



FRVTA's Lance Wilson Named to RV/MH Hall of Fame

Lance Wilson is best known for being the Executive Director of the Florida RV Trade Association, a position he's held since 1993. Among his many duties, he's the force behind the extremely popular FRVTA SuperShow, possibly the most successful trade show in the RV Industry. With attendance by RV owners and prospective buyers from all over North America and even Europe and the Middle

East, the show is a "win-win" for both customers and exhibitors.

Lance's RV Industry career started in 1971, when his father-in-law bought Foss RV Sales, an RV sales and storage facility in Florida. The company started selling travel trailers and later added park models. Lance started working part-time doing sales, service and whatever else needed doing. In 1974, he moved to full-time and then became Foss' General Manager in 1976 and president in 1982 when his father-in-law passed away. By 1993, he had become the full-time director of FRVTA, so his wife Joy ran the business until it sold in 1994.

Lance has been involved on the industry's national level, working with RVIA to form the initial RV Caucus in the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. What started as a hosted BBQ in Tallahassee with live music and dancing to thank senators and representatives for their service, grew and kept on growing. It was the forerunner of today's legislative caucus led by Dennis Ross and the RVIA.

Lance has served on the RV Service Training Council since its inception. From 1991 to 1993, he worked on the RVIA certification program with Bruce Hopkins (RVIA VP of Standards), but they eventually determined the program needed to be modified to be profitable. In 2000, they took the idea of learning by satellite to the FRVTA Board of Directors. Jim Carr joined as Education Director and they established the Distance Learning Network. Ultimately, the program transitioned from satellite to a 24/7 archive system. The program, which has been a joint effort within the industry, quickly grew. Today, 248 dealers are enrolled, 800 technicians are working toward certification and RVDA markets the program to members.

Working with FRVTA Legislative Consultant Marc Dunbar and RVIA, RVIA developed an RV-specific franchise bill for RV Dealers

in 2007. This legislation was designed to protect both dealers and manufacturers. The bill covers everything—from warranties to costs to parts and more. Because the program was agreeable to all parties, it passed the first time it was presented, which is virtually unheard of. Now, many other states have adopted the bill.

Among the many pies Lance has his fingers in, he a member and past president of the RV Executives Council. Michigan, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Florida have always been active participants, but other states, such as Oklahoma, California and Texas, have recognized the merits of inclusion and have joined. RVIA, RDVA, RVDA Canada plus several providers also have been longtime members.

Lance has also served on the GO RVing committee since its inception.

Lance's management style has been described as "inclusive leadership." He's frequently sought out by RVIA and its members for advice on how to improve relations between manufacturers and dealers, regardless of their location. He wants to push the people doing the hard work out in front. As he says, "It takes everybody. One person can't do any of this alone." In fact, Lance has this to say, "None of what I do would be possible without the support of my Board of Directors and all the volunteers. And my staff! Dave Kelly (Marketing Director), Lesa Colvin (show director), Mike Ryan (controller) Patty Flanagan (regional shows), Ana Corriea (admin) and Sharlene Nelson (membership)."

Although Lance's achievements in the RV Industry are the reason for his induction into the Hall of Fame, he wants everyone to know that his proudest accomplishment is his family. He and his wife, Joy have been married 48 years and are the proud parents of three sons, Chris, Mark and Travis, and grandparents of six. He knows he wouldn't be where he is without their love and support.

To sum up, Lance said, "Someone once said, 'Do something you love, and you'll never work a day in your life.' I tell people all the time that if I weren't doing this, I'd have to get a real job. The RV Industry is so exciting and vibrant, and the people are just the best.

"We provide fun and RVs are the best way in the world to travel. I'm so lucky to be in this industry. It's awesome."

Lance paused for a moment to recover as his voice began to crack from emotion. He then said, "What an honor it is to be included in the RV/MH Hall of Fame with some of the greatest names, leaders and business people. I am certainly humbled by this honor."



Opening with a glorious Florida winter sky overhead, thousands of eager outdoor enthusiasts sought out their ultimate outdoor adventure at the 34th Annual Florida RV SuperShow. The Show was once again held at the expansive Florida State Fairgrounds on January 16-20 in Tampa. (FULL STORY ON PAGE 3)

STATE OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
Rob Cochran
VICE PRESIDENT
Brian Copley
TREASURER
Tom Wegge
SECRETARY
Joey Schneider
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
Nelda Iacono

REGIONAL OFFICERS

REGION 1
Everett Henkel III - PRESIDENT
Paul Graef - DIRECTOR

REGION 2
Susan Squillace - PRESIDENT
Sean Thompson - DIRECTOR

REGION 3
Deanna Pearce - PRESIDENT
Snow Chamberlain - DIRECTOR

REGION 4
Ken Gifford - PRESIDENT
Traeanne Reynolds - DIRECTOR

REGION 5
John Schuster - PRESIDENT
Lyn Hart - DIRECTOR

REGION 6
Ken Loyd - PRESIDENT
Rob Rothenhausler - DIRECTOR

REGION 7
Dell Sanders - PRESIDENT
George Grimm - DIRECTOR

George Lempenau
CAMPGROUND DIRECTOR

OFFICE STAFF

Lance Wilson
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
David Kelly
MARKETING DIRECTOR
Mike Ryan
CONTROLLER
Lesla Colvin
SHOW DIRECTOR
Patty Flanagan
SHOW COORDINATOR
Ana Correia
ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR
Sharlene Nelson
MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

FLORIDA RV TRADE ASSOCIATION
10510 Gibsonton Drive
Riverview, Florida 33578
(813) 741-0488 • Fax (813) 741-0688

e-mail address: info@frvta.org
website: www.frvta.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...

Have you considered a Clarity Break?

Several years ago, I received a recommendation to read a book called Traction. The book explains how to incorporate the Entrepreneurial Operating System™ or EOS. The EOS system is a simple and structured way to plan business growth, structure meetings and hold accountability in the organization. I implemented the system into my company over a 12-month period and found it to be truly transformational.

Within the EOS system is a simple set of tools that is used to move your company forward and keep it on track. One of those tools I use regularly, and I have found to be extremely useful, is called a Clarity Break. I would recommend the complete EOS system for anyone, but if you were to only have one takeaway, this would be the one to use.

If you're like most small business owners and leaders, you are constantly juggling priorities. Finding time and balance for your company, employees and family can be a constant challenge. This is where a clarity break can help. A clarity break is a regularly scheduled appointment on your calendar with yourself. You define what regular is—a half hour daily, two hours weekly, a half day monthly, etc. It's up to you. The doing of it is what matters.

Next, find a place to meet with yourself. It can be a quiet restaurant, a nearby park or a library. Personally, I like the back porch at my home, but it can be anywhere you feel comfortable and can have a scheduled time without interruption.

So, what do you do on this clarity break? Start with a blank pad of paper and pen. Avoid using technology as it tends to become a distraction. We are tempted to answer one email or surf the web for that one project. Don't do it. Put your phone away and free your mind to search for priorities and solutions. Stare at your blank pad and your mind will help you. Think about your business, your family, your health and your priorities. The important things will surface when you have given a dedicated time and space for them. Try it. You'll be amazed.

If you'd like to learn more about the EOS system, grab a copy of Traction by Gino Wickman. You can also reach out to me at rob.cochranrv@gmail.com if you'd like to discuss how I implemented the program into my company. I'd be happy to share with you!

Until next time...

ROB COCHRAN
FRVTA State President





34TH ANNUAL RV SUPERSHOW DRIVES CROWDS SEEKING HOW TO ROLL

RVers from throughout the nation waited patiently in long lines for a chance to see what the nation's largest RV Show has to offer. As a result, a new attendance record was achieved with 74,286 attendees over the show's five-day-run. This is 1225 more than last year's attendance record of 73,061, which topped the previous year by more than 2,500.

"Opening day's lines were so long it took awhile to get all patrons in the gate," exclaimed longtime FRVTA Marketing Director Dave Kelly. "In fact, for much of the first few days it was shoulder-to-shoulder throughout the grounds."

FRVTA Executive Director Lance Wilson said inclement weather might have affected turnout, particularly over the weekend. "We had a wind advisory with 30-to-40 miles-per-hour gusts on Saturday and then it was unseasonable cold on Sunday."

Living up to its reputation as the nation's largest RV Show covering 26 acres with 1.2 million square feet of display space, most of the nation's RV Industry was represented with everything from multi-million dollar Class A Diesel pushers, a huge variety of Class B vans, park models and even small folding campers. Over 1500 RVs were eventually tallied as being there, so something for everyone!

The mega-RV event opened to industry insiders during Industry Day on Tuesday, January 15. FRVTA staff welcomed all industry-based attendees with free coffee and donuts in the morning with a variety of free sandwiches at lunch.

"With the demise of the RV Industry Association's (RVIA) National RV Show in Louisville, this was a great opportunity for industry members to see all the new products RV Manufacturers are offering for 2019," Dave said.

Dave explained that this year's theme of "This is How We Roll" shows how consumers are able to "roll" down the road in the safety and comfort of their RV seeing and experiencing new adventures along the way. If you don't like your view or neighbors, just roll down the road!

Additionally, Dave exclaimed that if the RV Industry offered it, it was at the RV SuperShow. He detailed that more booth vendors were represented this year than ever before ranging from high-end campground resorts, to insurance providers and other vendors offering needed outdoor-camping accoutrements.

"We sold out of both manufacturer and vendor space by fall," explained FRVTA Show Director Lesa Colvin. "We started

a waiting list, but with over 450 confirmed vendors unfortunately many did not make it this season."

To accommodate the crush of visitors to the show, the FRVTA once again offered its two-day pass so attendees could see everything at no additional cost. A free shuttle service within the SuperShow carried visitors from exhibit to exhibit so nothing was missed.

New this year was the institution of an interactive show map that allowed exhibitors to highlight their location in the show and then send that information to prospective clients. This interactive map also was available on the new FRVTA app so attendees could use the map on their mobile devices while at the show.

Using the "I Am Here" feature of the map, exhibitors spotlighted their location and then forwarded it to attendees. Attendees were also able to search the map by company name or product category.

"We felt this made attending the SuperShow much easier for those who came shopping for a specific product, RV category or a certain company," Lesa said. "We wanted exhibitors to download the app and get familiar with the new map so they could generate more sales leads."

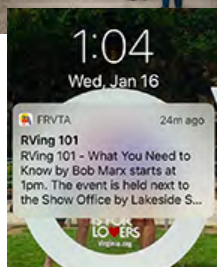
"The economy is humming along, fuel prices are at historic lows and Baby Boomers are retiring in greater numbers," detailed Lance, a newly nominated inductee to the RV/MH Heritage Foundation Hall of Fame. "All this has combined to provide the RV Industry with a golden opportunity to attract these folks.

"We believe the strength the RV Industry showed throughout 2018 bodes well for the RV SuperShow and the industry as a whole going into 2019," Lance continued. "There's no question about it. Everything's moving in the right direction. There's a lot of positivity out there and the SuperShow certainly is a bellwether for the national RV Industry."

To attract the massive crowds for this year's event, Dave expanded the use of online social marketing with emails, daily blogs, photos and show updates. Of course, he combined online marketing with traditional media, such as television, radio and print, to make sure all potential consumers were aware of the RV SuperShow.

Of course, a favorite of all visitors to the SuperShow is the free entertainment—from clowns and unicycle riders to barbershop quartets and bagpipe bands—SuperShow had it all!

Attendees were also treated to loads of new product offerings from a variety of manufacturers, including Bigfoot RV and nuCamp RV, both new to the RV SuperShow.



continued on page 4

FLORIDA RV SUPERSHOW

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Weekend Warrior returned to the RV SuperShow with its new SuperLite models that offer their exclusive WXL custom chassis and StarGlazer moon roof. Additionally, the company displayed their new flagship unit the JJ3300 with a triple axle that has an over 6000-pound cargo capacity.

High-end manufacturer Foretravel Motorcoach teamed with Spartan Motors to introduce the new Iron Colt, a 37-foot Class A diesel targeting new RVers and those seeking to downsize. The new unit is built on Spartan's K2 450 chassis for stability and maneuverability. Although smaller in length, Foretravel increased the unit's horsepower via a Cummins 450 horsepower diesel engine for towing capabilities.

Likewise, Newmar introduced its latest entry in the "smaller" diesel category with the New Aire. Measuring 33 feet long, the New Aire uses Comfort Drive adaptive steering technology to provide a SUV-like driving experience. Three floor plans are available all with a 360 horsepower Cummins diesel engine. New Aire features three slideouts with a full-wall slide on the door side. LED lighting is throughout.

Nexus RV introduced its new Bentley Diamond 40-foot Class A luxury diesel coach. This unit received considerable interest at the recent Elkhart RV Dealer Open House. And it's no wonder—the unit is built on a Spartan K1 360 chassis that features the Spartan Safe Haul chassis and has a Cummins 360 HP engine with a 10,000 pound towing capacity.

Winnebago Industries outdid other manufacturers, however, debuting four new lines as well as innovative RVs designed to reach the handicapped market. The four new lines featured were the Minnie Drop 210RBS travel trailer, the Micro Minnie fifth wheel, and the Vita and Adventurer motorhomes.

The Minnie Drop 210RBS travel trailer keeps a rounded, retro shape but offers customers a second axle to increase holding tank capacity for longer, off-road stays. The Micro Minnie Fifth Wheel takes many of the features found in the Micro Minnie trailer and puts them into a fifth wheel that can be towed by a mid-size truck. The new Vita is a compact Class C diesel built on the Mercedes Benz Sprinter chassis and is a "Best of Show" winner from the Elkhart Open House. The all-new Adventurer

is a gas powered Class A motorhome built with the company's SuperStructure.

Finally, Winnebago unveiled a series of customized RVs enhanced to be accessible by disabled individuals and families. Jamie Sorenson, Winnebago's director of specialty vehicles and advanced technology, says the customization process can take anywhere from six to nine months and expects these RVs to be available within the next six months. Much of the customization process is making sure areas within the RV are at least 32 inches wide, which is enough for wheelchairs to easily maneuver within the unit.

For those travelers seeking a place to use their new RV, Myriad Luxury Motorcoach Resort is located in northwest Cape Coral on Florida's southwest coast. Myriad is being developed as an exclusive waterfront resort that offers a variety of onsite services including a pet concierge, grocery and dry cleaning delivery. The 90-acre freshwater lake only allows electric boats, paddle boarding, kayaking and fishing. Construction is now underway and is expected to open soon.

To keep the public up-to-date on these and other ever-changing RV trends and issues, the RV SuperShow presented a variety of informational seminars, including National RV Writer Bob Marx who hosted "RVing 101" and "Full Time & Extended RV Travel." Additional seminars included Nomadic Living, Weight and Tire Issues and Generator Maintenance—all important for life on the road.

Besides all the display coaches, about 850 RVers and their units attended the Super Rally held at the fairgrounds in conjunction with the show. Celebrating its 32nd year, rally attendees were treated to free show attendance every day, free coffee and donuts each morning, free seminars

and a variety of entertainment options at night.

What new products, designs and comforts will be offered in the coming years? Mark your calendars now to attend the 35th Annual RV SuperShow, returning to Tampa's Florida State Fairgrounds, with Industry Day set for Tuesday, January 14 and public days running January 15 to 19, 2020.

For more information, contact the FRVTA State Office at (813) 741-0488 or visit our website www.frvta.org.



2018-19 FRVTA SHOW SCHEDULE



WEST PALM BEACH RV SHOW

February 21-24 • South Florida Fairgrounds

OCALA RV SHOW

February 28-March 3 • Florida Horse Park

RV SUPERSAVER SHOW

April 12-14 • CenturyLink-Lee Sports Complex

TAMPA BAY SUMMER RV SHOW

June 6-9 • Florida State Fairgrounds



Hugelmeyer Highlights '18, Goals for New Year

Editor's Note: The following is a letter penned by RV Industry Association President (RVIA) Frank Hugelmeyer offering a review of 2018 and also a look ahead for the coming year.

Once again, it is that time of year when we take a step back and personally reflect. The winter holiday is also a time

when dynamic organizations take stock of the year gone by and reset expectations that will kick-start fresh initiatives for the New Year.

For us at the RV Industry Association, 2018 has been a profound year of both change and progress. We worked closely with our member community and stakeholders to tackle some of the most pressing issues facing our industry, including improving the consumer experience and expanding our target markets. In doing so, we're delivering more strongly upon our mission to "promote and protect the RV industry and our members."

This year, we completed several major strategic initiatives and achieved new milestones for our members. Let's take a moment to review.

In 2018, we saw the [government recognize outdoor recreation](#) as an undeniably important economic sector for the very first time, accounting for an impressive 2.2% of the U.S. GDP. The RV community also gained an important voice on the new Outdoor Recreation Advisory Committee within the Department of the Interior that strives to boost access to our nation's public lands and increase outdoor tourism in order to connect more Americans to the great outdoors. Both occurrences prove the growing presence and clout of the RV industry at a federal level.

Meanwhile, the association team modernized our entire digital infrastructure by implementing new CRM and CMS platforms, refreshing RV Industry Association's

branding and updating all of our web content; established a new trade show concept with more relevant and exciting offerings tailored to our members; began to actively address repair event cycle times and technical education through the conceptualization and funding of the RV Technical Institute; and maintained the industry's valued self-regulation and the drive towards campground modernization. Last, but certainly not least, Go RVing has had its best year to date and enjoyed a record 16 million views of its "Unexpected" video series.

For 2019, we are looking to build upon our 2018 investments. As the year kicks off, we will launch the RV Technical Institute, including a comprehensive update of all our technical training curricula, and we will expand our fleet of regional technical training partners. We will also unveil [RVX: The RV Experience](#) to RV dealers and our end



consumers by highlighting the best-selling and most innovative RVs. RVX will deliver must see dealer-focused educational tools and seminars, magnify the importance of technical service and recognize outstanding

industry achievement. Concurrently, and for the first time ever, [Go RVing](#) will kick off our nation's RV camping season by introducing targeted campaigns that will generate excitement across nine ready-to-buy consumer market segments. We also intend to continue strengthening our political advocacy at the federal and state levels.

Amid all of this activity and development, the RV Industry Association's vision is unwavering and remains the same – "To be the proactive leader in promoting the health, growth and expansion of the RV Industry." Our member-first approach and firm dedication to building greater member value and programming has brought us to this point, and there is no reason to doubt that it will sustain us into 2019 and well beyond.

Thank you all for being a valued member as we go on this journey and for your steadfast support of the RV Industry Association.

Report by Global Market Insights: RV Market Worth \$56.5 Billion By 2024

The Motorhomes segment is estimated to account for around 60 percent of the recreation vehicle market revenue over the forecast period owing to the benefits offered including enhanced interior space such as beds, kitchen, sinks and bathroom. Lower interest rates along with easier piloting and camping capabilities supports product growth till 2024.

Diesel RVs accounted for more than \$12 billion in 2017 and will grow considerably over the forecast timeframe due to their higher fuel efficiency.

Gasoline RVs showed a significant growth rate of more than 7 percent CAGR over the study timeframe owing to multiple benefits offered including easier fuel availability, lower maintenance and acquisition cost. Lower emissions from gasoline RVs along with improved performance in high altitude and cold weather conditions, coupled with superior

power and speed capabilities provide a positive growth outlook.

The towable RVs segment will capture the maximum volume of around 74 percent till 2024. This dominance is attributed to easier maintenance and operations. The availability of several models at varied price ranges coupled with lower depreciation compared to motorized RVs further strengthens this segment dominance.

North America and Europe contributed to around 80 percent of the global RV market. High growth of RVs in these regions can be attributed to high average disposable income that allows consumers to invest in luxurious RVs. Growing consumer interest in touring and other recreational activities such as camping, sight-seeing, new destination exploration, etc. are expected to present favorable growth prospects.—RV Pro



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE • by Marc Dunbar, Legislative Consultant

Florida Legislature Committee Assignments

The legislative session began in earnest with a full committee meeting schedule the week of the 2019 inauguration. These first few weeks help familiarize members with the subject matters they will be overseeing throughout the course of the session.

Panhandle legislators maintain their hold on key leadership positions related to transportation in the House. Jay Trumbull is serving as chair of the Transportation and Tourism Appropriations committee and Brad Drake as chair to the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee.

Full committees are as follows:

Transportation and Tourism Appropriations

- Jay Trumbull (*chair*)
- Brad Drake (*vice chair*)
- Barbara Watson (*ranking member*)
- Bobby Dubose
- Elizabeth Fetterhoff
- Joe Geller
- Matt Wilhite
- Blaise Ingoglia
- Tom Leek
- Amber Mariano
- Anthony Rodriguez
- David Smith
- Matt Wilhite

The House transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee

- Brad Drake (Chair)
- Colleen Burton (vice chair)
- Geri Thompson (ranking member)
- Thad Altman
- Mike Caruso
- Dianne Hart
- Adam Hattersley
- Stan McClain
- Toby Overdorf
- Tina Polsky
- Bobby Payne
- Mel Ponder
- Rick Roth
- Charlie Stone

In the Senate, committees were restructured a bit. The Committee on Transportation has been expanded to include all matters of security and renamed the Committee on Infrastructure and Security. Domestic security matters previously considered by Military and Veterans Affairs will now fall under the purview of this committee, which will be chaired by Tom Lee.

The committee consists of the following senators:

- Tom Lee (*chair*)
- Keith Perry (*vice chair*)
- Aaron Bean
- Annette Taddeo
- Ed Hooper
- Travis Hutson
- Linda Stewart
- Janet Cruz

The Senate Transportation Committee has some familiar faces for the industry.

They include the following:

- Travis Hutson (*chair*)
- Perry Thurston, Jr.
- Jeff Brandes
- Vic Torres
- Keith Perry
- Wilton Simpson
- Annette Taddeo



With three current members of the Florida House joining the DeSantis administration, special elections will be scattered around the state in 2019. Because these special elections set the path to leadership roles, it is important to continue to support the FRVTA PAC. Many of those whom we have supported early on ascended into leadership positions and have been our champions. It is important to maintain this practice for the leaders of tomorrow.



TRAINING NEWS • by Jim Carr, Training Director

Director Sees RVTI as “Signature Model”

Editors Note: This is a reprint of a RVBusiness interview with the new Executive Director of the RV Technical Institute in Elkhart, Indiana. We're running this in the hope that you'll get excited about this new initiative to solve the industry's chronic shortage of qualified technicians.

Set to officially take the helm 10 days from now, incoming RV Technical Institute (RVTI) Executive Director Curt Hemmeler said he envisions a time when the operation is held in the same regard as the Go RVing campaign and seen as the “signature model” for other industries to follow.

Hemmeler will play a key role in establishing RVTI's new headquarters and training facility in Elkhart, Ind. — an announcement of an exact location is said to be imminent by the RV Industry Association (RVIA) — as well as managing and executing RVTI's strategic business plan, which includes recruiting and training RV service technicians.

“I probably won't say this as well as it can be said, but I am truly very excited about being a part of something that, I believe, at its core is kind of a heartbeat of America. It's the idea of celebration of retirement, and the idea of mobilization and not being tied to one place, especially with the young folks that we're seeing so much of lately,” Hemmeler said. “There's just an excitement to it that I can't even really put into words. I don't know what it is, but it just gets me going.

“That comes straight from the heart,” he added. “I'm just excited to be a part of that. I have not been this excited about something for as long as I can remember. It's almost to the point of ‘us leaving a legacy’ — just being part of something and leaving a legacy with the RV world. It's a great opportunity. I cannot compliment enough the RV world for recognizing that there is a shortage of technicians and wanting to improve the customer experience. The exciting part is the RV Technical Institute could become a signature model of how business and education must partner to help solve the national skills gap that exists.”

Hemmeler brings 20 years of professional experience in technical education and training to RVTI. His most recent position was vice president, operations and strategy for WyoTech, a division of Zenith Education that trains auto and diesel technicians. In that position he led

a team of more than 300 people with a \$43 million P&L across three locations. His responsibilities included sales, marketing, fundraising and community partnerships.

A lifelong Columbus, Ohio, resident who, with his wife Tracey, has three adult children and one grandchild, Hemmeler recently took time for an interview with RVBUSINESS.com. What follows is an edited transcript of that interview.

RVB: You're entering the position with much of the development work well underway. Have you been able to make an assessment of the work thus far?

Curt: Absolutely, I have. Everything done so far has been very thought out, very systematic.

Ironically, during my last appointment with WyoTech I

created what they created (a development plan using a similar approach). I told Frank (Hugelmeyer, RVIA president), ‘I'm going to show you what I did and I'm going to show you what you guys did. If you didn't know any better you could just take off the title of the plan and put a different name in it, because it's pretty much exactly the same.’

It's the right formula; it's the right process. And, as far as timelines, I think they're fair. It's aggressive, but at the same time it's achievable. It's very thought out and it's accurate. It's what we need to do. So I couldn't agree more.

RVB: It could be said the overarching mission for the RV Tech Institute is to improve the consumer experience. What might be some specific ways you think the Tech Institute can accomplish that?

Curt: First and foremost, it is about putting together a curriculum — which I know they have already started on and have quite a bit done — and part of the curriculum is certifying these technicians so that the consumer can have the confidence that, when they go into a dealership for repair of their vehicles, they're going to have a quality experience. This, in turn, should result in repeat customers, and happy customers telling other happy customers. But it starts with a good, strong curriculum.

The other part of that is you then have to deliver that training and certification. And the way to do that is taking this curriculum, putting it ‘in a box’ and delivering it out to regional partners at the state association level, at the dealership level, at the parks level, so that they can implement this training easily and locally.

This benefits us for recruiting new technicians who don't want to relocate, or who don't mind coming to Elkhart for some initial training but then want to return



TRAINING NEWS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

back home to where their families are to work at their local dealerships.

Having a central location in Elkhart is at the heart of everything. You're surrounded by all of the subject matter experts right there locally.

In my experiences on the education side, you're pulling in resources from all over the country, whereas in this situation all your experts are right there in a pretty localized geographical area, which just makes curriculum design and curriculum mastering much easier.

RVB: *You've referred to a 'national skills gap' a few times now when talking about potential RV technicians you envision recruiting. Could you elaborate on that?*

Curt: Over the last decade or two, we've done a tremendous job of telling our kids, 'Hey, the only way you can succeed in this world is to go to a four-year college and get a degree.'

The problem is not everyone is cut out for college, and we've lost so many of these kids because of that. The result is there aren't enough people trained and ready for the number of available jobs — like RV technicians — and that gap has continued to widen.

RVB: *So the recruiting challenge, as you see it then, is to convince these people that they could enjoy a rewarding career as an RV service technician?*

Curt: Exactly ... and that they have advancement opportunities within the industry. First it's 'How do I become a technician?' Then it's 'How do I become a master tech? How do I move to being a mobile tech? How do I move into shop manager? How do I go into sales?' Though it's not structured yet, I think that is definitely an initiative of the RV Tech Institute, in developing a career path and reducing turnover once you have a technician.

RVB: *How do you get that message in front of these people? I ask this only half-jokingly, but will we see daytime TV commercials touting the benefits of being an RV service technician?*

Curt: Nothing is off the table, but it would be premature for me to say too much about it because, obviously, I have not even officially started yet. But, and I'm just going off my own research and some stuff that they've provided me already, I would say that going on TV is not cheap, and it's not necessarily the most effective way anymore because everybody streams what they watch. Still, I would say there's nothing off the table at all.

TV commercials are one way of attracting people, but it could also be something as simple as just some boots on the ground grassroots marketing. These are the things

that I hope to bring to the table that might be some fresh ideas.

I'll give you one example I noticed that would be very simple and is happening every day but not being utilized yet. When you go down the freeway anywhere around Indiana — heck, anywhere in the country for that matter — you see these large fifth-wheels and travel trailers almost always being towed by a very nice, beautiful dually or a nice full-size F-150 or Silverado. I'm talking about the RVs being delivered from the manufacturers to dealerships and customers across the country.

Millions of people are seeing them and nowhere on them does it have a sign that says something to the essence of, 'Another dream being fulfilled. How would you like to work in this industry?' — or something like that anyway. What you've got are mobilized bulletin

boards all over the country; it's a simple wrap or even a banner that you put on the unit itself. It can also be a protective piece, if you may. But that's just one example.

Another one is going into the high schools, and this is where I believe the attraction comes in for me. I have a lot of experience

in creating student acquisition pathways — getting them excited about being a part of the RV industry.

I read something the other day that 38% of the RV sales are going to Millennials now. I mean, that's the high school population. That's when they're excited about getting them. That would be a pathway.

The other is the Internet and creating a website that really is the heartbeat of everything that you do: how you deliver your curriculum, how you deliver your marketing. In my experiences that has probably been the biggest pioneering piece. No matter their age, race, ethnicity — it doesn't matter — the first thing people do is go to the Internet to research things. So, you've got to have that premier website, and from that you can drive everything.

What also would be nice is perhaps combining with the Go RVing campaign. Just the other day I was watching one about using RVs for extreme cycling — once again, attracting the youth. Maybe we could just add the technician piece in there? It could be a very easy overlay that you'd start seeing popping up on some of the commercials on the website. Instead just actually 'living the dream' you add the technician piece so it's 'live the dream, work the dream.'

RVB: *You sound eager to get going on some of these.*

Curt: Ask me a year from now and hopefully I'll have some of these implemented and we'll be well on our way.—RVBusiness



NEW MEMBERS

MOBILE HOMES USA

David Boshart
19561 S Tamiami Trl
Fort Myers, FL 33908-4808
PH: 239-878-3574
www.mobilehomesusa.org
davidhboshart@gmail.com
Dealer, Region 1

ROLLICK INC

Mike Timmons
13215 Bee Cave Pkwy, Ste A220
Austin, TX 78738-0062
PH: 512-402-8118
Toll Free: 888-204-8209
www.gorollick.com • mike@rollick.10
Supplier, Region 10

If you have a story or item of interest concerning your business that you would like to share with the FRVTA membership, please contact Dave Kelly at davekelly@frvta.org in the State Office.

Florida Dealer Alan Shapiro Passes



Alan and his wife, Judy in front of their recently opened new sales facility at Alliance Coach.

Alan Shapiro, President and cofounder with Judy Shapiro of Alliance Coach Inc. in Wildwood, recently passed away. He is survived by his wife Judy, daughter Rebecca, and sons James, Robert and Timmy.

Alan and Judy opened Alliance Coach in 2009 as an RV service center. The Shapiros' efforts grew Alliance Coach into one of the Top 50 RV sales and service centers in North America for the last five consecutive years.

Alan took great pleasure in starting a new company, working hard and watching it grow. He placed immense value on building relationships with clientele and ensuring his employees enjoyed their workplace.

The FRVTA Board of Directors, membership and staff express our deepest condolences to his family at this time.

FRVTA Region 6 Donates to Firefighter Cause



After hearing from two representatives with "Hoods For Heroes" at its board meeting this week, members of FRVTA Region 6 voted to donate \$1 for each ticket sold at the upcoming Jacksonville RV MegaShow to the nonprofit group.

The donation would be capped at \$10,000. Hoods For Heroes is an Orange Park-based organization that raises money to provide protective hood gear for firefighters.

The FRVTA's financial commitment represents the first time the group has diverted a portion of its show admission to a nonprofit cause. Last year, the RV MegaShow broke the 10,000-guest attendance record.

Hoods For Heroes co-founders Jeff Rountree and Bill Hamilton founded the cause a few years ago and established a nonprofit agency in July of this year to raise funds to purchase the firefighter hoods.—news release

MEETING DATES



Region 1 • NO MEETING

*Region 2 • February 13 • PGA National Resort • Members Club, 400 Ave. of the Champions
Palm Beach Gardens*

Region 3 • February 12 • Rusty Pelican • 2425 North Rocky Pointe Drive • Tampa

Region 4 • February 6 • Tony Roma's • 8560 International Dr • Orlando

Region 5 • February 20 • Tuscany Italian Bistro • 36178 Emerald Parkway • Destin

Region 6 • February 19 • Copeland's of New Orleans • 4310 Southside Boulevard • Jacksonville

Region 7 • February 26 • Braised Onion • 754 NE 25th Ave • Ocala

ALL MEETINGS: Cocktails 6:30 PM • Dinner 7:00 PM