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GE Capital

November 2013

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Manufacturers Debut New Models

A toy hauler with ramp patio, a German Class B motorhome looking for a U.S. partner, and an industrialstrength towable built especially for rugged, off-road camping are new stars on the scene.

13 Price/Value Is Key to Selling RVs, Say Dealers What's the most important thing RV manufacturers can do to help their dealers sell units? Answer – give them products with a good price/value point, according to results from RVDA's annual Dealer Satisfaction Index.

14 GE Capital's Hyland: Positive Trends Bode Well for 2014 RV Market

RV Group president Tim Hyland forecasts a strong 2014 selling season and explains why the RV industry is part of the economic force known as the middle market.

20 Quality Circle Award Recipients

Eighteen manufacturers will receive RVDA's Quality Circle Award this year for their commitment to product excellence and dealer satisfaction. The ceremony will take place just prior to the opening of the National RV Trade Show in Louisville.

23 Jim Shields Tapped for RVDA's Highest Honor California dealer Jim Shields of Pan Pacific RV Centers has received the 2013 James B. Summers Award. In addition to serving as RVDA chairman, Shields was instrumental in unifying his state's RV dealers, leading to the creation of CalRVDA.

24 Changing it Up with Next Year's Convention With a later date – the week of November 9 – and an exciting new locale on The Strip – Bally's and Bally's Paris – there are no more excuses not to bring your staff to next year's convention!

<image><image><image><image>

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RVDA Adjusts Bylaws with an Eye on the Future

By Phil Ingrassia, CAE, president

ast year, several RVDA dealer members approached the board of directors to review the qualifications required to serve on RVDA's board of delegates (see page 8).

As background, the board of delegates serves as a critical link between members, the board of directors, and staff. Delegates participate in RVDA standing committees and task forces, and provide leadership within their states. Most delegates are active in their state and local associations in addition to the national RVDA.

Many initiatives RVDA takes on begin with the board of delegates, so it's extremely important that the body includes representation from all the different types of dealerships that make up the association's membership.

Delegates are elected by dealers in their state and also include at-large members (elected by the delegates themselves) and participating past chairmen of the RVDA Board of Directors. Since inception, membership on the board of delegates has been restricted to owners and officers of regular dealership members in accordance with RVDA's bylaws.

As dealership management practices evolve, many dealers argued that the "owner/officer" qualification is not sustainable if the association is to have a vibrant board of delegates. So the board of directors formed a bylaws task force that agreed a bylaws change could assist in the leadership of the association and widen the talent pool available to RVDA. The bylaws task force met in May and recommended the following change in the bylaws:

ARTICLE VI Board of Delegates SECTION 6. Qualification.

No person shall be eligible to be a Delegate (other than the President of RVDA) unless he or she is a representative of a Regular Member of the Association.

The change removed the requirement that a delegate must be an officer of the dealership. The board of directors approved the motion in June, and the membership approved the bylaws at the RVDA Annual Meeting last month during the convention.

The bylaws amendment only impacts the board of delegates and doesn't affect the requirement that officers serving on the board of directors must be owners or officers of regular dealer members. Dealer owners and officers will continue to have the responsibility for running RVDA.

The bottom line is that the bylaws change provides RVDA with the authority to give some up and coming managers – as designated by the dealer owner – the opportunity to participate in the board of delegates, contribute to the association, and grow as leaders.

Thanks for your support.

Phil

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The Convention Was in October, but Spring Was in the Air

By Jeff Hirsch, chairman



hen I returned from this year's convention, something had changed in New Hampshire – Fall was arriving, and our oaks and maples are awash in oranges and yellows. The leaves are drifting to earth, but I'm already anxiously anticipating Spring's rejuvenation.

In a way, everyone who attended the convention was transforming themselves for Spring by participating in all of the educational activities. I don't know where else we can get, in a week's time, the same type of in-depth training that helps ready us for Spring.

While there, I asked attendees about their convention experiences. Although I did get one negative response about a proprietary workshop presenter, all the rest were very positive. Many of you made a point to compliment our keynote speakers, author and talk show host Ross Shafer and KOA CEO Jim Rogers. I, too, felt both had outstanding messages. I've given a lot of thought to Rogers' comments about how dealers should develop closer partnerships with their local KOA campgrounds – talk about a captive audience of potential RV customers. I think with a little effort we could identify synergies for mutual benefit.

I also got a lot of great feedback about the Vendor Training +Plus Program. Thanks to Blue Ox, IDS and Preserve (formerly NCompass) for helping champion this new program. I'd like to share my vision for VTP. Some of you have told me that your managers don't have the educational or managerial experience to be department heads. In fact, most of us probably have some really good people who just never got the tools necessary to lead others. This is an area in which VTP could play a bigger role. With even greater vendor involvement and support, dealers would be encouraged to bring more employees, and VTP could become one of the best reasons of all to attend the 2014 convention.

I believe our convention would be even more valuable to our expo vendors if they could talk with more of our top-level employees who make buying decisions. VTP will be on the board's agenda in Louisville, and we'll be exploring ways to grow it. Based on its fledgling success, I believe we'll be able to attract more industry stakeholders who'll want to participate.

And with the exciting news that next year's convention will move to Bally's on The Strip, and that the event will take place later in the year (Nov. 9-12), the 2014 convention is already guaranteed to be even better.

Healthy marketplace

In last month's column I described the concept of the efficient frontier and how dealers should try to position themselves closer to it. The general idea is to provide more value to the customer at a given cost. What I didn't discuss is what a healthy marketplace looks like.

In healthy industries, players aren't attempting to reach the same point along the efficient frontier. They have different models, and each is providing a different cost/value proposition. If too many players adopt the same model and strive for the same position, none provide much added value to the customer, who could choose any of them and be equally served.

However, if customers have the choice between low value at a low cost or high value at a high cost, then there's real choice – competitors are providing unique value propositions, and it's up to customers to decide which model they prefer. This differentiation is healthy.

This theory applies to RV dealers and manufacturers alike. A healthy marketplace needs a number of manufacturers providing different cost/value propositions, both high cost/high value and low cost/low value. When manufacturers partner with dealers who have the same business model, then differentiation is maintained and value is provided to the marketplace.

But if manufacturers all adopt the same business model – either by copying each other, through consolidation, or not choosing appropriate dealer partners – then dealers are limited in their own business models. In turn, customers will be limited in their choices, and our industry will be an unhealthy marketplace.

In closing, I was proud to see two dear friends honored during the convention for their many contributions. No one more deserves to receive the James B. Summers award for lifetime achievement than Jim Shields, this year's recipient. And how fitting to honor former RVDA president Mike Molino, who dedicated his career to education, by renaming the RV Learning Center the Mike Molino RV Learning Center.



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Towable RV Inventories Shrink, Motorhome Inventories Expand

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Inventory

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By Thomas Walworth, Statistical Surveys/The Thrive Group

V dealers' towable RV inventories shrank in July while motorhome inventories expanded, according to market research firm Statistical Surveys/The Thrive Group.

U.S. dealers in July sold 24,551 towable RVs to consumers and had 21,400 units shipped to them from manufacturers, yielding an inventory index of 114.7. Many industry observers believe dealers now order fewer units during the summer as they prepare to place large orders during the manufacturer open houses in September.

U.S. dealers retailed 2,750 motorhomes in July and had 3,300 units shipped to them from the factories that month, placing the inventory index at 83.3.

RV dealers' towable inventories shrank this past July; they grew during July 2012 but at a relatively slow rate. In July 2012, dealers retailed 19,132 units and received 20,700 units from the factories, yielding an inventory index of 92.4.

In July 2012, motorhome inventories

shrank - 2,042 units were retailed and 2,000 were shipped wholesale, yielding an inventory index of 102.1.

Based in Grand Rapids, MI, Statistical Surveys/The Thrive Group tracks RV retail sales for the RV industry. For more information, contact Tom Walworth at (616) 281-9898. The Thrive Group is a partnership between Statistical Surveys and Spader Business Management.

100 When the RV Index is below 80 100, there's an expansion of 60 inventories. index is above MOTORHOMES 100, there's 40 shrinkage. If APR MAY JUN MAR the industry sold a unit at 120 retail for every unit delivered

120





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Manufacturers Debut New Models

By Jeff Kurowski

Here are some of the new products that have made recent appearances. As dealers head to the National RV Trade Show, they can expect to see an array of new RVs aimed at making it even more fun for families to enjoy the outdoors together.

Lance Camper Manufacturing Corp. of

Lancaster, CA, a company which, for years, built only truck campers, expanded into the travel trailer and fifth wheel markets a few years ago. The company has introduced a toy hauler that's the first of a number of models it will introduce later in 2014, according to Norm Jacobson, marketing manager.

The Lance toy hauler features an all-new proprietary 'Z'-frame chassis, radius frameless windows, rear awning and front molded aerodynamic nose cap.

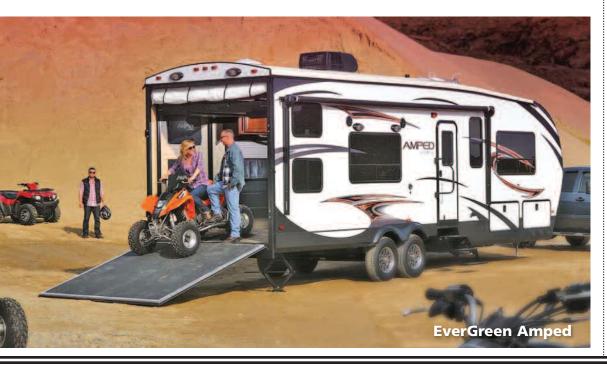
EverGreen Recreational Vehicles, Middlebury, IN, has



a 2014 Amped toy hauler with a "ramp patio option" – a 3,000-pound-rated ramp for loading and unloading motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles and other "toys" that doubles as the floor for a party deck.

Amped toy haulers, available in floor plans ranging from 22 to 32 feet in length, feature an arched, radius roof, and "Z-frame technology" that allows more storage space. With no wheel wells, there's space to store up to four ATVs and a 175-gallon water tank.

Other EverGreen units include the 2014 Bay Hill highprofile fifth wheel and the 2014 Alfa Gold fifth wheel built by EverGreen's Lifestyle Luxury RV division. The Bay Hill was created for RV enthusiasts wanting a luxury fifth wheel at an affordable price. Construction features include aluminum framed walls around all doors, windows and baggage door openings, vacuum laminated walls and floor, and Lippert Components' Level Up six-point automatic leveling system as a standard. The double slide-out equipped Bay Hill also features





a higher, arched interior ceiling, an 80-inch queen-size bed, doubledoor refrigerator/freezer, microwave and threeburner range with oven.

Lifestyle's Alfa Gold is designed "for year-round comfort for full-timers who love to travel." Built on the Lifestyle Titan Structure frame, the Alfa Gold incorporates a double-stacked, box-steel tube frame designed for superior strength and durability. Germany's **Hymer AG** has a Fiat Ducato chassis-mounted, diesel engine-powered Car GT 322 Class B motorhome. Hymer, Europe's largest RV builder, is looking for a North American partner to assemble its motorhomes on Fiat chassis assembled at a Chrysler Group factory in Mexico.

The Mercedes-Benz Sprinter chassis-mounted Serenity Class B was shown by Canada's **Leisure Travel** Vans. Serenity's curved, fiberglass body was designed to diminish wind noise and boost



fuel economy, and its solidwood cabinetry provides an incredible amount of interior storage for a 24-foot motorhome.



Making its first appearance at an RV industry event in October was **ADAK Adventure Trailers** of St. Augustine, FL, which also manufactures first-responder and military vehicles. ADAK

> differentiates itself from other towable RV builders by producing a trailer aimed at "dedicated

sportsmen" wanting a "secure, comfortable, durable means to pursue their passion." The trailer is designed to go off-road



"wherever your tow vehicle has the guts to pull it" and includes "long-term storage for all gear regardless of the sport," so loading and unloading after every trip isn't necessary.

Taking a more traditional design approach is **Open Range RV Co.** of

Shipshewana, IN, with its Light model. The Light comes with Lippert Components' Equa-Flex rubberized suspension system as a standard feature along with Gel coated

continued on page 12







continued from page 11

fiberglass walls, a 100-inch wide body frame, 42-inchdeep main slide, and 50-amp service. A heated and enclosed underbelly, double insulated baggage doors and a heated storage area make the Open Range Light ideal for use in cold weather.

Pacific Coachworks,

Riverside, CA, has its Powerlite toy hauler and Tango Ultra Lite and Tow Lite travel trailer series. Powerlite is available in floor plans ranging from 20 to 36 feet in length and features aluminum frame construction, chrome wheels, 3,000-pound capacity ramp doors, exterior radius fender skirts and interior and exterior LED lights.

Tango Ultra Lite units range from 21 to 28 feet and include 78-inch ceiling heights, a 13.5 BTU air conditioner, large double-door refrigerator, microwave oven and three-burner cooktop with oven. The Tango Tow Lite

Skyline Koala

comes in 26- to 32-foot floor plans and features an electric awning, custom built Ibeam chassis, dual LPG bottles with cover, glass tub/shower

door, and laminated counter tops.

Livin' Lite Recreational

Vehicles, which was recently acquired by Thor Industries Inc., features its Axxess toy hauler and Camp Lite ultralightweight travel trailers, both made from 98 percent recyclable material. The Axxess is available in a 22-foot floor plan weighing 3,950 lbs. and a 26-foot floor plan weighing 4,950 lbs., both with 7 foot-3 inches of interior headroom and polished "chrome" sidewalls. The Camp Lite comes in 11-, 13- and 16-foot floor plans weighing from 1,800 to 3,250 lbs. and 6-foot-4 inches of interior headroom.

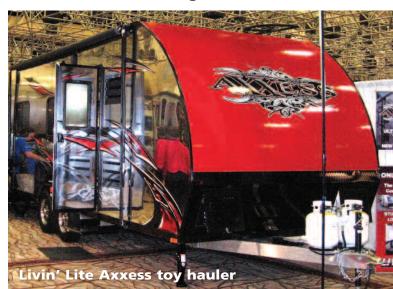
Nomad travel trailers and fifth wheels by **Skyline Corp.**, Elkhart, IN, come in three versions: the Retro stick and



Pacific Coachworks Tango

tin (wood frame with aluminum exterior); lightweight GL with a fiberglass exterior; and the Joey Select, which is available in both wood and aluminum construction and as an extension of the fiberglass GL series. Koala travel trailers and fifth wheels feature Skyline's exclusive Tow-Lite Technology including ultra-lightweight materials

> and an aerodynamic design, allowing it to be towed by smaller, more fuel-efficient vehicles than conventionally built trailers.





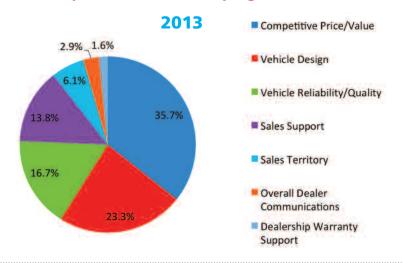
Price/Value Is Key to Selling RVs, Say Dealers

By Jeff Kurowski

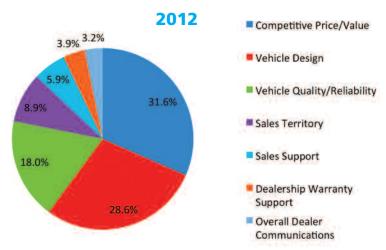
For the sixth year in a row, dealers say

price/value is by far the most helpful factor for selling RVs, according to results from RVDA's latest Dealer Satisfaction Index (DSI) survey. More respondents - almost 36 percent - chose this factor over other vehicle and manufacturer issues in the 20th DSI survey.

Most Important Factors Helping Dealers Sell RVs



Most Important Factors Helping Dealers Sell RVs



Since 2008, respondents have been tasked with choosing the three factors that are most helpful for selling RVs from this list of eight core issues:

- Sales support
- Sales territory
- Vehicle design
- Vehicle reliability/quality •
- **Competitive price/value**
- Parts support
- **Dealership warranty support** •
- **Overall dealer communications**

A total of 469 dealers responded to this year's survey, compared with 461 last year. These respondents rated 2,501 brands this year, an average of a little more than five brands per respondent.

Asked to pick the single most important factor in helping them sell RVs, 35.7 percent of dealers said competitive price/value, up from 31.6 percent in 2012.

Another 25.7 percent of dealers said competitive price/value was the second-most important factor, and 14.7 percent listed it as third. That means 76.1 percent of respondents believe that a competitive price is important in helping them sell RVs. A year ago, 73.4 percent felt that way.

Also this year, 23.3 percent of dealers listed vehicle design as the most important factor in helping them sell RVs, which is down from 28.6 percent of those answering the survey in 2012.

Another 16.7 percent of dealers listed vehicle reliability/quality as the most important factor helping them sell RVs, down from 18.0 percent in 2012.

The DSI is an annual confidential survey that asks dealers to express their level of satisfaction with their manufacturers and brands.

GE Capital

GE Capital's Hyland: Positive Trends Bode Well for RV Market in 2014



Edited by Mary Anne Shreve

GE Capital, Commercial Distribution

Finance has supported the RV industry with floor plan financing products for more than 30 years, and it tracks and reports on industry trends. *RV Executive Today* interviewed Tim Hyland, president of the RV Group, for insight into the current market.

individual market segment, the U.S. middle market would be the world's fourth largest global economy. Obviously, the middle market is critical to America's competitiveness and future."

"If looked at as an

- from the National Center for the Middle Market

Tim Hyland, President, RV Group GE Capital, Commercial Distribution Finance

Recently, GE Capital, Commercial Distribution Finance said the RV industry was experiencing double-digit growth consistent with the U.S middle market. Can you explain what GE means by the middle market, and how do RVs fit into that segment of the economy?

The middle market is defined as businesses with revenues of \$10 million to \$1 billion, making the RV industry an important contributor to this sector of the economy.

In 2011, GE Capital joined with The Ohio State University's Fischer College of Business to establish the National Center for the Middle Market. Its purpose is to serve as the leading resource on the U.S. middle market economy. As the first center of its kind in the country, it funds research that drives value for middle market companies. It also offers a well-informed outlook on the health and future of the middle market via a quarterly report called the Middle Market Indicator.

On its own, the U.S. middle market would be the fourth-largest economy in the world. Middle market companies generate over \$9 trillion in combined revenues annually, making them a key component of America's competitiveness and future. The U.S. middle market is responsible for over one-third of private sector jobs – that's 43 million jobs. Many RV manufacturing companies fit into the middle market.

What does RV dealer stocking and ordering activity look like this fall – how does it compare with fall 2012?

From speaking with the OEMs, we've heard that dealers sold aggres-

What IS the Middle Market?



sively prior to the Manufacturer's Open House in Elkhart. We also saw high levels of buying activity, which suggests dealer confidence in the market. RVIA data shows that shipments are up 11.8 percent through August, and growth through Q4 is expected to achieve 11.7 percent over 2012. Therefore, our anecdotal feedback is supported by the numbers YTD and anticipated through the end of the year.

What regional differences do you see in RV sales?

I'm seeing healthy growth in inventory levels across the country. Some regions had cold springs, which may have created a slow start in those areas, but overall I'm seeing strong and steady growth across the regions. As the strength of motorhome sales continues to improve, we should see outpaced activity where the market was hardest hit in the downturn – states such as Florida, California and Michigan.

As it is, through August, we've seen that motorhomes as a percent of overall shipments moved from just over 9 percent of shipments last year to almost 12 percent in 2013. We'll be keeping an eye on that progress.

GE CDF says RV dealers are turning their inventory more than twice; how does that compare with pre-recession rates? What's the optimal turn rate in this post-recession economy?

There is really no such thing as an optimal turn rate. Different asset classes and OEMs will turn at different rates, and there are macro-economic factors that also need to be considered when thinking about turns. However, if you consider where we were at the depths of the recession when turns were dramatically lower and aging was three to four times higher, we feel good about two times or better in the RV space, especially with aging remaining low.

What can you tell us about GE CDF's outlook for the RV business in 2014?

As we've said in the past, strong consumer confidence, an improving housing market, and positive trends in personal disposable income are some of the indices we watch. Absent any catastrophic events, we expect the RV industry to stay strong through the 2014 selling season, based on the anticipation of a relatively strong U.S. economy.

We've been providing services to those in the RV business for more than 30 years, so we understand that it has its ups and downs. Most important, though, we believe in the longterm prospects of this industry, and we continue to support it.



Thanks to the 2013 RV Dealers International Convention/Expo Partners

RVDA Chairman Jeff Hirsch and RVDA President Phil Ingrassia recognized these companies for their generous support of the annual convention:





GE Capital Left to right: John McElvey, Jeff McDermott, Bill Hughes, Tim Hyland, Hirsch, Rick Derbonne, Dave Ashby, Bob Parish, Ingrassia

GOLD



Bank of the West Left to right: Mylene Huynh, Craig Morris, Hirsch, Dave Russell, Mark Beecher, Dan Swanson, Ingrassia, Jeff Stowe



Protective Left to right: Bill Koster, Jaime Pais, Hirsch, Ingrassia



Thor Industries Left to right: Ingrassia, Kyle Kwasny, Ryan Juday, Bob Wheeler, Troy James, Justin Humphreys, Nate Goldenberg, Hirsch, Bob Martin, Dana Simon, Aram Koltookian, Matt Thompson, Ryan Thwaits, Jeff Runels, and Andy Cripe

RRONZE



Ally Financial Left to right: Bill Thompson, Ellen Andeen, Nancy Clayton, Bruce Richard, Hirsch, Mark Manzo, Ed Arienti, Ingrassia



Brown & Brown Recreational Insurance Left to right: Hirsch, Steve Freedman, Michael Neal, Ingrassia



Bank of America Merrill Lynch Hirsch, Ernie Schumache



Diversified Insurance Management Left to right: Ingrassia, Hirsch, Terry MacMillan, Rob Wing



Lance Left to right: Scott Almquist, William Hill, Hirsch, Jack Cole, Gary Conley, Scott Martin, Ingrassia, Lou Bonessa





MBA InsuranceLeft to right:Not pictured:Mackenzie Dickson, JosephineForest RiverJohnson, Hirsch, Bert Alanko,Ingrassia, Carlos Avila

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KOA CEO Jim Rogers at the Young RV <u>Executives Reception</u>

2013 RV Dealers International Conv

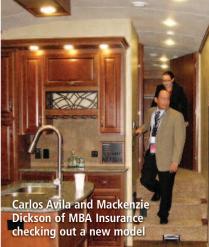




RV manufacturer, brought its Class B



Technician certification registrar Isabel McGrath helps with a question



Workshop attendees





KOA's Jim Rogers during RVDA's annual meeting





/ention/Expo Highlights





The Wednesday lunch spread is always good!



Moore, vice chairman George Goodrick

The ADAK Adventure

got lots of attention

Trailer's rugged good looks





Statistical Surveys' Tom Walworth (far left,) moderating Thursday's panel discussion





Quality Circle Award Recipients to be Honored at Louisville

By Jeff Kurowski

Eighteen manufacturers will receive **RVD**A's Quality Circle Award for their commitment to product excellence and dealer satisfaction. Each company scored high in the annual Dealer Satisfaction Index survey, which asks dealers to rate their makers on key issues such as sales and parts support, product value and overall dealer communications. The awards will be



presented during a reception on Dec. 2 at 5 p.m. in the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Louisville, KY, just prior to the opening of the National RV Trade show.

"The DSI Quality Circle Award recognizes the high level of success these manufacturers have had in working with their dealer business partners," says RVDA Chairman of the Board Jeff Hirsch of Kingston, NHbased Campers Inn. "Their commitment to continuously improving products and services ultimately helps dealers serve

customers better and preserves our industry's share of consumers' discretionary dollars."

The DSI asks dealers to indicate their level of satisfaction with brands/manufacturers on eight core issues: sales support, sales territory, vehicle design, vehicle reliability/quality, competitive price/value, parts support, dealership warranty support, and overall dealer communications.

To qualify for the Quality Circle Award, brands/manufacturers must receive at least 15 ratings and score 80 percent or above (or 4.0 or above on a five-point scale) in overall dealer satisfaction.

RVDA will honor 46 RV brands built by 18 manufacturers with Quality Circle Awards. In several cases, related brands were grouped together according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

20th Annual RVDA DEALER SATISFACTION INDEX

The towable RV brands/manufacturers that will receive Quality Circle Awards are (in alphabetical order with the manufacturer's name in bold): Airstream; **Coachmen** (Clipper/Viking travel trailers); Forest River (Palomino travel trailers and fifth wheels, Rockwood/Roo expandables, and Sierra/Sandpiper); Grand Design (Solitude); Heartland (Big Country/Elk Ridge, Big Horn/Landmark, Cyclone/ Road Warrior/Torque, Gateway, North Trail/Wilderness, Prowler, Sundance, Trail Runner/Fairfield); Jayco (Eagle/Eagle Premier/Eagle HT, camping trailers, Jay Feather, Jay Flight/Swift/SLX/DST/ Bungalow, Pinnacle, and White Hawk); Keystone (Cougar/X-lite, Hornet/ Hideout/Energy, Laredo, Montana/Big Sky/High Country/Mountaineer, Outback/ Sydney, Raptor, and Sprinter/Copper Canyon); KZ (Sportsmen/Sportsmen Classic, Spree/Spree Escape; Lance (travel trailers, and truck campers); Lifestyle RV/ Bay Hill; Open Range; Prime Time (Avenger, LaCrosse/Tracer, and Crusader/Sanibel).

These motorized RV brands/manufacturers will also receive Quality Circle Awards: Airstream; Coachmen (Class C's); Forest River; Jayco (Class A's & C's); Leisure Travel Vans/Triple E; Newmar; Pleasure-Way; Thor Motor Coach; Tiffin; and Winnebago/Itasca.

"The DSI Quality Circle Award recognizes the high level of success these manufacturers have had in working with their dealer business partners." – Jeff Hirsch



RV Learning Center Renamed to Honor Mike Molino

The RV Learning Center has been renamed the Mike Molino RV Learning Center in recognition of RVDA's longest serving CEO. Molino provided groundbreaking leadership in promoting continuing education and educational opportunities for dealers and their staff during his tenure as RVDA president from 1996 – 2012.

Jeff Pastore, chairman of the Learning Center's board of directors, announced the change Oct. 2 during the opening general session of the 2013 RV Dealers International Convention/Expo.

"Mike was the driving force behind a number of initiatives at RVDA that continue today, including public affairs advocacy, industry relations, and Go RVing," said Pastore, "but what really stands out for many of us is Mike's unwavering commitment to and leadership in continuing education."

Working with volunteer leaders, Molino began the RVDA Education Foundation, which later became the RV Learning Center. He was also instrumental in creating certification programs for fixed operations staff and the partnership with RVIA for the tech certification preparation program.

The Learning Center is dedicated to providing dealers and their employees with innovative ways to operate RV dealerships through education resources including publications, distance learning, live workshops, online products, training, and certification programs. For more information, visit www.rvlearningcenter.com, send an email to info@rvda.org, or send a fax to (703) 359-0152. The Learning Center is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization; contributions may be taxdeductible as charitable donations.



Congratulating Molino are (left to right) RVDA of Canada Chair Ian Moore, RVDA of Canada President Eleonore Hamm, RVDA Chair Jeff Hirsch, and RVDA President Phil Ingrassia.



Barbara and Mike Molino with a plaque showing the new logo of the renamed Learning Center

Lance Camper Honored for Growing RVDA Membership

Lance Camper Manufacturing recently received RVDA's Sue Caldwell Memorial Award for Outstanding Achievement in Membership Recruitment. The company was instrumental in adding 15 dealers to RVDA's membership in 2013. RVDA Chairman Jeff Hirsch (right) presents the award to national sales manager Gary Conley, who accepted on behalf of his company.



CELEBRATE!

RVDA Chairman Jeff Hirsch Honors Three Dealers, One Associate Member with Service Awards

RVDA Chairman of the Board Jeff Hirsch presented Chairman's Service Awards to three dealers and one associate member during RVDA's annual meeting at the 2013 RV Dealers International Convention/Expo in Las Vegas. The annual award allows the chairman to personally recognize individuals who have made a significant contribution to RVDA and the industry.

Dealers **Rick Horsey** of Parkview RV, Smyrna, DE, **John McCluskey** of Florida Outdoors RV Center, Stuart, FL, and **Tom Stinnett** of Tom Stinnett Derby City RV,

Clarksville, IN, were honored, as was associate member **Matt Zimmerman** of Keystone RV and Dutchmen RV.

Hirsch recounted Horsey's many contributions, including serving as chairman of RVDA and the RV Learning Center and helping the board of directors navigate through a host of issues regarding the timing and location of the convention. Hirsch praised his commitment to the industry, saying, "there are few people who've done as much for dealers as Rick Horsey."

In honoring McCluskey, Hirsch cited his service as



Above: Tom Stinnett, Jeff Hirsch, John McClusky. Right: Rick Horsey, Matt Zimmerman

second vice chair and RVDA Convention/Expo Committee Chairman. In the latter role, McCluskey gave an "incredible amount of time, thought, and leadership to create a topnotch experience for all of us." Hirsch said. As chair of the convention/expo committee, McCluskey was especially busy with the launching of two new initiatives, the Young RV Executives Program and Vendor Training +Plus. He also played a crucial role in the negotiations to move the convention to Bally's in Las Vegas through 2017.

Tom Stinnett, a past RVDA chairman, was recognized for his continuing leadership as RV Assistance Corporation (RVAC) Chairman and as co-chairman of the Go RVing Coalition. "Tom provided stability in those areas and took one more thing to worry about off my



plate," said Hirsch. RVAC is RVDA's for-profit subsidiary that develops member benefits for the association; it has contributed \$31,000 to the Mike Molino RV Learning Center.

Hirsch cited Zimmerman's commitment to dealership education. "Matt made time to serve as a manufacturer representative on the Convention/ Expo Committee, providing great insight and helping provide a business partner's perspective on our activities here in Las Vegas," Hirsch said. And Zimmerman was instrumental in a ground-breaking program that will provide \$250,000 over the next five years to help get technicians in Kevstone/Dutchmen's dealer network certified. Hirsch said he hoped other manufacturers would follow that example.



22 RV EXECUTIVE TODAY

Jim Shields Receives RVDA's Highest Honor

Jim Shields, owner of French Camp, Calif.-based Pan Pacific RV Centers Inc., received the 2013 James B. Summers Award during the RV Dealers International Convention/Expo in Las Vegas. He was recognized for his longtime service to RVDA, including a term as chairman; his role in unifying California RV dealers, which lead to the creation of CalRVDA, one of the most influential state dealer associations; and his eagerness to help struggling dealers succeed.

"Jim Shields is one of the great thinkers in our industry," said RVDA President Phil Ingrassia, as he presented the award.



"He's continually trying to improve the process and make things better at the dealership, in the industry, and at RVDA."

Jim Shields was surrounded by other JBS award recipients when he was honored at the 2013 convention.

In addition to serving as RVDA chairman in 2006-2007, Shields' service to the association includes co-chairing the Government

Jim and Sherry Shields

Relations Committee, participating in the RVDA Marketing Task Force, and serving a term as a director on the Mike Molino RV Learning Center board.

As a young man, Shields worked in his father's farm implement and motorcycle business, leaving eventually to work for American Honda Motor Company. His next position was as a computer salesman. During that time, he sold equipment to the owner of a small travel trailer dealership. When the owner retired, Shields bought the RV business. He and his wife Sherry worked hard to develop the company and acquire additional dealerships. Today, Pan Pacific includes three locations and sells dozens of makes and models.

The JBS honoree is chosen by the RVDA board each year by secret written ballot from nominations made by association members. The award, created in 1986, is named for RVDA's first CEO in recognition of his tireless service to RVDA.

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"A World of Training is responsible for helping us take the dealership to the next level by implementing structure and monitoring processes to make sure we are successful." Mark Primeaux, Primeaux RV, Lafayette, Louisiana

"I have been a client of A World of Training for several years. They are experts in all departments. They have helped us set up areat systems and processes that we use every day." Jamie Dodd, Dodd RV, Yorktown, Virginia

"The training was great and everyone is excited for the next round. The managers are also excited to use your ideas to help their ongoing training process." Clifton Lewis, Lewis RV Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

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CONVENTION NEWS

Changing It Up! RVDA'S 2014 CONVENTION TO MO

Some of the most exciting news coming from this year's convention/ expo was the announcement that next year's event will move to The Strip – specifically, Bally's and Bally's Paris.

And to enable more dealers and dealership employees to attend the industry's premier event for RV retailers, the convention has been pushed to the beginning of November for the next four years. In 2014, it will occur the week of Nov. 9.

RVDA Chairman of the Board leff Hirsch and RVDA of Canada Chairman of the Board Ian Moore announced the changes during the opening general session last month. "The new dates give us the opportunity to take advantage of the October market and give us a little more time

between the Elkhart open houses and the convention," Hirsch said.

The new dates are: 2015 – the week of November 1: 2016 – the week of November 6; and 2017 the week of November 7. Bally's and Bally's Paris are part of Caesars Entertainment, as is the Rio, where RVDA has held its convention/expo for more than 10 years. The association was able to negotiate a change of venue with Caesars executives.

Dealers and exhibitors at the convention responded enthusiastically to the news. As one individual said, "We're 100 percent for the change. It'll be better for us and better for the industry. And the Rio has served us well over the years, but it's time to move on."



Mark Your Calendar!

2014 Nov. 9-14 2015 Nov. 1-6 2016 Nov. 6-11 2017 Nov. 7-12

VE DATE AND VENUE

Here's how some convention attendees reacted to the news:

"We figure attendance should improve, because we're removing most of the obstacles people mention when asked why they don't go to the convention." — Darrell Friesen, All Seasons RV Center

"November is a better time of year. There's not as much going on. I have four people here and could bring six to eight next year." – Jeff Daily, Pacific Coachworks "Sometimes change is good. If the change in venue results in higher attendance, AGWS would reevaluate how many people to bring." – Mick DeLavallade, AGWS

"The Strip's more fun, and more people will come next year."

– Randy Adams, RVM Promotions

"November is better for us. The venue isn't as important, as long as it's still in Las Vegas. I brought four people this year. If it's later, I could bring eight to 10." — Clint Mack, Fife RV

"Paris is in the heart of The Strip, so there will be more to do. I've been here six years in a row, so it'll be nice to go someplace different. And the time change is good. This year I brought three to the convention. Next year I'll consider bringing four or five." – Peter Reyer, Paul Evert's RV Country



GO RVING PROGRAM FOR 2013!

The Go RVing dealer tie-in program is back in 2013... and better than ever! The "Away" campaign returns to the emotion-driven family focus of past campaigns, along with continued emphasis on the affordability and accessibility of the RV lifestyle for multigenerational families. This optional program also gives dealers, state dealer associations, and their agencies options to use materials connected to the national campaign. *Here are the highlights:*

Leads - Plus Program

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, Go RVing dealers signed up for the tie-in program can access via the Internet Go RVing leads that are prioritized according to the consumer's purchase timeframe.

Digital RV Image Library Pictures on GoRVing.com

Go RVing dealers signed up for the program have access to multiple all-new, high resolution images of consumers enjoying a variety of RV products. These images can be used in advertising, Yellow Pages ads, websites, and other promotional materials.

To give dealers maximum flexibility, the Go RVing Dealer Leads-Plus Program also features a menu of other promotional items. These items are available separately.

Get on board with Go RVing! Return this form TODAY!

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Go RVing's Facebook Page Doubles Fans in 3 Months

Edited by RVDA staff

Between June and the end of September, Go RVing doubled its following on Facebook, jumping from 100,000 followers to more than 207,000 and placing it on an elite list of pages that reach that milestone. Facebook says only 1 percent of all its brand-affiliated pages reach that status.

The biggest reason behind the growth of Go RVing's fan base is that followers are sharing the site's daily posts, which average more than 300 shares per week. That means current Go RVing followers are enjoying the posts and choosing to repost them on their walls for their friends to see.

The **#RVTailgateSweeps** has contributed an estimated 5,000 new followers since Go RVing's partnership with *Sports Illustrated* and coordinating sweepstakes launched at the end of August.

Go RVing continues to produce compelling content that consumers can enjoy and share on Facebook. Many



Go RVino

Facebook posts link to Go RVing's Instagram, Pinterest, and Twitter accounts, putting industry messages in front of more consumers and potential buyers.



Online Training with FRVTA's

DISTANCE LEARNING NETWORK

FRVTA-RV Learning Center Partnership

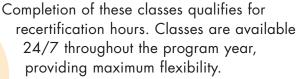
\$995 per year for each dealership location. Over 50 sessions available, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with full access to training through July 31, 2014.

The DLN offers your dealership:

- Onsite training
- Group training
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- Self-determined pace
- One fixed price of \$995 for the subscription term

The DLN offers online training for:

 RV Technicians – The certification prep course helps technicians get ready for the certification exam. Your subscription includes unlimited access to more than 50 training sessions, reviews, and test preparation sections. Also included are manufacturer- and supplier-specific advanced repair and troubleshooting classes designed to upgrade technicians' skills.



 Service Writers/Advisors – This three-hour program is valuable for both new staff and experienced personnel preparing for

the RV Learning Center's Service Writer/Advisor certification.

- Greeters/Receptionists This 50-minute session is suitable for all employees who need customer service skills. It includes a final exam and certificate of completion.
- **Dealers/GMs** This program features important topics for management, including lemon laws, LP gas licensing issues, and the federal Red Flags Rule.

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RV/MH Hall of Famer and former RVDA CEO Bob Strawn Passes Away

Former RVDA president, CEO, and chairman of the board Robert J. "Bob" Strawn passed away on Thursday, Oct. 10, at his home in Elberta, AL. Strawn was one of the most honored individuals in the RV retail industry; he was inducted into the RV/MH Hall of Fame, received the James B.



Summers Award, and had the RVDA headquarters building in Fairfax, VA, named after him.

Strawn served RVDA for 17 years as a volunteer dealer leader, joining the board of directors in 1979 and advancing to higher elected positions until he became chairman of the board in 1983-84. He was on a search committee to find a successor for retiring RVDA President Jim Summers when he decided to sell his Denver dealership and apply for the job himself. He then served as the association's CEO from 1986-1996. Throughout his tenure at RVDA, Strawn was assisted by his wife Nadine, who handled all of the finance and administration operations for the association.

Under Strawn's leadership, the association improved its financial stability, education programs, and member services. He was inducted into the RV/MH Hall of Fame in 1996, and the RVDA headquarters building was dedicated in his name that same year. He received the association's highest honor, the James B. Summers Award, in 1997.

"As a volunteer, Bob played a key role in getting RVDA established in the Washington, D.C., area and, as president, developed a professional organization and staff to serve dealers more effectively," said RVDA President Phil Ingrassia. "He left a lasting impression on this association and will be missed by his many friends in the RV industry."

Strawn was born in Oklahoma and reared on a Nebraska farm. He graduated from the National Maritime Academy in Kings Point, NY, and served on merchant and Navy ships in World War II. Afterwards, he earned an engineering degree, developed and patented a vaporizing process for industrial LP-gas burners, and opened a manufacturing business in Colorado.

Strawn sold his Denver business in 1968 and bought a small Colorado RV dealership. He quickly became involved in association affairs and advanced through the leadership of the Colorado state association. Strawn joined the national RVDA Board of Directors in 1979 before advancing to higher elected positions, becoming chairman of the board in 1983-84.

Strawn was interred in Barrancas National Cemetery, Pensacola, FL. Condolences may be sent to his widow, Nadine, via tjstrawn@embarqmail.com, and memorials may be made to Heifer International.



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	23-02-13	Managing Inventory with Logic - Not Emotion Tom Walworth, Troy James, Will Jarnot, Mike Regan, Ernie Schumacher (2 Audio CDs)	19-02-13	Still Surprised by Why People Do What They D David Spader
	80-02-13	D/GM Track on 1 CD-ROM All sessions below plus General Session Panel	20-02-13	4 Ways to Increase Your F&I Revenue Through Back-End Product SalesRob Auer, Jared Zin
	03-02-13	Establishing Benchmarks and Program IndicatorsBarry Siskind	27-02-13	Grow Your Leadership & Management Skills . Paul Webb
	08-02-13	Healthcare Reform: How to Get Ready NowKathryn Carlson	28-02-13	Dealership Culture - The Ultimate Differentiate

MORE SESSIONS ON PAGE 2

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- 24-02-13 How to Utilize Email Marketing to Increase Your Fixed Ops Revenue ...Peter Martin
- 26-02-13 "Rooftop" Measurements for Effective and Profitable Fixed Operations ..Mike Nicholes
- 31-02-13 Boomer Power: Meet the Best Buyers on the Planet ..Linda Cahan
- 37-02-13 Customer Service or "Am I Selling?" .. Paul Webb
- 44-02-13 New Hires with a Customer Service Mindset ... Ricardo Roman

85-02-13 Friday Track on 1 CD-ROM - Includes two sessions below (Canadian Compliance sold separately)

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- 46-02-13 CFPB Guidance and Rate Markups: Do You Understand Your Roles and Responsibilities? .. Chip Zyvoloski
- **47-02-13 Wednesday Canadian Compliance Session** Canada's New Anti-Spam Law and What It Means for Your Business ..Brian Bowman *(Audio CD Only)*

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www.nada.com Isims@nadaguides.com (800) 966-6232, Ext. 235 The N.A.D.A. RV Appraisal Guide is an essential tool for dealers needing to determine the average market value for used RVs. A new online program, RV Connect, is also available that provides updated RV values, creates custom window stickers for both newer and older RVs, and more. These products are all available at the RVDA "members only" rate.

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Visit www.rvcareers.org

RV dealers can access resumes and post job openings through a partnership with Boxwood Technology at www.rvcareers.org.

32 * Make copies of the calendar above for each department to track progress.

December 2013

RV Executive Today spoke with dealers to recreate the monthly calendar to make it more useful in planning your month. Use the checklists below to track each department's progress. If you have comments or suggestions, please e-mail the editor at mashreve@rvda.org.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 CHRISTMAS	26	27	28
29	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE				

Department Tasks:

Dealer/General Manager

- **D-1** Department Managers Meeting
- D-2 Change Ads
 - D-3 Check Go RVing Leads
 - **D-4** Review Department Activity
 - **D-5** Review Numbers

Rentals

- R-1 Review R.O.'s
- **R-2** Check Rental Contracts
- **R-3** Review Repairs Needed
- R-4 Place Ads
- R-5 Department Meeting



- Sales
 - S-1 Check Internet Leads
 - S-2 Check Inventory
 - S-3 Change Display
 - S-4 Customer Follow Up
 - S-5 Review R.O.'s on Deals
 - Department Meeting S-6



- F-1 Check On Outstanding Titles
- F-2 Check Distress Titles
- Log Deals F-3
- F-4 **Review Log**
- F-5 **Review Pricing Policies**
- F-6 **Department Meeting**



Service

- SV-1 Check Outstanding Warranties
- SV-2 Review All Carryover R.O.'s
- SV-3 Review Numbers
- SV-4 Review Actual vs. Flat Rate Time
- SV-5 Department Meeting



Parts & Accessories

- P-1 Check Replacement Parts Orders
- P-2 Check Weekly Parts Orders
- P-3 Change Displays
- P-4 Review All R.O.'s Make Sure Parts Are Listed
- P-5 **Review Numbers**
- P-6 Department Meeting



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Rivers RV	\$250	\$17,600	05/31/13	Hayes RV Center	\$300	\$5,400	02/01/13
Alpin Haus	\$500	\$17,500	06/21/13	Webster City RV, Inc.	\$1,000	\$5,100	04/22/13
Butch Thomas	\$1,000	\$16,000	11/30/12	Madison RV Supercenter	\$1,000	\$5,000	08/08/13
Hartville RV Center, Inc.	\$1,000	\$15,500	05/07/13	Minnesota RVDA	\$5,000	\$5,000	01/11/13
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Hemlock Hill RV Sales, Inc.	\$10,000 \$639	\$10,000	02/27/13	Alliance Coach, Inc.	\$750 \$500	\$2,550 \$2,500	10/26/12
Rich & Sons Camper Sales	\$2,000	\$10,000	11/21/12		\$300 \$750	\$2,500 \$2,500	06/07/13
				or pledge between \$1,000 and \$2	-	φ2,500	00/07/13
The Trail Center	\$250			Dinosaur Electronics	\$500	\$1,250	06/06/13
Hilltop Trailer Sales, Inc.	\$541	\$2,122	06/11/13	Out of Doors Mart, Inc.	\$500 \$500	\$1,250	09/18/13
Skyline RV & Home Sales, Inc.	\$1,250	\$1,500	06/14/13	Phil Ingrassia	\$300 \$1,000	\$1,000	09/05/12
•	\$1,230 \$505			•	. ,		
Noble RV, Inc.	-	\$1,405	06/21/13	Bill Mirrielees	\$250	\$1,000	05/09/13
				ation or pledge between \$500 ar		\$ 500	00/00/40
Schaap's RV Traveland	\$500	\$850		Holiday Hour, Inc.	\$100 \$500	\$500 \$500	03/20/13
Steinbring Motorcoach	\$500 \$200	\$750 \$625		Lindsey Reines	\$500 \$250	\$500 \$500	12/19/12
Ronnie Hepp	\$300 \$205	\$625 \$500	08/24/12 12/31/12	Beckley's Camping Center	\$250	\$500	06/06/13
Camp-Site RV							
				tion or pledge between \$100 and		¢400	10/10/10
Bell Camper Sales	\$200 \$250	\$450 \$250	08/26/13 09/01/12	Happy Camping RV	\$100 \$100	\$100 \$100	10/19/12 08/12/13
Foley RV Center Kroubetz Lakeside Campers	\$250 \$250	\$250 \$250	12/02/11	Mike Thompson's RV Super Stores John Peak	\$100	\$100	10/03/13
Mayflower RV, Inc.	\$250 \$250	\$250 \$250	07/27/12	Amy Pennington	\$100	\$100 \$100	11/30/12
Karin Van Duyse	\$250 \$250	\$250 \$250	10/25/12		φιου	φιου	11/30/12
ENDOWMENTS	φ200	φ200	10/23/12				
Kindlund Family Scholarship		\$270,000					

CENTRAL TRAINING CALENDAR

Dealer/GM	<< Back December 2013 Fv						
Sales	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Service RV Service Technician Parts F & I Rental	Sobel University Registration Begins Show Online Events		2 Show Online Events	Selling Has Nothing To Do With Selling Show Online Events	Increasing Your Sales Power to New Levels of Excellence Show Online Events		Show Online Events
Go RVing. Don't see your events listed? Visit	E Show Online Events	Comprehensive Sales Seminar (3 credits) Spader Total Management 1 Workshop Show Online Events	10 Spader Parts 8 Accessories Management Workshop Show Online Events	Show Online Events	12 Write-Up and Close Seminar (2 credits) Show Online Events	Show Online Events	Show Online Events
www.rvtrainingcalendar.com to upload your events to the calendar.	18 Show Online Events	16		the second second	1	Sobel	Show Online Events
	22	23	24	25	20	5 27	28

Show Online Events Show Online Events

29	30	31	ONGOING	ONLINE EVI	ENTS:	_
nline Events	Show Online Events	Show Online Events	Technician Certification Self-Study Prep Course	FRVTA's Distance Learning Network - Training for Every Position at Your Dealership	Training through	Service Writer/ Advisor Training through FRVTA's DLN

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