

RV Consumer e-Magazine

January 2015
Volume 5
Issue 1



DISCOVER
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RV 2015

What's New What's Cool

52nd Annual National RV Trade Show

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Page 6



Page 26



Page 31

IN THIS ISSUE

6 RV 2015 What's New, What's Cool

Take a look at what's new for 2015, and get Mark's perspective on some of the trends shaping the future of the RV industry.

26 RV Product Spotlight

If you have Day/Night shades in your RV or your house for that matter chances are a cord will eventually break in a shade. Find out how easy it is to repair a shade and have it working like new.

31 Campground Tips for Better Trips

Get some great tips on how to make your campground experiences the best they can be.

DEPARTMENTS

4 Editor's Desk

28 RV Show Season Quick Tips

Discover some quick tips on how to get the most out of attending upcoming RV shows.

29 RV Insurance Tips

Get some valuable tips on how to save on RV insurance, but still have the coverage you need.



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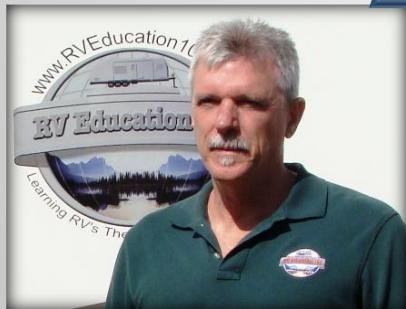
- Devin T., Georgia

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Last month I attended the 52nd Annual National RV Trade Show in Louisville, Kentucky. I look forward to this show every year. It's simply incredible to see 57 RV manufacturers and 229 RV supplier exhibitors fill more than 750,000 SF of exhibit space with products just for RVers. And trust me when I say it's hard to cover that amount of display space in only three days.

In addition to seeing what's new and what's cool for 2015 this annual trek to Louisville gives me the opportunity to visit with old friends, gauge the state of the RV industry and get excited for another year of doing what I love.

In this issue of RV Consumer Magazine I'll be highlighting some of the new and cool things I saw in Louisville to usher in the 2015 RV and camping season.

Sit back, relax and take a look inside the 52nd Annual National RV Trade Show. Happy 2015!

Mark

"Here's to old friends, new friends and another great year of RVing. Happy New Year!"

~ Mark Polk

RV Consumer Magazine

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Go where your RV takes you



Exclusive Coverage of the
52nd Annual National RV Trade Show
Louisville, Ky.

RV 2015

What's New? What's Cool?



By Mark Polk

Last year in Louisville I focused my attention on RV trends, like how RV manufacturers are building smaller, lighter, and more fuel efficient RVs. In 2015 we are planning to update our RV training video library so this year's focus was on "what's new and what's cool"

I wanted to look at all the latest technology used in RVs, like on-demand water heaters, radiant floor heating, electric awnings and the all-electric RVs with induction cook-tops and residential style refrigerators so we can include the latest technology in our new videos. And I wanted to focus on things I saw that I thought were cool for 2015. Let's not waste any time!

There was no denying that smaller, lighter, more fuel efficient RV had a dominant position in the marketplace for 2015, and it makes sense. Smaller tow vehicles means smaller trailers, and even though we are enjoying lower gas prices now how long can you expect it to last, right? So in the smaller lighter and more fuel efficient category here's some of what I saw.

Let's start with the minimalist type camping enthusiast and work our way up from there. I personally think what I refer to as minimalist camping will proper in years to come. It seems like since the recession folks are taking a look at their previous lifestyle and are considering the fact that bigger isn't

always better. I ran into a display featuring a wide assortment of gear toting transport and outdoor adventure equipment called "[Let's Go AERO](#)".



The first thing that caught my eye was the **Gear Wagon** enclosed trailer. It is basically a lightweight trailer to haul all your camping gear to your destination



and when you include the optional tent fabric it provides you with a place to sleep off of the ground.



Next was the **Little Giant** all-in-one cargo, utility and camping trailer. You can use it as a daily cargo trailer



and it easily converts into a roomy tent trailer for camping.



Some of the other products included nice receiver mounted, and small trailer cargo carriers.



For more information visit
[Let's Go AERO](#)

For the camper who wants more than the bare essentials, but still likes the idea of small, lightweight towable trailers I visited my friends at Little Guy Teardrop Camper/Trailer.

Since my last visit they added to the already impressive line-up of lightweight trailers, to include a brand new Cirrus truck camper scheduled to be released next spring.



Weighing in under 2,000 pounds it's sure to be a hit in the truck camper market place.



For more information on the Cirrus truck camper you can email info@cirrus-truckcamper.com

In addition to the new truck camper a couple other models that caught my eye were the **T@B Sofitel** and the

T@B Outback Edition.

I really like the silver metallic sidewalls, yacht inspired flooring and upscale cabinetry on the Sofitel model.



The Outback Edition offers features like a roof rack, a pitched axle with off-road tires and rims and a 5 piece ABS off-road assembly package.



For more information visit www.golittleguy.com

Still leaning towards the lightweight unconventional side of camping I ran into another favorite of mine, the Jeep Trail & Extreme campers.



If you own a Jeep you can get a custom painted Jeep camper to match the factory color of your Jeep.



And after rigorous field testing at the famous Chelsea Proving Grounds the camper earned the distinguished Trail Rated Jeep badge. So if some off-road camping is in your future you might want to check these campers out at www.livinlite.com

Of course the lightweight towable RV segment would not be complete without conventional pop-ups, hybrid trailers and ultra-lightweight trailers too. These are all good choices for smaller vehicles with lower tow ratings.



Being lightweight is nice, but nobody said anything about leaving out all the nice features and amenities we have grown accustomed to. Here are a couple examples of what I'm talking about.



This is a High Wall Flagstaff pop-up with outside kitchen and BBQ grill

Here is a Rockwood Premier Hard Side packed with features like heat pump, cherry wood interior, hot water, outside shower, water filtration, front storage and more



And off-road lightweight trailers and toy haulers to reach all those hard to get to places

Not a lot changed, that I saw, in the smaller, lighter more fuel efficient motorized segment . There were lots of Class B motor homes, B-Plus motor homes and scaled down versions of Class A motor homes



A couple interesting things I saw concerning these platforms was a new Sprinter 4X4 option, offering on-demand four-wheel drive.



And a brand new [AI-Ko AMC chassis](#) that is wider, lower and lighter, all of which are smart choices for RV manufacturers to build on.



For fuel efficiency the Class B & B-plus motorhomes are built on Sprinter and Dodge Promaster chassis' powered by a 3.6l gas or turbo diesel engine.



Speaking of chassis' but on a larger scale, Freightliner Custom Chassis unveiled the UltraSteer chassis.



Designed for premium RVs, with UltraSteer the wheels on the tag axle follow the ideal turning path of the front suspension giving the inside wheel optimal turning range. The result is a 17% reduction in the curb-to-curb turning radius, which is a 140% advantage over typical steer tag axles. And a 20% tighter turning angle than the closest competitor. More on [Freightliner Custom Chassis](#)

There were literally rows upon rows of conventional travel trailers, 5th wheel trailers and motorhomes on display by 57 RV manufacturers, making it difficult to see everything in a short period of time. At a minimum I tried to walk through each display and see what stood out, or caught my eye. Towable trailers lead in market share, so travel trailers and 5th wheel trailers were well represented. There are trailers being designed and built for every need, taste and budget. **Here is a quick glimpse of the 2015 towable offering.**

I mentioned earlier there are lots of lightweight and ultra-lightweight units to choose from. This category is great for folks with a limited tow vehicle rating who don't want to invest in upgrading to a more expensive tow vehicle. This towable category includes pop-ups, hybrid trailers and lightweight versions.



For folks with a higher tow vehicle rating, but just getting started in the RV lifestyle there are endless amounts of conventional travel trailers to choose from. Many fall into what I refer to as entry level trailers, meaning the price point is attractive, but options and amenities are more limited. This is a great place for new RVers to get introduced to the world of RVs.



If you are looking for more there are mid-priced and high-end travel trailers to

choose from as well. These upgraded trailers use different building materials in the construction process, and offer the buyer more in the way of creature comforts and optional equipment.



Element Interior

For the most part 5th wheel trailer and toy haulers are designed and built the same way. There are lightweight versions with lower price points and there are top of the line units with price tags to match. Regardless of what you are looking for you can rest assured you will find it.



I think most folks can relate to the iconic [Airstream](#), and there are numerous other manufacturers with offerings in this category and price point. For example the Element by [Ever Green](#)



[Mobile Suites 5th Wheel](#)

I saw a variety of toy haulers. Some were small, some were huge and there were motorhome toy haulers and custom designed toy haulers. If a toy hauler is in your future make sure the tow vehicle is not only rated to tow the weight of the trailer, but the additional weight of all the toys you put in the trailer too.



Towing Tip: Purchase a tow vehicle with a tow rating equal to or greater than the toy hauler's GVWR. This way even if you load it to the maximum amount the tow vehicle is still rated to tow it.



You can even get a toy hauler custom designed for the ultimate tailgating experience with your favorite college or professional team theme.



Motorized RVs are not much different than towable RVs in-as-much-as there are smaller lower priced models and larger more expensive models to choose from. For example, on the higher end of the scale I saw this all new 600 HP London Aire motorhome



to this much more affordably priced and family oriented type C model. All you need to do is figure out what your needs are, what your budget is and start shopping for your 2015 dream RV.



[Winnebago Minnie Winnie](#)



Something that is becoming predominantly stronger in the RV marketplace is what I refer to as destination camping. Lots of folks have that favorite destination at the coast or in the mountains that they enjoy returning to on a regular basis. To accommodate these needs there is a wide variety of Park Model Trailer manufacturers. When you purchase a park model trailer it is commonly set-up and left at your favorite camping destination on a semi-permanent basis.

All you need to do is find a lot (usually rented space) large enough for your park model trailer and you can go enjoy it whenever you want.

There are a couple different styles of park model trailer available. Some look similar to a large conventional travel trailer and others look more like a cottage.



[Cottage by Cedar Creek](#)





There are park model vacation homes available to meet many different needs and different price points.



[Kropf Park Model Homes](#)



We spent some time covering what's new for 2015, now let's look at what's cool for 2015

If you like LED lighting technology you might like what ARV did to highlight their [Luxe 5th wheel](#).

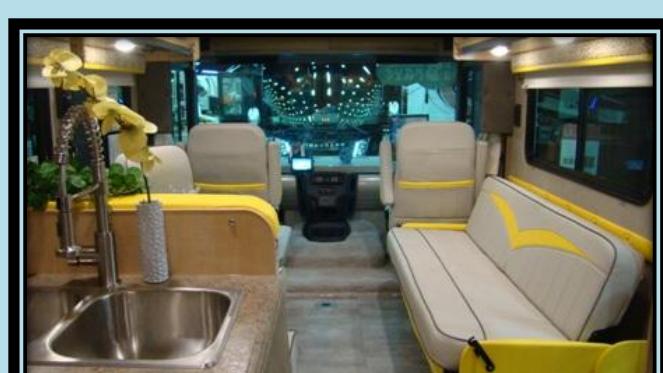


the retro looking interior and exterior, this Brave comes equipped with all the modern day features and amenities.



[Luxe by Agusta RV](#)

Winnebago went retro with the classic [Winnebago Brave](#). I first saw this vintage style makeover at the Pennsylvania RV & Camping Show earlier this year. Don't be fooled by



The retro-style RV is gaining popularity in towable and motorized RVs.

This isn't new but it sure is cool. For many years Winnebago Industries has offered what is known as Winnebago Specialty Vehicles.



What this means is, if you have special design requirements for a motorhome you can sit down and design it with the Winnebago specialty vehicle design experts.

This is the perfect solution for folks who require mobile offices, mobile vets, medical clinics, emergency command centers and much more.

You start with an open space platform and go from there. The Super Structure construction design eliminates the need for interior walls giving you maximum flexibility on floor-plan design.

This is an extremely viable and affordable option for anyone looking for specific design elements in a mobile unit.



For more information visit
Winnebago Specialty Vehicles



I mentioned earlier that manufacturers are incorporating more advanced technology in today's RVs. Some people I talk to think it is a bit much for a vehicle designed to go camping in, while others say the goal of this new technology is to make your camping experiences more enjoyable.

The thing I like about the RV industry is no matter what your thoughts conjure up about what camping is supposed to be you can find a RV to suit your needs. One thing is for certain though, technology will not stand still in any industry today.

Some RV manufacturers are building all-electric RV models with induction cook tops and residential style refrigerators, eliminating the need for propane as long as there is a source of electricity, be it the power pedestal or a generator.



There's carbonic heat technology that works on 12 VDC power, radiating heat from the floor to heat the RV.



Almost anything in the RV can be operated at the touch of a button, from lighting to awnings to roller shades, and you can operate many of these devices using an app on your phone or a remote control on your keychain.



And don't forget the on-demand water heaters that provide hot water faster than our water heater at home, big screen TVs, fireplaces, satellite TV, charging stations, climate controlled heat & AC, solar panel technology, LED lighting, and entertainment centers with surround sound. Technology in today's RVs almost surpasses the creature comforts found in our own homes. I can hardly wait to see what next year will bring.

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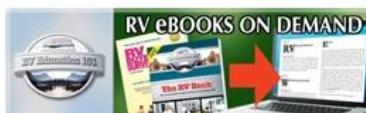
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Don't forget to check out [Mark's Blog](#), our free [RV101.TV](#) site and the brand new [RV DIY Channel](#) too!

Best in Show



Just for fun I wanted to select my “Best in Show” RV. In the past I selected the “Best in Show” from towable RVs, so this year I decided to select from motorized RVs. Understand this is just for fun because I did not see every RV at every display at the show. But based on what I did see my “Best in Show” this year is the [2015 Zephyr by Tiffin](#)



I always tell people you will know it's the right RV as soon as you see it. In this case it was the Zephyr. The craftsmanship is superb, it is loaded with features and the design elements are second to none. I don't always lean towards 45-foot luxury motor coaches, but like I said when I saw the Zephyr I knew it was a special motorhome.



The old saying "A picture is worth a thousand words" seems appropriate. I'll let the pictures do the talking.





2015 Zephyr By Tiffin





That wraps up my coverage of the 52nd Annual National RV Trade Show. I mentioned a couple times that regardless of what type of RV you are interested in, what size RV, and what price point there is an RV out there to suit your particular needs. Take time this winter to attend some local RV shows and don't rush into making a buying decision. Do your research on RV manufacturers, RV dealers, the different types of RVs and look at some floor plans. Like I said, when you see it you will know it. Go find your dream RV and have a wonderful 2015 camping season.

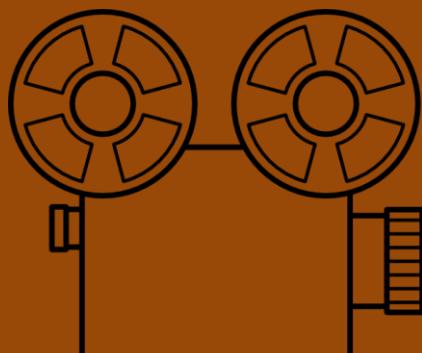
[To find some local RV shows in the state where you live visit RVIA](#)

RV Product Spotlight

RV Product Spotlight



If you have pleated shades in your RV the day will come when a cord breaks and it needs to be repaired. This is an easy do-it-yourself project and the Pleated Shade First Aid Kit by United Shade makes it even easier.



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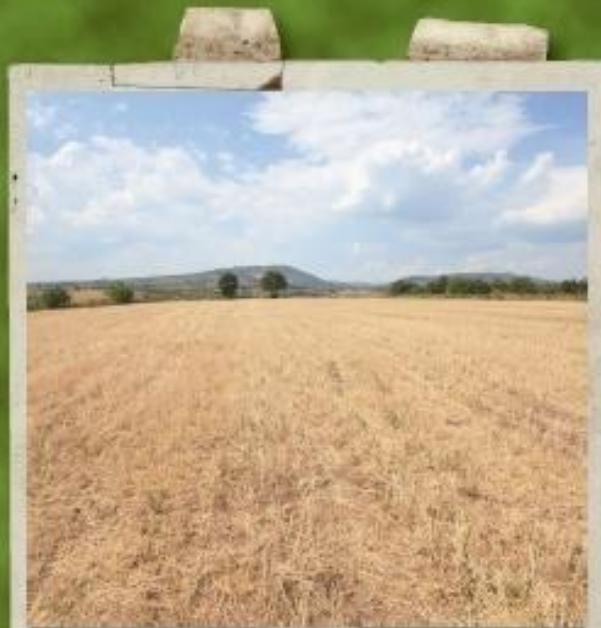
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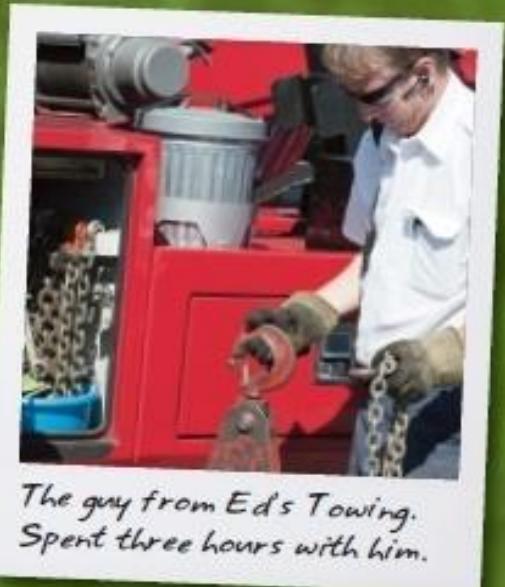


The laptop we would've used to keep in touch with the kids.



Cook's Field, the week after we missed the Bluegrass Festival.

How will you
Remember
your travels?



*The guy from Ed's Towing.
Spent three hours with him.*

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RV Show Season Quick Tips



Let the Search Begin

A good place to start your search for a new RV is at a local RV show. When you attend an RV show ask lots of questions about RVs and RV products.

Great Place to Conduct Research

For the buyer RV shows put everything you need to see and learn about RVs under one roof, making it the ideal forum to conduct research and make informed RV buying decisions.

Locate a reputable RV Dealer

Remember, you're at the show to check out the dealer as well as the product and you should plan to visit the RV dealer's physical location before you buy. If at all possible talk to some other people who have dealt with the dealership in the past.

Avoid making a Hasty Decision

There are some great deals offered at RV shows and with all of the excitement, and a good salesperson, it's easy to make a hasty purchase. If they can offer a great deal at the show, chances are they can offer a great deal after the show, unless the offer included a manufacturer discount or rebate for show dates only. Let them know you might be interested in a particular unit or deal, but you want to visit the dealership before you buy.

Compare Apples to Apples

There is a lot of ground to cover at an RV show and a wealth of information available. Not only will you find a good selection of RV dealers to check out, but there will be every make and model of RV imaginable too. RV shows are a great place to do some comparison shopping. Keep in mind that RVs are available in entry, mid-line, and high-end models. When comparing prices, make sure it is apples to apples. One RV may look like another one, but you need to compare the options, construction, equipment and features they both have to offer..

RV Insurance Tips

Top 10 Factors that Contribute to Your RV Insurance Rate:

As you shop around for the best in RV insurance rates, consider these top 10 factors that contribute to your overall rate.

- 1. Location:** Just like real estate, nothing matters more to your insurance rate than where you store your RV. An insurance company will consider factors such as weather risks and crime rates for the area where you keep your RV.
- 2. Credit Score:** A higher credit score indicates a higher degree of responsibility and therefore, lower RV insurance rates.
- 3. Age:** Older adults get a break on rates so sometimes being older does have its perks. Being married can also lower rates by showing stability.
- 4. Deductibles:** Choosing to have a higher deductible will lower your rate while lower deductibles increase rates. However, choosing the right deductible for you is most important. Consider carefully how much money you're able to spend out of pocket in case of an accident.
- 5. Driving History:** Insurance companies consider your past driving record, past accidents or tickets, and how many claims you have made in the past.
- 6. Owning a Home:** Owning a home means your RV will spend less time on the road and be at less risk, lowering your rate.
- 7. RV Type:** Car insurance varies by the type of automobile and so does RV insurance. Rates change based on type of RV you own.
- 8. RV Use:** How much do you use your RV? Are you a full timer or just a vacationer? The less you use your RV, the lower your rates.
- 9. Experience:** Experienced RV drivers often receive a discount based on experience. Be sure to mention your years of experience to your agent when purchasing your policy.
- 10. Association Memberships:** Membership in an RV association provides discounts at campgrounds and restaurants and could also provide discounts with certain insurance companies. Check your membership details to see if you qualify for a discount.

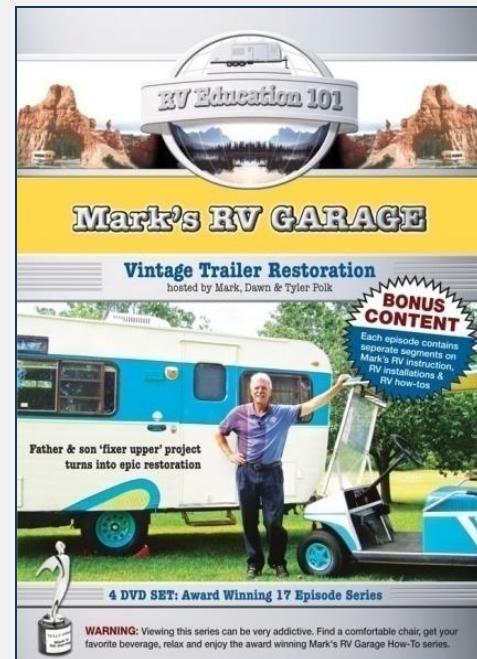
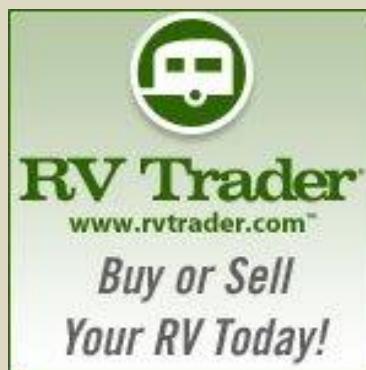
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Getting to

Campground Tips for Better Trips presented by KOA



A big part of the camping experience is the campground experience. Here are some tips and tricks to help make your next campground stay as pleasant and carefree as possible.

- If you know where you'll be staying make campground reservations at your favorite KOA campground in advance, particularly during prime travel season.
- With a reservation there will always be a site waiting for you when you arrive.
- Plan to stop traveling while there is still plenty of daylight so you can get set-up, get settled in, and enjoy some of the amenities the campground has to offer.
- When you arrive at the campground, ask to see the site before you accept it. Ask if there are any pull-thru sites available. If you are not proficient at backing this can ease the stress of having to back your unit into the campsite.
- Make sure the electrical source is compatible with your RV's electrical system.

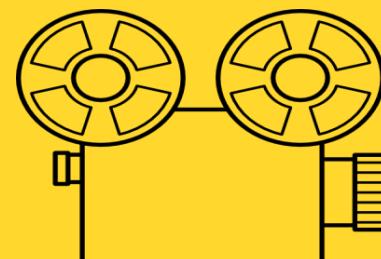
- Make sure the site will accommodate the length of your RV and vehicle.
- If it's hot outside request a site that is in the shade, if possible. This will help the refrigerator and AC work more efficiently.
- Check the site for any overhead obstacles that might interfere with the campground set-up, and when you position the unit on the site make sure there is enough clearance for slide-outs and the patio awning.
- Level the RV and chock the wheels before disconnecting from the tow vehicle (for towable RVs.)
- Test the polarity and voltage prior to plugging the RV into any electrical source. After you test the electrical source turn the breaker off, plug the RV in and turn the breaker back on.
- Campground voltage can fluctuate depending on the demand. You should use a quality surge protector to protect your RV's electrical equipment and appliances in the event AC voltage drops below 105-volts or goes above 130-volts.

Getting to



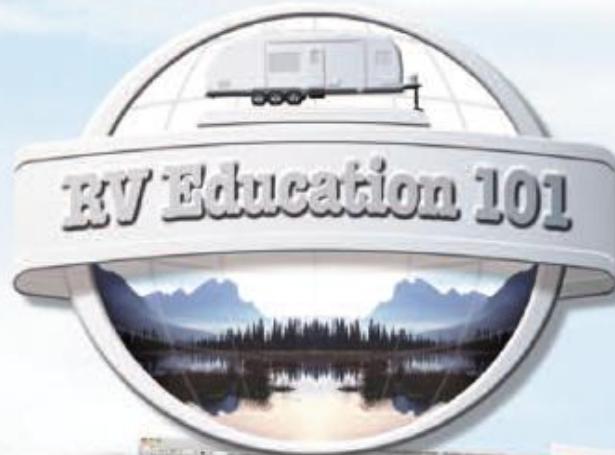
- Keep a variety of electrical adapters on hand in case you need them. You should also have an extension cord that is compatible with the electrical system on your RV. The gauges of wire used in standard household type extension cords are not suitable for RV hook-ups.
- Use a water pressure regulator at the campground to prevent possible damage to your plumbing system from high water pressure. Always connect the pressure regulator at the water source, then connect the drinking hose to it.
- Use a white drinking safe hose to connect from the water source to the RV. It's a good idea to have a 4-foot, 10-foot and 25-foot hose on hand so you can always reach the campground water hook-up. Take a green or black garden hose for all other uses, like flushing holding tanks or cleaning the RV.
- You should always filter the water going into the RV with a high quality filtration system. The 4-foot or 10-foot drinking hose can be used to go from a water filter to the city water connector on the RV.
- It's a good idea to have a 10-foot and 20-foot sewer hose available so you can always reach the campground sewer connection. Spend a little extra

- and get heavy-duty sewer hoses. Keep an assortment of sewer hose adapters and connectors on hand.
- If you're going to be leaving the campground for more than few minutes it's a good idea to turn the water supply off until you return. Better safe than sorry.
- Always stow the awning when you're not going to be at the campsite, and leave it in the stowed position at night.
- Lock your RV and secure valuables when you are not physically at the campsite.
- Keep a spare set of keys for the RV and other vehicles.
- Practice good campground etiquette and leave the campsite in the same condition you found it, or better.
- If you travel with pets, respect other campers as it pertains to your pets. Always use a leash, control any barking and **always** clean up after your pets. ~ **RV 101**

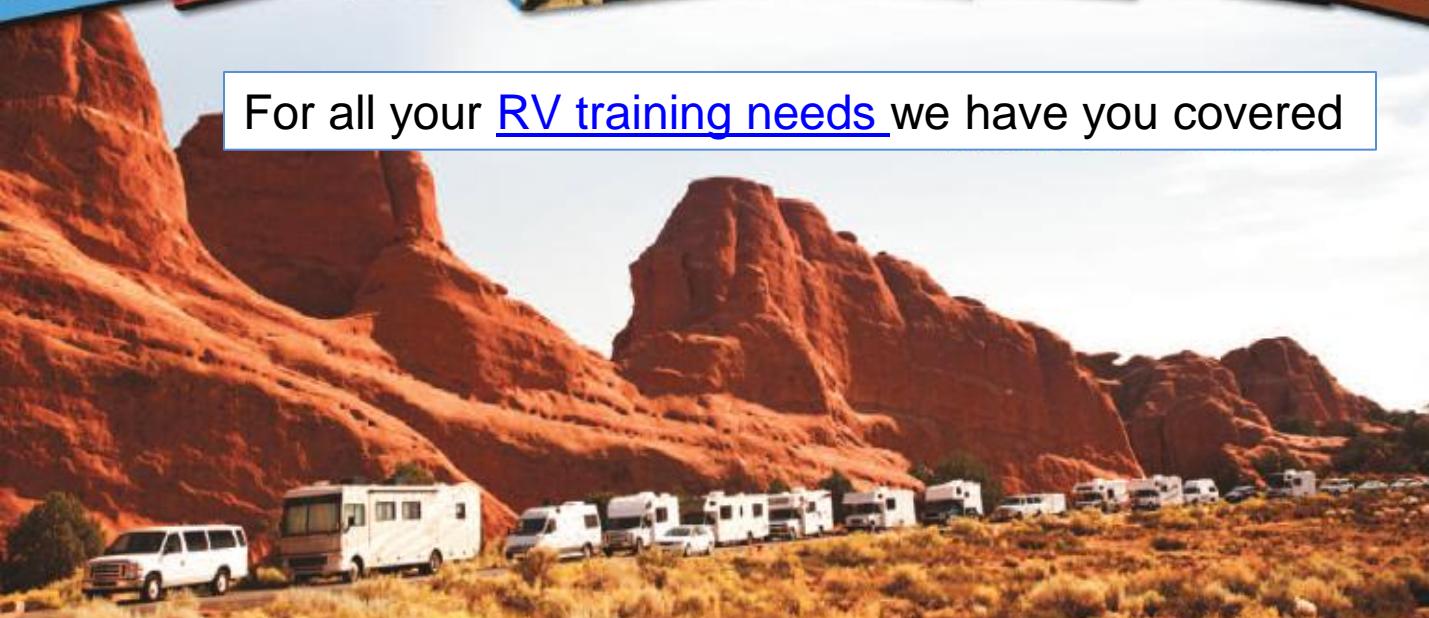


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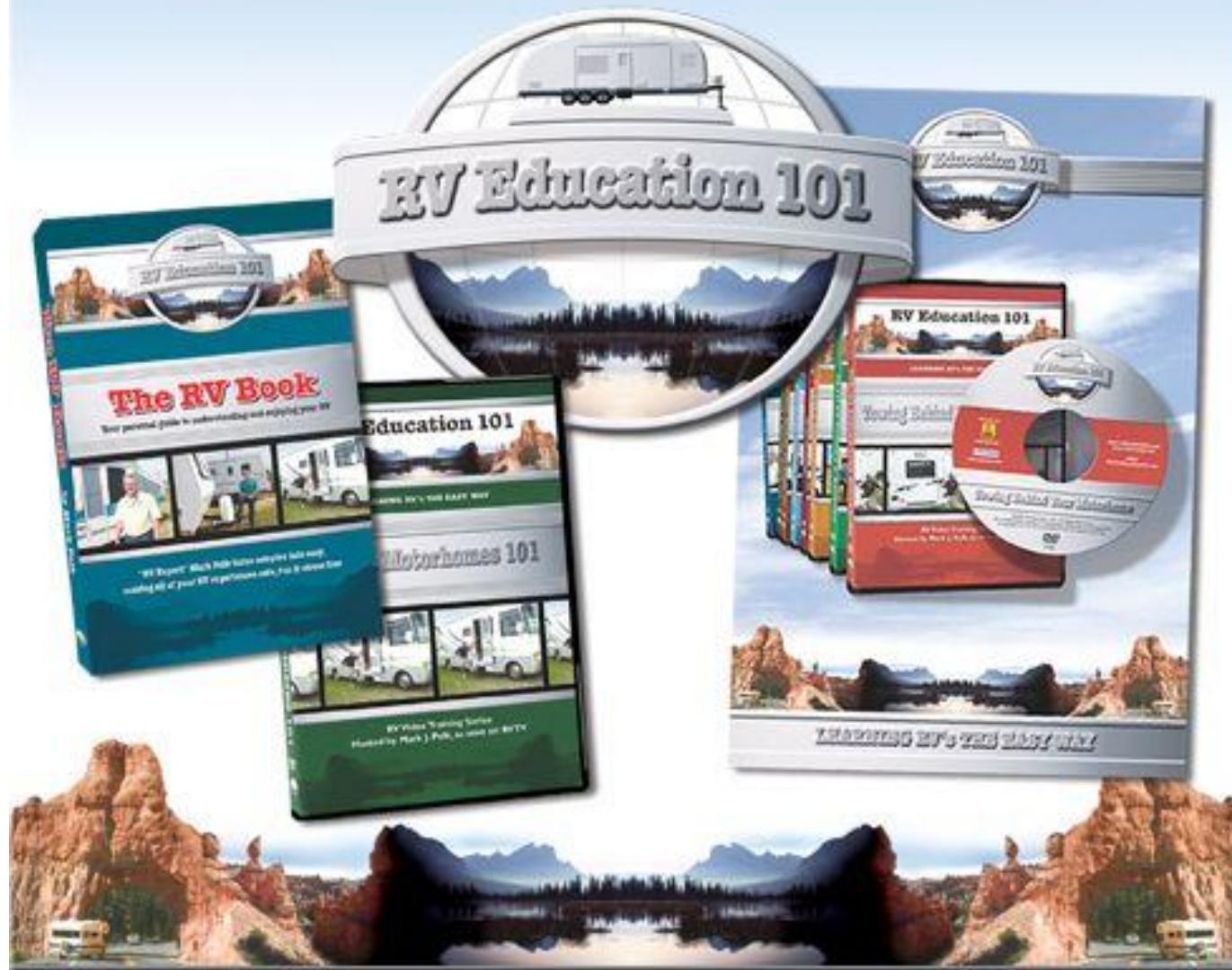
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Our goal with RV Consumer E-Magazine is to provide you with helpful information to make all of your RV experiences more enjoyable. I left my position as an RV Sales and F&I manager in 2000 to start RV Education 101.

We produce RV educational videos & DVDs and publish books and e-books on how to safely & properly use and maintain your RV. The reason I left my job was because of my concern about the lack of educational and safety awareness material available to the RV consumer, in other words you.

My wife Dawn left her position in RV sales to help start the company, and is our Sales and Marketing Director. We currently have a 35-foot Class A motor home. We have two boys, Tyler 17 and Josh 23, both avid RVers and two dogs, Roxie & Gracie.

If you would like to learn more about us and about RV Education 101 please visit

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