



DEALER NEWS

SERVING CANADA'S RV INDUSTRY SINCE 1971 VOL 41 NO 1






TOM RAMSAY

MERIDIAN RV MFG.
PORT COQUITLAM, BC

CANADIAN
RV DEALER
OF THE YEAR




 THE 2011
 WALTER PASESKA MEMORIAL
**CANADIAN RV DEALER
 OF THE YEAR
 AWARD**
 PRESENTED TO
TOM RAMSAY
 MERIDIAN R.V. MFG. LTD.
 Port Coquitlam/100 Mile House, British Columbia
 IN RECOGNITION OF YOUR CONTINUING
 CONTRIBUTION TO THE RV INDUSTRY AND THE
 RECREATIONAL LIFESTYLE IN CANADA
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PRESENTED AT THE 2011 CANADA NIGHT DINNER, LOUISVILLE, KY
 NOVEMBER 22, 2011





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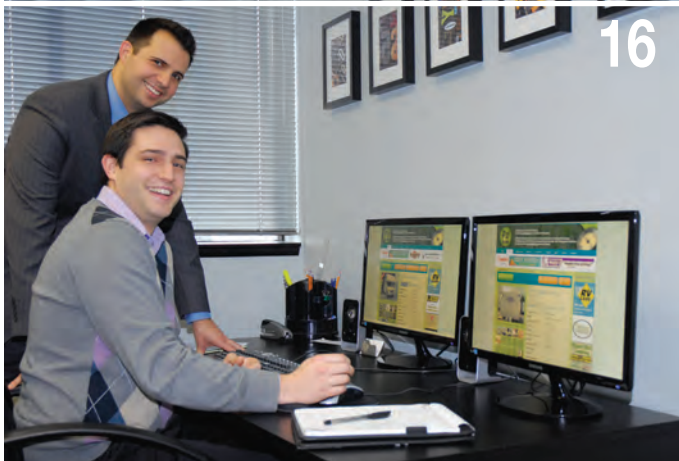
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Brighter Skies Ahead

After one of the warmest winters in recent memory, the RV season is shifting into high gear across Canada, with dealers reporting brisk sales and positive prospects for a prosperous summer of 2012.

There is no doubt that we have many things to be thankful for as we roll into the RV season. The Canadian economy is better, manufacturers are recovering from the effects of the recession, and most importantly, the winter RV show season was very successful throughout the nation.

From our perspective, there were more new prospects at this year's Canadian RV shows than we have seen in a long time – young families discovering the many advantages of the RV lifestyle, and established RV enthusiasts ready to trade-in their rig for something new, after holding off for a few years due to the economic situation.

As I travel throughout Canada, I can feel the energy radiating from campgrounds and RV dealerships as the warm weather signals the earliest start to the summer RV season in a long time. This will be a year to remember – the turbulent times have passed, and there are brighter skies ahead!

Throughout the summer of 2012, RV Lifestyle Magazine, DEALER NEWS, Vie en Plein Air, and our sister publications Power Boating Canada Magazine and Les Plaisanciers will be working with Prostate Cancer Canada on a very special "Run the Wave" campaign to raise funds for prostate cancer research. This disease, which affects one in seven men aged 45 and older, can be cured – and that is our goal as we ask RV dealers throughout Canada to join us as we raise awareness of this very important cause. I recently received a call from one of our industry leaders who has guaranteed to match anybody who contributes \$50,000 to this cause – so please take a few minutes to read the information on page 28, and join us as we "run the Wave to fight prostate cancer!"

Bill Taylor, Publisher

RV Lifestyle Magazine
Vie en Plein Air
RV Lifestyle DEALER NEWS



Dealer News

Volume 41 Number 1

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L-R: Sherry, Chris, Tammy, Ben and Tom Ramsay.

Tom Ramsay

**Meridian RV Mfg.,
Port Coquitlam and 100 Mile House, B.C.**

Tom Ramsay is an energetic and enthusiastic proponent of the RV lifestyle. His 45-year career in the RV retail and manufacturing sector was recognized at the annual RVDA of Canada Night in Louisville, when he was presented with the Walt Paseska Memorial Canadian RV Dealer of the Year Award.

This award, presented annually by RV Lifestyle Magazine, *Vie en Plein Air*, and RV Lifestyle DEALER NEWS, recognizes a Canadian RV dealer for his or her long-term commitment to the RVDA movement at provincial and national levels, charitable contributions to the community, and promotion of the RV lifestyle. The award is based upon nominations from the members of the Canadian RVDA chapters with the winner determined by a special board consisting of RVDA officials and previous Dealer of the Year winners.

The 2011 presentation ceremony celebrated the 20th anniversary of this prestigious award.

Tom Ramsay is a well-known and highly respected member of the Canadian RV dealer community, with more than 45 years of dedicated service to the industry and the community.

Meridian RV Manufacturing Ltd. was established in 1967 in Port Coquitlam, B.C., by Tom's father, Doug Ramsay Sr., along with his two sons, Doug Jr. and Tom, under the original name Meridian Mobile. The company manufactured a variety of custom travel trailers, campers and chassis-mount motorhomes.

During those early years, Tom put in many long hours working after school and on weekends while finishing high school. After graduation, his career choice was to become a veteri-

narian. "I grew up on the farm, and I loved working with the animals. I tended to most of the minor vet duties". He started advancing his studies, however, about four months later, his brother was injured in a car accident and Tom was asked to leave his studies and to come back temporarily to work in the family business. "At that time, there was my Dad, myself, and one helper – that was it – and we plugged along over the years establishing our business as a custom manufacturer."

The custom manufacturing advanced further to commercial custom building, including TV stations, medical units, cafés, and other projects. There were well over 100 different types of portable structures, as well as several different types of stationary structures. Tom reflects on that phase of the company's development: "We grew into a larger company handling the manufacturing of

TOM RAMSAY dedicated his Canadian RV Dealer of the Year Award to his mother and father because it was their guidance that instilled in him the work ethic and philosophy of life that has not only resulted in personal and business success, but a sense of pride in the many accomplishments of the company and the staff. Tom accepted the award on behalf of the family, beginning his speech in a manner that is characteristic of this gentleman, who is so highly respected by his peers...

“ WITHOUT THE INVOLVEMENT OF MY WIFE, SHERRY, AND THE CHILDREN, TAMMY, BEN AND CHRIS, THIS AWARD WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ATTAINABLE. ”

pre-fabricated modular homes, logging and mining camps – some of which were two-storey units. The RV service work was still continued in a smaller way”.

Tom’s recollections of those years reflect how difficult it was to make a living by building good custom RVs. After the economic downturn in 1981, the business lost some major contracts. At that point, Tom focused on turning the manufacturing facility into a major service centre. The company did warranty work for many of the dealerships in B.C., Alberta, and Washington State.

Tom explains the shift to a service-based business model: “In those days, most of the RV dealerships did not want to do repairs – it takes a certain degree of training and mindset to be a good RV service technician – it was a challenge for some of the dealers, but it was a wind-fall for Meridian RV. When it came to repairs and insurance claims, the bigger the claim, the better the prospect for profit, and we were able to repair many units that other shops might have considered to be write-offs. We saved the insurance companies fortunes because we were an RV manufacturer, and we could do the major repair jobs professionally and efficiently. It is a complex business – you have to give a repair estimate, and if you don’t know exactly what you are doing, you can lose money very quickly.”

Some readers who may not be familiar with Tom Ramsay and Meridian RV Manufacturing may wonder how a company that calls itself a “manufacturer” can qualify for the Dealer of the Year award. Tom explains the unusual corporate name: “we were originally incorporated as Meridian Mobile Manufacturing Limited, and we were a manufacturer, but even in that era, the name was a bit misleading. Most of the people thought that we were building mobile homes, and some thought that we were just doing mobile service, so we thought that we should change the name to reflect our activity in the RV sector. That is when we became Meridian RV, and we kept the “manufacturing” term for legal reasons, but we have not done any custom mobile building for the past 25 years. Most of the time, we refer to our-

selves simply as Meridian RV.”

A Strong Work Ethic is the Key to Success

Tom’s work ethic stems from his childhood, when the family farmed in the Port Coquitlam area. Tom, who had started on the path to become a veterinarian, was called-in to assist in the operation of the company in 1971. At that time, the company manufactured all components of the modular homes, from the frames to the upholstery, and Meridian RV facilities in Port Coquitlam encompassed a 30-bay shop where warranty work was done for many of the RV dealers in the surrounding region.

Tom and his wife Sherry opened a second Meridian RV location in 100 Mile House, B.C., in 2007, with full sales, service and parts departments. Today, the dealerships sell a full range of towable RV’s, from fold-down camping trailers to luxury fifth wheels.

When we presented the Canadian RV Dealer of the Year Award to Tom, he began his acceptance speech by thanking the Selection Committee and dedicating the award to his Mom and Dad. “They were the ones that taught me my work ethic and dedication. Unfortunately, they have both passed away, but I know they are proudly looking on.” Tom accepted the award and emphasized the tremendous contribution that his family has made to the success of the business. “Sherry was very instrumental in the growth of the business – without the support of your spouse you just cannot spend the time and effort to grow the business. Our daughter Tammy is the Controller, and she works on all of the business systems that help us compete in the modern corporate environment. Our oldest son Ben started out in the service area, and he is a licensed technician, with a diploma from the RV Service Technician program at Okanagan College – he has worked into the position of parts and service manager, and his skills are still building. Our son Chris is our General Sales Manager. He went through the service department as well, and he has a very thorough knowledge of how the units are

designed and manufactured.”

The Ramsay family is privileged to have three generations actively involved in the growth of the company. The children started at the bottom and worked their way up – they were offered many other opportunities, but they chose to work in the RV business, something that Tom and Sherry are very proud of.

Putting Customers First

At Meridian RV, there is no doubt that the customer comes first. Tom recognizes the importance of a solid corporate image within the industry, and the community. “Our business was built the hard way, by word of mouth referrals. We sell to the families, friends, and acquaintances of our customers. We advertise, of course, but the growth of the business – its’ foundation, has been built soundly on a straightforward, honest approach. We are a very honest firm – we have earned our money and paid our bills the hard way. Our integrity is beyond reproach.”

Family values run strong and deep in the Ramsay household, and they share their love of the great outdoors and their approach to the RV lifestyle with their customers. Perhaps that is the key element to the success of the company, and the great satisfaction that Tom and the Meridian RV team derive from being one of Canada’s favourite RV dealerships.

RVDA Activities

Tom Ramsay has been an avid supporter of the RVDA of B.C., and the Canadian RVDA movement, serving on the B.C. Board from 1998 through 2010, including terms as Director and Executive. His activities on behalf of the RVDA of Canada include seven years as a member of the board.

RV Service training has been a major project for Tom, who chaired the RVDA of B.C. Service Seminars and sat on the Okanagan College RV PAC Advisory Board. “I am a strong believer in the association – a single voice doesn’t get much recognition, but multiple voices can accomplish goals across Canada.”

Tom’s focus in the RVDA of B.C.



started in the service training area, because of his expertise in the field. “That was the way I could make the best contribution to the association - there is a great difference between the RV dealers who have their roots in the automotive industry, and those, like ourselves, have their roots in RV service – the automotive dealers sell a necessity – we sell a lifestyle.”

Community Involvement

One of the key criteria of the Canadian RV Dealer of the Year Award is a dedication to the community. Tom Ramsay has spent a lifetime serving his fellow citizens in a range of community activities that include support of the Scouting movement, and a variety of roles on civic committees in Port Coquitlam.

A member of the Masonic Lodge since 1985, and a Shriner, Tom keeps his schedule open for community service. He has been a Rotarian since 1989, serving as Rotary Club President in 1995 and 2000. He was awarded the prestigious Paul Harris Fellowship in recognition of his service to the Rotary International Circle. The Fellowship is an acknowledgment of significant achievements in club activities - it is the highest award of recognition bestowed by the organization.

Tom has been very active in a wide range of community activities, and he

encourages business owners to become more involved with the community at large. “The value of community service is very important – it is a way to give back to the community. We support many of the community programs, including sports teams, charitable drives, and a wide range of programs. When a business person supports the community, the community responds by supporting the business. The service clubs provide the ideal way to make these community contributions – with the Rotary Club, your contribution can be channeled 100% to the cause – none of the money goes for expenses.”

Planning for the Future

As the head of a family business, Tom Ramsay is always cognizant of the importance of planning for the future. With three adult children working in the business and learning all aspects of the daily operations, Meridian RV is well prepared to grow and adapt to the changing needs of the community, the business, and the RV industry. Tom has some interesting insights for RV dealers operating a family business: “You might consider more outside training for the children – perhaps working at another dealership – this helps to expand their knowledge of the business in general. In our case, the children have all taken training courses to enhance their skills

within the RV dealership environment.”

Words of Wisdom from the Dealer of the Year...

RV Lifestyle DEALER NEWS took the opportunity to ask Tom Ramsay to share some words of wisdom with his fellow Canadian RV Dealers.... After a moment of reflection, he offered the following advice, based on many years of hard work and lessons learned from a wide range of situations: “First of all, I believe that it doesn’t matter what size the dealer is, they would benefit from being a member of their RVDA association. When you talk with a family member who would be available to take on a role in the dealership, it is important to get them involved in the provincial RVDA, as you progress through the RVDA structure, you learn a great deal.”

“I would suggest that Canadian RV dealers try to work closer with their colleagues in the industry – your competitor is not necessarily the dealership just down the street. You should encourage family and staff to get the proper training to help build a stronger business and industry, and involve yourself in the community that you serve, because when you become a community leader it not only helps your fellow citizens, it gives your staff and your family a strong role model to follow.” 🍁

2011-2012 RVDA of Canada RV Technician Bursary

About This Bursary

RVDA of Canada will award 21 bursaries valued at \$1000 each and 2 bursaries at \$2000 each to eligible RV technicians in all Canadian provinces who have enrolled in RV apprenticeship or related education programs recognized by both Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association (RVDA) of Canada and The RV Learning Center.

RVDA of Canada would like to encourage all eligible RV technicians to apply. A selection committee will review all applications that meet the bursary requirements.

Students enrolled in formal RV apprenticeship and related programs (see complete list below) will need to achieve a minimum of 70% or higher average depending on the passing grade as specified by the course. Bursaries will be awarded to students with serious interest and desire to succeed in the RV industry as demonstrated by successful program completion with higher than average grades.

Application deadline is **June 1, 2012**. Applications can be e-mailed to jobs@rvcareers.ca or mailed to:

2011-2012 RV Technician Bursary Selection Committee

Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association of Canada
204-6411 Buswell St.
Richmond, BC V6Y 2G5



Confirmation of the receipt of your application will be sent by e-mail.

Bursary Requirements

- Successfully pass each course with a minimum of 70% passing grade or higher depending on the course specification.
- Supply copies of payment for course registration and course transcript (verified and signed by course instructor), for the 2011-2012 term(s).
- Submit application on or before June 1, 2012.
- Applicable only to the eligible training programs* listed at right, and completed between August 1, 2011 and May 31, 2012.
- Complete application form with clear specification of the \$1000 RV Technician Bursary or the \$2000 RV Technician Bursary.
- One bursary application per technician
- The bursary will be awarded to the technician. The dealership must be a member in good standing with the Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association (RVDA) of Canada.

* programs are subject to change

Eligible Programs (In-school and Web-based) (Programs are subject to change)

- Centre de formation professionnelle des patriotes (Quebec)**
 - Entretien et Réparation de Caravanes (RV Maintenance and Repair)
- Centre de formation professionnelle de Nova / Nova Career Centre (Quebec)**
 - RV Maintenance and Repair
- Centre de formation professionnelle Samuel-De-Champlain (Quebec)**
 - Ouvrier en Entretien et Réparation de Caravanes (RV Maintenance and Repair)
- FRVTA Distance Learning Network (Florida, USA)**
 - RV Technician certification Preparation course
- Okanagan College (British Columbia)**
 - Recreation Vehicle Service Technician Apprenticeship program
 - Recreation Vehicle Service Technician Entry-Level Training program
 - Recreation Vehicle Service Technician Online Training courses (core courses)
- Ontario RVDA / Technical Standards and Safety Authority (Ontario)**
 - RV 2 & RV 1 Propane Certification
- RV Learning Center (Virginia, USA)**
 - RV Technician Certification Preparation
- Southern Alberta Institute of Technology Polytechnic (Alberta)**
 - Recreation Vehicle Service Technician Apprenticeship program
- Winnipeg Technical College (Manitoba)**
 - Recreation Vehicle Service Technician Entry-Level Training program

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RV UPDATE

Buy Local

The RVDA of Canada is working with its provincial and regional RVDA partners to make consumers aware of the benefits of buying from their RV from their local dealer. The association has made available a brochure for RVDA show promoters and dealers which highlights the benefits of buying your RV close to home. Copies of this brochure are available for dealers' use and key points will be listed on our new website: www.buylocalrv.ca or www.achatlocalvr.ca. We are encouraging our members to create a link on their own sites to this domain so that consumers can access additional resources on this topic.

Government Relations Parliamentary Partners Program

The RVDA of Canada is in the process of developing a new Parliamentary Partners Program to assist us in our overall advocacy efforts. The purpose of the Parliamentary Partners Program is to identify RVDA members who have a strong personal relationship with a Member of Parliament (MP) or Senator and to facilitate more frequent communication with that individual on legislative issues affecting the RV industry.

During the past six to eight years, several changes have occurred in the Ottawa lobbying community which have made it more difficult to impact the legislative process. During that period, a phone call from a constituent was usually all that was needed to get a sponsor for legislation or to get a vote for a bill in Committee. Today, more than ever, most organizations and public interest groups recognize the importance of grassroots lobbying and have stepped up their local involvement. As a result, Parliamentary offices are being bom-

barded by letters and calls from constituents demanding help on a great number of issues. This means that a phone call from an RVDA member to a Member of Parliament or Senator generally does not have the same impact as it did several years ago. Usually, the constituents cannot speak directly with the Member of Parliament or Senator, but must talk with a staff member who cannot give a commitment on an issue. The issue is explained to the Member, second-hand, by a staff member who often does not fully understand the problem and certainly does not pursue the issue with the emotion of one who is directly affected.

This does not mean that the importance of grassroots lobbying has diminished in any way. Constituent contacts are still the most effective way to communicate opposition or support of an issue. However, in today's environment, direct contact with Members and Senators is needed to ensure that we effectively deliver our message to Parliament.

Under this program, RVDA will search for the member who has a strong personal relationship with each Senator and Member of Parliament. If the person agrees to the responsibilities of the position, he or she would be appointed a Parliamentary Partner. RVDA firmly believes that the contacts and relationships developed by the Parliamentary Partners program will become a critical component to RVDA's legislative activities and will help contribute to its success in national advocacy.

RV Technician Bursary Program

The RVDA of Canada will award 21 bursaries valued at \$1000 each and 2 bursaries at \$2000 each to eligible RV technicians in all Canadian provinces

who have enrolled in RV apprenticeship or related education programs recognized by both the Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association (RVDA) of Canada and The RV Learning Center.

RVDA of Canada would like to encourage all eligible RV technicians to apply. A selection committee will review all applications that meet the bursary requirements.

Students enrolled in formal RV apprenticeship and related programs (see complete list below) will need to achieve a minimum of 70% or higher average depending on the passing grade as specified by the course. Bursaries will be awarded to students with serious interest and desire to succeed in the RV industry as demonstrated by successful program completion with higher than average grades.

Application deadline is **June 1, 2012**. Applications can be e-mailed to jobs@rvcareers.ca

Payroll Survey

The RVDA of Canada has once again undertaken its National Payroll Survey. This year, the survey has been enhanced to give all of our dealer members a more accurate reporting of current compensation packages and vacancies.

Payroll information is collected on an annual basis to provide dealers with information pertinent to employee reviews and compensation as well as evaluating the competitiveness of the RV industry. We also use the findings about our industry during our advocacy efforts and to further develop training programs. Only those that participate receive the survey results.

*For additional information on the above mentioned program, please contact the RVDA of Canada office at 607-718-6325. **

A professional portrait of Christopher Mahony, a man with short dark hair, wearing a dark brown suit jacket over a red and blue checkered shirt. He is sitting and looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a dark, textured grey.

“ I am delighted to join **GO RVING CANADA** in my new role and I am very much looking forward to continuing to showcase the **FUN, FREEDOM** and **FLEXIBILITY** associated with RV travel. ”

CHRISTOPHER MAHONY

CHRISTOPHER MAHONY

GO RV'ING

CANADA

As the spring RV season is in full force and summer draws nearer, Go RVing Canada is ready to hit the high road. There are a number of exciting initiatives on the horizon that are sure to be beneficial to dealers and consumers alike.

March 2012 saw the appointment of Go RVing Canada's new Executive Director, Christopher Mahony. Christopher brings in a strong presence, credibility and adeptness in collaborating with all levels of management, media, stakeholders and the public.

Go RVing Canada is delighted with the positive change. Jeff Hanemaayer, Chairman of the Go RVing Canada Board stated "Christopher's broad business, association and communications expertise, along with his enthusiasm for the RV lifestyle, will bring in a whole range of exciting new ideas to the table."

Christopher joins Go RVing Canada from his most recent Executive Director role for the International Confectionery Association. He is a strong leader in managing and maintaining marketing strategies with agencies and PR firms. In addition, he holds 10 plus years of Board experience with national associations.

Christopher has had a long-growing passion for RVing which began when he first drove across Canada in 2001. He stated "I am delighted to join Go RVing Canada in my new role and I am

very much looking forward to continuing to showcase the fun, freedom and flexibility associated with RV travel."

One of the many positive amenities associated with RVing continues to be the incredible affordability of an RV vacation. The economic climate is on the road to recovery, but it is clear that a growing number of Canadians continue to pursue the RV lifestyle as an affordable vacation choice and an incredible travel option for their families.

Go RVing Canada recently released results of a study, conducted by PKF Consulting, which found that, depending on the model, a typical RV vacation can be up to 78% less expensive per day than any other type of family trip, regardless of trip duration, distance, or location. This statistic has increased by 3% since the last study, conducted in 2009.

With continued affordability in the marketplace, an RV holiday is the perfect way for families to reconnect with each other without breaking the bank. There is nothing more valuable to families than time together, and an RV holiday provides the ideal setting. In fact, studies have shown that families who RV together spend more time together. Not only that, 90% of RV owners say that it is the best way to travel with kids.

"We are looking forward to continuing to highlight these and other positive benefits associated with RV travel, and as such, we are embarking on an exciting and revamped strategy to get our

message out to RV dealers and consumers," said Mahony.

In the midst of Go RVing Canada's new national advertising campaign, the coalition is also working on a new, vibrant user-friendly website. The improved website will serve as an incredible resource for dealers and consumers alike, highlighting dealer and campground information, RV tips, special features, social media initiatives and more.

Go RVing Canada will be reviewing its short and long-term goals and objectives at its upcoming board meeting, being held in Vancouver on May 16th, 2012. The Board and Mahony are excited to review & implement PR & advertising strategies that connect with consumer and effectively grow the RV lifestyle.

"This (meeting) will serve as a prime opportunity to explore our current workplan and commence to establish a strategic shift in our goals and direction. We look forward to sharing these new initiatives with Canadians in the near future", concluded Mahony. Certainly a key focus for Go RVing Canada in the immediate future will be the launch of its dynamic – user friendly website, as well as the accompanying social media and online advertising initiatives. Promoting the RV lifestyle is forefront in Go RV Canada's mind, leveraging media vehicles both old and new in order to accomplish this goal is paramount. ♣

Montreal RV Show Breakfast



Title Sponsor Denis Lachaine, *President Préloc Auto & RV*, with representatives Cynthia Pouliot Pichette, Maryse Leclerc, *Préloc Administrations* and TD AUTO FINANCE the co-sponsor representative; Marleen Guilbault, *Director of Territory, Recreational Products, Recreation & Marine Financing, Auto TD* with Pierre Savoie event organizer and General Manager, *Vie En Plein Air*.

The date was March 9, 2012 for the big Vie en Plein Air breakfast at the Olympic Stadium, sponsored by PreLoc Auto and RV and co-sponsored by TD Auto Finance. The Annual Breakfast for the RV Dealers was held in Salon 26 and brought together more than 100 invited RV dealers, offering them a couple of hours of friendly relaxed networking and motivation by giving them a hearty breakfast and a cheery pep talk before the doors opened for the Montreal RV Show.

“We are excited to be a sponsor of this event, continuing our commitment to the RV dealers,” said Craig Haynes, National Sales Manager, TD Auto Finance. Denis Lachaine, President of PreLoc Auto and RV’s said: “The generosity and relaxed atmosphere of the breakfast is what dealers look forward to before the long hours of the RV Show, and we are happy to be sponsoring for the 7th year.”

Attendees were all presented with a specially designed coffee mug with the logos of title sponsor PreLoc Auto and RV and co-sponsor TD Auto Finance.

Winners of the 7th anniversary breakfast door prizes were as follows: a deluxe prize, offered by Denis Lachaine, President of PreLoc Auto and RV, and title sponsor of the breakfast, was an iPad with Save the Date - won by Billy Girard, Owner of North Shore RV Repentigny, PQ.

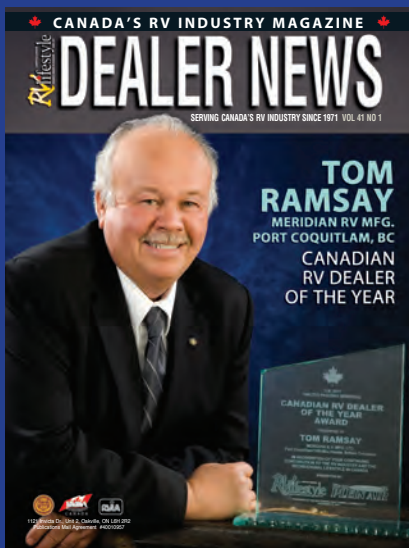
The winners of a half-page ad in Vie en Plein Air magazine were Ren Berthiaume of Centre Roulotte 1444, St-Janvier, PQ, and our 2010 Canadian RV Dealer of the Year, Daniel Morin of Roulottes Desjardins, St-Jerome, PQ.

Vie en Plein Air wishes to extend a big thank you to all who attended the breakfast, and to PreLoc Auto and RV, and TD Auto Finance for their generous sponsorship! 🍁



Scotiabank would like to congratulate Tom Ramsay on his outstanding achievements and for being honoured as the 2011 *Walter Paeska Memorial Canadian RV Dealer of the Year.*

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L - R Vince Russo; President, Matthew Mancini, Sales/Marketing Manager; Tony Mancini, Lead Web Designer; Wade MacKenzie, Creative Director and Debbie Maurer, Accounts Receivable/Technical Support and the friendly voice on the phone.

RVHotline

Celebrates 10 Years!

For over 10 years, serving Canadian RV Dealers and supporting the RV industry in Canada. RVHotline has been a proud member of the RVDA and ardent advocates of the RV lifestyle. Being the only classified-style listings website with an RVDA endorsement the team at RVHotline takes great pride in serving RV Dealers across Canada. With the continuing popularity of the internet and the new wave of mobile and laptop customers researching RVs online dealerships have had to embrace the technology and are now looking for alternate online marketing platforms. The RVHotline.com portal website and its Inventory Management System help fill this demand. Many of Canada's top RVDA dealers have already joined RVHotline - but for those that haven't here are a series of questions and answers designed to outline what RVHotline is, how it works and what it can do for your dealership.

Q: What is RVHotline?

Matt: We are a Canadian owned and operated classified-style website that offers listing packages to Canadian RVDA dealers looking to increase their online presence and increase leads. We are the only RVDA endorsed listings website in Canada and have been supporting the industry since inception. RV listings are not the only thing you'll find on RVHotline though. We have a number of monthly feature articles, as well as a host of RV-specific educational section, from Traveling with Pets, First Aid for Travelers to the history of RVing. We also list Canadian RV Shows, Tours & Rallies, Storage Facilities and much, much more.

Q: How does RVHotline work?

Matt: Well, you may think, it's just a listings website, right? Wrong. Its real strength comes when you have the RVHotline team integrate our listings service on your dealership website. With a membership package comes the opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. Imagine you upload your units to our website and now you are advertising your inventory on one of Canada's most popular RV listing websites reaching over 400,000 unique RV shoppers each year. Now imagine that while uploading your units to our site you were simultaneously uploading those same units to your own website. That's how RVHotline really works. From the beginning we designed RVHotline to cut back on the amount of work necessary to advertise on multiple websites. Our inventory system is easy to install and comes in two versions, basic and custom.

Q: What can RVHotline do for my dealership?

Matt: First and foremost we are in the business of generating leads. Last year RVHotline had more than 400,000 unique visitors generating more than 9,000 leads for our member dealers. Leads are not the only service we offer however. We also have an award winning web design team that will help you market your dealership more efficiently online. Our web design team will optimize your existing website, redesign it from scratch or just upgrade the inventory system to work in con-

junction with the RVHotline Inventory Management System.

Q: How do I add my inventory to the website?

Matt: Many dealers add their units manually but for those dealers who require it an XML feed can be set up so that RVHotline can read inventory data straight from your DMS (dealer management system). Every time you update your DMS it sends notification to us and our backend then automatically picks up those changes and updates our database. Our corporate policy is one of transparency and cooperation, so for us working with our competitors is something we don't mind doing – as long as it benefits our members. Some of the current web providers we have active FEEDS with include IDS, MYRVAdvantage, InteractRV, ARI Networks, PearTree and many more. Please contact us to see if we can work with your provider.

Q: Why choose RVHotline.com over other leading RV Classified websites?

Matt: For one reason we are the most competitively priced option available for advertising your units online – and in terms of leads generated we rival any competitor. When you compare price to leads ratios we are heads and shoulders above anyone else in our niche market. Our level of customer service is also second to none. When you phone us, you're guaranteed to speak directly with one of our designers or developers. If you prefer to request information be email you'll hear back within two days no later. No automated phone system or voice mail, and no excuses. Contact us and ask to see our portfolio of work or a list of testimonials from our many satisfied Dealer Members.

Q: Can you help me drive more traffic to our website?

Matt: Yes, whether you're looking for basic optimization, a full SEO package, a complete custom redesign or just a simple Inventory Integration we can do it all.

Basic optimization is the process of analyzing your current website and cleaning up the inconsistencies to ensure that it's optimized for better search engine readability. It's a fairly quick pro-

cess and is relatively inexpensive.

A full SEO package includes basic optimization plus many other search-friendly techniques and services designed to increase your organic search traffic over time.

Our complete custom redesigns are any dealers best bet to get exactly what you are looking for. If you've seen features on other sites – we can implement them. If you want certain features and don't know how to explain them our team has years of experience and can help you work through your wants and needs. The sites we currently build utilize today's best practices and web standards and can begin to build you new traffic from day one. Our team specializes in RV Dealer websites – that's all we do!

For some dealers simple inventory integration is all that's required. The way our system works – you only need to upload once, and your units show up in two places RVHotline and on your new inventory system on your own website.

Q: How much does all this cost?

Matt: The best way to determine the bottom line is to contact us for a quote. We can send you our various price lists and we can gather a better feel for your particular requirements in about 10 minutes over the phone. Every dealership has different needs, and we're here to make sure our recommendations match those needs.

Q: What else can you do for my dealership?

Matt: We are really a full service design firm – and that means we have the capabilities and experienced staff to take your dealership from one end of the spectrum to the other. We can help you design your logo, pick the proper domain name, develop & host your website, set your dealership up with all the email accounts you need, design a social media strategy for Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and more, design all your marketing materials, tradeshow presentations... you name it we can produce it.

We would like to thank RVLifestyle Magazine again for giving us the opportunity to reach Canadian RV Dealers and explain our unique approach to online marketing. Call us for a free consultation today at 1-866-642-2343. 🌟

NTP Canada Names New Sales Manager

NTP Canada, a Division of Keystone Automotive Operations, Inc. recently named Robert Edwards as their new Sales Manager focusing on the RV aftermarket for Canada. "He brings a wealth of experience in serving the needs of RV dealers throughout Canada as well as extensive product knowledge. We're excited to have him join our team," said Ralph Ruzzi, Vice President of Sales Canada.



Edwards draws on over 30 years of experience in multiple segments of the industry. He started at the dealership level working the wash bay and steadily climbed the ranks as Shop Technician, Parts Manager on to General Manager. His experience with the supplier manufacturer segment of the business enabled him to apply his understanding of dealership operations to aftermarket and OEM sales. Edwards noted, "That's why I'm here. This is the most exciting opportunity I've seen in my career! The concepts and principles that drive Keystone Automotive and NTP are a natural fit. There's much we can do to service the needs of RV dealers throughout Canada."

Edwards describes himself as a family man with a loving wife of 25 years (this July) and two daughters. His oldest is working in child care and the youngest attends the University at North Bay in Ontario. ✨



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Sylvain “Sly” Lussier Appointed SVP, GM Coast Distribution System

The Coast Distribution System today announced that Sylvain “Sly” Lussier has been appointed Senior Vice President and General Manager of Coast Canada. Lussier is relocating to St. Bruno, Canada to direct Coast’s Canadian operations and oversee the company’s growth.

“I’m pleased to have this opportunity to work more closely with our Canadian teams and to grow our relationships with customers and vendors across the country,” says Lussier. “My family is very

much looking forward to moving back to Canada.”

The Lussier family founded International Trailer Supply (ITS), which Coast acquired in 1991. Lussier has considerable experience in the RV aftermarket in Canada, Europe, and the United States. He was the sales leader of the Coast’s Canadian business for many years. Most recently, Lussier headed up product management and corporate marketing for Coast, and will continue to participate in Coast’s distri-

bution marketing strategy from Canada.

The Coast Distribution System is a leading North American manufacturer and distributor of recreational products and outdoor power equipment. The company has 17 strategically located distribution centers in the United States and Canada, offering same day shipping for most products. Coast supplies products to the independent RV, marine, outdoor power equipment, and pool and patio dealers. Reach Sly at Coast Canada, at (450) 441-2707. ♣

Elevation Ramps Up New Regional Sales Manager Hired

CrossRoads RV is pleased to welcome Mike Kale to the CrossRoads RV family. As Regional Sales Manager, Mike will have responsibility for representing the Elevation toy hauler line to both Southwest Canada and the West Coast of the United States.

Prior to joining CrossRoads RV, Mike worked extensively in the RV industry’s retail and wholesale arenas. Most recently, he was with La Mesa RV. Additionally, Mike has worked as a Regional Sales Manager for Phoenix USA of Elkhart, Indiana

and TrailManor Inc. of Lake City, Tennessee.

“Mike’s history of building mutually beneficial business relationships is exactly the element we need to continue to grow the Elevation line on the West Coast,” notes Kevin Combs, Product Manager of the Elevation line for CrossRoads RV. “We are very pleased he joined the Elevation team!”

Mike will be located out of his home office in Mesa, Arizona and traveling as needed for dealer support. He is immediately available to assist U.S.

dealers west of the Mississippi River and dealers in Southwest Canada. Contact Mike at: mkale@crossroadsrv.com mobile: 541-954-8944

CrossRoads RV manufactures a wide variety of travel trailers, fifth wheels, and park models at five plant locations. Its products are distributed through dealers throughout the United States, Canada, France, Japan, and Australia. CrossRoads RV is a division of Thor Industries, Inc. More information on the company can be obtained online at www.crossroadsrv.com or by calling 888-226-7496. ♣

CANADIAN HOSPITALITY NIGHT



SAL GROUP-Industrial Alliance Pacific Insurance and Financial Services Inc. (IAP) returned as Title Sponsor joining co-sponsors RBC-Royal Bank and RV Hotline, Hospitality Night in Louisville.

RV Lifestyle Magazine's Louisville Event was a huge success in 2011 due in large part to SAL GROUP, a division of Industrial Alliance Pacific Insurance and Financial Services Inc. who continued its long-term support by remaining the presenting sponsors of 2011's event. SAL GROUP generously gave away 6 IPADS to RV Dealers through the popular doorprizes generously supplied by all the of 2011 event sponsors.

Kevin Calladine, National Business Development Manager, SAL Group said he was excited that the company continues its commitment to RV Lifestyle's Canadian Hospitality Night and is looking forward to fostering longstanding relationships with the RV dealer body. "The Canadian Cocktail party gives us an opportunity to continue our role as a title sponsor and to show the dealers our ongoing support. The success of Canadian RV industry is important to us, and we appreciate the confidence and trust that dealers have in our quality products and services. It gives us a chance to thank them for their partnership, which we intend to grow for many

years to come," Calladine explained.

"The generosity and relaxed atmosphere of the Canadian cocktail party is what the dealers look forward to after a long day of walking the show. We enjoy celebrating our mutual achievements and to continue working closely with our dealer partners in an effort to maximize their business potential," said Trevor Smolski, SAL Group's Regional Manager for Alberta. New Co Sponsor RV Hotline, couldn't make it to the event but they were happy to send wonderful door prizes to the venue. "We are also eager to engage in developing website opportunities with RV dealers who want to expand their business online; said Matthew Mancini Sales/Marketing Manager with RV Hotline a division of Synergy Pro Solutions in Hamilton, Ontario.

RV Lifestyle Magazine celebrated with SAL GROUP – IAP as they returned as title sponsor, "its 16 years together of helping us present the RV Lifestyle Magazine Canadian Hospitality Night; said Jo-Ann Searls, RV Lifestyle Magazine's event organizer. We are also

thrilled to have partnered for the third year co-sponsorship again with RBC Royal Bank. George Steinsky, National Sales Director, Indirect Lending at RBC Royal Bank was pleased to continue sponsoring the Canadian Night. "We're proud of our support of the RV industry through this event, sponsorship of the RVDA and, most importantly, our record as a consistent lender with committed industry experts." Dave Stefanuk, RBC's most recognized RV specialist, shares George's enthusiasm. "We work hard to help our dealers at every show and behind the scenes with approvals and funding, and it was great to get together with everyone at last year's event."

Dealer's planning to attending Louisville this November should mark their calendars... as The popular Canadian event will take place on Tuesday, November 27, 2012 in Ballroom A at the conveniently located Crowne Plaza/Airport Hotel (formerly the Executive Inn) – right in front of the Louisville Expo/Fair grounds. For directions to the venue please go to www.cplouisville.com. 🍁



1. RBC ROYAL BANK, George Steinsky, National Sales Director Indirect Lending, presents a fabulous door prize to Keith Donkin Northern Lite Mfg; they make Truck Campers in Kelowna BC.



2. Title sponsors flank RVDA !!! SAL GROUP Alberta Regional Manager, Trevor Smolski, Eleonore Hamm, President Recreation Vehicles Dealer Association of Canada; and Vicki Yan Marketing Manager SAL GROUP.

3. High River Autoplex RV's Doug McLaughlin and Jerry Howe.



4. Luck right out of the gate! Preloc's Auto & RV President, Denis Lachaine presents a first time event, first time too Louisville KY RV Dealer attendee with an IPAD!



5. RBC ROYAL BANK Co Sponsors were on hand to greet guests and hand out their great door prizes - L - R from RBC ROYAL BANK, George Steinsky, National Sales Director Indirect Lending, Dave Stefanuk Senior Product Specialist and Max Thompson, Director Personal Lending.

6. Atlas RV Products Gary Brewernick brought along his wife to enjoy the fun with friends at the event.

7. Bucars RV won the RV HOTLINE RETRO Leather Jacket everyone had their eye on. Presented by Dealer of the Year Tom Ramsay.(R)



8. Title sponsor SAL GROUP Alberta Regional Manager, Trevor Smolski presents Adam Stovold of the RV Warehouse with a IPAD while event organizer Jo-Ann Searls, RV Lifestyle Magazine shares in the joy!



Title Sponsors: (L-R) Trevor Smolski, Regional Manager, Alberta SAL GROUP; Kevin Calladine, National Business Development Manager SAL GROUP, Michel Rousseau, Preloc Administrations, Denis Lachaine, President Preloc Auto & VR, Vicki Yan, Marketing Manager SAL GROUP; Tommy Cantafio in front of Robert Thompson, Business Development Manager SAL GROUP, Ontario; Matt Fehr, Business Development Manager SAL GROUP British Columbia; Henry Ninaber, District Marketing Representative Ontario SAL GROUP, Dan Cleary, District Marketing Representative, Alberta SAL GROUP.

ATLAS Niagara Festival

Trailer Coach Products

Atlas Trailer Coach Products held its 16th Annual Buying Show on November 15 & 16, in Niagara Falls at the fabulous Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort. The show was well attended, mood was positive and business was brisk. It is great to have a Canadian RV industry event such as this to continue bringing dealers together from across the country.



Garry Bewernick, President congratulates Art Tischer, General Manager for 30 years of service with Atlas.
(No, that isn't the Atlas corporate helicopter)



Good Attendance!



Good Products!



Good Fun!



Good Food!



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RV Care Reaches Milestone for the 2012 Season

The RV Care Network has reached a milestone to start the 2012 RV season with a total of sixty (60) RV Care dealer locations across Canada to serve their traveling customers.

“We have more than doubled in size over the past 4 years. Each year we look for dealers who are committed to the high standards of customer service and professionalism that the RV Care Network represents to the RVing public. We add new dealers in the winter and launch the new RV season with our expanded network at the retail shows that start in January” explains Earl Manning, Vice President of RV Care Network.

This year the RV Care Network is pleased to welcome the following RV dealerships:

- Candan RV Centre in Langley, BC
- Country Camping Leisure Products in Salmon Arm, BC
- Islander RV in Grand Fall-Windsor, Newfoundland
- Islander RV in St John’s, Newfoundland

- South Thompson RV in Kamloops, BC
- Traveland RV Superstore in Langley, BC

A map and complete list of the 60 RV Care locations are available on the website at www.rvcare.ca

All sixty RV Care locations are committed to work together to provide their customers with support and service when they travel throughout Canada. Everyone who purchases an RV from an RV Care dealer can look forward to being treated as well at any RV Care location as they are at the dealership where they purchased their new or used unit. Whether it’s a service or repair that’s necessary for them to complete their trip safely, or if they just need some supplies or directions to the local sites, RV Care customers can look forward to a friendly face in a faraway place when they pull into an RV Care dealership.

RV Care also works with a selection of industry partners to provide products and services to the RV Care dealers, which helps them provide top quality service and value to their customers.

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For more information visit www.rvcare.ca or contact Earl Manning at 604-882-2551. ✪



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		Description: TD Canada Trust Magazine Ad								RV Lifestyle/Dealer News	
		Ad #: P1590-RV		Trim: 8.125"x10.875"						RV Compass	
		Printed at 100%		Client: TD Canada Trust		Bleed: 8.625"x11.125"				BLACK	
		MOD DATE: Jan 31/12	Contact: Vince	Docket #: P1590	Live: 7"x 9.5"						
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