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## Plummeting Oil Prices Continue to Push Price Down at Pumps

By: RV PRO Staff  
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Gasoline prices returned to their downward trajectory in the last week, according to data from price-tracker GasBuddy.com.

The national average shed 8.5 cents per gallon, falling to \$2.60 per gallon by Monday (Aug. 24), 84 cents lower than last year's \$3.44.

Indiana led the nation in lower gas prices last week, dropping 19.8 cents per gallon.

Over 1,000 gas stations in the U.S. now boast selling prices under \$2 per gallon, a number likely to increase by the holidays. More stations are selling gasoline under \$2 per gallon today than over \$4 per gallon, a sign that the West Coast's pain at the pump is over. 49 states saw declines versus a week ago, with just Wyoming sitting out of the party with a slight rise (0.3 cents).

The big move lower at the pump comes as oil prices continue their apparent free-fall, moving under \$39 a barrel this morning, the lowest in over six and a half years.

The Midwest, which had been home to quickly rising prices in recent weeks, has calmed down after news sources reported that BP's sprawling Whiting, Indiana refinery could come online much sooner than expected after temporary repairs were made.

While refinery issues have seemingly been put in the rearview for the Midwest, they may be just beginning for the Northeast, after a Friday fire at a PBF refinery in Delaware City. GasBuddy will be monitoring the markets in reaction to the fire, and it's possible the fire will be lost in the midst of a

selloff in global stock markets.

States with largest Gas Drop:  
Indiana, down 19.8 cents per gallon  
Ohio, down 19.2 cents per gallon  
Michigan, down 18.2 cents per gallon  
Illinois, down 13.6 cents per gallon  
Missouri, down 12.9 cents per gallon

## Fifth wheel or travel trailer?

Russ and Tina DeMaris

In the world of towables, the two classes most compared by prospective buyers are fifth wheels and travel trailers. Which one is better for you? There are a few variables that can make a difference.

First, the major difference between a "fiver" and a travel trailer are the hitch point. While a travel trailer attaches to a ball mount at about the level of the tow rig's rear bumper, a fifth wheel attaches to a special hitch system mounted close to the rear axle in a truck--most often a pickup truck, although we've seen flatbeds used for towing fivers.

Here's where the first difference in your lifestyle comes in: A fifth wheel always requires a truck to pull, while you may be able to use other types of tow vehicles to pull a travel trailer. If your SUV or even a four-door or sedan has the rating towing capacity for the trailer you want, you're in.

If you opt for the fifth wheel route, you will have a considerable amount of the truck bed's real-estate taken up with a fifth wheel hitch system. You won't be able to use a canopy to store things when towing, and if you decide to remove the hitch when not towing, it's a heavy thing, and not something to be undertaken lightly. Towing a travel trailer, you can have your full bed area available for storage.

From a lifestyle perspective, we've found by experience that a fifth wheel, foot for foot of length, provides more living space. Additionally, fivers are far more likely to have greater "basement storage" available in compartments accessed from outside the rig. Because the bedroom is often placed up over the hitch, the seeming "residential" feeling of a fifth wheel is often greater, the "feel" is more like home to us.

And yes, fifth wheels are an "easier" tow than a travel trailer. There's far less sway involved. If sway is a problem with a travel trailer, you can add on accessory sway control systems--at an additional cost. Backing a fifth wheel versus the travel trailer--is it easier? We'll just say, it's different. A travel trailer responds much quicker to steering commands than does a fifth wheel, so when switching from one to the other, your mind set has to make a change over. If you've learned to back in a travel trailer, be prepared to have to learn to pull a lot farther forward when backing your fifth wheel into the same spot.

Since some of the length of a fiver is over the bed of the truck, your overall combination length of tow vehicle and trailer is a bit less, which may be helpful if you RV to public campgrounds.

What about hitching up? Another big difference between the two. Hitching a travel trailer can be a maddening experience, particularly for those who have difficulty with depth perception. You can't "see" the trailer hitch from the steering wheel, and getting these two lined up without a "spotter" can be an agonizing issue. There are some clever devices available that make this easier, but with a fifth wheel it's easy to hitch up without devices or spotters. With the hitch in the truck bed, spotting the king pin on the trailer

(the equivalents of a trailer ball and coupler on a travel trailer) is easy. With a little practice, even this squinty eyed writer could handle it in a flash.

So what's better? Well, it's all a matter of taste and lifestyle.

## Getting Started

If you are new to the recreational vehicle (RV) lifestyle, you owe it to yourself to become well informed before jumping in. Uninformed RV consumers are likely to make unwise choices financially, emotionally, and concerning safety.

**Experienced RVers** should also review this list when goals change and before buying a new RV.

Below we have compiled a list of steps to guide you through the planning and purchase of an RV. We stopped short of numbering the steps because many can be done out of sequence. We do recommend the sequence as listed below, especially when it involves **buying decisions**.

**Define RV goals** How do you plan to use your RV? Is it for weekend outings, longer vacations, as a snowbird or as a fulltimer?

**Become familiar with RV types** Take some time to review the introduction pages to each RV type. No need to research each type in detail at this point—that comes later.

- Class A Motor Home
- Class B Motor Home
- Class C Motor Home
- Fifth Wheel
- Folding Trailer
- Travel Trailer
- Truck Camper

**Review issues important to different RV lifestyles** All RVing lifestyles have many things in common, yet each has its own special requirements.

**List RV amenities** Create a list of amenities that you would like to have in an RV based on your selected lifestyle. Divide the list into "must have" and "optional" sections.

**Create a budget** At this point you should have a rough idea of your desired RV lifestyle and the specifics are coming into focus. Now is the time to create a budget. Knowing what you are able and willing to afford will save you precious time by narrowing down your choices.

**Rent various RV types** In the following steps you need to make decisions on the type and size of the RV. Consider renting several RV types to help you decide. Living in an RV for a few days will give you insights that you can not get on the sales lot.

**Choose RV type** and then decide which one will suit your needs best.

**Choose RV size** After choosing the RV type, determine the size based on your needs.

**Tow vehicle type and size** If you chose a towable RV such as a travel trailer or fifth wheel, determine the size of vehicle required to tow it.

Choose RV manufacturers to consider Choose the RV manufacturers that meet your criteria with the help of RV Consumer Group resources in the

Choose RV models to consider Choose a small number of RV models that meet your needs from each manufacturer selected previously. Keep in mind that the average owner keeps their RV for **five years**, so do your best to anticipate your needs for this span of time.

Request RV insurance quotes Request one or more preliminary RV insurance quotes using the likely RV and truck models you are considering. Add the preliminary insurance premiums to your budget. After you select the exact RV model, you should request quotes from multiple insurance companies.

If you request a quotation from your existing insurance agent, be aware that he may or may not have specialized RV insurance.

Determine fair market value Before heading out to buy, do some research to determine the fair market value of each RV model you selected. Do this even if you are planning to buy a new unit.

Inspect before buying new or used When you find an RV that you are interested in, give it a thorough inspection **before** signing any papers.

Practice run Set up your RV as soon after buying it as possible. If you do not have immediate travel plans, find the nearest RV park and set up your unit there. Live in your new RV a few days to find potential problems **before** you head out on your big trip.

Join the community By now you have gained a lot of knowledge about RV's and the RV lifestyle. Join the RV community to further your knowledge, find helpful information, and share your experiences with others.

Next steps:

1. Subscribe to our [free newsletter](#) to stay informed
2. Research [RV clubs](#) to join
3. Join online [discussion groups](#) to share ideas

## Fall Foliage RV Destinations

If you are planning a fall foliage trip with your RV, you might think your only good choices are confined to the Northeastern U.S., but that's not true. There are great places to see autumn leaves all over the United States. Here are just a few RV destinations that you should try for leaf peeping.

### Blue Ridge Parkway

It's difficult to beat the Blue Ridge Parkway during leaf season. This isn't just a road through a lovely, rural area – it's a road that was created specifically to be a beautiful scenic drive! Winding for 470 miles through Virginia and North Carolina, the Parkway travels through open farmland and high into forested mountains. Look for the leaves to be at their peak from mid- to late-October. Changes in elevation and angles of sunlight give you a better chance of seeing good leaves if you drive farther along the Parkway. If you want to relax overnight among the leaves, there are plenty of campgrounds along the way as well.

### The Gold Coast of Michigan

This Great Lakes RV destination begins at Traverse City, Michigan, where you head north to first visit the Old Mission Lighthouse set on a peninsula in the middle of Great Traverse Bay. After that there will be wineries, sand dunes, more lighthouses, apple picking, and of course, fall foliage amidst evergreens. The leaves should be at their best from mid-September to mid-October. If you want to relax in a beautiful spot, try one of the campgrounds at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

### Lake of the Ozarks

Another fall foliage destination that's made even more beautiful by the presence of water is Missouri's Lake of the Ozarks. A man-made body of water, Lake of the Ozarks is approximately 92 miles long with more than 1,100 miles of shoreline. Adjacent to the lake are rolling hills and the Ozark Mountains, made all the more beautiful by turning autumn leaves. Lake of the Ozarks State Park – the largest state park in Missouri – surrounds an entire "arm" of the Lake. Why not make yourself a nice little home in the center of all this beauty at one of the four campgrounds at the State Park. The Section 4 campground is located right on the water, plus it's adjacent to a marina and boat ramp. You can take a fall foliage tour from the water – with your own watercraft or a rental. Just remember to make your reservations for Oct 26 through Nov. 5 for optimal leaf viewing.

### Vermont

You can't seriously discuss autumn leaves and forget Vermont. In Vermont, you will get the full range of fall colors – yellow, orange, red and red-purple – set against the quaint backdrop of rural, semi-rural and historic America. Of course, the good people of Vermont didn't invent the fall season, but they've done a great job of making Vermont a beautiful place to come back to again and again! If Vermont is your fall RV destination, you'll want to start at Waitsfield at the Mad River Byway. Enjoy your drive all the way to Stowe, Vermont. Stop and have some cider along the way. Remember, you'll want to be in Vermont from mid-September through late October for prime leaf showing.

## Air Safe Hitches

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## RV Facts and Figures

There are trends and patterns when it comes to consumers' behavior. Most trends are just that: a trend. They are a phase and the product behind the phase will seduce the American public to fall in like with it for a short time. We usually fall out of like with the item when the next best thing comes along. [RVs](#) have earned the fondness of the American people with their innovative technological breakthroughs. You can actually say at this point, that we love them: good old recreational vehicles. We the people will make sure that they are not going anywhere.

There are numerous facts and statistics supporting the claim that RV's are here to stay, and more popular than ever. This article comprises just a few. From \$6,824 folding camping trailers to \$143,843 class A motorhomes, American consumers are finding many ranges in price of recreational vehicles. All of these options are what fuels the recreational vehicle industry's 12 billion dollar price tag.

Most of the RV world's buying up rise took place between 1980 and 2001. Today, if you own a vehicle and live in the US, one in 12 of you also own an RV. The over all gain in RV ownership between 1980 and 2001 was 38%.

The average RV owning American currently resides with an average household income of around \$56,000, and they are 49 years old. The average RV owner most likely owns their own home. From 28 to 35 days a year, this individual will enjoy traveling in their RV, adding 4,500 miles to their motorhome annually while doing so. Also, the average RV owning US resident is married.

Clint Ethington, Manager of Pedata RV in Tucson comments that there are 16,000 destinations for RV enthusiasts when it comes to campgrounds. Some are privately owned and others publicly. Ethington has also observed the RV goer's age decline." The generation X age group has been showing interest in recreational vehicles lately", comments Ethington. Though generation Xers are a fast growing group, the baby boomers are actually the group with the strongest numbers. They are the largest group of RV enthusiasts to date. Both groups as well as others make up the 30 million RV enthusiasts Nation wide, including RV owners and renters. Not to mention the average 7.2 million that are on the roadways in America.

The popular statistics and facts in the studies provided by RVIA help to inform the public, and simply let us know what's going on in the RV world. Statistics enable the experts to properly determine what the RV world has in store for us, and who will be enjoying the benefits of RV travel in the future.

## Fun Facts About RVs from dealer in Virginia

Did you know that you could save 23-50% on vacation costs by traveling in an RV? That's just one fun fact that our RV dealer in Virginia has for you. Today we have a bunch of interesting facts that you may have never realized about your RV lifestyle or perhaps it'll sway you to join the RV movement. RV shipments and sales data predict that we should an increase over the years. Will you be one of those to take the plunge into adventure?

Here are some facts you may enjoy:

- The most popular months to go RVing are April, September, June, and July.

- Some of the Top ten visited nation parks are the Great Smoky Mountains, Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Yellowstone, Rocky Mountain, and Olympic.
- RV's make it easier to take more frequent weekend getaways or mini-vacations.
- More than nine million American households now own an RV.
- Buyers aged 35-54 are the largest segment of RV owners.
- 90% of owners say that it is the best way to travel with kids.
- Starting at \$6,000, there is an RV for every budget.
- RVs catalyze a healthy lifestyle with more family time, healthier eating on the road, sleep, and personal bathroom facilities.
- RVers spend more time enjoying campgrounds and less on the road to save fuel.
- The projected total of RVs shipped in 2014 was 335,000 units.

All of these facts have us wondering if you'll be stopping by our RV dealership to check out what we have to offer. With new models constantly coming in, we are bound to have something for everyone and ever lifestyle. Gong to a music festival? Traveling to a retreat? Need to get away from your town and start fresh? We have the vehicle for your needs.

### Contact Us

East Coast Partners Grp  
1041 Old Blush Road  
Celebration, Florida | 34747  
Tel. 321-939-2132  
Fax. 866-201-3391  
[www.airsafehitches.com](http://www.airsafehitches.com)

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