com

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SEALANTS AND ADHESIVES

Lippert, Elkhart, Indiana, presents the Alpha Sealants & Adhesives. Maintaining your RV just got easier. Formulated to withstand harsh weather environments and with the flexibility to absorb the shock, vibration and stress caused by travel, Alpha Systems products help RV owners upkeep their rigs with premium sealants, tapes, roofing kits and more. Whether you need to seal around a window or railing or simply patch up spots on your roof, Lippert's products help you get the job done right so you can enjoy the road ahead without the worry.

lippert.com



MULTIPURPOSE TOOL

MCD Innovations, McKinney, Texas, offers the Multi-Purpose Tool, for making adjustments to your MCD roller shades. It features MCD specific bits, LED lighting, a telescopic magnetic extension and a nonslip handle to make any maintenance job easy and efficient. This multipurpose tool is compact and can easily be stored anywhere in your RV.

mcdinnovations.com/roller-shade-accessories

STERILIZING TREATMENT

Noble Pine Products, Mount Vernon, New York, presents the Sterifab, the only EPA registered product that kills bed bugs, mites and a host of other insects, as well as killing mold, mildew, germs, viruses and fungus, along with gram negative and gram positive bacteria. Manufactured since 1967, Sterifab is a mandatory product

in many states where upholstered furniture, mattresses, etc., are required to be treated. This ready-to-use product requires no dilution, contains no perfumes, dyes or harmful solvents. Available from distributors nationwide, Sterifab is packaged in pints, gallons and 5-gallon containers.

sterifab.com



DEIONIZER WITH BYPASS

On the Go Portable, Bloomington, Indiana, offers the Mixed Bed DBL Deionizer with Bypass. This deionizer is compact and easy to move while providing deionized/spot-free water where needed, whether it be your garage or on the road. This unit contains 1/2 cubic feet of high-grade virgin mixed bed resin, and the bypass makes it so you can easily switch between DI and non-DI water with the switch of two knobs. The unit comes complete with the deionizer, bypass kit, 4-foot-high pressure hose and a handheld TDS meter.

portablewaterdi.com



RUBBER ROOF CLEANER/PROTECTANT

ProPack Packaging, Saint Louis, Missouri, presents the Rubber Roof Cleaner & Protectant. Don't let the weather get the best of you this winter. The company's one-step system protects as it cleans. Use only one product to remove the grime, streaks and oxidation from the coming winter weather to extend the life of your RV roof. Lasts up to four months—the next time you'll need to treat will be during your spring cleaning.

propackpackaging.com



ALL PURPOSE CLEANER

RV Pro, Châteauguay, Quebec, Canada, presents the RV Pro All Purpose Cleaner, an effective product that is safe to use on most surfaces. It quickly removes tough stains. It can be used indoors and outdoors on aluminum, fiberglass, appliances, shower, sink, toilet, bathroom, etc.

rvproparts.com



FUEL STABILIZER

Star brite, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, offers the Star Tron Stabilizer+ Fuel Storage. Star Tron Stabilizer+ is perfect for stored gas vehicles from motorcycles, boats, RVs and everything in between. Customers can protect their investments while ensuring a great startup every time.

starbrite.com

HEAVY-DUTY FIBERGLASS CLEANER

RV by LIFE, a division of Life Industries Corp., North Charleston, South Carolina, offers the Fiberglass Powder Cleaner & Stain Remover. This heavy-duty fiberglass cleaner has a nonscratching formula that removes dirt and stubborn stains. Ideal for nonskid surfaces. Removes rust stains, scuff marks, black streaks and diesel exhaust stains. Washes off with fresh water. Leaves surface ready for waxing.

rvbylife.com



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WARM AIR CIRCULATOR

SEEKR by Caframo, Georgian Bluffs, Ontario, Canada, offers the Stor-Dry, a low-wattage warm air circulator that is the “must have” product for the winterization season. Stor-Dry combats musty odors and the effects of moisture in any RV that is closed up or winterized. This dual action air dryer uses a low-wattage heating element and internal fan to both heat and circulate the air, preventing stale air pockets. Ideal for spaces up to 1,000 cubic feet. Anodized aluminum ensures it will not rust. Built-in cord management when not in use.

seekr.caframobrands.com

ROOF MEMBRANE SEALER

Sika Corp., Madison Heights, Michigan, offers the Sikaflex-715, a semi self-leveling roof membrane sealer. Sikaflex-715 is a one-component silane terminated polymer (STP) sealant that cures on exposure to atmospheric humidity. Its unique flow characteristic is designed for roof sealing applications. Sikaflex-715 has good adhesion and is UV resistance making it suitable for open joints.

usa.sika.com/en/industry/transportation/rv/adhesives-sealants/roof-sealing/sikaflex-715.html



RV ANTIFREEZE HAND PUMP

Valterra by Dometic, Mission Hills, California, presents the RV Antifreeze Hand Pump Kit, which allows you to pump antifreeze into your RV's freshwater lines during winterization. Connect the hose to your RV's water inlet and pump it in from the antifreeze container. The extension tube lets you reach the bottom of the antifreeze containers easily. You can also add a Valterra RV Water Heater By-Pass Kit to save 6 gallons of nontoxic RV antifreeze each time the RV is winterized.

valterra.com



MATTRESS ENCASEMENT

CKI Solutions, West Palm Beach, Florida, offers the Sleep Defender EZ3. Store your RV mattress the easy way. The interior of an RV can become damp and musty during the winter months. The easiest and best way to ensure your mattress is kept safe from mold, mildew, bugs, even viruses and pathogens, is by using a mattress encasement. Why not protect your mattress year-round? The company's Sleep Defender EZ3 is 100% water and bug proof.

ckisolutions.us



HEAT AND SOUND INSULATION

Thermo Tec, Greenwich, Ohio, offers the Two-Sided Thermo Guard FR insulation for interior use. Thermo Guard FR offers the best in heat and sound insulation. This lightweight, durable shield reduces sound, absorbs vibration, protects from radiant heat and provides an extra layer of insulation padding. The two-sided option provides even greater climate protection to the vehicle's cabin area by retaining the desired temperature environment. Features 100% synthetic fiber felt that provides sound and comfort control and a double-sided, high-tech foil heat barrier that blocks over 90% of radiant heat. Works great on floors, in doors and within headliner. Available in 48 inches by 72 inches. All Thermo Tec products are proudly made in the USA.

thermotec.com



PLEATED SHADE REPAIR KIT

United Shade, Elkhart, Indiana, offers the Pleated Shade Restring Kit. Repair damaged pleated shades in your RV with the Restring Kit from United Shade. The easy-to-use kit helps to extend the life of your existing pleated shades and is compatible with most styles of RV pleated shades. The Restring Kit includes material for the repair of two-cord day/night shades; four cord day/night shades; and two-cord night shades only.

unitedshade.com/product-category/first-aid-products/



PORTABLE PROPANE HEATER

Enerco Group, Cleveland, Ohio, presents the Portable Buddy Heater. This patented radiant 4,000 to 9,000 BTU liquid propane heater connects directly to a 1-pound cylinder and is the perfect solution for heating enclosed spaces up to 225 square feet. The expertly engineered size to BTU ratio has a fold down handle to provide maximum output while retaining a minimalistic footprint. With the Oxygen Depletion Sensor and tip-over safety shutoff, you can be sure that you will enjoy years of comfortable indoor safe heat.

mrheater.com



SKYLIGHT SHADE

Specialty Recreation, El Cajon, California, presents the Skylight Shade. Designed with edge-to-edge coverage without a perforated curtain, blocking nearly all light coming into the RV. This provides ultimate temperature and light control. Available in three sizes to cover most skylights. Made of mold resistant material, installs in minutes, hardware included.

specrec.com

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REPLACEMENT ANODE ROD

Suburban, Dayton, Tennessee, presents the Replacement Anode Rod. Anode rods should be checked every time you drain your water heater and replaced annually or once the rod is 75% consumed to help extend the longevity of your unit. For Suburban's porcelain-lined steel water tanks, like with residential water heaters, anode rods spare the surrounding tank from the caustic nature of Galvanic Corrosion combating harsh water conditions from a broad geographic range of water types. Suburban's replacement anode rods are available in magnesium or aluminum.

suburbanrv.com/water-heating/tank-water-heaters/tank-water-heater-accessories/replacement-anode-rod



HOLDING TANK CLEANERS

Walex Products, Wilmington, North Carolina, offers the Commando and Elemonate. Holding tank odors don't stand a chance with Commando Black Holding Tank & Sensor cleaner and Elemonate Grey Water Tank Deodorizer. Both products help alleviate malodors and clean holding tanks. In as little as 12 to 24 hours, Commando helps break down residual waste and paper buildup on the tank wall and clean the sensors that may have false readings. Elemonate helps break down organic sludge and kills odor-causing bacteria within the grey tank. These products are fitting to use for winterization.

walex.com/store-category/rv-marine



RV WINTERIZATION KIT

VIAIR Corp., Irvine, California, offers the VIAIR RV Winterization Kit. VIAIR's convenient and easy do-it-yourself winterization kit protects your RV's water system from freezing during the long winter months and helps avoid costly springtime repairs from damaged water lines due to winter freezes. This kit is to be used with Viair's 4OOP-RV, 4OOP-RVS, 45OP-RV or 45OP-RVS models only.

viaircorp.com



FOAM GRIP HANDLE/BRUSH

Adjust-a-Brush, Clearwater, Florida, offers the Foam Grip Handle & Brush. Since 1980, Adjust-a-Brush has manufactured handles, brushes and related accessories for RVs. In the company's veteran-owned/operated facility, there's a molding operation as well as handle and brush production. Adjust-a-Brush is the original manufacturer of the Flo-Thru telescopic handle for the RV industry. The FG4848FT H&AAB telescopic handle is made of aircraft-grade anodized aluminum tubing with a 48-inch foam sleeve, a built-in water control valve in the swivel connector that attached to a garden hose, and the All-About soft wash brush.

adjust-a-brush.com

ON-DEMAND TANKLESS WATER HEATER

Way Interglobal, Elkhart, Indiana, presents the Greystone Flex Temp On-Demand Tankless Water Heater. The Flex Temp provides extended periods of hot water without limits and touts advanced technology, increased safety features and better efficiency than other RV water heater models. Flex temp features an industry-first patented flow restrictor valve that automatically adjusts the flow rate based on the incoming water temperature, ensuring maximum efficiency. Additionally, the Flex Temp comes equipped with industry-first safety features like a carbon monoxide detector, propane leak detector, anti-freezing system and anti-scald system.

wayinterglobal.com





Jan Kelly, president of Kelly Enterprises, is an educator, consultant, convention speaker and writes frequently for industry publications. For information about educational venues or joining an F&I 20 Group, call 800-336-4275 or visit jlkelly.com.



Post Delivery \$ales

Make the most of communication with customers to drive sales of ancillary products.

A large percentage of finance offices are struggling to sell ancillary products at the point of delivery. With an average take rate of 37% on extended service agreements, this leaves a huge wake in follow-up opportunities at 63%. You may be thinking: “My finance department’s take rate is in the 60% range—some maybe more.” But there are typically other reasons why this is a challenge.

Pick one of the reasons I heard most often from managers: “The payments will not withstand the increase in payments. The advance will not allow any finance products. The customer is not keeping the unit past the factory warranty.” Or the ole stand by, “the customer

simply said no.” The point is, the department is lacking revenue and your customers are lacking benefits.

The Missing Piece

Many dealerships are still running understaffed departments, so managers often say they simply don’t have time to follow up with customers.

My counsel is this: hire a billing clerk. A billing clerk is the perfect person to send out reminders of opportunities to customers who did not purchase ancillary finance products at the time of delivery.

What is a billing clerk? She or he could be a seasonal hire that can multitask and likes a fast-paced



environment. Someone who has excellent customer service skills, likes to communicate with customers and wants to learn what they do not know.

Seasonal hires can also be part-time, working only on high-traffic days. When the season changes, the duties of this position may very well change into a revenue enhancement position.

This position would earn an hourly wage plus a small commission on the ancillary products she or he sells to a customer in a post-delivery process. This person must be tech-savvy or willing to learn from your computer representatives. They also must have strong written and verbal communication skills.

Here are some ideas for recruiting personnel:

1. Job fairs at a local college
2. Post a job opening with the dean of business at the college
3. Post a mechanic job opening with a high school shop class (if they still have a shop class or tech school in your area)
4. Post a job opportunity with the unemployment office
5. Speak with local church leaders—they often know who is looking for a job
6. Give current employees a reward for a referral—maybe \$100?
 - a. The referral reward should be paid after the new hire passes their probationary period
7. Post a job opening online, such as on Indeed.com, LinkedIn or Facebook

8. When you go out to any restaurant, leave your business card when you leave a tip
9. Promote an intern program for local students with the option to offer full-time or part-time employment as the business needs and the individual's class schedule allows

The Right Tools

Following up with past customers may seem like an old-fashioned idea. To be honest, it is. Except you can use today's technology to deliver your message to the customer.

All follow-up messages, whether delivered by email, text, video or snail mail, must be followed up by a personal telephone call. Contact with the customer must be personalized and not appear as a "canned" effort. Everyone likes to feel they are a person of high value to the business they patronize. It is no different in the RV industry. If the message appears to be produced for the masses, it will most likely not be opened or deleted.

In addition, the method of delivery must provide you with a report on how many views it garners, along with details of the views and how many were trashed without so much as a glimpse of the content.

A dealership's website should have information about post-delivery purchases of finance ancillary products. Are your service agreements renewable for those customers who have had their units for many years and want to retain it for a few more before upgrading? What is new about the coverage? Why does your customer need this coverage

Follow-up is a 'science of nines.' The customer must see something nine times before it will register with her or him. One-and-done is not a plan that works for selling ancillary products post-delivery.

without degrading the unit they purchased? Keep the message short and concise. It's best to keep video text under one minute. Sixty seconds will seem like a lifetime when you are preparing a video, so keep the goal in mind; you want to capture the customer's attention.

Many dealerships use a platform called Connect for its sales customer relationship management (CRM). When I ask about this tool, I'm told, "Oh, that is for sales."

That response is short-sighted, as this platform can assist every department in post-delivery sales, in addition to driving new business for the sales team. Learn more about it, and use it to the max.

We live in a high-tech world, and all of us need to learn how to use these platforms to enhance the RVing experience for your customers and your dealership.

The 'Science of Nines'

Now let's visit the follow-up process. Contact needs to be consistent with the customer. If ancillary products are not sold at delivery, the door must be left open for the follow-up team.

Value in ancillary products should be seen throughout the dealership, even in service and parts. Have a sign posted in the service department, in the customer's line of sight, that says the following: "We accept Extended Service Agreements for all covered repairs." Also, have you inform your service advisor of your policy?

The cashier should have a stamp that is used on every customer receipt for a repair order, provided the unit is within factory warranty limits. The stamp should be self-inking red ink that says: "Your factory warranty is about to expire. Do you have your service agreement?"

Follow-up is a "science of nines." The customer must see something nine times before it will register with her or him. One-and-done is not a plan that works for selling ancillary products post-delivery. The message must be consistent and sent out often. Follow up with your customers. **RV2**

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

How to Find SPACE

In a follow-up to the August column, one dealership's desire to get the most from its parts and accessories spaces turns into a lucrative project.

If you read my column in the August issue of RV PRO, you may have decided to organize your parts department storage area(s) to optimize space and reduce the time required by your parts associates to complete a parts/accessories transaction. You may have realized that by increasing your parts associates' efficiency, they could process more transactions, which could increase your gross sales.

Hopefully, the written details in my SPACE column are sufficient to assist you in planning and executing your organization project. However, just in case you require a bit more assistance, you might benefit from a project that we recently completed at an RV dealership. And, since it is said that "a picture is worth 1,000 words," I have included some before, during and after photos of said project.

The owner of this RV dealership contacted me because he recently decided to expand some dealership facilities, and he wanted to improve the areas in which the parts and accessories were stored.

He decided on a two-part project with Part One being a one-day reconnaissance visit, so that I could understand the current conditions and recommend a plan to enhance the storage areas. During the reconnaissance visit, I recorded many notes and documented the areas with digital photos.

Executing the Plan

Using my SPACE acronym, I suggested that the dealer start the project prior to my return for Part Two. This included him coordinating with associates to commence "separating the wheat from the chaff" in the storage areas. This enabled us to identify what goods, equipment and materials needed to be processed, and what space and storage equipment would be available for use.



No. 1

One of the requests the dealer had was to obtain more display fixtures because part of the expansion included the retail display area. He said it was difficult to procure display fixtures due to the supply chain issues. During my reconnaissance visit, I was provided a tour of the entire facility and, to everyone's surprise, I located 10 display fixtures that were hiding in plain sight in the upper-level storage area. This discovery more than paid for the cost of my reconnaissance visit. This is an application of MBWA (Management by Walking Around) and could be an application of one of Yogi Berra's famous quotes: "You can observe a lot just by watching."

While on-site during Part One, we also processed the second step of the SPACE acronym: Polling the associates. This is a very important step because it is necessary to acquire the buy-in from the people who will be working in the revised storage areas. Since the current storage situation was not acceptable, the parts associates were receptive to my suggestions and agreed to provide input when requested. One of the discussions with the parts associates and the dealer principal included a graphic showing how several of the storage units in the primary parts storage area would be assembled.

No. 2

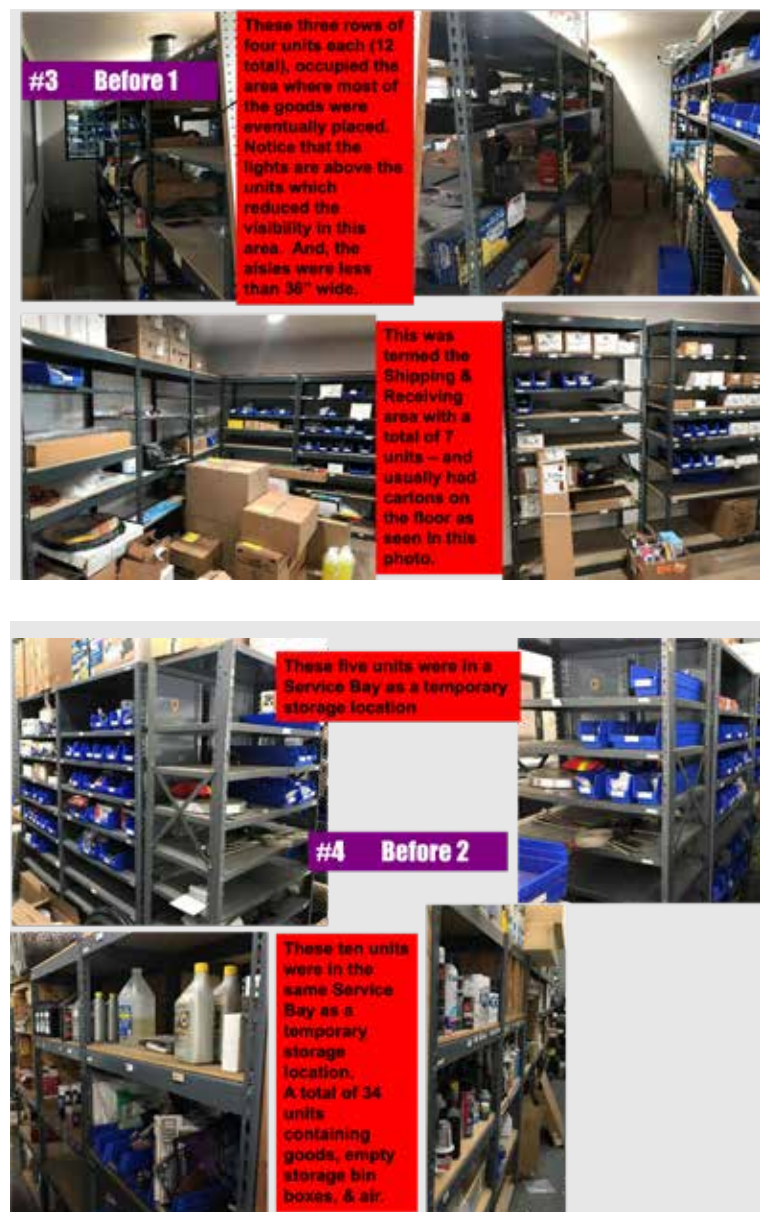
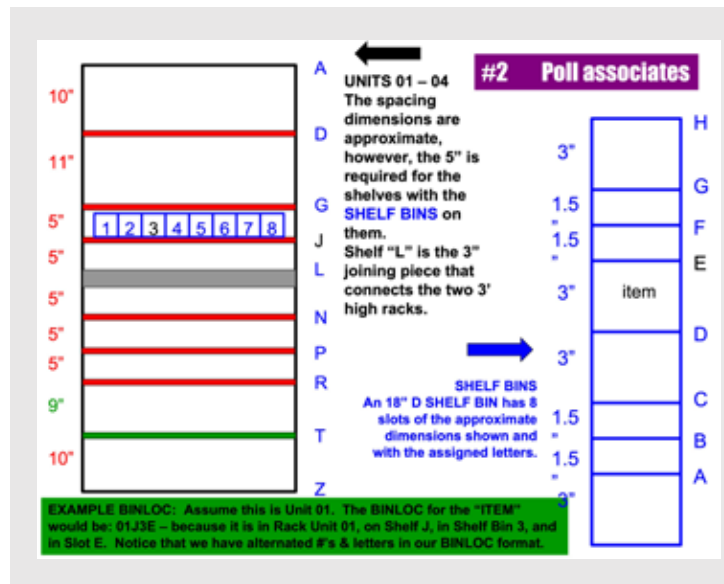
Asking questions is step three of my SPACE acronym, and this aspect of the organization project was performed during the one-day visit plus via emails and phone calls with the dealer principal and parts associates. Their responses aided in developing the plan for Part Two's seven-day visit.

Because there was enough storage equipment available for Part Two, we modified the "contacting equipment vendors" aspect of my SPACE acronym, and I designated which elements of the existing storage equipment would be required for the project. This provided additional savings for the dealership.

The final letter of my SPACE acronym—executing the plan—needed seven days to complete. This portion of the project required continual interaction with the parts associates and other dealership personnel because we were changing the placement of parts, accessories, materials and equipment each day.

The dealer principal played a major role in this aspect of the project because he posted the database changes to bin locations and to quantity on-hand for the goods that we processed each day. By performing this task, he realized that the project served an additional purpose beyond organizing the goods and that benefit was a more accurate valuation of his parts and accessories inventories.

This is from my most recent email from the dealer principal: "The system that you implemented for bin locations is working quite well, and has been well received and utilized by (parts associates names withheld)."





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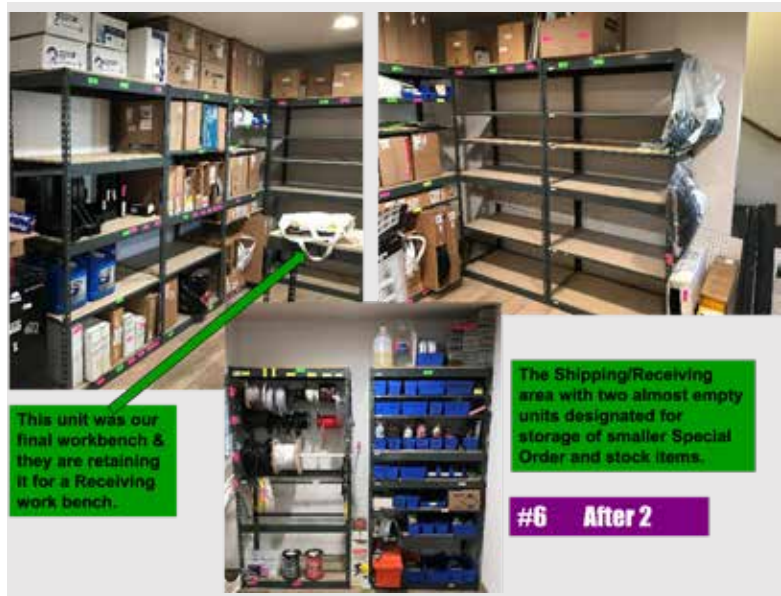


UNITS 01 thru 04 with Bin Labels indicating exact location of each shelf bin or carton

UNITS 05 thru 08 with Bin Labels indicating exact location of each shelf bin or carton & containing most of the goods from those 34 original units

There are eight units in the area originally containing 12 units & these 8 have lots of light.

#5 After 1



This unit was our final workbench & they are retaining it for a Receiving work bench.

The Shipping/Receiving area with two almost empty units designated for storage of smaller Special Order and stock items.

#6 After 2

Nos. 3 Through 6

At this point, you might ask: Why did the dealer principal hire P.A.R.T.S.* to do the work? Primarily, it was that the person with whom he originally contracted to perform the job was MIA when needed, and it was the middle of the RV selling season. The dealer principal had been reading my columns in RV PRO and contacted me to ask if I could assist in this eleventh hour of his dealership renovation.

Had his need been in November or December, and had he read my SPACE column as you may have done, perhaps he would have attempted the project using his personnel. And this is the purpose of my column—that you and your team could tackle a SPACE project if you feel that it would be beneficial to your operations, your customer service and to your profitability.

Or, you might decide to contact me to discuss your situation, so that we could cooperatively decide on the most appropriate path for you in your SPACE explorations. **RV2**

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Pit Stop



44,793

Total of June RV shipments

11.7%

Decrease in RV shipments compared to June 2021

7.8%

Increase in shipments through June 2022 when compared to the same point last year

"While early 2022 shipment results have been strong, we do see the market leveling off against 2021's record numbers," according to a statement from RVDA. "The latest 2022 RV RoadSigns forecast projects RV shipments for 2022 to range between 537,800 and 561,900 units with a most likely year-end total of 549,900 units, an 8.4% decline from the 600,240 shipped in 2021."

AND THE SURVEY SAYS...

RVIA SURVEY of Lenders' Experiences Results

\$16B: dollar volume of RV wholesale loans in 2021

\$13B: dollars funded in 276,838 retail indirect loans to RV consumers in 2021

"With the RV market continuing to grow and the dollar volume for RV lending also on the rise, the data shows that RV financing continues to be a profitable market for banks," according to a statement from RVIA.

TIPS FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS

Outside Magazine and Go RVing teamed up to produce a series of videos to provide "Tips and Tricks for New RVers." Check out all the videos at gorving.com, but here are two lists that you can tell your customers about:

MUST-HAVE TOOLS FOR RVERS

1. Tire pressure gauge
2. Multitool or multihead screwdriver
3. Fire extinguisher
4. Jumper cables
5. Headlamp
6. Toilet paper (A different kind of tool!)
7. Duct tape
8. Zip ties



CHECK OUT THESE APPS

Roadtrippers: find information on parking, attractions, campgrounds and more along your route
iExit: learn what's coming up at exits along your way
Gaia GPS: navigate backroads more easily with downloadable maps



INDUSTRY CELEBRATES FICOR

Upon the Biden administration's announcement of the creation of FICOR—Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation—Jessica Turner, president of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, said: "Solidifying FICOR could not have come at a better time to support America's public lands, waters and \$689 billion outdoor recreation economy. It is critical that federal land and water management agencies work together to address important recreation issues around funding, overcrowding and climate resiliency, as well as coordinate on the implementation of newly passed measure that will address the maintenance backlog, infrastructure priorities and distribution of Land and Water Conservation Fund dollars. ORR and its members are ready to partner however we can on solving these challenges together, as well as collectively approaching the many opportunities that are ahead to help everyone access the outdoors and protect our natural resources."





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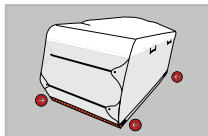
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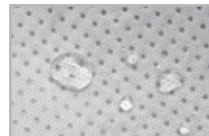
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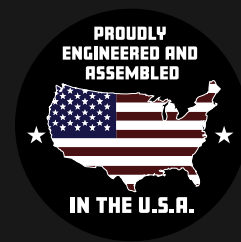
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Inside

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Heng 203	Anak-Rubber Plastic Mtg 204	Iapmo 205	KING 206	Azdel 207	GEN-Y-Hitch 208	Nickle Atlantic 209	CDI Balmar 210	Seaflo 211	Seaflo 212

Ailse
Inside

Kenyon Int'l 313	Freedman Seating 312	10x20	OPEN 311 A 10' x 30	Terry Rodino 311
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Ailse

outside

A/c and Land-scaping

Outside

Xantrex 313A 10'x20'	Arterra 314 10'x15'	Arterra 315 10'x10'	DDR 316	10' x 30' ASPHCL LED 317 10'x10'	Bansbach Tactical 318 10x10
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* map not to scale. major crossroads identified.

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4-6 pm	Appetizers
6-9 pm	Dinner
6-10 pm	Entertainment & DJ

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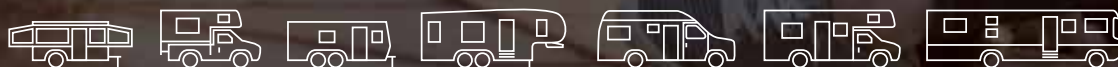
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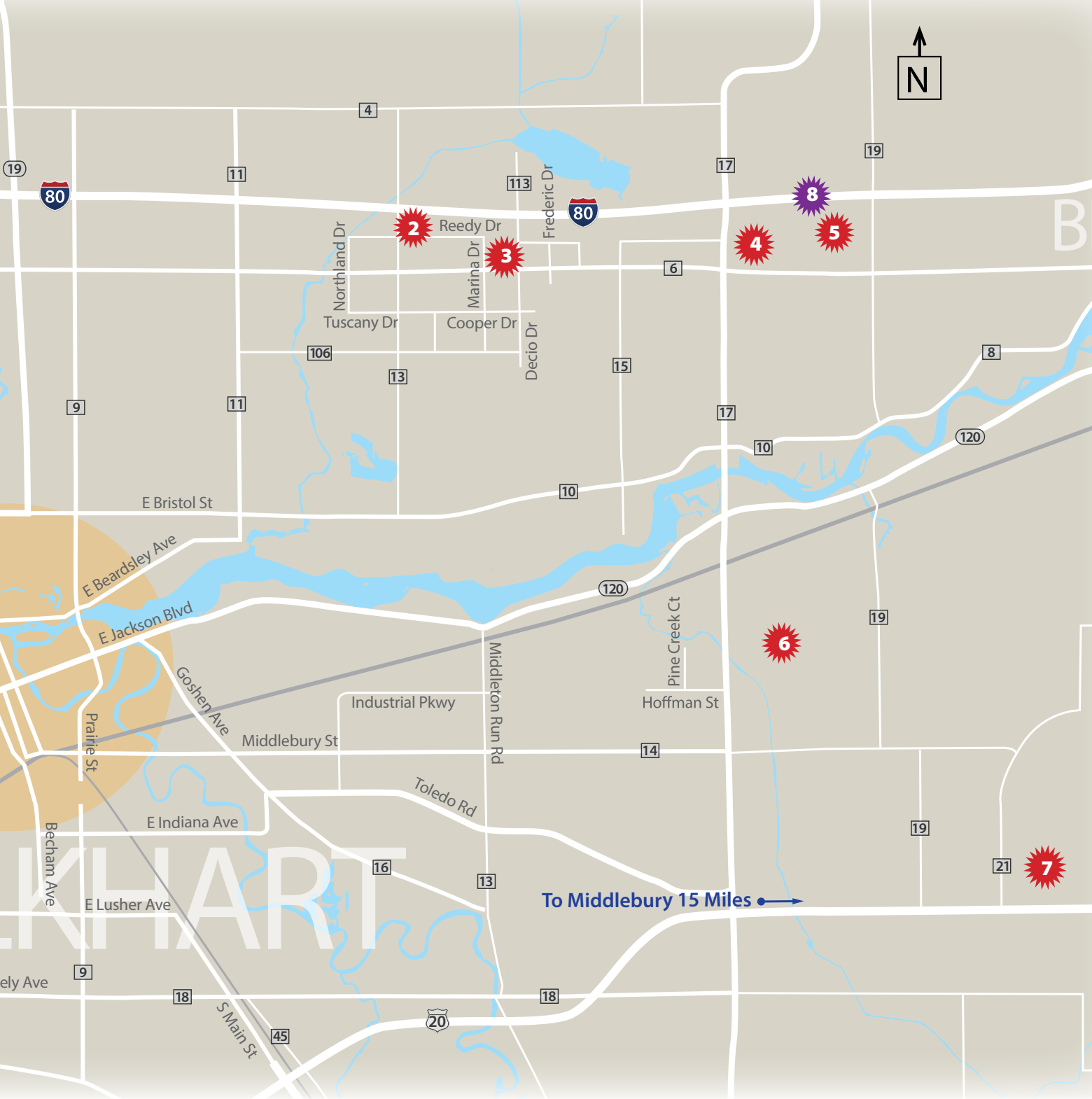
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