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JANUARY 2013

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2013 First Look
Trucks & Towables

TRAILER LIFE
READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Pg. 52



Rediscovering Route 66

Southern Hospitality

- Taming Georgia's Okefenokee
- Pensacola Historical Tour

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User Guide

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Discover Lake Buchanan, Texas



The Phoenix fifth-wheel offers versatility.

On the cover: The Cyclone 4100 King by Heartland is a spacious and indulgent toy hauler that includes surprising extras.

Happy New Year

What's In Store



This is the first issue of the New Year and we are looking forward to delivering ever-increasing exciting, informative and fulfilling stories to you, the readers and fans of *Trailer Life*. For example, see Tim Walton's well-researched treatise on pin boxes for fifth-wheel trailers. Walton explores different designs, their benefits, uses, and which pin boxes may be better for certain types of rigs and applications. In addition, the author offers a diverse guide to major manufacturers' products available on the market today.

Just as interesting, if not enlightening, is automotive journalist and *Trailer Life* contributor Bruce Smith's roundup of nine 2013 four-door pickup trucks he's driven at various new truck press introductions attended during the fall and early winter of 2012. Smith's first-hand, behind-the-wheel driving/towing impressions provide invaluable information.

Let's look at some new trailers, shall we? Bob Ashley and a band of expert sources in the Elkhart, Ind., region (the heart of RV production) have compiled a collection of news and photos that offer a peek into what can be expected to appear on dealer lots in the months to come. There are some exciting new rigs – travel trailers and fifth-wheels, ranging from super lightweight to high-end luxury suites – waiting right around the corner!

Of course there are the wonderfully illustrated and interesting travel tales such as Ann and Carl Calvert's wild adventure in Okefenokee Swamp in southern Georgia, and their equally intriguing exploration of the more tame, yet just as much fun, Pensacola, Fla. This issue also introduces Guy and Pam Selbert's first of a four-part series tracing the famous Route 66 from start to finish (part 1 takes you from Chi-Town to Springfield, Mo.).

Undoubtedly though, the most interesting to us is the Readers' Choice Awards. That's because we heard from you on 25 RV-centric categories involving more than 100 different products, rigs, services and vehicles. The readers of *Trailer Life* told us what they liked best by voting through a web-based survey, rating their favorite trailers, trucks, campgrounds, places to eat, fuel stops, portable generators, oil products, hitches, RV retailers, states to RV in, etc. It was an eye-opening experience, and is informative for both the *Trailer Life* staff and readers.

– Stuart Bourdon, editor-in-chief

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INSIDE

You may notice the new, quarterly special motorized section "Unhitched."

We recognized an interest in certain types of motorhomes from a segment of the *Trailer Life* readership. However, the vast majority of the magazine will continue to be filled with tow tests and trailer reviews, and outstanding technical, travel and feature stories about the travel trailer lifestyle we know you enjoy and love.



Publisher Bob Livingston
Editor-in-Chief Stuart Bourdon
Managing Editor Tom Kaiser
Associate Editor Amanda Lepinski
Senior Art Director Rick Damien
Production Manager Angela Schmieg
Production Coordinator Andrea Schneider
Sales Administrator Katey Purgatorio

Consulting Editors Wes Caughlan, Ken Freund, Jeff Johnston
Contributors Bob Ashley, Ann & Carl Calvert, Len Cousineau, Bill Graves, Bruce Hampson, Tom Morr, Guy and Pamela Selbert, Bruce W. Smith, Tim Walton, Gary Wescott

Vice President National Sales Terry Thompson
Tel 206-283-9545 Fax 206-283-9571

RV Marketplace Sue Seidlitz
10556 Combie Road #6443, Auburn, CA 95602
Tel 530-268-3005 Fax 530-653-2090
sseidlitz@goodsamfamily.com

Classifieds Kathy Schurman
3300 Fernbrook Ln N Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN 55447
Tel 763-383-4437 Fax 763-383-4499
kathy.schurman@goodsamfamily.com

Tacy Hendershot-Sargent (Southeast Region)
1010 SW Lighthouse Drive, Palm City, FL 34990
Tel 772-288-0387 Fax 772-288-0085

Lou Cicirelli (Northeast Region)
1400 NW 108th Avenue, #266, Plantation, FL 33322
Tel 954-297-9234

Scott Oakes, John Marciano (Western Region)
1818 Westlake Avenue, N. #420
Seattle, WA 98109
Tel 206-283-9545 Fax 206-283-9571

Crompton Holdings Scott Crompton (Detroit, MI)
2031 Kings Highway, Shreveport, LA 71103
Tel 334-546-7243 Fax 334-356-7740
scottcrompton@mac.com

Chairman Emeritus Art Rouse

Publisher Emeritus Bill Estes

Production Specialist Cherri Perschmann, **Digital Advertising and Marketing Manager** Jeffrey Larson, **Senior Marketing Manager** Kathryn Knudson, **Administrative Assistant-Audience Development** Molly Sullivan, **Digital Media Content Editor** Mike Davin, **Digital Media Manager** Chris Soash, **Digital Marketing Specialist** Kathryn Benson, **Digital Editor** Nicholas Upton, **Associate Editor** Chris Gerber

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Full-Time Freedom

Excel, by Peterson Industries, was not mentioned in the article about rigs for full-time living. Their construction quality, especially their drop-Z frame is made specifically for full-timing. And the units are guaranteed to -10 degrees Fahrenheit. They have a gel-coated fiberglass roof and exterior. In my opinion, some of the fifth-wheels that were in the article don't measure up to Excel in quality for the price. Looking forward to hearing from you while I anticipate next month's magazine arrival.

Terrence W. Griffin, Bosque Farms, N.M.

Terrence, thank you for your suggestion. Indeed, Excel by Peterson Industries is a manufacturer of quality travel trailers and fifth-wheels, including the Limited series, which the company calls a "five-star hotel on wheels" and is applicable to the full-timing crowd.

Four Seasons and Fifty Amps

I am a retiree one year out from making an RV purchase decision. The criteria I am looking for requires a 36- to 40-foot unit equipped to handle all four seasons with 50-amp power. The RV will be moved between Minnesota and Arizona most of the time. It will also need to have outside electrical outlets and be capable of being connected to a portable generator.

I value your judgment and enjoy

FACEBOOK POLL

What's your favorite (or dream) winter RV destination?

35% Florida
27% Arizona
14% California
14% Texas
10% New Mexico

Happier Campers

In the November 2012 letters to the editor, a Mr. and Mrs. Mandell voiced concern about a recent visit to Trailer Ranch RV Resort in Santa Fe, N.M., specifically their escort policy. As luck would have it, my wife and I just spent three nights in this park. I found the escort policy to be helpful, but their suggestion to have an additional pair of eyes observing would certainly be helpful. While the Mandells seemed to have had a bad experience, we could not have been happier with the park, their staff and our stay overall. The time we were there happened to be Balloon Fiesta, [which was] very busy. Even though they were busy, they were able to accommodate us on very short notice and with pleasure. If individuals are traveling to or through Santa Fe, I would highly recommend this park. - **Rick Broyer, Oakhurst, Calif.**



BACKUP SAFETY

» No matter how skilled a driver you are, always have an assistant help when backing your RV into a campsite. Your assistant should stand where the driver can read body language, and the driver should roll down the windows to aid verbal communication. Another set of eyes will help spot objects like low-hanging branches or a fire pit that may not be visible inside the cab.

reading the RV critiques you provide in the magazine. Any input you provide will be greatly appreciated. I am looking for an independent critique in assisting me to make a final purchase decision.

Greg Floto, Tucson, Ariz.

Greg, there are a number of manufacturers that can fill your order. One of them is Oregon's Northwood Manufacturing that makes four-season units in its Arctic Fox line with optional 50-amp service. DRV, Excel and New Horizons are also among the other excellent brands to look at as well when considering a trailer for your needs. Quite a few of the upper-end, larger travel trailers and fifth-wheels offer winter-weather packages, 50-amp service options, as well as exterior electrical access and the ability to source from a portable generator.

Toeing the Action Line

I wish to thank you for your RV Action Line section, as complaints do matter

to this Good Sam Life Member. In late 2008 we were looking for a new fifth-wheel and I decided to look back at the past two and a half years of Action Line. To my amazement I found that around 42 percent of the complaints had to do with three RV companies. Now, some four years later, I thought I would look back over the past 24 months to see what companies were the trendsetters now. Guess what? The same three RV companies are still there, but this time it is 46 percent of all complaints, with one of them at 24 percent of all complaints. Now, in their defense, some of the issues were resolved. I am sure that others have seen the same thing. So, RV companies, take heed — complaints do matter.

George Baker, Colmesneil, Texas

CORRECTION

A caption in "It's the Oysters" (Trailer Life, November 2012) incorrectly labeled a shrimp boat as an oyster boat. We regret the error. 🐞

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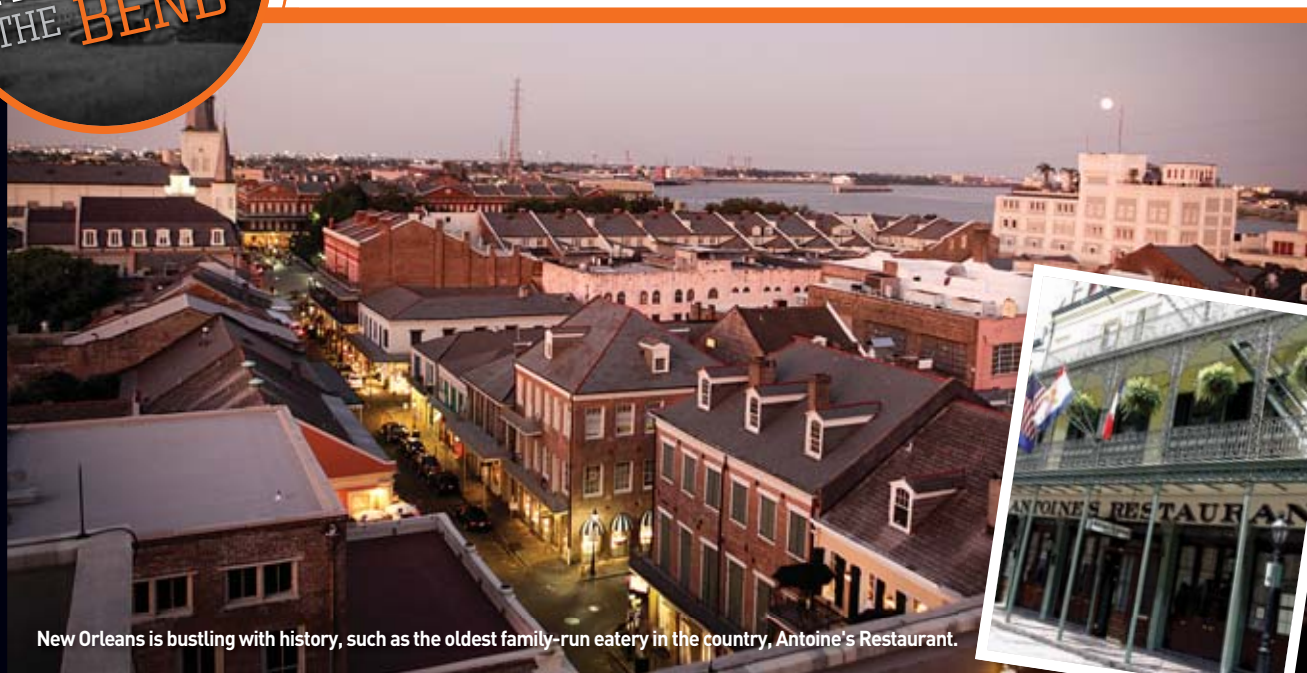
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New Orleans is bustling with history, such as the oldest family-run eatery in the country, Antoine's Restaurant.

Lovely New Orleans

"Come as you are, leave different"

On April 30, 1812, subtropical Louisiana was admitted to the Union and is known for its European, West Indian and African roots dating back to the 16th century. A few hundred years later, in 1838, the first Mardi Gras celebration was held in New Orleans, honoring the area's diverse culture. Though New Orleans continues to be well traveled for Mardi Gras, the annual celebration isn't the only aspect of the city that attracts visitors. New Orleans is also recognized as the birthplace of jazz music.

In the 1780s, New Orleans residents crowded the streets drumming, making music and dancing to a variety of smooth-sounding instruments that would later become known as jazz. The streets surrounding the three buildings located within the New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park are filled with live local, national and sometimes famous jazz musicians daily.

An exotic variety of animals from around the world such as sea lions, elephants, whooping cranes, Amur

leopards, orangutans, white tigers and white alligators call New Orleans home at the Audubon Zoo. Bright green gardens, the award-winning Louisiana Swamp and Jaguar Jungle, and hands-on animal encounters entice visitors of all ages.

Another must-see attraction is the self-professed oldest family-run restaurant in the country, Antoine's. Since 1840, the French-Creole cuisine menu has enticed locals as well as tourists to dine there. Each of the 14 dining rooms has a unique theme including Mardi Gras, European royalty, the Prohibition era, an 1840-period room, and a room devoted to wine holding approximately 25,000 bottles when fully stocked.

Amid jazz and other fare is the Confederate Memorial Hall Museum — Louisiana's oldest — containing one of the largest collections of Confederate memorabilia in the United States. For history buffs, another point of interest is the National WWII Museum on Magazine Street. A variety of museum tours pay homage to the

mid-20th century war, including the New Orleans History and Heritage tour; showing the museum's galleries, a guided outdoor exploration of New Orleans attractions and a dinner cruise on the Mississippi River.

To be near the action, the New Orleans West KOA Kampground is located just outside the French Quarter and offers full hookups, concrete sites with grassy areas, cable hookups, Wi-Fi, laundry facilities, pool, store and a daily shuttle to the French Quarter.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau
504-566-5011, www.neworleanscvb.com

New Orleans West KOA
800-562-5110,
www.koa.com/campgrounds/new-orleans/

Antoine's Restaurant
504-581-4422, www.antoines.com

New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park
877-520-0677, www.nps.gov/jazz

Confederate Memorial Hall Museum
504-523-4522,
www.confederatemuseum.com

The National WWII Museum
504-528-1944,
www.nationalww2museum.org

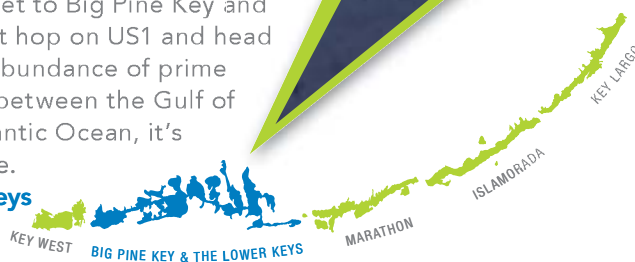


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It's not difficult to get to Big Pine Key and The Lower Keys: just hop on US1 and head south. But with an abundance of prime campsites situated between the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean, it's awfully hard to leave.

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Big Pine Key Fishing Lodge
305-872-2351

Boyd's Key West Campground
305-294-1465
boydscampground.com

Bluewater Rentals in Bluewater Key
305-744-0999
bluewaterkey.net

Key West Visitors Center
305-872-7447
keywest123.com

Big Pine Key, Circle 106 on Reader Service Card

Features and Affordability

Offered with eight floorplans ranging from 27 to 35 feet, the Phoenix fifth-wheel by Shasta comes standard with an 8-foot, 4-inch-wide body construction on an all-aluminum structure that accommodates features such as a larger bathroom and bigger slideouts. A surprising addition to this affordable unit is a washer and dryer area within the bedroom. The standard queen bed

fits within the much-appreciated extra bedroom space afforded by the wide-body design. The galley has 42-inch-deep slideouts, making food prep and dining easier. A porcelain toilet, stainless steel sink and 30-by-48-inch Super Shower with Skydome LED

skylight round out the trailer's bathroom. The Phoenix offers 45-gallon black and grey tanks, while the freshwater tank holds 50 gallons. The base MSRP for a standard model is \$29,000. **Shasta RV, 574-825-7178, www.shastarving.com**



Beneficial Beverage

Tea is one of the world's oldest beverages and may ward off illnesses such as seasonal flu and boost immunity. Two Leaves Tea Company has a variety of loose and bagged organic tea available for wherever your travels take you, no matter the season. These biodegradable, pyramid-shaped tea sachets are designed to allow whole-leaf tea the space to expand when hot water is added. We were sent a variety of flavors including the company's black, green, white and herbal blend tea sachets, filled with full-leaf herbs, flowers and fruit bits. Each cup has a distinct flavor with hints of each ingredient note present with every sip. Teas are available in full caffeine, moderate caffeine, light caffeine or caffeine free. While you're enjoying the great outdoors, cozy up with a cup of tea that is good for the earth and good for you; **888-688-4150, www.twoleavestea.com**.



NEWswire

TECHNOLOGY



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The Rand McNally RVND 7720 is a 7-inch RV GPS device with Wi-Fi connectivity, ideal for real-time weather information along with a brighter display. The RVND 7720 also routes trailers around road restrictions, low bridges or other physical hazards. The RVND 7720 is compatible with a range of backup and rear-view camera video inputs ensuring help getting set up at camp; **\$349.99, 800-275-7263, www.randmcnally.com**.

EXPANSION



RV/MH Hall of Fame Adds Event Center

The Hall has branded the southern building entrance as the Northern Indiana Event Center, accommodating groups and companies. The new space provides a designated area for shows, meetings and events. The Hall will continue to use its main facility to honor industry legends and history, but the event area will now be devoted to events and meetings; **800-378-8694, www.northernindianaeventcenter.org**.

PARTNERSHIP



Navistar and Cummins Partner

Navistar International Corp. has reached a long-term supply agreement for heavy-duty diesel engine and emissions aftertreatment technologies with Cummins Inc. By April 2013, regular shipments of these clean-engine aftertreatment technologies will be available in the marketplace. In the meantime, Navistar will continue to build and ship EPA-compliant trucks during the transition.

Frosty Treats for Snow Birds

When you're enjoying warmer weather climes this winter, cool off with a frosty treat found at one of these Sun Belt state ice cream shops.

Watson Drugs and Soda Fountain (Calif.)
714-532-6317,
www.watsondrugs.com

Sugar Bowl (Ariz.)
480-946-0051,
www.sugarbowlscottsdale.com

Route 66 Malt Shop (N.M.)
505-242-7866,
www.route66maltshop.com

Another Time Soda Fountain (Texas)
281-232-2999,
www.anothertimesodafountain.com

POPS (Okla.)
405-928-7677,
www.pops66.com

Purple Cow (Ark.)
501-221-3555,
www.purplecowlr.com

Brent's Drugs and Soda Fountain (Miss.)
601-366-3427,
www.brentsdrugs.com

Cream & Sugar Café (Ala.)
251-405-0003,
www.creamandsugarmobile.com

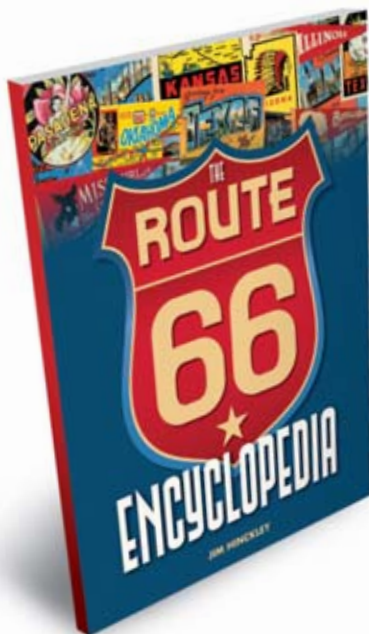
Leopold's Ice Cream (Ga.)
912-234-4442,
www.leopoldsicecream.com

Jaxson's Ice Cream Parlour (Fla.)
954-923-4445,
www.jaxsonsicecream.com



More than an Encyclopedia

Internationally recognized, Route 66 is often referred to as the Main Street of America and continues to be well traveled. "The Route 66 Encyclopedia" by Jim Hinckley contains more than 1,000 color and black-and-white photos and an alphabetized listing of major landmarks, personalities and culture that put Route 66 on the map and secured its place in American history. Each listing includes a brief summary of dates, facts and a mini-history that makes this book more like a travel guide than an encyclopedia. MSRP: \$45.
www.amazon.com



TRAILER LIFE.COM

WEB-EXCLUSIVE



► In this month's Web Exclusive, we'll have an online photo gallery dedicated to the extra photos of Part 1 of the Route 66 series.

Trailer Life editors take you inside the industry with the latest in RV news and offer a forum so you can ask the experts for tips on RV maintenance and new products.



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Short-Lived Tires

» We spent the winter season at Quartzsite, Ariz., using an SUV and a 27-foot travel trailer. In January, we purchased a used 31-foot Newmar Cypress fifth-wheel from the temporary Camping World facility in Quartzsite. We also purchased a Good Sam Extended Service Plan for \$2,900.

Camping World spent several days going through the unit, making certain everything was in top condition prior to delivery of the unit. We asked about the tires and were assured that they had “many miles left on them.”

Prior to our April 9 departure for home, we brought the tow vehicle to a factory dealer to have it serviced, and the towing systems were checked to make for a trouble-free trip home. I checked the trailer tires for proper inflation and made certain the wheels were on tight and all lights worked properly.

We intended to travel 270 miles that first day. We stopped after leaving the RV park to check our equipment. We traveled a total of 39 miles and pulled off at a roadside rest area just west of Blythe, Calif., for yet another check when we discovered the tread had separated from the casing of the right-rear trailer tire, damaging the side of the trailer.

A tow company was called for help and a spare wheel and tire, which came with the trailer, were installed. We returned to Blythe, where Alex’s Tire replaced all four tires at a cost of \$968 plus tax. We left Quartzsite the following day and completed our trip home without further incident.

After arriving home, we reviewed our Extended Service

Plan contract and contacted the carrier of our RV insurance. On May 3, I contacted Camping World and was referred to Shane Stein, a service manager. Mr. Stein committed to paying me \$480, and on May 4, I faxed him a copy of the invoice from Alex’s Tire.

On May 24, I spoke with Mr. Stein and was told Camping World did not get the fax and that the offices involved had physically moved and there had been some mix-ups. He said he would get back to us, and that we should expect payment.

Today has been almost two months since I last heard from Camping World, and I have not received the \$480 promised by service manager Stein, so I request your assistance.

Sincerely,

Richard Mansell, Carlsborg, Wash.

After receiving the Mansells’ original letter, and all relevant invoices and fax transmissions, RV Action Line contacted Camping World on their behalf. Before responding to our communication, Camping World independently contacted the Mansells and reimbursed them for the tires and installation — resolving the dispute and leaving the owners grateful for the prompt payment and assistance from Trailer Life.

Broken Slideout Support

Readers Robert and Judith Brown purchased a Kodiak travel trailer from Giant Recreation World, and after having several other small problems, eventually suffered a broken slideout support that caused cracks in the fiberglass shell. They contacted the dealer and were not satisfied with the result.

Acting on behalf of the readers, *Trailer Life* contacted Giant Recreation World in an attempt to reach an amicable resolution.

THE COMPANY RESPONDED

Robert and Judith,

It is good to hear from you after all these years. I hate that it is because you are experiencing problems with the travel trailer you purchased from us,

however. As a dealer, we strive for 100 percent customer satisfaction before, during and after the sale. Because you purchased your unit from us so long ago, there really isn’t anything we as a dealer will be able to do for you except for us to help solicit help from the manufacturer. If there was a defect that caused your problems, we will back you up as much as we can.

If you were to bring the unit to any one of our central Florida locations, we would be willing to perform a good inspection of the damage, as well as investigate the root cause of the damage and document our findings in writing if those causes support your

claim. You could then use our findings to fight the good fight, so to speak. We, Giant Recreation World Inc., will be glad to supply this service free of charge as well, as a benefit of purchasing from us in the past. I checked our records and the travel trailer has never been back to us for any service since you picked it up in January of 2006. I will say that if there is any documentation of you returning to any authorized RV repair center during your initial warranty period that would be a great benefit to support your request for help.

Thanks,

Larry McNamara,
COO, Giant Recreation World

TAKE ACTION » After exhausting all other resources without success, please forward information with copies of appropriate bills and correspondence to RV Action Line, 3300 Fernbrook Lane N, Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN 55447. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. No phone calls, please.

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Walking on Snow

Snowshoeing is easy to learn, excellent exercise and a great way to get out and see the wonders of winter

Snowshoeing may look difficult, but the reason it is becoming so popular among people of all ages, from children to senior citizens, is that it is easy to learn and do. There are no specific technical skills required as there are in skiing or snowboarding. Snowshoeing provides a comparable workout like you may have at your local gym, and you

don't have to go to an expensive ski resort to engage in the sport. Snowshoeing can be enjoyed just about anywhere there are trails or open spaces to explore.

Although there is no learning curve with snowshoeing, the first few adventures may require building up your stamina before taking extended walks. It's also smart to be prepared

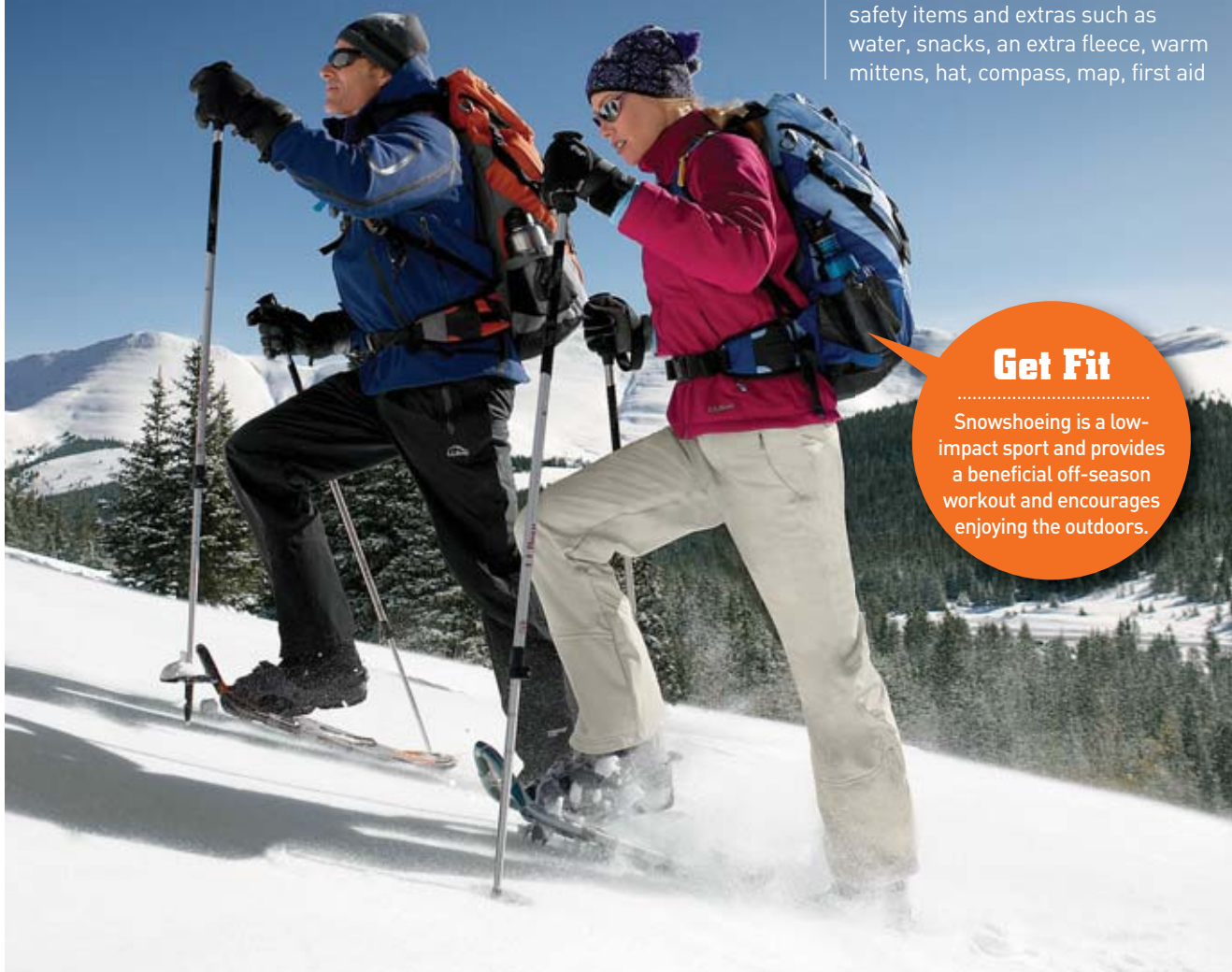
by dressing properly for the cold, damp conditions, reviewing a safety checklist and, most importantly, having the right equipment on your feet depending on where, when and how long you are planning to enjoy the activity.

TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

- ☑ Take it easy at first.
- ☑ Take frequent breaks to enjoy the scenery.
- ☑ Stay hydrated; drink lots of water.
- ☑ Dress properly in layers of good performance apparel with wicking and warming layers. If you stay warm and dry, you'll enjoy your outing much more.
- ☑ Carry a small backpack with safety items and extras such as water, snacks, an extra fleece, warm mittens, hat, compass, map, first aid

Get Fit

Snowshoeing is a low-impact sport and provides a beneficial off-season workout and encourages enjoying the outdoors.



kit, cell phone, GPS and a small repair/multi-tool kit.

☑ Always let people know where you are going and when you are expected to return.

☑ When snowshoeing as a group, especially a family (which is the most fun) let the fittest teenagers break the trail, since it will slow them down a little and allow the rest of the family to keep up. The activity can be a multi-generational outing with the little ones and grandparents at the end of the line on a trail that has been well packed down.

GEAR PICKS

L.L. Bean (800-441-5713, llbean.com) retails many top manufacturers' snowshoes, as well as accessories needed for

snowshoeing like walking poles, and clothes for cold weather. The company also offers its own L.L. Bean-branded snowshoes and equipment, including the Winter Walker snowshoes and pack-ages for everyone from adults to kids.



MSR (206-505-9500, msrgear.com)

also offers snowshoe models for men and women, including its Lightning Axis snowshoe named for MSR's innovative Axis binding technology. The

Lightning Axis snowshoes allow up to 22-degrees of bilateral binding adjustment to compensate for a step that's toe-in or toe-out.



Redfeather Snowshoes (800-525-0081, redfeather.com) offers the Arrow model, a modified round-tail design that makes travel across snow easy. They have also enhanced the Hike Series, specifically designing a version for a woman's stride, which is generally shorter and narrower than a man's. 🚗

For More Information

How to choose snowshoes – advice from REI: www.rei.com/expertadvice/articles/snowshoes.html

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Adventures in New Mexico

Wilderness, wildlife and signs of ancient people near Santa Fe

Located two hours from Albuquerque, N.M., and about an hour from Santa Fe and Los Alamos, Bandelier National Monument includes more than 33,000 acres of beautiful, rugged terrain that gives credence to the state's nickname, The Land of Enchantment. Bandelier National Monument may be the perfect respite from the fast-paced hassles of modern life, especially since 90 percent of the monument beyond the headquarters area is a designated wilderness area. In other words, relaxation comes easily in Bandelier.

For more than 400 years, ending approximately in 1550, the Ancestral Pueblo people lived in the region, building their homes from the abundant volcanic tuff, growing corn, beans and squash on the mesa tops, and hunting deer, rabbits and

squirrels. A severe drought contributed to already tough living conditions, so the Ancestral Pueblo people eventually dispersed. Today's visitors to the monument can examine petroglyphs, remnants of masonry walls and dwellings carved into cliffs.

In the summer of 2011, a fire combined with subsequent floods damaged the park. Visitors are still required to take a shuttle to Frijoles Canyon, the monument's most-visited area.

A Fall Fiesta, which features a host of entertainment and educational activities, occurs in late September. Last year, an ambitious aspect of the Fiesta, titled "Mozart on the Rocks" and sponsored by the Los Alamos Opera Guild, the Don Quixote Distillery & Winery among others, introduced opera to the Fiesta.

The simplest way for many visitors to experience the monument's historic features is to walk the Main Loop Trail. This path stretches 1.2 miles and passes numerous archeological sites. An additional one-mile round-trip trail allows visitors to access the impressive cave dwelling known as Alcove House, and fit hikers may want to take the three-mile round-trip Falls Trail. In total, more than 70 miles of trails zigzag throughout the monument.

Juniper Family Campground is a simple first-come, first-served campground that costs \$12 per night and rarely sells out. Groups any size from 10 to 50 can stay in Ponderosa Group Campground, which requires reservations. 📞

Bandelier National Monument

505-672-3861, www.nps.gov/band

FUN FACT

Western pygmy blue butterflies have wing spans of .5 to .6 inches, making them the smallest butterflies in North America. - NPS



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THE MOTI



As of November 11, 1926, the day it was officially designated, Route 66 became "the road on which America drove west." At 2,448 miles, stretching from Lake Michigan in Chicago to the Pacific Ocean at Santa Monica, Calif., the two-lane road crossed eight states and three time zones, stitching the country together by linking the industrial regions of the Midwest with the golden plains and monuments of the West.

The highway was so well-traveled for the next few decades that it was dubbed the Main Street of America, as

Route 66 literally ran along Main Street in the dozens of cities, towns and hamlets it bisected.

It was also affectionately called "The Mother Road" (so-named by John Steinbeck in "The Grapes of Wrath"), though when it became a route of escape for thousands of desperate families fleeing the Depression and Dust Bowl during the 1930s, it did not treat the migrants tenderly; many broke down along the way, ran out of money and supplies or couldn't find work in the "promised land," California.

The 1940s changed travel on the route. During WWII it served as a military conduit, moving vast numbers

of men, munitions and equipment. And when the hostilities ended, a tourist boom began, when families on vacation rolled along America's Main Street, propelled by Bobby Troup's 1946 hit song, "Get Your Kicks on Route 66." For years "getting there" was more important than "arriving" and Route 66, with gaudy neon signs lighting much of the way, was just the avenue for the trip.

My husband, Guy, and I drove the



(Left to right) Henry's "Rabbit Ranch" in Staunton, Ill., is a play on the more famous "Cadillac Ranch" outside Amarillo, Texas. An abandoned house in Grey Summit where Old 66 (Manchester Road) re-joins the newer alignment (now I-44). The Gemini Giant in Wilmington, IL.



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HER ROAD

We Trace Historic Route 66 to Discover America: Part I



entire length of Route 66 with the help of maps by Route 66 historians/enthusiasts Jerry McClanahan and Jim Ross, half a dozen books on the subject and far better signage now than 10 years ago due to the renewed popularity of traveling the historic route and a fair amount of exploring on our own. We traveled the Route for one month, though RVers without that luxury of time can shorten the trip by traveling the interstates that for many stretches have supplanted the old road. Our trip will appear in a four-part series in *Trailer Life*. The first part of our trip covers the span from Chicago to Springfield, Mo.

STARTING LINE

Route 66 officially began in Chicago at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Jackson Boulevard. There is still a marker, but now Jackson Boulevard is a one-way going east. Bill Kelly, executive director of the Illinois Route 66 National Scenic Byway, suggests starting the trip at either the Chicago Art Institute or at nearby Clarence Buckingham Memorial Fountain in Grant Park.

We began at the fountain, a landmark since 1927. Twice the size but

patterned after the Latona Fountain at Versailles in France, the magnificent Buckingham is designed to represent Lake Michigan, and includes four pairs of seahorses symbolizing the states that touch the lake: Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan and Illinois. We suggest a walk around the lovely park for fine views of gray-green Lake Michigan and the hundreds of boats in the harbor, and opposite, the dramatic Chicago skyline.

You might encounter a few brief detours for road construction along the way, but Route 66 is well marked

through Chicago, its suburbs and the rest of Illinois as well. Illinois claims more than 400 miles of the historic route in several different alignments. Interstate 55 roughly parallels the old road the entire way.

Attractions are numerous. Among them is National Scenic Byway's newly-installed kiosk in Berwyn, the first of 14 similar kiosks scheduled to be built between Chicago and St. Louis. Visitors read about history of the road and listen to Troup's famous tune.

Continue south to the White Fence



Downtown Chicago from the Buckingham Fountain in Grant Park. Each of the four pairs of sea horses represents one of the four states bordering Lake Michigan.



Route 66: Part One

Farm Restaurant, built nearly 90 years ago by Peabody Coal Company president Stuyvesant Peabody, who believed people would enjoy a simple menu of superior food served in an attractive farm atmosphere. The restaurant, famous for its fried chicken, became hugely popular after Route 66 was designated. The farm also includes a petting zoo.

Ahead is Joliet, a town that capitalizes on its Route 66 connection (frequent signs urge you to "Get Your Kicks on Route 66"). Be sure to stop at the Rich & Creamy, a frozen custard stand that opened in 1975. Life-size versions of Jake and Elwood Blues — "The Blues Brothers" — dance on the roof, and Joliet Correction Facility, which appeared in the opening scene of the movie, can be seen in the distance.

Route 66 Park adjoins the custard stand. Placards tell the old road's story and note the locale of five historic gas pumps placed through the town at important sites. For example, a red and yellow Shell pump is here while

another, an antique Texaco pump, is near the magnificent Rialto Square Theatre. The Rialto was built as a vaudeville palace in the 1920's. The Rialto, featuring Corinthian columns, a decorated apse and 20-foot-long crystal chandelier, is the oldest theater on Illinois Route 66.

Continue south along Illinois Highway 53 (Old Route 66) toward Springfield. At Wilmington the 28-foot-tall Gemini Giant stands outside the Launching Pad, a drive-in restaurant. Another drive-in just ahead at Braidwood — the Polk-A-Dot Drive-In — is similarly eye-catching. Life-size Blues Brothers are dancing on one side, while Elvis, Marilyn Monroe, James Dean and Betty Boop strike familiar poses along the other.

Gardner, a lovely town with nearly 1,500 residents, is notable for its surprisingly fine two-cell jail built in 1906. Nearby is a 19th century horse-drawn streetcar that was converted to the Streetcar Diner in 1932. No food has been served since 1939, but the diner,

now a museum, looks open for business.

Highway 53 ends at Gardner, but well-marked Old Route 66 continues south through a string of small towns, including Odell, which features a historic Standard Oil station, restored to its 1932 appearance, and now offering cold water, pop and souvenirs. Elsewhere in town, across the street from St. Paul's Catholic Church, is a reminder of the days when Route 66 was so heavily traveled that crossing on foot was hazardous. An underground passage, now filled in though the entrance remains, allowed church goers and school children to get across safely.

Ahead, Pontiac offers a particularly important stop on Route 66 today, the Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame is located on the first floor of a fire station and was built in 1900. Nearby is the Pontiac-Oakland Automobile Museum, featuring a large collection of classic Pontiacs and Oaklands.

The capitol of Springfield, Ill., is ahead. Attractions are plentiful, most of them Lincoln-related. Not coinciden-

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tally, our visit took place the last weekend in September, when for the 11th year, the International Route 66 Mother Road Festival was underway. The three-day event draws more than 80,000 visitors, many of who take part in a Friday evening "cruise" of Old Route 66. By early Saturday morning some 1,100 classic cars and trucks are on display along 20 square blocks of the city.

Of the dozens of restaurants in Springfield, one Route 66 travelers should not miss is Cozy Dog, which was founded in 1950 by Jennie and Edwin Waldmire and is still in the family. Grandson Tony Waldmire now runs the restaurant best-known for its "cozy dogs" (Don't call them "corn dogs," Waldmire says with a smile), but the menu is extensive.

South of Springfield you have two choices: follow the original (1926-30) Route 66 alignment on Illinois Highway 4 or the later (1930-43) alignment, which closely parallels I-55; signage is excellent. We drove both routes, but

preferred the longer-but-more-interesting, pastoral Highway 4, which also strings together numerous small towns, but in addition offers short side-trips on the earliest sections of road, one of them laid brick.

Henry's Rabbit Ranch and Route 66 Emporium, run by Rich Henry, is on the newer alignment at Staunton and we recommend a stop. Henry, who was named to the Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame in 2012, built his establishment in 1922 "to look like an old-time service station."

The name "Rabbit Ranch" is derived not only from the seven upended VW Rabbits "planted" outside (similar to Cadillac Ranch in Texas) but also from the numerous pet rabbits Henry has rescued from shelters. He currently has 14, most in large cages. Big Red, an enormous rabbit with the softest fur you can imagine, is the exception, spending his days lounging on the shop's counter as the "official Route 66 greeter."

South of Staunton Old Route 66 leaves Highway 4 to follow the frontage road to Illinois Highway 157 at Hamel.



Customized hot rods in Springfield, Ill., at the International Route 66 Mother Road Festival.



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Route 66: Part One

The route continues south on Highway 157 through Edwardsville, then crosses South University Drive to become Chain of Rocks Road into Mitchell.

There, the restored Luna Café, now a bar rife with Route 66 memorabilia, was once a supper club frequented by gangster Al Capone. A restored neon sign shaped like a cocktail glass advertised the establishment, and when the neon cherry at the bottom of the glass was lit, that meant ladies at the upstairs “house of ill repute” were also open for business.

There is no single route into or through St. Louis — the biggest city between Chicago and Los Angeles — on the route the alignment was changed so often over the years. Two of the three bridges that at various times carried the old highway across the Mississippi are no longer open to



Old 66 crossed the Mississippi River here on the old Chain of Rocks Bridge (completed 1929).

auto traffic.

However, mile-long 1929 Chain of Rocks Bridge, part of a route to bypass the city from 1936 till 1968, has been restored and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2006. The erector set-like old toll bridge, among the more unusual structures to span a river due to the 22-degree bend in the middle, is popular for walking and bicycle riding. Placards and replicas of Route 66 postcards tell the story of the bridge, now part of the Route 66 Bikeway, linked to more than 300 miles of bike trails on both sides of the river.

Continue south on Illinois Highway 3 to the McKinley Bridge, built in 1910 as a railroad bridge. Auto traffic was added later, and the McKinley, the “world’s largest electric bridge,” was the first bridge on which Route 66 crossed the Mississippi into downtown St. Louis.

St. Louis abounds with major attractions, including more than six dozen that charge no admission (second only to the nation’s capital in numbers of free attractions). However, we recommend leaving the RV at a campground while touring the city; a good choice is the campground at the Casino Queen.

The Gateway to the West is famous for its fine eateries, and they are numerous. Two in particular are long associated with Route 66 — the Eat-Rite Diner and Ted Drewes Frozen Custard; as you leave St. Louis on the historic route (see map for directions).

The Eat-Rite opened as a donut shop

in 1908 (two blocks south of Busch Stadium). Favorite dishes at the 24/7 diner include fried chicken; chili; sliders; and the St. Louis-original slinger, a hamburger patty topped with a fried egg, hash browns, chili, cheese and onions. A few miles west is Ted Drewes, founded in 1929 and renowned way beyond St. Louis for its concretes, blended frozen custard drinks so thick they don’t spill when turned upside down. The shop, on Route 66 and in its current building since 1941, recently introduced the Root 66 concretes named for the highway and the root beer it includes.

Along the old highway to the West is the site of the famous Coral Court Motel, now demolished but once a bustling “no-tell motel” (the 25 two-unit buildings all had attached garages), and the finest example of Streamline Moderne motel architecture on Route 66. One unit was saved and is partially rebuilt at the National Museum of Transportation.

Cutting a diagonal furrow across Missouri, Route 66, which followed the much-earlier Osage Indian Trail, became today’s I-44.

The 200-or-so mile drive through this lush rural landscape, limestone hills thickly statured with jade-hued oaks and cedars, is one of the loveliest stretches on the entire route. There are also numerous reasons to stop, with Meramec Caverns (a Jesse James hideout) near Stanton among the best. There is also the whimsical, such as the World’s Biggest Rocking Chair (42 feet

“St. Louis
abounds
with major
attractions,
including
more than six
dozen that
charge no
admission.”



Framing one of the world’s most iconic downtown views is the Gateway Arch in St. Louis.



For more attractions as you explore this stretch of Route 66, go to www.trailerlife.com and check out “Route 66 Area Attractions (Part 1).”



tall, 20 feet wide) at Fanning's "66 Outpost," a Route 66 memorabilia shop in "Mural City" Cuba.

Evidence of interest in the old road is everywhere. Signs advertise Route 66 Antiques, Route 66 Gas, Route 66 Bar and BBQ Pit, Route 66 Antique Mall and Route 66 Motors, among others. At Route 66 Motors near Rolla, owner Wayne Bales displays century-old gravity gas pumps, a large red Pegasus, an array of historic autos and other Route 66 memorabilia.

The old highway diverges south from I-44 at Devil's Elbow on Teardrop Road, runs through Hooker Cut, once one of the deepest rock cuts in the country, and crosses an especially scenic bend in the crystal-clear Big Piney River. You can drive the 1923 bridge (if your RV is less than 13 feet 8 inches high), but we also walked it.

The main attraction in Devil's Elbow, a town founded in 1870 and named for the bend in the river, a "devil of an elbow," is the Elbow Inn, a popular barbecue establishment. Outdoor

seating is available on a patio overlooking the picturesque Big Piney.

West of town, the old highway climbs steeply to a pull-off at a scenic overlook. There we met Kim and Jytte Broberg from Denmark, who were devoting 26 days to driving Route 66. Kim explained that American history can be told through the roadways adding, "Route 66 is the most interesting — it's famous all over the world."

The old highway continues west, looping back and forth across the interstate, through the towns of Buckhorn, Hazelgreen, Lebanon (century-old Independent Stave Company here offers tours), and into Springfield, last stop on this first leg of our Route 66 odyssey.

It was in Springfield on April 30, 1926 that the name of the new Chicago to Los Angeles highway was first proposed, making the town the "official birthplace" of Route 66. A dozen years later it would become the first completely paved transcontinental highway in the country. 🚚

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Illinois Route 66 Association
815-844-4566, www.il66assoc.org

Illinois Route 66 National Scenic Byway
217-525-9308,
www.wayside66.irswebsolutions.com

Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau
800-926-2262,
www.heritagecorridorcvb.com

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January 2013 **TRAILERLIFE** 23



Alligator

Southern Georgia's wide variety of surprises for the RV traveler

South-central Georgia is a magical place. It is home to the legendary Okefenokee Swamp; bordered by Florida to the south and the town of Tifton, Ga., to the north; and it contains a heady mix of nature gone wild as well as tamed civilized elegance.

Within the confines of the south Georgia environ, travelers can expect to find extensive swamps, miles of rich forests, cultural and historic museums, colorful and well-tended gardens, quaint towns steeped in heritage, and an extensive mix of visitor amenities. One of the main draws in the area is Georgia's famously unspoiled swampland, with its sometimes frightening collection of swamp denizens, unchecked biological growth, and attendant sights, sounds and smells.

When talking about swampland in

Georgia, the most famous swamp in the southern section is the Okefenokee. So magical is the name Okefenokee that many still believe it is a fictional place, but this wonder of nature is very much real. Comprising 438,000 acres in the southeastern part of Georgia (and a bit of northern Florida), this swampland is one of the "Seven Natural Wonders of Georgia." The Okefenokee is the largest peat-based "blackwater" swamp in North America, and is one of the largest in the world. The name of the swamp comes from an extinct Native American language and is roughly translated as "bubbling water." The Suwannee River is the source of most of the water in the Okefenokee, and the river drains 90 percent of the swamp's water toward the Gulf of Mexico. In 2007, a vast wildfire roared through much of the Okefenokee, burning 600,000 acres.

Today, the swamp is recovering nicely.

For public access, there are four entrances/landings located at various parts of the swamp, and a large park/tourist attraction, the Okefenokee Swamp Park, just south of Waycross, Ga. The swamp park offers boat tours of the swamp, and holds a collection of swamp creatures, a deer observatory, nature center, bear observatory, acres of gardens, and its very own Okefenokee Railroad. Visitors familiar with the Okefenokee cartoon character Pogo will want to visit the park's Walt Kelly Studio (the creator of Pogo) and the Pogo Memorabilia exhibit.

Also located near Waycross is Obediah's Okefenok, a tribute and memorial to swamp legend Henry Obediah Barber. This historic park contains the 1870 cabin where Obediah lived and prospered as well as other fine



Boats to Oaks



(Left to right) Boat tours into the swamp are part of the fun at Okefenokee Swamp Park. Alligators are common in these areas. An authentic grist mill sits on the grounds of the Agrirama in Tifton, Ga. The Okefenokee Swamp is comprised of 438,000 acres in southern Georgia and northern Florida.



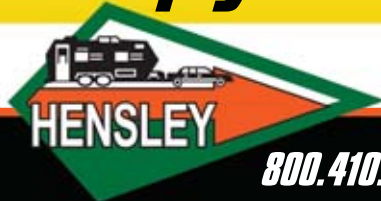
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Okefenokee Swamp

examples of swamp life. Swamp critters and reptiles, a hog gallows, crumbling outhouses, a grist mill, smoke house, moonshine still, and much more are also found in the park. A picturesque boardwalk leads visitors into the heart of Obediah's realm.

Waycross is also home to the Okefenokee Heritage Center, a museum/conference center/historic exhibit teeming with interesting Waycross and Okefenokee heritage. The center features many homes and buildings from bygone Waycross times including the Waycross Journal Herald; carpentry shop; a depot warehouse; and the Hilliard House; presumably the oldest standing house in Ware County, built around 1824. The museum also has a railroad depot and mailroom, and the "Old Number Nine," a historic 1912 Baldwin steam locomotive. The museum proper houses a Founder's Hall, Native American Exhibit, an art gallery and a Sacred Harp Exhibit.

Next door to the Heritage Center is the Southern Forest World museum, focusing on Georgia's forests and lumber industry. Since Georgia is one of the nation's primary lumber-producing states, this museum is a fascinating glimpse into the world of forestry and harvesting of Georgia trees. Don't miss the mummified dog that was found inside a tree after it was cut down.

While Waycross and the Okefenokee Swamp are certainly highlights of southern Georgia, there are additional towns in this area that hold must-see sights for tourists. Tifton, about an hour's drive west of Waycross, is home to the Agrirama, the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village, that plays host to thousands of eager tourists each year.

The Agrirama is divided into six areas: a traditional farm community of the 1870s, an 1890s progressive farmstead, a main street, industrial area, historic Tuft House and the Steam Train. There are 35 structures on the 95-acre site, including an original Victorian house built in the 1800s. Other structures of interest include farmhouses, a sawmill, turpentine still, schoolhouse, blacksmith shop and grist mill. Staff members in period costumes perform daily activities on the grounds.

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A working sawmill is a popular attraction at the Agrirama. The Big Oak tree in Thomasville is one of the oldest and largest in the country.

Southwest of Tifton, and just west of Valdosta, is the very interesting town of Thomasville. This town is a Georgia institution, and was designated a Great American Main Street City in 1998 and named one of a dozen top places to visit in the United States by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1999. The town of Thomasville contains a wide range of historic buildings and homes, most dating back to around the turn of the 20th century as well as many 1800s structures. Reading a few facts about Thomasville will hint at why the town is so revered: the town's Pinetree Boulevard is the oldest perimeter road in the United States; the WPAX radio station is the third oldest station in Georgia and the 20th oldest in the country; the Thomas County Museum of History has the oldest known private bowling alley in the country, built of

heart pine lumber in 1893. Other interesting Thomasville facts are that Joanne Woodward, Oscar-winning actress and wife of Paul Newman, was born here; town resident Lt. Henry O. Flipper was the first black graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1877; and that Jacqueline Kennedy retreated to a Thomasville plantation following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963.

Thomasville is also home to the "Big Oak," an immense live oak tree more than 325 years old, with a limb span of 165 feet and a circumference of 26 1/2 feet. The Big Oak is one of the original members of the National Live Oak Society, enrolled in 1936. A day in Thomasville is more than worth the trip — it offers a vibrant historic downtown with brick-paved streets, unique shops and restaurants, and beautifully

restored Victorian homes. Visitors can tour the town's museums, have their picture taken beside the Big Oak, tour a plantation, or discover the beautiful homes and downtown on a walking or driving tour.

The area of southern Georgia bordered by the Okefenokee Swamp and Waycross to the east, Thomasville to the west, Valdosta to the south and Tifton to the north, holds a wide variety of surprises, attractions, wild flora and fauna, interesting museums and historic structures, beautiful gardens and grounds, and experiences not to be missed. And these Georgia cities may have small-town charm, but are also filled with the amenities a discerning traveler demands: tasty restaurants, unlimited shopping and first-class accommodations — definitely something for everyone. 🚗



Before You Go

Quality RV parks are located in the towns and surrounding areas of Valdosta, Waycross, Thomasville and Tifton.

Valdosta, the most populated of the four towns, has the largest and widest selection of parks, restaurants and shops. Roads in the area range from the huge I-75 interstate to rural roads running through Waycross and the Okefenokee Swamp area, and most all of them are suitable for large trailers and fifth-wheels. Since the area is located in the deep south, weather and road conditions are generally fair and sunny (with the exception of the rare hurricane or tornado). Since the population in this area is fairly low, traffic is usually not much of a problem, and most services are located conveniently along Interstate 75.

Some informative websites covering this area of Georgia include:

www.thomasvillega.com, www.okeswamp.com, www.valdostatourism.com, www.myrtlewoodplantation.com

PICTURE-PERFECT PENSACOLA

A nice surprise in the Florida Panhandle

by **Carl Calvert**
photos by **Ann & Carl Calvert**

The trip from Alabama's panhandle into Florida's better-known panhandle is a short one, but in terms of the differences between the two states, the transition from one border to another is huge. Alabama is steeped in Southern tradition and lore, rich in regionally-sourced gastronomical delights and has its roots deep in Civil War history. Drive into Florida, however, and you'll notice a world of difference: sun-drenched white-sand beaches, a multitude of sunscreen-lathered tourists soaking up the winter sunshine

(especially college students on spring break), and a line of congested traffic heading for points east and south.

Upon entering the state of Florida from Alabama, the first stop on many tourist agendas is the town of Pensacola. The picturesque city of Pensacola is rich in history, lush with parks and pristine beaches, a haven for swimmers, boaters and fisherman, chock full of tourist attractions, and the surrounding area plays host to hundreds of thousands of happy visitors each year.

Any focus on Pensacola would have



Downtown Pensacola offers a number of interesting museums, including the T.T. Wentworth Florida State Museum.





(Above) For a wilder side of Pensacola, visitors can explore the Yellow River nearby. **(Right)** The Blue Angels display inside the National Naval Aviation Museum is a highlight at the museum. **(Bottom right)** Pensacola has a rich history, including a number of military establishments.



to begin with the city's history. Pensacola's founding dates back more than 450 years and it was originally settled by French and Spanish explorers. Pensacola's history includes a virtual melting pot of settlers from across the globe. Visitors to this historic town can sit on a park bench in the spot where General Andrew Jackson first raised the American flag in Florida, or walk through a path where the British Fort of Pensacola once stood. The downtown area sports a number of museums, historic buildings, archeological paths, as well as one of the two oldest Florida cemeteries.

For a great overview of early Pensacola, don't miss the Historic Pensacola Village. The Village features a number of original houses dating back to 1805 as well as several museums and a church. Nearby is the Colonial Archeological Trail, which presents evidence of the fortifications that existed on these grounds between the years 1752 and 1821. During this period, Spanish, British and American soldiers occupied the structures along the trail, and the exhibits highlight features that were part of the evolving fort construction, including kitchen sites, buildings, trash pits and wells.

Scattered throughout downtown Pensacola are many specialty

Before You Go

There are a number of RV parks in the Pensacola area, including the Big Lagoon State Park (www.floridastateparks.org), Perdido Cove RV Resort & Marina (www.perdido Cove.com) and the Playa Del Rio RV Park (www.playadelrio.com). Naturally, because this is Florida tourist country, the area becomes extremely populated and busy during its peak season (roughly December through March), and is somewhat quieter the remainder of the year. Pensacola and its surrounding area offers everything in the way of tourist amenities, with plenty of tasty restaurants, shopping for every budget and taste, and many stores that cater to the RV traveler.

Pensacola, Florida

shops that blend past, present and future, a number of tasty restaurants and cafes, and a host of museums celebrating Pensacola's history and culture.

Located just outside of the downtown area is one of Pensacola's prime attractions — the National Naval Aviation Museum, one of the largest air and space museums in the world. Inside, there are over 150 restored aircraft representing Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard aviation. Pensacola is the home to the famous Blue Angels flying team, and a highlight of the museum is the quartet of original jets used by the Blue Angels, hung majestically from the ceiling of the atrium. The museum also features an IMAX theater, a Max Flight 360-degree flight simulator of a Blue Angels ride or a World War II fighter simulator, cockpit trainers, a replica of a carrier flight deck, and much more; truly a museum for kids of all ages.

At the nearby Naval Air Station the Blue Angels perform practice shows over the air station, and the public is invited to attend. Following most of the Wednesday practices, there is an autograph session with the pilots inside the museum. Also located on the air station is Fort Barrancas, remnants of a British fort originally built in 1763, and the historic Pensacola Lighthouse and Museum. With all of these attractions conveniently located in one area, a visit to Pensacola's Naval Air Station is definitely an all-day event.

Naturally, in this part of Florida's panhandle, Pensacola is not the only area that attracts visitors. A number of nearby towns hold a wealth of tourist stops, pristine beaches, museums,



The interior of the Old Christ Church in the Historic Pensacola Village is as pristine as the outside.

shopping experiences and unlimited natural beauty.

A drive along Highway 98 just east of Pensacola brings visitors past some of the whitest and most pristine beaches you'll likely ever encounter. These white sand beaches are particularly impressive near the town of Destin. And don't miss the towns of Niceville (a place that lives up to its name), Bagdad (patterned with rustic and historic houses), Milton (revered for its riverwalk), and the ever-popular Fort Walton.

Near Destin, take the time to pull off the road and take an up-close look at

one of Wyland's famous "Whaling Walls" — larger than life murals of whales and other sea life created by this nature artist. There are more than 100 of these murals scattered across the United States and the one located in this area of Florida is particularly impressive.

In the town of Milton you'll find the Arcadia Mill Archaeological Site. The grounds contain the remains (you'll have to look closely) of a quarry and mill owned by Joseph Forsyth, a Pensacola merchant and shipper who quarried ironstone in the area for the Pensacola wharf. On the site, Forsyth also built a

"Pensacola brings visitors past some of the whitest and most pristine beaches you'll likely encounter"



The Historic Pensacola Village includes a rich and varied abundance of historic houses.

15-foot-high dam and sawmill on Pond Creek. Later, in 1841, the Arcadia Pail Factory was established. A variety of products were manufactured at the Arcadia Mill Complex, including lumber, shingles, staves, buckets, meal and flour. By 1840, the operation was moved to the Blackwater River, establishing the town of Bagdad. Today, the site offers guided and self-guided grounds tours, a variety of nature trails, a visitor's center, museum and a picnic area.

Pensacola and its surrounding towns and environs have much to offer the visiting RV traveler — sparkling sands, fascinating history and culture, enough museums to browse for days; tasty restaurants featuring everything from oysters, soft-shelled crabs, gourmet pizza, to Creole pastas; and the assorted visitor paraphernalia that is uniquely Floridian. Just a stone's throw from Mobile, Ala., and the Deep South, Pensacola is another world once you cross the Florida state line. 🚗



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PIN POINT IMPROVEMENTS

Upgrading your pin box can smooth out the bumps while towing a fifth-wheel

by Tim Walton

If your idea of a good time is climbing onto the back of rodeo stock bred and raised to throw a rider, you can expect a good deal of bucking, but when it comes to towing a fifth-wheel trailer, it's the last thing you expect or want in your ride.

The hardware that connects your truck and trailer can make a big difference in how they behave on the road. There are two sides in the truck-to-trailer connection that are critical to the fifth-wheel towing setup. In a recent article ("5th And Go Forth," September 2012 *Trailer Life*) we explored the available options for fifth-wheel hitches,

which can accommodate short-bed pickups or can improve ride quality and ease of use for your trailer and tow vehicle combination.

Now it's time to explore the trailer half of the fifth-wheel connection equation, the pin box. The primary function on the pin box is to fix the kingpin at a certain location and angle in relationship to the front of the fifth-wheel trailer. Its most important characteristic is structural integrity, creating a strong connection from the trailer frame to the kingpin. The term "pin box" is the industry standard and describes the most common design, which is a



box frame because it is a good way to make flat steel strong enough to handle the loads much like the truck manufacturers are now building frame rails.

The box design also allows for some interesting options in terms of reach, pin placement, cushions, tilt plates, shock absorbers and air bags. This is where aftermarket pin boxes come into play. They can improve ride quality, increase control, create a tighter turning radius and create more room in your pickup bed.

Premium pin boxes can also be used in conjunction with different styles of hitches to address issues not solved by the hitch. For example, your slider hitch allows your short-bed pickup to tow a fifth-wheel, but you could use some improvement in ride quality. A pin box can help without having to replace the entire hitch. If you already have air bag suspension in your truck but are experiencing the fore and aft jarring known as chucking, you can use a pin box designed to address that very annoyance.

When you're shopping for pin boxes, knowing the make, model and serial number of your trailer is important. Make sure a change of pin boxes doesn't affect the warranty coverage of your trailer and its frame. For example, Lippert Components, which builds RV chassis, has endorsed specific Reese pin boxes as replacements.

If you have a shortbed pickup then clearance to the cab of your pickup is at a premium. Fortunately, there are pin box solutions designed to help you achieve the clearance you require. An extended design helps the pin box reach out further from the frame of the trailer or by some other creative means. PopUp offers a bolt-on pin box extension gaining you 10 inches of reach with the kingpin and is suitable for use on many fifth-wheels and with most hitches.

Reese's Sidewinder approaches the issue from another angle using a capture plate that moves the pivot of the trailer from the hitch point back to the trailer mounting area, giving you more room and freeing up space you'd have to leave clear in the bed with a normal-style hitch and pin box setup.

Many of the ride quality issues

associated with fifth-wheel trailers come from the uneven road surfaces that can translate into movement in the trailer. Without a specialty pin box, this movement can transfer into the tow vehicle producing a jerky ride and eventually causing wear to the chassis of the vehicle. The same stresses that affect the tow vehicle are also being exerted on the trailer's frame and structure. A pin box that helps absorb the seesaw action between truck and trailer can save wear on the rider and vehicles.

Damping in a pin box can be achieved through a variety of technologies. The best fit will be determined by specific characteristics in your truck and trailer setup, such as how well it handles road conditions.

The unit from MOR/ryde features a rubber shear spring that resists movement not only fore and aft, but also side to side. This style of damping is maintenance-free and is available in different trailer weight ratings.

Using air bags to improve ride quality is an approach used by a few companies but the implementation, the number of bags and the assistance of a shock to damp movement are some of the variations.

Air bags allow you to change the

ride quality according to the current load of the trailer by simply changing the air pressure of the system. The use of shock absorbers helps the units stabilize the movement of the trailer and reduce shock and dampens the ride. The TrailAir unit and the Reese 5th Airborne use air bags and shocks to improve ride quality. Air Safe's pin box solution uses four air bags, which are connected, but it doesn't employ shocks or other more rigid components.

Demco uses a parallel linkage system to address the fore and aft. The system always returns back to center using gravity and damps the jerking of the trailer from the imperfections in the road without recoil.

If you already have a pickup setup with a gooseneck and don't want to hassle with installing a fifth-wheel hitch, you can get a conversion hitch setup like those available from PopUp hitch or an entire Goose box replacement like the unit available from Reese. These give you the option of using your existing gooseneck-style hitch in your bed while providing a better ride quality with extra cushioning built in.

Be sure to thoroughly identify your towing concerns. Double check tire inflation, hitch location and trailer cargo distribution to eliminate variables. Make

Reese Sidewinder



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User Guide

Contents



Reese 5th Airborne



Reese Goose Box

Reese Elite Airborne/Sidewinder

sure you choose a pin box that matches load requirements and that is designed to address the type of bucking your bronco is doing.

Reese

The Sidewinder from Reese is specifically designed for short-bed pickups and allows up to 90-degree turns. It automatically maximizes maneuverability without the need to throw a switch or push a button. The Sidewinder allows you to use the full cargo area in your pickup bed, without the need to leave clearance for pin box movement. The pivoting pin box allows you to hook up easier because you can connect at any angle. The unit gives you faster steering

response allowing easier back up with greater control. The Sidewinder is available with air-ride and is backed by a limited lifetime warranty. **Reese, 800-632-3290, www.reeseprod.com**

The Reese 5th Airborne acts as a buffer between the tow vehicle and the trailer to help smooth the ride by reducing stress, jarring and vibration. The pin box utilizes a forward pivot, enclosed air bag and rear-mounted shock absorber. The forward pivot works in harmony with your hitch pivot, while the air bag is protected from UV exposure and road hazards in the enclosed aerodynamic housing. The 5th Airborne is designed to reduce horizontal chucking by 60 percent and

vertical shock by up to 44 percent. It offers worry-free operation and is backed by a limited lifetime warranty.

Do you need the features of the Sidewinder and the smooth ride quality of the 5th Airborne? The Reese Elite Airborne/Sidewinder gives you the best of both worlds. The 5th Airborne combined with the Sidewinder gives you the smooth ride and easy turning in one premium pin box. The Elite Airborne/Sidewinder improves the towing experience both on the road and while maneuvering in camp, and is backed by a limited lifetime warranty.

The Goose Box from Reese is a hybrid of sort that allows towing your fifth-wheel trailer with your gooseneck



MOR/ryde

hitch while providing a smooth, stable ride using an air-ride equipped coupler. The fully enclosed air bag and dual shock absorbers cushion and absorb road shock, decreasing vertical shock or bounce, and longitudinal shock or chucking. This limits strain on truck and trailer frames while the pivot tube helps to minimize jarring by allowing fore and aft movement. The unit is endorsed by Lippert Components, so it will not affect the warranty on its trailer frames and is made in the USA, and backed by a limited seven-year warranty.

MOR/ryde

The MOR/ryde rubber pin boxes (RPB) have available models to match all of the OEM pin boxes on the market. It gives a cushioned sensation over uneven road conditions and offers jerk-free starts and stops. The RPB greatly reduces back and forth chucking and jerking making for a smoother, more comfortable in-cab ride. MOR/ryde's RPB utilizes a unique rubber shear spring which works in a horizontal planar motion to absorb the towing shock. MOR/ryde's pin box system is bolt-on and typically takes about one hour to install. **MOR/ryde**, 574-293-1581, www.morryde.com

Demco Glide Ride



Demco

The Glide Ride absorbs bumps and jolts through a gravity self-centering parallel linkage system. Demco's pin box protects your pickup and fifth-wheel by reducing the stress applied to the drivetrain, suspension, body and tires. The pin box is designed to smooth out the ride while helping to reduce potentially costly repairs and extending the life of your vehicle. The Glide Ride operation is maintenance free and doesn't affect braking or steering. Available in multiple fits for different manufacturers' pin boxes with up to a 21,000-pound GWR. **Demco**, 800-543-3626, www.towdemco.com



RV5

PopUp Towing Products

The RV5 is a 10-inch kingpin extension. It attaches to the trailer's existing kingpin with a heavy (nearly 20-pound) machined steel clamp and also bolts to the bottom of the kingpin box. The added distance between the cab of the truck and the nose of the trailer is

especially needed for many short-bed trucks, allowing for shorter turns. The RV5 is a serious piece of equipment, it's laser cut from half-inch plate steel with computer precision and powder coated for a long-lasting finish that will look great on your trailer. **PopUp Towing**, 800-837-8578, www.popuphitch.com



RVCC

The RVCC is the newest in the line of fifth-wheel-to-gooseneck adapters from PopUp Towing Products. It attaches to the trailer's kingpin with a heavy (nearly 20-pound) machined steel clamp and also bolts to the bottom of the kingpin box. It allows a fifth-wheel trailer to be pulled with a gooseneck ball in a pickup. It's adjustable in height, from 13.5 to 17.5 inches, to fit a variety of truck/trailer combinations. It also features a 7 1/2-inch extension with the coupler forward of the trailer's kingpin for more room between cab of truck and nose of trailer, which is a big help with short-bed trucks. Enjoy a smoother ride with a specially formulated shock-damping cushion. **PopUp Towing, 800-837-8578, www.popuphitch.com**

Airsafe

The King air pin box from Airsafe utilizes four air bags tied together to reduce shock and improve ride quality. The air bags allow you to fill all from one point while transferring air between them. Air

Airsafe King



ride makes sure you experience no bounce, without rigid points allowing improved control and helping to increase the life of the trailer. The bags allow you to increase or decrease air pressure for pin rating without the need for shocks. Available for a variety of manufacturers' pin box designs. **AirSafe, 866-414-4824, www.airsafehitch.com**

Lippert Components

The Tri Glide Air Ride Pin Box by Trailair replaces the conventional rigid hitch connection between the fifth-wheel and



Trailair Tri Glide Air Ride

pickup. It uses a unique scissor action that allows the air spring to absorb and dissipate road forces; the shock absorber handles the rebound effect. It helps reduce the fight between the trailer and tow vehicle, protecting your investments and damping road shock, providing a smoother ride. Available for many manufacturers and are available in a multi-fit design that can be matched up based on style, width, length and drilled on site.

Lippert Components, 574-535-1125, www.store.lci1.com

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BEST BETS FROM THE BIG 3

Whether occasional trailer-toter or full-timer, there are standout tow

With a renewed spirit permeating the nation, those who enjoy the outdoors and the freedom of the road are again enjoying weekend getaways and extended road trips with family and friends.

Along with that renewed wanderlust may come the realization that the pickup you've been driving is probably more than a decade old. Time and miles have taken their toll and it's time to step up to a new truck that's more reliable, comfortable and functional.

They say timing is everything, and 2013 couldn't be a better year to make such a move. The new pickups are more refined, powerful and fuel-friendly than ever before.

We have spent seat time in the new four-doors from the Big Three (Chevrolet, Ford and Ram) during the past few months. Improvements that range from engine and transmission technology, interior design, ride and handling, as well as overall comfort is at an all-time high.

So is the integration of today's wireless technology and advanced computing power. Whatever you need to enjoy time spent in the vehicle is often at your fingertips or can be controlled from the sound of your voice.

Trying to compare a 2003 pickup to a 2013 is like comparing a basic flip phone to a smartphone: Both are functional, but the latter integrates seamlessly into your lifestyle and allows you to do things the old phone wasn't capable of.

Today's pickups are almost like smartphones with a lot of towing power.

A few pickups caught our attention as being the ideal package for those who enjoy the recreational trailer lifestyle. Whether you are brand-loyal or not, we think you will find one or more of these particular 2013 pickups will do the job quite nicely.



FORD F-150 SUPER CREW

FORD Quiet Muscle

We like Ford's F-150 Super Crew 4x2 EcoBoost Lariat 365HP 3.5L with the 6-speed automatic and 3.55 axle.

The twin-turbo V-6 puts most V-8s to shame and delivers 22/16 hwy/city MPG. Order it with Equipment Group 502A and enjoy HID headlights and the MyFord Touch electronics package while towing up to 9,800 pounds using a weight-distributing (WD) hitch (5,000 pounds conventional). Its towing package has the best mirrors in the industry. The back-up camera is a nice bonus.

Style Points

Higher up is the F-250 Crew Cab Platinum Long Bed 4x4, 400HP 6.7L Power Stroke diesel, 6-speed



automatic with 3.55 axles.

This F-250 is filled with all the amenities for serious towing use. The FX4 off-road package adds hill-descent control. It's ideal for towing trailers up to 14,000 pounds with a WD hitch, 15,200 pounds when towing a fifth-wheel.

Statement Maker

At the top end, is Ford's F-350 King Ranch Crew Cab Dually 4x2, 400HP 6.7L Power Stroke diesel, 6-speed automatic and 3.73 axle. Ford doesn't make one-tons

FOR 2013

vehicles in this year's four-door pickup offerings that fit your lifestyle

Best Bets for 2013

any nicer than this model. You'll be the envy of any RV park. Its long wheelbase helps smooth out a cross-country trip. The rich southwestern-styled interior soothes the soul. And it offers a 16,000-pound towing capacity with a gooseneck or fifth-wheel hitch.

Chevy/GMC

Half-ton Muscle

GM's Silverado/Sierra 1500 Crew Cab Short Box LT 4x2, 403HP 6.2L Vortec, 6-speed automatic and 3.73 axle is ideal for light-duty work. Although most buyers gravitate to the 5.3L, those who want serious towing performance order the NHT maximum trailering package and get the benefit of four-wheel disc brakes and GM's strongest pickup small-block. The NHT package also brings on 10,600 pounds of towing capacity when using a WD hitch. The 6.2L pickup has guts, but still touts 13/18 city/hwy EPA numbers. Its mid-level cloth trim is nicely appointed and comfortable.

Polished Performer

The Silverado/Sierra 2500HD Crew Cab



RAM 1500 SLT CREW CAB

Long Bed LTZ 4x2, 397HP 6.6L Duramax diesel with the 6-speed automatic and 3.73 axle is a solid do-it-all choice. With strong grade-braking performance, built-in trailer sway control and 16,700 pounds of towing capacity, this package is a favorite for mid-size trailer owners in mountain country. It also has the ability to pull a 13,000-pound trailer on its conventional hitch. The LTZ trim coddles occupants in luxury.

The Big Dog

Heavy-duty users should check out GM's Silverado/Sierra 3500 HD Crew Cab Dually 4x4, 397HP 6.6L Duramax diesel, 6-speed automatic with 3.73 axles. The

ability to tow an 18,000-pound trailer on the ball or a 22,500-pound fifth-wheel makes this truck a great choice for the full-time RVer. The 1LT trim package and NavTraffic option brings advanced functionality and richness to the interior.

Ram Truck

The Fuel Miser

Ram's 1500 SLT Crew Cab 4x2 with a 5-foot, 7-inch bed, 305HP 3.6L Pentastar V-6, 3.55 axle and 8-speed automatic is a high-value choice. It's a V-6 that feels like a small-block V-8, thanks to the new automatic. It offers an estimated 25 hwy/17 city MPG. Its towing capacity is



CHEVY SILVERADO 3500 HD

The GM Vortec 6.2L V-8 VVT (variable valve timing) gas engine produces more than 400 lb-ft of torque.

Axle Ratios and Towing Performance

When the search for a new tow vehicle has been narrowed down to a specific engine and cab configuration, pay close attention to the axle ratio.

A lower (numerically higher) gear ratio, such as 3.73:1, provides considerably more low-speed wheel torque, i.e., faster acceleration and better grade braking, than a taller (numerically lower) ratio such as 3.42.

This means a "towing" ratio like 3.73:1 gears takes less throttle to get the truck and the load it's carrying or towing up to speed than ratios touted for better fuel economy like a 3.42:1 axle.

As for an axle ratio's effect on fuel economy, factory engineers say the difference between, say 3.55 and 3.73 gears is negligible when towing. Even unladen the difference in highway mileage is probably going to be about 1MPG at cruising speeds.

Axle ratios also affect tow capacities. So if you are planning on towing close to the maximum with the new truck, pay very close attention to what axle ratio you order; sometimes the lowest axle ratio doesn't always translate into the maximum trailering capacity.



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Best Bets for 2013

almost 6,000 pounds so this is an excellent package for towing lightweight trailers while keeping the best fuel economy for daily driving.

The Outdoorsman

The Ram 1500 Crew Cab Outdoorsman 4x4 5-foot, 7-inch bed, 383HP 5.7L Hemi, with 3.92 axles and 8-speed automatic is ideal for moderately sized RVs. Order it with the optional air suspension

and you have the most technologically advanced Ram half-ton — a sporty, stable towing platform for trailers up to 9,950 pounds.


The Towing King

Ram's 3500 HD Crew Cab Long Bed Dually 4x2, 370HP 6.7L Cummins, with the 6-speed auto and 3.55 axle is a good choice. If your lifestyle revolves around extended trips with a fifth-wheel, the plush Laramie Longhorn should be capable of towing more than 17,000 pounds, and might be just what you're looking for. 🚚

RAM 3500 HD CREW CAB



Truck Comparisons

 F-150 Super Crew 4x2 EcoBoost Lariat		F-250 Crew Cab Platinum Long Bed 4x4	F-350 King Ranch Crew Cab Dually 4x2
Engine	3.5L 365HP EcoBoost	6.7L V-8 OHV turbodiesel	6.7L V-8 OHV turbodiesel
HP	365 @ 5,000 RPM	400 @ 2,800 RPM	400 @ 2,800 RPM
Torque	420 @ 2,500 RPM	800 @ 1,600 RPM	800 @ 1,600 RPM
Transmission	6-speed automatic	6-speed automatic	6-speed automatic
Axle Ratio	3.55:1	3.55:1	3.73:1
Fuel Cap	26 gal.	37.5 gal.	26 gal.
Suspension, F/R	Coil-on-shock, double-wishbone independent/ Hotchkiss-type live axle, lead springs and outboard shock absorbers	Mono beam with coil springs, shocks, stabilizers bar/live axle with leaf springs, staggered shocks and stabilizer bar	Independent twin I-beam with coil springs, shocks, stabilizer bar/live axle with leaf springs, staggered shocks and stabilizer bar
Brakes	Four-wheel vented disc, ABS	Four-wheel vented disc, ABS	Four-wheel vented disc, ABS
Tow Rating	9,800 lb.	15,200 lb. (fifth-wheel)	21,900 lb. (fifth-wheel)
GVWR	7,400 lb.	10,000 lb.	13,300 lb.
GCWR	15,000 lb.	23,500 lb.	30,500 lb.
Length	231.9"	263"	263"
Wheelbase	144.5"	172.4"	172.4"

CONTACT: Ford trucks; 800-392-3673, www.ford.com



Silverado/Sierra 1500 Crew Cab Short Box LT 4x2

Silverado/Sierra 2500HD Crew Cab Long Bed LTZ 4X2

Silverado/Sierra 3500HD Crew Cab Dually 4x4

Engine	6.2L Vortec V-8	6.6L Duramax Turbodiesel V-8	6.6L Duramax Turbodiesel V-8
HP	403 @ 5,700 RPM	397 @ 3,000 RPM	397 @ 3,000 RPM
Torque	417 @ 4,300 RPM	765 @ 1,600 RPM	765 @ 1,600 RPM
Transmission	6-speed automatic	6-speed automatic	6-speed automatic
Axle Ratio	3.73:1	3.73:1	3.73:1
Fuel Cap	26 gal.	36 gal.	36 gal.
Suspension, F/R	Independent, coil-over-shock/ Live axle with leaf springs, shocks and stabilizer bar	Independent, torsion bar/Live axle with leaf springs, shocks and stabilizer bar	Independent, torsion bar/Live axle with leaf springs, shocks and stabilizer bar
Brakes	Four-wheel vented disc, ABS	Four-wheel disc, ABS	Four-wheel disc, ABS
Tow Rating	10,600 lb.	13,000 lb. (conventional)	22,500 lb. (fifth-wheel)
GVWR	7,100 lb.	10,000 lb.	13,200 lb.
GCWR	16,000 lb.	16,000 lb.	27,500 lb.
Length	230"	259.1"	259.1"
Wheelbase	143.5"	167.7"	167.7"

CONTACT: General Motors; 800-222-1020 (Chevy), 800-462-8782 (GMC), www.gm.com



RAM

Ram 1500 SLT Crew Cab 4x2 with 5-foot, 7-inch bed

Ram 1500 Crew Cab Outdoorsman 4x4 5-foot, 7-inch bed

Ram 3500HD Crew Cab Long Bed Dually 4x2

Engine	3.6L DOHC V-6	5.7L HEMI 16-valve V-8	6.7L Cummins turbodiesel I-6
HP	305 @ 6,400 RPM	395 @ 5,600 RPM	370 @ 2,800 RPM
Torque	269 @ 4,175 RPM	407 @ 3,950 RPM	800 @ 1,600 RPM
Transmission	8-speed automatic	8-speed automatic	6-speed automatic
Axle Ratio	3.55:1	3.92:1	3.55:1
Fuel Cap	26 gal. (standard)	26 gal. (standard)	26 gal. (standard)
Suspension, F/R	Independent, coil springs, shocks and stabilizer bar/five-link with track bar, coil springs, shocks and stabilizer bar *	Independent, coil springs, shocks and stabilizer bar/five-link with track bar, coil springs, shocks and stabilizer bar *	Live axle, links with track bar, coil springs, shocks and stabilizer bar/live axle, leaf springs, shocks
Brakes	Four-wheel disc, (front vented discs), ABS	Four-wheel disc, (front vented discs), ABS	Four-wheel disc, ABS
Tow Rating	5,950 lb.	9,950 lb.	17,000 lb. (mfg. estimate)**
GVWR	6,700 lb.	6,800 lb.	N/A lb.**
GCWR	11,200 lb.	15,650 lb.	N/A lb.**
Length	229"	237.9"	259.4"
Wheelbase	140.5"	149.6"	168.9"

CONTACT: Ram Trucks; 866-726-4636, www.ramtrucks.com

* Optional air suspension replaces shocks and coil springs.

**Unavailable from Chrysler at press time due to late builds of Ram HD models.



by **Bob Ashley** and associates
photos by **Bruce Hampson** and **Shawn Spence**

The Latest in Trailer Offerings

A sneak peek at a few of the exciting new towables you can expect to see on dealer lots in the coming months

The towables market has been ever-expanding since the recent recession and is currently the fastest growing segment in the RV market. This ongoing trend is redefining the market as we know it. Recreation-minded consumers seem eager to spend on affordable RVs that are packed with value and they want something that offers fuel efficiency. In other words,

lighter-weight trailers and fifth-wheels are a big part of that new market. However, at the other end of the spectrum, larger fifth-wheels are also gaining in popularity. Retirees or people considering retirement don't seem so concerned about the cost of a unit. Luxury toy haulers that have become more residential with larger

KEYSTONE MONTANA





JAYCO WHITEHAWK

More To Come

All-new Augusta

With Augusta RV's first unit coming off the line in March of 2012, this new company now offers the aerodynamic Augusta towable line featuring a fiberglass skin and includes a couple of bunkhouse models in its 28- to 34-foot, \$19,000 to \$23,000 products.

Shasta RV

The 100-inch-wide mid-level Phoenix fifth-wheel will feature leather-style furniture and a "designer-inspired" bathroom. The new Phoenix will range in length from 27 to 34 feet with MSRPs starting around \$30,000.

Cruiser RV

Cruiser is offering a remodeled Fun Finder travel trailer lineup with a new barrel roof and fiberglass front caps, rear living rooms and galley slides. Lengths vary from 18 to 33 feet; MSRPs from \$16,000 to \$22,000.

Starcraft RV

The AR One line has been expanded with three new models: a 21-, 26- and a 25-footer with bunks and a slide. A new half-ton towable fifth-wheel and five new folding camping trailer floorplans are also in the lineup.

KZ RV

The company has introduced the Durango Sandlewood Edition fifth-wheels with champagne full-body exteriors in both the mid-profile Durango 1500 and full-profile Durango. These will have black accent trim and new aerodynamic front caps, and be available in lengths of 28 to 39 feet. The highlight of its new offerings is the Sport Trek travel trailer, towable by light-duty pickups and SUVs, which will retail in the \$20,000 range, come in lengths of 26 to 34 feet and feature an enclosed underbelly.

Lifestyle Luxury RV

Evergreen's Lifestyle Luxury RV division has introduced a new model, the LS35SB, featuring an entertainment center with a pullout desk, galley slide with optional kitchen island, optional fireplace and full-size sofa in opposing slideouts.



AUGUSTA AT29RL



KEYSTONE RAPTOR VELOCITY

refrigerators and more comfortable furniture are particularly hot in the market right now.

In the lightweight category, Coachmen is focusing on the heart of the market with its new, entry-level Apex travel trailer line that comes in lengths from 20 to 28 feet with base prices starting at \$15,000. The company swapped out lauan substrate for Azdel Superlite — 50 percent lighter than wood — in its new laminated fiberglass sidewalls.

Keystone's high-end Raptor and Fusion fifth-wheel and travel trailer series are the company's top-selling toy haulers, with retail prices starting at \$38,149 and \$43,600, respectively. It seems toy haulers as a whole are starting to appeal to women who often make the purchase decisions and want

New Trailers for 2013

the unit to be an RV with a garage, not a garage first. Toy haulers are not as edgy as they once were. During the last year, Keystone has specifically moved that direction with its Raptor and Fusion products. In addition, the company's high-end Montana fifth-wheel has been completely redesigned; especially notable is the fresh new interior, including one model (3900FB) with a huge front bath where the master bedroom is usually located.

Winnebago Industries, which for decades has built Class A, B and C



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motorhomes, climbed aboard the towable trend two years ago with the purchase of SunnyBrook RV, a highly regarded travel trailer and fifth-wheel manufacturer. In the lightweight categories, Winnebago Towables introduced two new products for 2013 — the Winnebago Lite Five fifth-wheel and the Minnie travel trailer, which borrowed its name from an iconic Winnebago mini-motorhome brand.

Three-year-old Prime Time, a subsidiary of Forest River, introduced



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the Avenger travel trailer for 2013 with a \$15,995 MSRP. Prime Time president Jeff Rank noted that new materials and construction techniques inside the factory allow some entry-level travel trailers to cost less than pop-up campers, which is probably why folding camping trailers are the only towable segment in decline.

That trend will probably continue to

cut into the folding camping trailer market according to Derald Bontrager, president of Jayco. For 2013, Jayco introduced seven laminated-fiberglass travel trailer floorplans ranging from 29 to 35 feet in the White Hawk series with a base MSRP of \$24,893.

Living' Lite started out building lightweight, all-aluminum pop-up campers and has progressed into all-aluminum

travel trailers. Living' Lite will introduce an ultra-lite, all-aluminum and composite travel trailer called the Mercury in two 24-foot floorplans with dry weights less than 4,500 pounds.

To meet the current market, Crossroads for 2013 added a lightweight 30-foot fifth-wheel with a \$29,995 MSRP to its Cruiser Aire series. The two-tone double-slide unit features a dry weight

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of 7,000 pounds so it can be towed by half-ton pickup trucks. Crossroads uses lightweight composites and aluminum in its construction.

Founded in 2008, Evergreen Recreational Vehicles initially offered an all-composite green Ever-Lite travel trailer series retailing for about \$45,000. Now the company has evolved into more traditional products that include the Bay Hill fifth-wheels with luxurious interiors and a line of Sun Valley travel trailers.

Heartland Recreational Vehicles has seen increased sales in the company's mid-level Sundance and Elk Ridge lines, which retail in the low \$40,000 range. Both have been upgraded for 2013 and now offer the same amenities, slideouts and floorplans in mid-level that were only available in high-end fifth-wheels three or four years ago. The company is also coming out with an edgier, upgraded look with its Gateway, a 35- to 38-foot line of fifth-wheels with triple and quad slides with colored glass and frameless windows, and hot new paint schemes

on its Cyclone fifth-wheel toy haulers.

Reintroduced with an all-new look is the Dutchmen Coleman travel trailer, featuring a fully enclosed insulated underbelly, larger water capacity and enhanced insulation. The 16- to 33-foot, fiberglass-skinned ultra-light offers two standard Coleman folding chairs with each unit. Optional Coleman coolers, lanterns, indoor/outdoor tables and

sleeping bags are also available.

Gulf Stream's 7 1/2-foot-wide entry-level wood and aluminum Ameri-Lite travel trailer is designated "Super Lite" by the company with a dry weight less than 2,880 pounds.

With five 17- to 21-foot floorplans, the Ameri-Lite Super Lite carries an \$8,995 MSRP and a 12-year warranty. The company is also bringing to market

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CRUISER FUN FINDER

a bathroom-slideout-equipped Gulf Breeze and a competitively priced Track & Trail toy hauler, two new 23-foot Visa travel trailers and three new Yellowstone fifth-wheel floorplans.

Last, but certainly not least, Airstream had California designer Christopher C. Deam design an ultra-modern interior for the 2013 International Sterling Edition that used bright yellow and lavender colors to accent the interior. Meanwhile, Airstream has developed a new product with its European partners. It's all hush-hush as of press time for this issue, but we were told that it's a travel trailer interior concept unlike anything Airstream has ever done before. 🚐

Sources

Airstream

877-596-6111,
www.airstream.com

Augusta RV

574-848-0200,
www.augusta-rv.com

Coachmen RV

574-825-5821,
www.coachmenrv.com

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3RD**Mobile 1**

800-662-4525, www.mobiloil.com

Fifth-Wheel Hitch |

1ST**Reese**

A powerhouse in the towing market, Reese makes ball mounts, hitch balls, pin boxes, brake controllers and heavy-duty hitches for the RV market.
800-632-3290, www.reeseprod.com

2ND**B&W Trailer Hitches**

800-248-6564, www.turnoverball.com

3RD**PullRite**

574-259-1520, www.pullrite.com

Fifth-Wheel Trailer

1ST

Keystone

Keystone is a leader in North American RV sales, specializing in fifth-wheels, travel trailers and toy haulers.

574-535-2100, www.keystonerv.com

2ND

Forest River

574-389-4600, www.forestriverinc.com

3RD

Jayco

574-825-5861, www.jayco.com

Folding Camper

1ST

Jayco

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2ND

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800-945-4787, www.starcraftv.com

3RD

Aliner

724-423-7440, www.aliner.com

Fuel Additive

1ST

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800-342-2512, www.lucasoil.com

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1ST

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2ND

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3RD

Bully Dog

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Edge Products

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(Tie)

www.bulldog.com

www.edgeproducts.com

Portable Generator

1ST

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www.powerequipment.honda.com

2ND

Cummins Onan

800-888-6626, www.cumminsonan.com

3RD

Yamaha

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1ST

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2ND

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800-543-1219, www.thetford.com



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2ND

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RV Retailer

1ST

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888-626-7576, www.campingworld.com

2ND

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Applebee's

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3RD

Denny's

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When we were planning our trip to South America many years ago, we bought our first Four Wheel Camper. It was the lightest and lowest we could find, and we lived in it for 14 months as we traveled south from our home in California all the way to Tierra del Fuego, Argentina.

After driving it back home, we bought another one and mounted it on a Ford F-350. Next we drove across Siberia in the winter, across the rest

of Russia, and then around the world on a three-year/40,000-mile adventure in 1996.

Any pop-up camper is, in essence, an extremely complicated tent and we don't really recommend everyone travel in the kind of temperatures we did in Siberia. However, the design and manufacturing of pop-up campers has come a long way in recent years and we were excited to have the opportunity to take Four Wheel's new Grandby on a

road trip. Once we settled in, we were impressed with many of the improvements.

Like our older model, the new light-weight Grandby top "pops" up, but now there are twin gas struts in the front that make opening much easier. Now it also features a one-piece roof to eliminate the chance of seam leaks, and the fiberglass batting of yesteryear has been replaced with modern and efficient foam insulation panels.



(Top to bottom) A new modern kitchen features a stylish flush-mounted three-burner propane stove and a large sink with a fold-down faucet. There are several cupboards and storage bins for food, bedding and camping gear. The cabover mattress pulls out to make a comfortable queen-size bed.

All sewing for the construction of the pop-up sides is done in-house at Four Wheel Camper to allow for a higher level of quality control. The corners in the plastic fold-down windows are gusseted for extra strength, and rib beads along the sides have been added to eliminate leaks. Every window has a screen, too.

The first thing we noticed inside the Grandby was the modern kitchen with a stylish and functional flush-mounted three-burner propane stove and a large sink with a fold-down faucet. A real plus is the optional DSI (\$155) LP-gas water heater, which also feeds the outside shower, a real luxury in a small camper.

The larger optional (\$1,395) Waeco compressor AC/DC refrigerator was super quiet. A compressor refrigerator does not have to be level, and compared to the more common absorption refrigerators it is more efficient. Dual batteries (\$180) and a pair of optional solar panels (\$995) kept everything running when we were boondocking.

There is no gray- or black-water tank, so you need to carry a collapsible or portable container for this purpose. Thetford makes several SmartTote Portable Tanks ranging in capacity from 12 to 35 gallons



SPECIFICATIONS

Exterior Length (box)	8'
Exterior Width	80"
Floor Length	96"
Height Closed (w/roof vent)	59"
Interior Height (open)	66"
Freshwater Cap	20 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap	N/A
LP-Gas Cap (optional)	5 gal.
Gross Weight (Dry)	850 lb.
Sleeping Cap	3-4
Base MSRP	\$13,195

[Four Wheel Campers, Inc.](http://www.fourwheelcampers.com)
800-242-1442,
www.fourwheelcampers.com



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TRAILER LIFE TEST

(www.thetford.com). The optional Thetford Porta Potti is small, and it can also be dumped into a SmartTote when you camp for several days.

Speaking of water, an electric pump draws from the 22-gallon freshwater tank, nearly twice the size of previous models. On an extended trip, water is always the first thing we run out of.

Because we arrived late at the campground, the twin Grote LED floodlights (\$395) on the rear made setting up camp easy in the dark. We do wish they would come on automatically when the tow vehicle is shifted into reverse.

Climbing inside, the top was up in seconds and dinner was on the stove. A Fan-Tastic Vent (\$295) pulls cooking odors out quickly and sucks in fresh air if you leave a window cracked. We turned on the forced-air furnace and the camper was quickly warm. Our test model had the optional Arctic Pack (\$475), a good idea if you plan on doing any serious winter season travel.

The dinette table is just big enough

for two and it stows away securely when not in use. The cabover mattress pulls out to make a comfortable queen-size bed and the seat cushions of the dinette flip around to make a step or second bed for a child. The company has a floorplan it claims could sleep four, but that would be tight.

Our Grandby had the optional (\$250) LED exterior lights. A switch near the master bed turns on these outside lights so you can see, "What was that noise, dear?" without getting up. If you do need to get up in the middle of the night, there is even a red interior LED that allows you to see in the dark without being temporarily night-blinded or having to grope for a flashlight. As such things happen frequently while camping, it's a very handy touch.

The next morning we relaxed around the campfire and enjoyed the crisp cool mountain air. It reminded us why we love to find beautiful places off the beaten track and why we had chosen a Four Wheel Camper to get us there. Its low center of gravity and the

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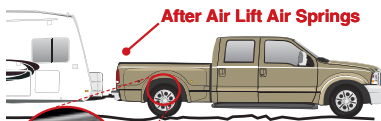
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(Top to bottom) A Waeco Compressor AC/DC refrigerator is super quiet. The optional Thetford Porta Potti is small but functional.

overall construction is light, so it doesn't alter the drivability and maneuverability of the truck. The height of the camper's cabover section is just 10 inches when in the closed position, giving it a very low profile, which translated into lower wind drag, higher fuel economy and superior handling in all conditions. As we wheeled back home on the twisting two-lane highway over the coastal mountains, planning our next adventure, we hardly noticed the Grandby test camper was still there. 🚚

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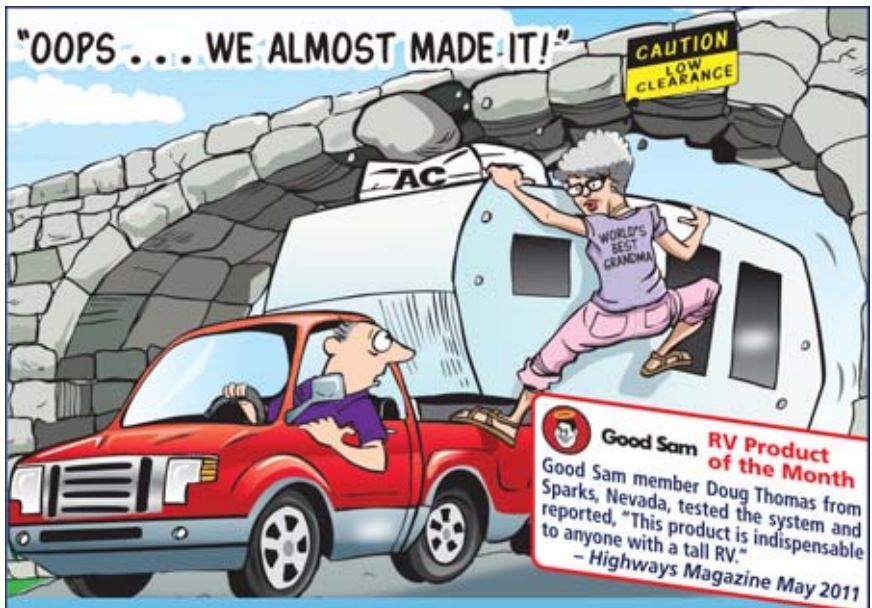


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Jan. 18-20	Progressive Insurance New Jersey RV & Camping Show	Edison, NJ
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Feb. 22-24	Progressive Insurance South Carolina RV & Camping Show	Greenville, SC
Feb. 28 – Mar. 3	Progressive Insurance Colorado RV, Sports, Boat & Travel Show	Denver, CO
Mar. 8-10	Progressive Insurance Virginia RV Show	Hampton, VA
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User Guide

Contents



Residential Recreation

The Cyclone 4100 King is much more than a toy hauler

The term “residential style” is fast becoming a cliché in the recreational vehicle marketplace.

Contemporary RVs are — across virtually every model line — head-and-shoulders above what was imaginable even five years ago. That holds true for everything from efficient use of space to build quality, value for the money and equipment. Far from being an unusual commodity, residential style is now as commonplace throughout today’s RV industry as microwave ovens.

That said, there still are manufacturers that continue to push the boundaries of the residential envelope. Elkhart, Ind.-based Heartland Recre-

ational Vehicles’ newest model within its popular Cyclone toy hauler line, the 4100 King fifth-wheel, incorporates a number of unique twists that quite literally run from one end of its 43 feet to the other. It also underscores a go-big-or-go-home attitude sure to be appreciated by the sociable toy hauler crowd — everything about this model is oversized.

“It’s meant to be ‘The King’ and we labeled it as such for a reason,” said A.J. Jones, general manager for Heartland’s Cyclone, Road Warrior and Torque divisions.

“There are a lot of features about this particular model that you won’t find

in any other toy hauler,” Jones added. “For starters, it has a true king-sized bed in the front bedroom area, along with a very unique closet configuration along the forward wall that allows for the inclusion of a washer-dryer setup, wardrobe and sitting area.”

Heartland did stretch the length of the upper cabin to accommodate the full-size bed, but the impressive cabinet capacity was realized by using unique radius bends to maximize living area and improve aesthetics. The surprisingly spacious bedroom also boasts a large curbside six-drawer dresser topped by a solid-surface countertop and a nice sitting area integrated into the forward wall. There’s also an LCD TV mounted in the curbside wall, along with a window that, with windows fore and aft in the bed-



Heartland’s Cyclone 4100 King is all about family fun with motorized toys. The 43-foot-long unit features a ramp that converts into a patio to further the outdoor lifestyle.



room slideout, provides ventilation.

But while a king-size bed would be impressive in any towable RV, the full scope of the 4100 King's creature comforts doesn't hit home until you walk into the forward bath — home to, among other niceties, a full-sized residential tub enclosure. While other manufacturers have tried adding full-size tubs, the 4100 King mounts it in an east-west configuration, thus preserving pass-through storage beneath the living quarters.

"The enclosure is one fiberglass unit, with the tub sunken into the main floor level," Jones pointed out. "When you're in the bathroom, you actually step down into the tub." The recessed tub also contributes to the sense of space that permeates throughout the Heartland fifth-wheel. "I'm 6 feet, 2 inches in height," said Jones, "and when I stand in the tub and put both arms straight up I can't touch the skydome."

That "bigger is better" philosophy prevails throughout the main cabin, where floor-to-ceiling woodwork in the forward wall is home to cabinets, an



High-end luxury fixtures and accommodations inside the Cyclone 4100 King are what make it more than just another toy hauler. The "mega-lounger" will seat five to six people.

electric fireplace and a massive 55-inch LCD TV capable of being viewed from just about anywhere within the three living "zones" created on the main floor by virtue of a new three-seasons wall that can separate the ramp door/patio room from the garage. For those out back not

interested in the 5.1 Dolby digital surround sound/Sony 1,000-watt-fueled theater-sized screen, the garage is pre-wired for an optional TV up to 32 inches.

The couch will easily accommodate five to six adults comfortably at dinner, relying on a new Heartland-designed

Trailer Life
Reader's Choice
Award Winner

SUPERIOR SWAY CONTROL *lets you enjoy the journey*

THE ORIGINAL
Equal-i-zer®
SWAY CONTROL HITCH

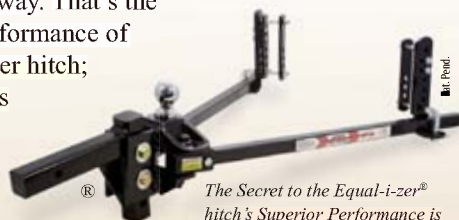


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99% of our customers would recommend the Equal-i-zer® hitch to their friends. Why? Because Equal-i-zer hitch's superior sway control performance helps you reach your destination safely.

The Equal-i-zer hitch's superior design makes it the best performing sway control hitch on the market. Four steel on steel friction points (*known as 4-Point Sway Control™*) and excellent weight distribution — provide

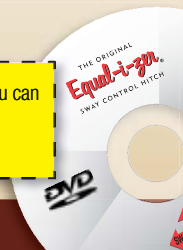
the best resistance to your trailer's attempts to sway. That's the premium performance of the Equal-i-zer hitch; and that helps keep your family safe.



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www.EqualizerHitch.com



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“mega-lounger” seating arrangement that incorporates three built-in recliners behind twin pedestal tables. “A lot of people have tried to incorporate tables, recliners and couches, but they never seem to hit that happy medium,” Jones said. “With our mega-lounger setup, you no longer have to fight that old battle: what’s more important — the couch, recliners or dining area?”

With a trailer of this size, extended vacations tend to be the rule rather than the exception, so the 4100 King was equipped with storage space wherever possible. That includes the galley, where a wraparound island countertop ties into extra glazed cherry cabinetry. And, while the 12-cubic-foot double-door refrigerator is optional, it looks right at home. The 30-inch microwave (convection is optional) is typically oversized, as well.

Maximizing all available space, the 4100 sports dual twin-sized overhead bunks between the main cabin and garage; one runs east-west, the other north-south, each with its own privacy curtains.

The garage itself is a full 12 feet long, although Jones notes that “we’re not even calling it a garage anymore — it’s more of an all-in-one space that just happens to accommodate motorized toys. We’re seeing people using it as a dining room or, with all the large windows in the area and the sliding middle screen in the three-seasons wall, you can convert the garage area itself into a screened-in patio.” The three-seasons



(Clockwise) The front master bedroom offers a king-size bed, closet configuration including space for a washer/dryer, a six-drawer dresser, a nice sitting area, and an LCD TV. Extraordinary cabinet space and a vestibule-style sink are found in the bathroom. Its huge pass-through basement provides considerable storage for gear and is well lit.

wall effectively seals off the end of the garage from the ramp door — which itself can be transformed into a 64-square-foot patio deck. The garage also has its own access door, its own half-bath and its own rear awning. In fact, the King boasts three electric awnings with nearly 40 linear feet of shade available at the push of a button.

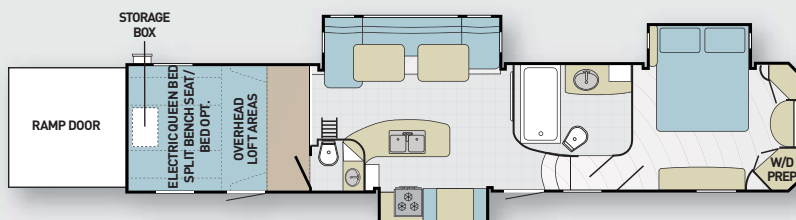
Available in base trim with white exterior walls, the 4100 also comes with copper, red or blue graphics to match a tow vehicle or full-body paint. The HD

series (pictured) includes a vestibule sink in the full bath and gray exterior walls with a painted front cap.

“The gray is actually infused into the sidewall,” Jones pointed out. “It’s similar to a gelcoat, but the color is actually all the way through the sidewall material — it’s stained fiberglass. If you scratch it, you’ll see the scratch — but with the underlying material also gray it won’t stand out nearly as much. Considering the environment where you’ll take a toy hauler, that’s a big deal.” 🚚

QUICK INFO ✓

Exterior Length	43' 8"
Interior Floor Length	(garage) 12'
Exterior Width	8' 5"
Exterior Height	13' 3"
Interior Height	8' 4-5/8"
Freshwater Cap.	100 gal.
Black-/Gray-Water Cap.	82 gal. each
LP-Gas Cap.	14 gal.
GVWR	18,000 lb.
Dry Weight	14,800 lb.
MSRP Base Price	\$67,499
MSRP Price as Tested	\$89,884



Heartland Recreational Vehicles; 877-262-8032, www.heartlandrvs.com



ROCK ON THE ROAD

The Travel Channel is set to launch a new series starring rock musician, Bret Michaels, entitled "Rock My RV." The eight-episode series will chronicle Michaels and his hand-picked team of RV designers and fabricators as they take ordinary RVs and reconstruct them into luxury homes on wheels. On average, Michaels logs nine months a year in an RV he designed from top to bottom. Michaels understands how important RVs are to their owners having spent his childhood camping in his family's Winnebago. The show depicts how enthusiasts can upgrade and enhance their RVs; www.travelchannel.com.

PHOTO COURTESY GO RVING

A ONE-PIECE BODY HELPS TO REDUCE LEAKS, SQUEAKS AND RATTLES, AND PROMOTES DURABILITY.

Luxury on Wheels

The Coach House Platinum 261XL DT is comfortably upscale

A builder of luxury

motorhomes, Coach House offers four Platinum series models, including the Ford E-450-based 261XL DT (dinette twin), which refers to the cozy dinette that converts to a 34-by-75-inch bed within a streetside slideout.

A six-way powered driver's seat, swiveling passenger seat and

front-mounted 32-inch overhead HDTV lead back toward the galley with a dual-burner stove, sink, microwave/convection oven, fridge and freezer opposite the dinette.

The central hallway divides two twin beds, each equipped with overhead and shirt cabinets for storing the essentials. The lavatory is in the rear, with two storage closets, a standup shower and an emergency exit in the rear of the coach.

With its unique and robust one-piece fiberglass

body shell, the likelihood of squeaks, leaks and rattles is drastically reduced from conventional, multi-piece superstructures — and it's quite durable over the long haul.

Several differing exterior paint schemes are available, including the deluxe option (as pictured), as well as a variety of upholsteries and surfaces, including Optima leather, optional mahogany-tone cabinetry and Corian countertops lending a luxuriant, residential-grade feel to the interior.



ChassisFord E-450
Engine6.8L V-10
Length26' 10"
Width8'
Height with A/C.....10' 5"

Interior Height6' 3"
Freshwater Cap32 gal.
Gray-Water Cap30 gal.
Black-Water Cap.....25 gal.
Base MSRP\$154,000

➞ Coach House RV; 800-235-0984, www.coachhouseserv.com

Girard Gen 2 Tankless Water Heater

The second-generation GSWH-1M offers a wider range of Btu, running from 18,000 to 36,000, and a fully adjustable dial temperature control. It is claimed to provide hot water in any environment, rapidly raising incoming water temperatures from 20- to 70-plus degrees. The Gen 2 is also said to consume half the LP-gas that a 6-gallon tank water heater uses to heat the same amount of water. It is lighter than typical tank water heaters, and there is no need for bypass plumbing or anode rods. The new GSWH-1M Tankless Water Heater is available on many new RVs as either standard equipment or as an option, and the tankless water heater is also sold in the RV aftermarket from authorized Girard distributors and dealers. **MSRP: \$679. Girard Products LLC; 866-559-1221, www.greenrvproducts.com.**



Coleman Mach 8 Roof-Top Air Conditioner

The all-new Coleman Mach 8 low-profile air conditioner, at 8 inches tall, is said to have the lowest profile of any other RV air conditioner, yet still deliver the highest airflow of any low-profile air conditioner on the market. The Mach 8 also has an ultra-quiet low speed for nearly silent nighttime cooling. The Coleman Mach 8 comes in 8,000-, 13,500- or 15,000-Btu models in either standard air conditioner or heat pump configurations. It even has an optional condensate removal system that helps prevent those ugly water streaks from forming on the side of your coach. The Mach 8 is said to have the highest Btu rated heat strip of any RV air conditioner on the market. The Coleman Mach 8 is available in black and white models, and is made in the USA. **MSRPs start at about \$800. RV Products; 316-832-3468, www.airxccl.com.**



Agile Efficiency

Roadtrek Ranger RT



FIRST IMPRESSION

Chassis
Chevrolet Express 2500

Engine
4.8-liter V-8

Length
20' 5"

Width
7'

Base MSRP
\$72,800

Nimble, Class B Motorhomes, like Roadtrek's Ranger RT, offer a unique way to get around. It affords the flexibility to drive tight roads, while returning acceptable mileage. The tradeoff? After becoming accustomed to the interior volume of a trailer, learning to live with minimal space may not be for everyone.

By minimizing weight and using a 4.8-liter GM V-8, Roadtrek was able to place its newest van on a lighter Chevrolet Express 2,500 chassis.

In the same spirit of efficiency, appliances are no longer powered by

propane. Dual auxiliary batteries and a 1,250-watt inverter power the fridge and microwave while other appliances are run by the generator or via hookups. Propane is an option.

Inside, the Ranger RT offers a practical layout. Dual captain's chairs swivel, with a table, and serve as the primary seating. A streetside galley includes the basics: two-burner stove, single-basin sink, fridge and microwave. Space is tight, but there is open counter space for meal preparation. A tidy curbside bath includes a commode and sink.

➔ **For more information contact: Roadtrek; 888-762-3873, www.roadtrek.com**



RV-Friendly Carpet Cleaner

Cleaning carpets and removing deep-seated stains — especially in rigs with pets — can be accomplished with Bissell's SpotBot Pet Deep Cleaner. According to the company, Microban technology also prevents the growth of odor-causing bacteria and mildew. Preset cycles allow for hands-free cleaning of tough stains in one quick step. Spiral brushing action is designed to lift dirt and stains, keeping the inside of your RV or tow vehicle clean and fresh smelling throughout the year.

MSRP: \$149.99

800-237-7691, www.bissell.com

Circle 201 on Reader Service Card.



Diesel Swap Kit

For Ford owners looking to replace the 6.4-liter diesel Power Stroke V-8, Diesel Conversion Specialists now has a kit that will replace the factory engine with the 5.9- or 6.7-liter Cummins diesel. The DCS kit offers provisions for air conditioning, factory instrument cluster, cruise control, bolt-in engine mounting, radiator hoses and wiring. The kit also includes detailed instructions and technical support to guide do-it-yourselfers through the project from start to finish. Many other truck-engine combos are available.

MSRP: starting at \$4,149

406-755-8878,

www.dieselconversion.com

Circle 202 on Reader Service Card.



LED Utility Light

The LM Pro, built by Lightmodule Inc., is said to be the first portable safety/emergency light system that utilizes LED technology. According to the company, the 850-lumen rating provides warning lighting that is brighter than chemical flares, which is crucial during nighttime breakdowns. The versatile LM Pro has a rating of 720 lumens when used as a 180-degree pattern area light claimed to stay illuminated for up to six hours. The handheld light, useful in a range of travel and RV situations is rechargeable, built to take a beating and manufactured in the USA.

MSRP: \$215-\$325

888-900-7853, www.lightmodule.com

Circle 203 on Reader Service Card.



Chevrolet Duramax Diesel Exhaust

Magnaflow's Pro Series Diesel Performance Exhaust (#17908) kit is designed to boost horsepower and torque — as well as an improved, tougher sounding exhaust note — for the GM Duramax 6.6-liter diesel engine. The 4-inch single exhaust pipe, which is mandrel-bent and welded, exits on the passenger side of the vehicle and has a particulate filter and intercooled tip. Performance gains are based on the company's dynamometer testing.

MSRP: \$563.75

800-824-8664, www.magnaflow.com

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PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Take advantage of these competitive rates...Act TODAY!

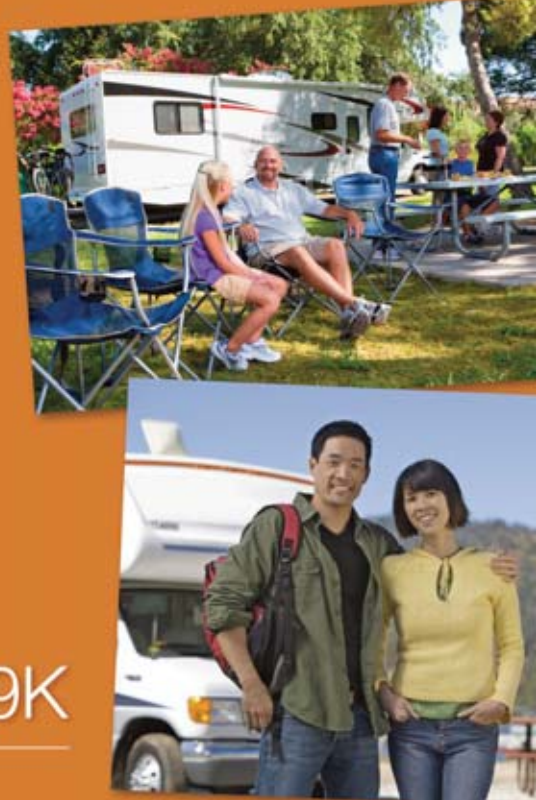
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CLICK: GoodSamRVLoans.com/513



*Estimated APR (Annual Percentage Rate). Subject to loan program requirements and credit approval. Certain fees, closing costs and restrictions may apply. Rates and terms may vary with market conditions and are subject to change without notice.

**The 4.99% APR is available for consumer transactions only on loan amounts \$25,000 - \$49,999 with a maximum 12 year loan term. The 4.62% APR is available on consumer transactions only on loan amounts \$50,000 or greater with a maximum 20 year loan term. For a refinance request, RV must be 2003 model year or newer and current loan must have been open for a minimum of six months. For a purchase request, RV must be 2005 model year or newer. For RV 2009 model year or older and loan amount \$50,000 or greater, maximum loan term is less than 20 years; contact Good Sam Finance Center for those terms. Maximum loan to value is determined by the following: credit score and model year, with collateral value being established per NADA Used Wholesale Trade-in value. An application for credit must be submitted by January 31, 2013. APR is valid for 30 days from date of loan approval. A 12 year loan at 4.99% APR and 20 year loan at 4.62% APR will have a monthly payment of \$9.24 and \$6.39 respectively per \$1,000 borrowed. Information is accurate as of October 30, 2012. This offer is not available to applicants who use their RV as a principal dwelling (Full-Timer), visit website for Full-Timer rates and terms. Financing provided through Good Sam Finance Center. ©2012 Good Sam Finance Center

Poly Bushings for Better Handling

When the tail starts wagging the dog more noticeably than normal, RV owners often point to their tow rigs' hard parts: shocks, ball joints and such. But like cartilage in the human body, a tow vehicle's suspension and steering system bushings absorb movement and friction between hard parts. Those old, worn-out bushings are the automotive equivalent of osteoarthritis. (Relevant factoid: polyurethane was invented in the 1930s as a synthetic alternative to rubber by Otis Bayer, better known for his aspirin.)

Luckily, anti-inflammatories for tow vehicles are available without a prescription. Polyurethane bushings can function like a synthetic hip replacement, providing a compliant, long-lasting buffer between hard parts. Unlike rubber, most automotive polyurethane formulations are UV-stable and chemical-resistant, so road grime, particularly salt, doesn't cause them to decay.

Software Engineers

Making poly bushings isn't as easy as popping a mold from an OE part, then pouring in liquefied polymer. Some overseas and low-end domestic manufacturers have attempted this. Consumers generally get what they pay for. Lower-cost bushings can have varying amounts of hardness, or durometer, within a given production run. Durometer is the hardness measurement for non-metallic materials.

Reputable bushing manufacturers have quality-control standards that only allow a small durometer variation for a given part number. Further, bushings need different durometers for different jobs. High-flex applications such as swaybars and endlinks might call for a 45-60 durometer; leaf spring and

certain control-arm bushings need a firmer formulation, such as a 90 durometer. The art and science involves optimizing the bushing for its application. For example, Energy Suspension, which has made poly bushings for more than 25 years, has different recipes for its "stiff" 90-durometer polyurethane chemical depending on whether the bushing's primary load is torsional or tensile. Aftermarket poly manufacturers might also infuse some parts with advanced composites such as graphite and carbon-fiber to improved strength, quietness and other properties.

OE specs can fall within a wide range to compensate for manufacturing variations. Quality aftermarket poly bushings tend to be more precise. One example is leaf spring bushings that fit tightly in the frame horns — no fender-washer shims necessary. Engineering can involve creating a mold that's slightly larger than the desired finished product to account for shrinkage during curing. Other details include precise lengths for steel sleeves (which bear loads) instead of settling for "close enough" with one part number for several applications.

Trade-Offs

If polyurethane is so superior, why isn't it installed on the assembly line? The simple answer: Poly isn't as supple as rubber. The automakers prioritize NVH (noise, vibration, harshness). Rubber absorbs these better than poly. And rubber only needs to last past the vehicle's warranty coverage.

For tow vehicles, poly has two prominent benefits. First, it normally deflects less than the rubber it replaces. This translates to better handling, particularly when towing: less

body roll around corners, minimized nose-diving under firm braking. Durability is the other big benefit. Rubber's tolerances increase as it degrades. Prominent polyurethane manufacturers typically warranty their products for anywhere from two years to however long the original purchaser owns the vehicle (with some caveats). The reality is that these components sometimes outlast their vehicles.

Concerning installation, suspension bushings can be a chore to remove, particularly those with rubber-impregnated steel. Energy Suspension uses a 5-ton arbor press in its R&D facility. However, patient do-it-yourselfers can usually accomplish the job at home with a vise, impact sockets (functioning as punches) and large Channellock pliers. Liberal doses of silicone spray lube helps. Less-patient weekend warriors can use a butane or oxy-acetylene torch to melt the rubber prior to hammering out the rest of the bushing with an appropriately sized impact socket. Some OE bushings have steel lips that must be chiseled inward before the unit can be punched/pressed out.

Hot-ticket tips from Energy Suspension to help reduce squeaks: Prep any component that has an eye by sanding the bushing contact area smooth with 400-grit emery cloth. Pits in the metal casting can be filled with JB Weld or equivalent and smoothed out with emery paper when cured. During installation, Energy Suspension says that it's impossible to use too much assembly grease. Bushing kits normally include a tub of lube, which is often marine-market waterproof wheel bearing grease. After installation, excess grease wipes off with a WD-40-coated rag.

Steering stabilizers, aftermarket shocks/struts and high-performance balljoints are a few other options for improving tow-rig handling. For the best bang-for-buck handling improvement over the long haul, though, consider re-bushing with a polyurethane kit from a name-brand manufacturer. For more information, visit www.energysuspension.com. 🚚

Energy Suspension kits are offered for a wide variety of applications.



Acid Absorber

The Battery Mat neutralizes corrosive acid leaking from open cell batteries, keeping the compartment clean and damage free

DIFFICULTY

1 2 3 4 5

TIME TO COMPLETE

1 HOUR

TOOLS NEEDED

UTILITY KNIFE, STRAIGHT EDGE, TOOLS TO REMOVE BATTERY

Recently, a friend was working on his batteries neatly mounted in an exterior compartment. He was proud of his system: multiple 8Ds positioned systematically and filling up the compartment with a precision fit. Over the years, corrosion from the batteries made the compartment floor resemble the landscape after a new snowfall. Copious amounts of corrosion were eating away at anything metal. It wasn't a pretty sight.

The solution to the corrosion problem (after checking the charging system) is a product that's been around for years, but is not well known in the RV community. The Battery Mat absorbs and neutralizes battery acid and is simply placed under the battery before it is mounted in the compartment. It's a product that has been used extensively in the military and government and makes perfect sense for all motorhome owners who use open cell batteries.

At first glance, The Battery Mat looks like a plain old piece of nondescript material, but it's actually made of super-absorbent polypropylene needle punch felt. One side is heated for strength and the fabric is slowly pressure treated at high temperatures using a natural acid-neutralizing formula. The material is then cured in ovens. Once that's done, the fabric is dipped in a latex sealant, heated again in the ovens and screen-printed.

My experience with The Battery Mat started many years ago when the company sent me a sample. It was a package containing an 8-by-12-inch, 3/16-inch-thick yellow mat, with a bunch of battery images printed on the surface. After a little hesitation, I installed the mat under a battery in a



The heavier duty Battery Mat material is sold in bulk sizes in sheets and rolls and can be cut to fit any size compartment for custom projects using a utility knife and straight edge.

compartment that was plagued by corrosion. The mat proved to be effective over a long period of time. Eventually, I used larger sections of heavier duty material (sold in custom and bulk sizes) in a number of battery projects. The material is available in standard and heavy-duty configurations cut to 8-by-12 inches or 8-by-20 inches, or in sheets and rolls. Prices vary, depending on size and thickness, but the basic yellow mat can be found on the Internet for \$3.95.

Most onlookers are skeptical at first. It's hard to imagine how the mat traps and neutralizes battery acid that leaks from the terminals or cell caps. A key element is the latex sealant that repels water and retains the acid neutralizers in a potent state. Battery acid seeps into the highly porous fabric (latex is not impervious to the acid) where it is absorbed and neutralized.

The Battery Mat is made in the United States from components originating in the United States. The company claims to manufacture the world's only acid-neutralizing mat and has a long history in dealing with battery acid solutions.



The Battery Mat is an easy and inexpensive way to keep the battery compartment looking clean and free from corrosive damage. It is claimed to last up to three years, in service. The company will provide technical assistance when ordering the product. ☎

Battery Mat; 800-392-1888,
www.batterymat.com



ACID TRAP » The basic yellow Battery Mat can be purchased on the Internet for less than \$4.

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FIFTH-WHEEL — GOOSENECK OPTIONS

Q After reading the article about fifth-wheel hitches ("Go 5th and Go Forth") in Sept. 2012 *Trailer Life* I would like your opinion about gooseneck adapters for an RV-to-gooseneck hitch ball. I have been pulling a gooseneck-hitch trailer with our long-bed 2004 Chevy 2500 HD, which has a gooseneck hitch ball in the bed of the truck. We want to buy a used fifth-wheel trailer and will need an adapter that will allow the fifth-wheel to be pulled with our gooseneck hitch in the truck. What are your thoughts on these adapters? Are they safe? Do you prefer a certain brand?

Nancy and Hank, via email

A There are several fifth-wheel-to-gooseneck adapters on the market, and they're very popular for the exact reason you've mentioned. RVers with trailers equipped with fifth-wheel hitches sometimes want to haul a trailer with a truck fitted with the gooseneck-type ball, which is more commonly used for commercial or agricultural applications. As long as you buy an adapter with the proper load rating to handle the weight of your trailer, and the adapter comes from a reputable source, they're safe. We don't have a specific brand preference.

As an alternative, Reese just released a new adapter hitch, called the Goose Box, that replaces the entire hitch box on your trailer with a hitch box that already has the gooseneck ball coupler on its bottom end. The Goose Box also incorporates shock absorption so it's easier on the trailer than a solid hitch. We haven't had any first-hand experience with this new hitch, but Reese is a quality brand and it looks like a terrific option for what you want to do. — Jeff Johnston



TRUCK AND TRAILER MATCHUP

Q We have been RVing for 40 years and love every moment. We're retired now and get too much conflicting info on trailers and tow vehicles, and are getting scared to travel because of all the negative feedback on camping advice. Please help resolve our planned

setup for fifth-wheeling. We have a 34-foot Cedar Creek fifth-wheel, hitch pin weight 1,760 pounds, UVW 11,310, GVW 13,760, we usually load light, and are planning to weigh later, and we travel with 10 gallons of water at maximum.

Our tow vehicle is a 2007 Dodge Ram 2500 HD 5.9 Cummins turbo

THE TECH TEAM



KEN FREUND: Ken is a former ASE Certified Master Technician, service manager and shop owner who has authored numerous books on automotive repair.



JEFF JOHNSTON: Jeff served as technical director of *Trailer Life* for 18 years and has been an RV enthusiast, mechanic and writer since he could hold a wrench.



diesel, 4x4 Sport, four-speed auto (48RE) with the tranny cooler, 11.5-inch rear axle with anti-slip, upgraded with Timbrens on the rear, a K&N cold air intake, and Superchip Flashpaq tuned to trailer towing. It has 42,000 miles on it, offers a GVWR of 9,000 pounds, features the trailer tow group, sports LT 265/70R17E tires, and carries a Hi-jacker 18,000-pound capacity auto travel fifth-wheel hitch.

We would like to upgrade in steps for economy and pulling power, at a retiree's income. First, a better exhaust, larger tranny oil pan and larger rear-end pan. Any other suggestions you have to help to tow safely and economically? Synthetic oils all around? What about a transmission upgrade? This is our retirement package, do you have any suggestions or should I be concerned about any of it?

Terry & Linda Wilding, via email

A Your equipment package sounds pretty good all around. If you've enjoyed RVing for 40 years, why listen to those who seem bound to scare you off with their horror stories? When you start inquiring about the facts of those stories you often hear about overloaded tow vehicles, inadequate maintenance, improper equipment selections, excess performance upgrades and the like. Yours seems like a pretty sensible package that should work well.

Do you truly feel your truck delivers inadequate towing performance or is improved performance, in general, just something you think you should have? In one sense, the less you mess around with your existing equipment package, the less potential problems you may have down the road. As for fuel economy, you can only do so much with a towing setup, and the chipset you have may be your optimum situation for now.

As for any other upgrades, the Superchip you have sounds fine. A performance exhaust system could be a good match for your setup. The synthetic lubricants are costly but well recommended, although not required for successful towing as long as you observe the factory maintenance intervals for petroleum lubricants. A transmission upgrade is probably optional at most. As long as your existing trans-

mission works, I would not worry about it. The larger fluid pans are OK and can help with fluid cooling, and perhaps incrementally longer lubricant life due to the larger volume, but I would place them in the optional category, as they are not necessary. Enjoy your towing setup! — J.J.

SMALL PICKUP TOWING

Q Are compact pickups, for example 2000 and newer Dodge Dakotas, a

good choice for towing travel trailers weighing less than 4,000 pounds? Should an equalizing hitch be installed?

Hugh Swan, New Braunfels, Texas

A Small pickups make great tow vehicles, Hugh. They're made to haul loads and a suitably sized trailer is a fine payload. The main point is to pay attention to the manufacturer's tow rating. If you do that, and don't overload the truck or push it past what



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Cypress Trails, Circle 133 on Reader Service Card

it's designed to do, it should work well for you.

Even for a compact truck and trailer combination an equalizing (weight-distributing) hitch is a good idea. Several companies make smaller, lower-rated weight-distributing hitches designed specifically for lighter-weight towing setups. Properly selected and adjusted, it can only make your towing safer and more fun. — J.J.

DELAMINATION

Q We have a 2005 Jayco Eagle 281RLS fifth-wheel trailer and have noticed an area at the front, left-hand corner sidewall, just behind the front cap, that appears to be delaminating. My question is whether or not this is repairable. The area is 3 feet by 2 feet in size and it is noticeable when looking down the line of the trailer. My second question is whether or not this is worth repairing or if we just leave it. Your

thoughts would be welcome.

Brent Kirkpatrick
Shaunavon, Saskatchewan

A Delamination is something you should definitely not ignore, Brent, because a little bit now can become a lot later. Yes, it is repairable, but it's going to be spendy and it has to be done by a qualified service center. It's probably one of the most complicated types of damage to repair because of the amount of disassembly that can be required and the specialized techniques employed to repair the damage. In some cases this type of repair can only be done at the factory. As for whether it's worth the cost of repair, only you can answer that based on the cost estimate presented by your repair facility, how long you plan to keep the trailer, and so on. — J.J.



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SLIDEOUT: IN OR OUT?

Q We leave our fifth-wheel trailer at the campground for extended periods of time because we have a yearly camping spot. My question is, should I leave my slideout room extended, or retract it each time before we head home? There are times the camper sits empty for two weeks at a time. Some of our camping buddies leave their slide

out and some bring them in. Value or brand of the camper does not matter. I am just looking for the correct answer.
Rick Schmidt, Cape Girardeau, Mo.

A Slideout rooms have various seals and such that are designed to keep the weather (rain, snow, dust, etc.) out. When they are extended, more of these sealing areas are exposed. If any of the seals deteriorate or are otherwise damaged or compromised, water and dirt and perhaps insects, rodents and vermin are more likely to enter the trailer. Slideouts are designed to be extended for long periods of time, but if it is sagging or twisted, or the mechanism is defective, be sure to have the unit examined by a dealer for damage or wear and tear. — **Ken Freund**

SATELLITE RECEIVER FITMENT

Q We are looking at downsizing from our fifth-wheel to a travel trailer. One concern we have with all manufacturers is where, inside, do they expect us to put the satellite receiver? Because of the size of the receiver we haven't seen one trailer that has room for the receiver. Most have satellite prep installed, or optionally available, so they have thought about that part.
William Hancy, Athens, Texas

A This is a new one for us, William. It's likely that you'll need to look around more at some different manufacturers' trailers to find one with the shelf or cabinet space you need. In our experience, when the manufacturer includes a satellite-receiver wiring prep as a standard or option, there's usually a place for the receiver near the designated TV spot. If you're looking at a smaller-sized trailer, in which space is at a premium, then the manufacturer may be expecting you to just position the receiver wherever you can find room for it. A countertop adjacent to the TV might be an option, for example, even though stringing the connecting cables between the components may not be a very elegant solution. This type of problem calls for some flexibility and creativity, but then, most RVers are known for such traits. — **J.J.**



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WATER HEATER FAILURE

Q We have a 2009 Fleetwood Formula toy hauler with a 10-gallon Atwood gas-only water heater. Last year during a trip we noticed water coming out on the floor from the water heater area and found the water heater dripping from the bottom, not the fittings. This messed up our trip due to keeping the water heater isolated until we really needed hot water and then we used rags and pans to catch the leaking

water. After a little haggling Atwood did replace the heater. They inspected it and determined it was not a freeze crack but a rupture.

About the seventh week of using the new water heater this year I found water on the floor by the door of the cabinet where it is located. I removed the access panel and saw water dripping from the bottom of the heater. We are dry camping and using the water out of the trailer's freshwater tank. I

had just finished my shower when I noticed the dripping. I kept an eye on the drip until the water heater got to temperature and shut off. After about five minutes the dripping stopped. The air temperature outside went down to 40 degrees last night so my potable water most likely got close to that. Do you think the water heater, even though it has a foam insulation wrap, was sweating due to the cold water going into the hot tank? The first water heater never quit leaking when water pressure was on it.

J. Pauley, via email

A This is an odd one. Many water heater leaks happen at the natural locations for leaks, which are the fittings and their attachment points.

"(Most water heater) failures are due to freeze damage...Atwood recommends the temperature control be set at a mid-point..."

The tank leak with your old heater, caused by a rupture, is rare; most such failures are due to freeze damage. That's why your Atwood tech checked that as a possibility.

You didn't say where you live or how you store your trailer when not in use (Readers: It's important to give us as much information as you can when sending letters to RV Clinic. The more data we have, the better we can help suggest a solution to your problem.) so we can not address climate concerns as part of the cause.

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the same thing that happens with every other water heater and it doesn't cause trouble with other users so I would rule that out as a cause. If you were on city water and didn't use a regulator in the feed line, excess pressure could also have been a partial cause, but that would likely burst water lines well before the steel tank would rupture. Your leaks occurred when dry camping, so that rules out the city water pressure concern.

That you've experienced the same kind of trouble with two consecutive tanks is doubly unusual. The chance that you received two water heaters with the same unusual defect seems highly unlikely so we need to look at other factors with your situation. Our best guess on this is excess water temperature that would cause too much pressure inside the tank. Atwood recommends the temperature control be set at a midpoint between the lowest and highest settings. If you adjusted the control

(continued on pg. 80)

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Need We Say More?

(continued from pg. 77)

up from there, the hotter water could be the culprit. Check the adjustment, per your owners' manual, lower the temperature and see if the leaking stops. You said, "After about five minutes the dripping stopped" and that could be when the temperature lowered a bit and/or some pressure bled off through the rest of the plumbing system. A once-over by your service tech may be the next step you follow beyond the temperature check. — J.J.

INTERMITTENT TRAILER BRAKES TIP

Q In the Oct. 2012 issue, Dave Arrasmith of Warsaw, Mo., talked about having intermittent trailer brakes. I had a similar problem with my 2002 Montana fifth-wheel. After

lengthy troubleshooting I found the problem to be in the brake wiring that goes through the axles from one side to the other. After traveling in excess of 50,000 miles the insulation on the wire inside the axles had been shaved bare in several spots. Depending on how the wire ended up, I either had brakes or did not. The fix was to run new wires on the outside of the axle housing and secure it with plastic wire ties. End of problem. I hope this will help Dave fix his trouble.

Falk Breitmann, Augusta, Ga.

A Thanks for writing. Surprisingly, many trailers have brake wires running through the axle tubes with no provision to prevent chafing through the insulation. This often leads to intermittent short circuits to ground. — K.F.

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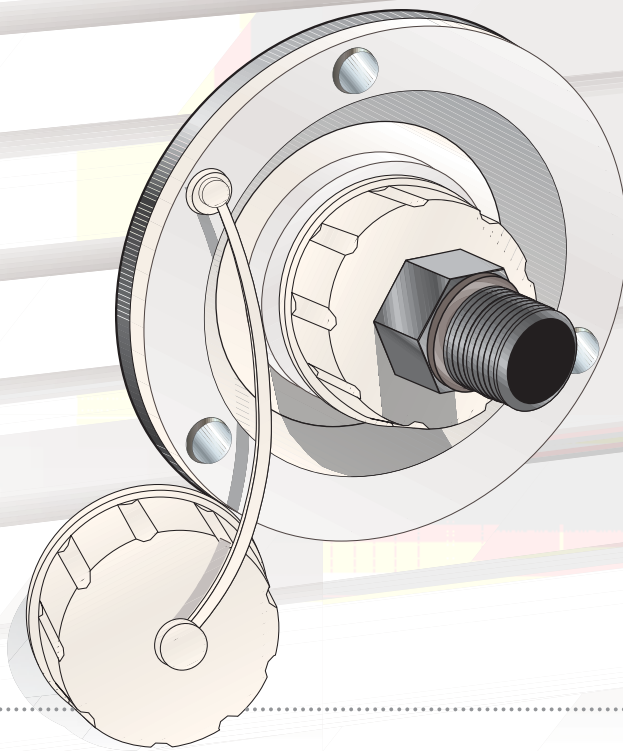
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Purchase a new fill cap and water hose adapter (female hose to 1/2-inch male pipe threads). Next, drill a hole in the center of the fill cap and install the hose adapter. Then drill a series of small holes around the newly built hose adapter – holes are needed to allow air to escape while filling. To make the hose connection easier, I use quick-hose connectors. To fill, remove the RV freshwater fill cap, install the adapter, connect the water hose and turn on the water supply. The tank is full when water comes out of the small holes in the adapter. Close the water supply valve, remove the adapter and store, and install the freshwater fill cap. (Note: The adapter is not left installed to prevent debris and insects from entering through the holes in the adapter.)

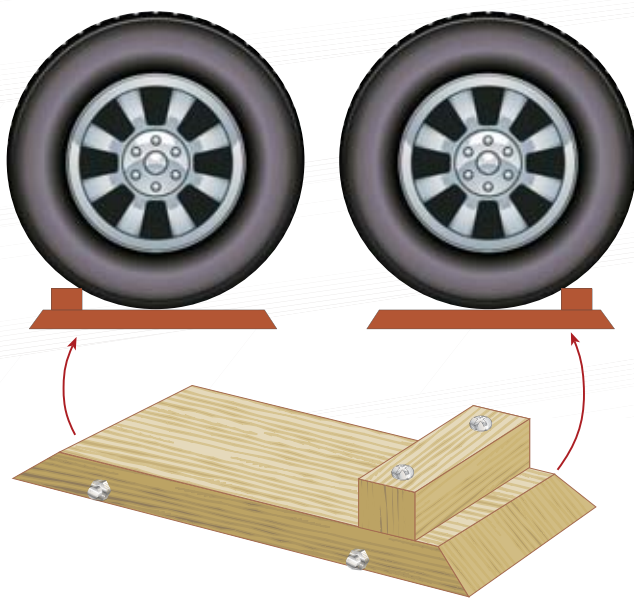
Jim Hinton, North Augusta, S.C.



Leveling Blocks

Most of us level our trailers from side to side by driving on plastic or wood blocks. I found that 2-by-12-inch planks, cut to size, do a very good job. They do not sink into soft soil, nor do they chip from rocky ground. After a time, however, they do weather and split. My solution is to drill from side to side with a long 3/8-inch bit near each end, and insert all thread with a washer and nut on each end. I finish by coating with a wood preservative. To assist in stopping at the proper place, I have bolted 2-by-3-inch stop boards across the end of the two longest boards. After I drive onto the levelers, I can feel when the tires make contact. A single stop board works, but is harder to detect on rough ground.

James W. Baker, Chandler, Ariz.



QUICK FIX

Trailer Door

I was tired of sliding the panel to the side to open the screen door so I improvised. Take a 1- or 2-inch block of scrap plastic and drill a hole into the middle. Cut a slot toward the drilled hole wide enough for the plastic lever to move freely. Drill another hole to accommodate a pivot for the lever. Take out the sliding window from the screen door, cut a slot and mount the block. Now to open the door from the inside, you just lift the lever.

— **Wilhelm Resch, Saint Michael, Minn.**

To send your submission, write to: 10-Minute Tech, 3300 Fernbrook Lane N, Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN 55447 or email: 10minutetech@trailerlife.com. Please include an illustration or photo if applicable. *Trailer Life* will pay you \$35 for original 10-Minute Tech ideas.

Vanishing Towns

The other Colorado River



The Colorado River created the Grand Canyon and keeps Arizona and much of Southern California from being a desert. We think of it as being the quintessential Colorado — unless you live in Texas. Texans have their own version of the Colorado River.

Like the iconic Colorado, the Highland Lakes have dams along their course that generate electric power and create recreational lakes in the Texas Hill Country, northwest of Austin. The largest of the Highland Lakes is Lake Buchanan. Its surface covers 35-square miles — that's in a good year.

A pecking order exists among these man-made lakes regarding the allocation of water, especially when it's scarce. Although it has seniority, being the oldest, Buchanan is at the bottom of the pecking order: The folks who control the Buchanan Dam will not allow a flood during heavy rains, but they will — and do — let the lake drop significantly during periods of drought.

Lakes that are higher on the pecking order, like nearby Lake LBJ, are kept at a fairly constant level by drawing on the “non-constant,” or the sacrificial, lakes like Buchanan.

I am on Lake Buchanan at a resort called Canyon of the Eagles. It's situated on 940 acres and has a 14-mile network of hiking trails. I quickly discovered that a guy who tows his own accommodations makes out pretty good here. He pays 32 bucks a night to hook up and he also has full use of the resort facilities, while a guest at the resort pays 160 bucks a night. The only thing the guest gets that I probably could use is a fresh towel every day.

This region of Texas is in its second year of serious drought. The lake is down as much as 28 feet. A big rain could change that in a couple of days. It will happen; it always does, but not today.

To get an authoritative view of the lake, I went out on a Vanishing Texas River Cruises boat tour. Minutes out from the pier, it became obvious that there are stories about this lake being uncovered as its water recedes. The tops of dead trees were coming out of the lake on both sides of the boat.

“On May 27th, 1937, they closed the gates on the dam and the river began milling around, creeping up the 339,000 tons of concrete that sprawled for two miles across



(Top to bottom) A 120-passenger boat pulls up against the shore of a town called Bluffton. Passengers left the boat on Shaw Island, that is normally under water, and walked to what remains of Bluffton. Boat tour guides give passengers the history of the area.



its path. The lake, however, was filling up quicker than they planned,” boat tour guide Tim Mohan said. “The guys who were clearing the trees from what was to be the lake bottom, using crosscut saws and axes, just couldn't keep ahead of the rising water. So what you see are what they couldn't cut.

“One fellow was even out here in a boat harvesting his crop of pecans. He tied sheets to the lower branches to catch them,” Mohan said.

“These were local guys cutting homegrown trees that had stood for a thousand years ... part of their identity, you might say. They took no pleasure in their work. They were also clearing away their homes and memories. All they knew of their lives was soon to be at the bottom of a lake.”

We approached a sandy flat that would normally be under water. Slowly, the skipper nosed the 120-passenger boat against the beach. Tim dropped a ramp so we could go ashore.

We walked to what remained of a town called Bluffton — just some stone foundations, but it was enough to write an epitaph: The cost of progress can be painfully personal.

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without spending your means.



Fig. 1 Saturn



Fig. 3 Asteroid Gaspra



Fig. 5 Mercury



Fig. 7 Jupiter



Fig. 2 Neptune



Fig. 4 Phases of the Moon



Fig. 6 Mars

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