

Subject: FW: Trailer Towing Newsletter for January 2012



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January 2012 edition of the "Air-Hitch Advisor" newsletter.

I hope everyone had a good holiday season and a Happy New Year. Welcome to 2012 and the first newsletter of the year. If you have articles or special request for the newsletter please let me know.

Something to think about!!

This gives us something to think about with all our new electronic technology.

GPS

A friend had their car broken into while they were at a football game. Their car was parked on the green which was adjacent to the football stadium and specially allotted to football fans. Things stolen from the car included a garage door remote control, some money and a GPS which had been prominently mounted on the dashboard.

When the victims got home, they found that their house had been ransacked and just about everything worth anything had been stolen.

The thieves had used the GPS to guide them to the house. They then used the garage remote control to open the garage door and gain entry to the house. The thieves knew the owners were at the football game, they knew what time the game was scheduled to finish and so they knew how much time they had to clean out the house. It appeared that they had brought a truck to empty the house of its contents.

Something to consider if you have a GPS - don't put your home address in it. Put a nearby address (like a store or gas station) so you can still find your way home if you need to, but no one else would know where you live if your

GPS were stolen.

MOBILE PHONES -- I would never have thought of this.....

This lady has now changed her habit of how she lists her names on her mobile phone after her handbag was stolen. Her handbag, which contained her cell phone, credit card, wallet... etc... was stolen.

20 minutes later when she called her hubby, from a pay phone telling him what had happened, hubby says 'I received your text asking about our Pin number and I've replied a little while ago.'

When they rushed down to the bank, the bank staff told them all the money was already withdrawn. The thief had actually used the stolen cell phone to text 'hubby' in the contact list and got hold of the pin number. Within 20 minutes he had withdrawn all the money from their bank account.

Moral of the lesson:

Do not disclose the relationship between you and the people in your contact list.

Avoid using names like Home, Honey, Hubby, Sweetheart, Dad, Mom, etc....

And very importantly, when sensitive info is being asked through texts, CONFIRM by calling back.

Also, when you're being text by friends or family to meet them somewhere, be sure to call back to confirm that the message came from them. If you don't reach them, be very careful about going places to meet 'family and friends' who text you.

Welcome to Amazon Town

Retired 'Workampers' Flock to Remote Towns for Temporary Gigs; RV Parks Are Full

FERNLEY, Nev.-Behind the piles of smiley-faced Amazon.com Inc. boxes arriving on doorsteps this holiday season are workers like Ray and Sarann Williams.

The retired couple are part of the swarm of seasonal employees taking up temporary residence in this small desert city-home to one of Amazon's warehouses-to help the online-retail giant fulfill its influx of holiday orders.

The Williamses migrated from their home in Hurricane, Utah, to take the two-month warehouse gig. "The money always helps" and the physical labor "always makes me feel better," Mr. Williams said as he walked his miniature schnauzer, Maya, around the Desert Rose RV park, where the couple is currently residing. The 75-year-old said this was his second stint as a seasonal Amazon worker, after spending last autumn at Amazon's Campbellsville, Ky., location.

Amazon, the world's biggest e-commerce purveyor, sees a sales spike every fourth quarter, when it makes nearly 40% of its more than \$34 billion in annual revenue. To meet that surge, the Seattle-based company hires hundreds of temporary workers at each of its 34 U.S. warehouses.

A spokeswoman for Amazon, which has 51,000 staffers excluding seasonal workers world-wide, said it hires "thousands" of temporary workers for the holidays, but declined to disclose specific numbers. It said it quadrupled its staff at its warehouse in Phoenix to 1,200 to handle the end-of-year rush.

Many of these employees belong to the community of "workampers," a sort of modern-day migrant worker. Many of them are retirees who spend all or part of the year living in RVs and taking odd seasonal jobs around the country. While some workers really need the money, others said they take the gigs to help fund their adventures or just for fun.

Many current and former seasonal workers said Amazon pays decent wages—about \$12 an hour plus overtime in Fernley, which is about 50% better than minimum wage here. But that is in exchange for long hours and tedious labor.

"It's like the best place to work and the worst place to work," said Kelly Andrus, a 50-year-old Fernley resident who served as an Amazon holiday employee seven years ago. "It's good pay, and they're safety oriented," but she said the managers were strict and the labor was physically demanding.

Workers can be on their feet for hours fetching items from shelves, packing boxes and preparing incoming items for storage. Many said they lose five pounds or more in a few weeks.

Earlier this year, Amazon was on the defensive after an Allentown, Pa., newspaper reported that more than a dozen workers collapsed inside the local warehouse there because of the summer heat. The company said employee safety was its top concern and that it had urgently installed air conditioning.

Holiday hiring surges are common in online retailing. At online electronics retailer Newegg Inc., a spokeswoman said the company boosts warehouse and customer-service headcount by about 130, or roughly 20%, during the holidays.

Amazon finds its workers via recruiting events, such as the one it held at an RV show in Quartzsite, Ariz., earlier this year. Many also come by word of mouth.

Clare Moxley, who came to Fernley from Kimberley, British Columbia, said she heard about the Amazon gig from a workamper website. The 54-year-old went into early retirement five years ago, after working as a bank information-technology manager, and said she recently took up the RV lifestyle to battle complacency.

Though she sometimes gets together with several coworkers at a local Mexican restaurant on Saturdays, Ms. Moxley said most nights she is too tired to do anything but stay in her 16-foot trailer, which has room only for a small desk and a twin-sized bed. Off days are used to catch up on sleep and to do laundry.

Still, she said she was glad to make new friends in Fernley and to prove that she could still handle tough labor.

"I definitely would do it again," Ms. Moxley said.

Amazon said it hires RV residents for the autumn in three locations, Fernley, Campbellsville and Coffeyville, Kan., as part of a program called CamperForce, which started last year.

Current and former seasonal workers said Amazon lets them choose from several RV camps where the retailer will pay the parking fee for the seasonal workers.

Each location is distinct. The Desert Rose RV Park in Fernley sits off a highway in the arid desert. Occupants of the 90 campers hang out in the communal laundry and recreation room, where they threw a small, informal holiday party Wednesday. Cherie Ve Ard and Chris Dunphy said they stayed at scenic Elk City State Park when they worked at the Coffeyville location in 2009.

The influx of Amazon's holiday help can perk up places such as Fernley, a city of 19,000 about 45 miles east of the California border, where the online retailer opened its warehouse in 1999. Restaurants and casinos get crowded. There are traffic jams.

"There's probably more people working in Fernley at this time of year than any other," said Eric Stanger, president of the local Chamber of Commerce.

Amazon's Fernley warehouse, which is about the size of 13 football fields, sits between the stores of two competitors, Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and Lowe's Cos. Employees say they often park in the lots of those big-box retailers when the Amazon lot fills up. The area gets congested around 6 p.m., when the shifts change.

The RV parks are perhaps Amazon's biggest beneficiaries this time of year. Debbie Skinner, the owner of Desert Rose RV Park, said about a fifth of her annual revenue-she wouldn't give underlying numbers-comes from Amazon. The monthly parking rate at Desert Rose is \$375, though Ms. Skinner would not disclose Amazon's special rate.

The effects of temporary help also trickle down to local businesses and the city government. Troy Sibson, manager of Pioneer Crossing Casino, said his establishment gets noticeably busier during these months.

Mr. Sibson couldn't provide specific figures on the boost from seasonal workers. But he noted one change: "They befriend the bartenders."

RV Dealer Sentiment Reaches Highest Level Since 2007

By: RV PRO Staff
Friday, January 13, 2012

For the first time since October 2007, RV dealer sentiment has risen above a score of 50 - hitting 55 in analyst firm Robert W. Baird's most recent survey of current conditions, which polled 122 dealers. A score of 50 is considered neutral.

The rise in dealer sentiment is notable considering retail traffic has been mixed, according to Baird. However, dealers reported 5-7 percent growth in motorhomes and 7-9 percent growth in towables during the December

quarter. Better consumer confidence and favorable weather appeared to help.

Dealer inventory is healthy, according to the Baird. Dealers report 117 days of towable inventory, down from 119 days last year, and 127 days of motorhome inventory, down from 133 last year. Some dealers are still taking delivery on orders placed at the fall Elkhart show, which offered heavy incentives on towables. Thirty-five percent of towable dealers consider inventory "too high," versus just 15 percent of motorhome dealers.

Access to both wholesale and retail credit remains healthy, but largely unchanged, according to the firm. Dealers liked the recent GE Capital promotion, which covered floorplan interest costs through the winter on units from Thor and Forest River.

After an awful year for RV stocks, investor sentiment is beginning to recover as consumers and dealers grow more optimistic, according to Baird. The firm said there's "value for patient investors," noting that the expectations for 2012 retail seem reasonable. Thor has \$3.77 per share in cash and no debt, with a chance to earn over \$3 per share in a recovery scenario. Meanwhile, Winnebago has \$2.45 per share in cash and no debt, with the potential to earn over \$1 per share in a recovery scenario.

Healthy Sales Atmosphere Reported at Florida RV SuperShow

By: RV PRO Staff

Monday, January 16, 2012

RVM Promotions said in a press release that crowds at last week's 27th Florida RV SuperShow were steady Wednesday and Thursday, while the weekend brought in large numbers of visitors. Many dealers believe 2012 will set an all-time attendance high.

Dave Kelly, marketing director for the Florida RV Dealers Association (FRVDA), said attendance figures aren't yet final.

"Preliminary reports from dealers show that sales were considerably higher than anticipated. This was the clear consensus over the weekend. Several dealers were nothing short of exuberant," he said.

The notable difference this year is that consumers are doing more buying, according to RVM Promotions. Pent-up demand coupled with consumers' increasing confidence in the economy has translated into brisk sales for dealers. Dealers said consumers are still looking for value but are making much quicker buying decisions than in past years.

RVM Promotions collected comments from companies that attended the show.

. "The crowds are bigger and more engaging than the past few years. We are selling a lot of product," said Gary Conley of Lance Camper.

. "Fantastic show. The rain and cooler weather did not keep people away the first few days. Best show I've been to in 25 years," said Troy O'Leary of Starcraft RV.

. "We're having a great show. There are a lot of buyers out here. Better than last year; people are very optimistic. You can see that the economy is improving," said T.R. Fulk of Bates RV in Dover, Fla.

. "We have tripled our sales compared with last year. Wednesday and Thursday the traffic was average, but people came to buy. The snowbirds and full-timers are here trading up their older units," said Jon Sare of Forest River.

. "The smaller, lightweight units have been our best sellers. We are working lots of deals. There are a lot more families out here today looking at bunkhouses," said George Grimm of Campers Inn of Fruitland Park, Fla.

. "We had a lot of serious buyers early on Wednesday that wanted to get an early start picking out their new unit. We have been extremely busy Friday and Saturday," said Tim Garner of Airstream.

. "This year's show has been wonderful. The buyers are here this week. Traffic and sales are much improved over last year. Lightweight trailers with bunks have been our best sellers," said Sam Hunter of Arrow RV in Clearwater, Fla.

. "Great show. We have more than doubled our sales from last year," said Matt Grimes of Evergreen RV.

Odd Facts About 7 Iconic Foods

1. Philadelphia Brand cream cheese was made in New York.

American cream cheese was an attempt to replicate the style of French neufchâtel cheese as it was made in the 1800s. Cream cheese was first made in 1872 in New York State by dairyman William A. Lawrence. Eight years later, the enterprising cheese distributor A. L. Reynolds packaged the cheese in foil wrappers and called it Philadelphia Brand because the public associated the City of Brotherly Love with high-quality food products. To this day, Philadelphia cream cheese has a monopoly on the cream cheese market.

2. Gatorade does have something to do with "Gators"

In 1965, a coach for the Florida Gators college football team and one of the university's kidney specialists came up with a concoction of water, salt, sugar, and lemon juice to keep the school's football players hydrated and energized while playing football under the hot Southern sun. Two years later, Gatorade was marketed nationally and has since netted the University of Florida more than \$90 million in revenues.

3. SPAM stands for something!

In 1937, in Austin, Minnesota, the Hormel Company developed the first canned meat product that did not require refrigeration. Made of chopped pork shoulder and ham (a cut from the pig's buttock and thigh), it was marketed simply as "Hormel Spiced Ham." The public's response was anticlimactic. Other companies developed their own canned meats, and Hormel's product was soon at risk of getting lost in the shuffle. To save the day, a decision was made to offer a prize to the person who could think up a catchy new name. The winning entry was "Spam". Several versions of the name's meaning are in circulation - the two most credible are: It's a blend of "spice" and "ham," and it stands for "Shoulder of Pork and Ham." What is known for certain is that Kenneth Daigneau, a Broadway actor - and the brother of a Hormel vice president - submitted "Spam." As the contest winner, he was given a prize of \$100.

Today Spam is iconic. It is still an inexpensive source of protein that can stretch a budget; yet it is "famous" enough to have spawned fan clubs and

cookbooks. It is known (sometimes by reputation and sometimes by taste) by Americans of all ages. As is fitting an icon, its packaging was accepted into the Smithsonian. And if you travel to Austin, Minnesota, you can visit the Spam Museum, opened in 2001. You will be welcomed by a variety of interactive and educational games, exhibits, and video presentations, all singing the praises of Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam..

4. What does the Frisbee have to do with pie?

The Frisbie Pie Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut, sold pies. Local college students used the empty tins (embossed with the words "Frisbie's Pies") to play catch. In 1948, Walter Morrison and Warren Franscioni found a way to capitalize on this free toy by creating a plastic version called the Flyin' Saucer and later renamed the Pluto Platter Flying Saucer. (This was after the alleged UFO sightings in Roswell, New Mexico.) When the founders of Wham-O bought rights to the toy and renamed it Frisbee, sales truly went out of this world.

5. What is a chicken noodle in Campbell's Chicken Noodle Soup?

"Chicken with Noodles" soup was a variety introduced to the public by Campbell's in 1934. Despite the fact that it is now considered a mainstay comfort food, sales back then were slow - until the product's name was misread during an episode of the popular Amos 'n' Andy radio show. Once listeners heard the words "chicken noodle soup," consumer interest was captured. Folks began to call Campbell's to ask about this "new" soup. Wise to a good thing, the company quickly dropped the "with" and the "s" and renamed the soup to match the blooper that raised its sales.

6. What do Nathan's Famous Hotdogs have to do with doctors?

In 1916, Nathan Handwerker started his own hot dog stand in Coney Island, using an all-beef recipe developed by his wife, Ida. He charged 5 cents because he wanted his product to be affordable. The public stayed away, reasoning that if it was so cheap maybe it was horse meat! Nathan devised a creative solution: He hired people to stand and eat in front of his place wearing lab coats and stethoscopes. He then posted a sign reading, "If doctors eat our hot dogs, you know they're good!" It was this type of moxie that enabled him to build his stand into a hot dog empire, and create a brand name that is recognized around the globe.

7. Marshmallows used to soothe sore throats.

Today a marshmallow is a spongy treat cooked over campfires. Up until the mid-1800s, marshmallow candy was used medicinally. Doctors extracted juice from the roots of the marsh-mallow plant and cooked it with egg whites and sugar, then whipped it into a foamy meringue. This hardened and the resulting candy soothed children's sore throats. Eventually, advanced manufacturing processes replaced the root juice with gelatin, which eliminated any healing properties.

RV Show Attendance UP

FRVTA: Record Attendance at 27th Florida RV SuperShow

By: Anthony Bowe

Wednesday, January 18, 2012

A record-setting 54,000 people attended the 27th Florida RV SuperShow last week, about 900 more attendees than last year, according to the Florida RV Trade Association (FRVTA).

"Most dealers had a good to great show. I have yet to talk to anyone who thought it was less than that. Everyone I've talked with have said it was either a good show, great, or one of the best they've attended in years," Dave Kelly, FRVTA marketing director, told RV PRO.

Kelly said dealers found that financing was easier for customers to acquire.

"I haven't been optimistic in a long time, but I'm really encouraged going into our regional dealer show schedule," he said. FRVTA's Fort Myers RV Show kicks off tomorrow (Jan. 19), and runs through Sunday (Jan. 22) at the Lee Civic Center. The Ocala RV Show will follow Jan. 26-29 at the Super Ocala I-75 Flea Market.

Rain welcomed attendees during the SuperShow in Tampa Bay, but the next four days were dry and unseasonably warm.

"If we had to have rain, early in the week is always preferable," Dave Kelly. "I think a lot of people wanted to get out and stretch their legs and see the new RVs."

Dealers and manufacturers reported excellent sales at the show, according to FRVTA. While many of the show attendees were retirees, the weekend brought a lot of families as well.

"We are seeing three to four years of pent up demand for RVs finally opening up," said Lance Wilson, FRVTA executive director. "Americans will only wait so long for things that they really want, and it appears they want RVs right now."

Booth exhibitors also reported healthy sales and many were running out of brochures and products early in the week, according to FRVTA.

"We heard families saying they have been waiting to buy an RV for years and their kids were not getting any younger, and older couples have been patient and they thought the time was right," Kelly said. "The media was also very positive and very anxious to see what was going on in the RV industry. They recognize that RV sales are a leading indicator of the entire economy and that point was made in a few of the TV interviews."

FRVTA has set dates for the 2013 Florida RV SuperShow. Industry day at the show will be Jan. 15, and then it will open to the public Jan. 16-20.

Attendance Up at Chicago Boat and RV Show

By: RV PRO Staff
Wednesday, January 18, 2012

Total attendance for the Progressive Insurance Chicago Boat, Sports & RV Show increased 7 percent despite slower days Thursday and Friday (Jan. 12-

13) because of bad weather, the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) reported.

NMMA reports that 35,402 people attended the event, which ran Jan. 12-16 at McCormick Place. The show switched its date pattern this year, moving from Wednesday-Sunday to Thursday-Monday to take advantage of the Martin Luther King holiday, according to Soundings Trade Only Today.

More than 500 boats were on display and more than 100 RVs were for sale. According to NMMA exhibitors report that dozens of boats were sold at the show and that business was good on the RV side as well, according to the boating publication.

Pittsburgh RV Show Breaks Opening Day Attendance Record
By: RV PRO Staff
Thursday, January 19, 2012

A record 6,000 people attended the opening for the 2012 Pittsburgh RV Show on Jan. 14 and another 6,000 have attended as of Jan. 18. The nine-day show closes Sunday (Jan. 22).

"These are the best numbers we've seen in ten years" said Rob Young, show manager.

About 18,000 people attended the show last year. Young said this year's attendance could reach an all-time high of 25,000 visitors.

Steve Deffenbaugh, general manager of Clem's Trailer Sales, reports that the dealership's sales at the show have increased 20 percent compared to this point in the show last year. The Pittsburgh RV Show is held at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center and is produced by Three Rivers Promotions Inc.

Vintage RV Museum Opens in Texas

1937 Elkhart Traveler, and a 1953 Fleetwood. The list goes on.

Don't fear the Gornickes when you visit Amarillo's new Jack Sisemore Traveland RV Museum.

The annoying family from the Robin Williams movie "RV" didn't come with the 1948 Fxible Clipper bus that Trent Sisemore located in Hollywood and acquired for the museum at the family recreational vehicle dealership at 4341 Canyon Drive.

Travis and Mary Jo Gornicke - played by Jeff Daniels and Kristin Chenoweth - drove the red-and-white bus and drove the Munro (Williams) family crazy in the movie.

"I looked for it (the movie bus) for two years," Sisemore said. "I just thought it was the neatest looking RV I'd ever seen. Jay Leno has the same model."

Traveland's RV museum, which takes up 7,000 square feet, opened to the public more than a week ago and already has had more than 400 visitors,

Sisemore said.

"We've been building a museum for about 25 years. And we have RVs from every decade up through the '70s to show the progression of the RV industry," he said. "I wanted to have something that was free, that people could come to from anywhere in the United States."

Sisemore reverently rattled off a list of models of industry greats on display: a 1936 Alma, a 1937 Elkhart Traveler, a 1953 Fleetwood. The list goes on.

Visit www.rvmuseum.net for a preview. Then check it out during Traveland store hours: 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.

Reader Eric Wallace gets kudos for introducing my husband, Kevin, and me to Pho Thanh Tung at 1800 S. Western St., between Interstate 40 and Plains Boulevard.

And I have to thank two Vietnam veterans who sat at an adjacent table for explaining what condiments to use when our orders came. I know they served there because I overheard them talking with manager Dung "Nancy" Nguyen about their desire to revisit what they said is a beautiful country. (Ever met a journalist who didn't eavesdrop?)

I ordered the Bun Thit Nurong, as foreign to me as it sounds. I got a heaping bowl of rice, grilled pork and vegetables into which I poured a broth, soy and a dash of a spicy paste, upon the advice of my nearby trainers. The cooks also sliced an eggroll into hunks to go into the dish. It tasted great and was bottomless.

Kevin tried the Mi Thap Cam, an egg noodle soup that contains shrimp, pork, liver, a fish ball and two beautiful hard-boiled quail eggs. Talk about exotic!

I wouldn't have had such a difficult time finishing if we hadn't ordered the spring rolls. A definite must.

Pho Thanh Tung operates from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, and 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Orders can be eaten there or carried out.

Parking has been available inside Westgate Mall for a select group of vehicles, a display of 2012 Toyota models by Street Toyota that will run until Monday. I won't go into details, but the dealership is hosting a related photo contest on its Facebook page. Playing means posting a photo, per their instructions, and test-driving a vehicle, which brings a \$25 restaurant gift-card reward, according to information I received.

The Big Texan Steak Ranch's Bobby Lee told me last week that the Big Texan Brewery has found success with something called a growler - gallon and half-gallon jugs of the brewery's handcrafted beer.

"A must at football-watching parties, and tourists (are) taking gallons of real Texas beer back home. I truly believe we are really onto something. Our beer sales have doubled and now, with the Growler sales, 'We're going to need a bigger boat,'" he said, slipping in a "Jaws" reference. Wish you had Rosie the Maid from "The Jetsons" or computer providing

creature comforts on the Starship Enterprise?

Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse might be able to help you with some tasks. The retailer announced last week it will be launching a home-management system called Iris this year. Those who purchase the Web interface can use it to control thermostats, locks, lighting and appliances in their homes from any location using smartphones or computers.

Companies have signed on to integrate their products with Iris. Window-outfitter Pella, for example, will offer its SmartSync technology so Iris can be used to control shades or blinds. Orbit Irrigation Products Inc. is on board for an Easy-Set Smart Irrigation Timer and Smart Landscape LED Light Controller.

Iris is cloud-based, which I guess brings the whole

Jetsons-Star Trek metaphor full circle, huh?

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