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October 2016 Newsletter from Air Safe Hitches

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Rec Economy Poised for Growth

October 20, 2016

Editor's note: The following is a 2017 Outlook provided by the American Recreation Coalition.

Outdoor recreation contributes \$650 billion to the American economy, and supports tens of millions of jobs. According to ARC's new report: Outdoor Recreation Outlook 2017, those numbers are only expected to grow. Most components of the recreation industry reported significant gains in 2016 and the general outlook for the industry in 2017 is optimistic. Key items from the report include:

- Visitation to National Parks is up 3.9% over 2015, an increase of 9.7 million visits
- Total capital expenditures for state park operations increased by 25.3% (\$159 million)
- 16.5 million people visited recreation.gov in 2016, up 38%
- Since the end of the "Great Recession," the RV industry has come roaring back, with RV shipments up more than 125%
- 45.7 million Americans participated in fishing in 2015, including 3.4 million Hispanics
- Almost 20 percent of new campers are African-American, the majority of whom are also millennials
- From 2011 through 2015, boat sales grew in the 5 to 6% range and retail sales could be up in the 8 to 10% range annually in the next several years
- Recreational horseback riding contributes \$32 billion a year to the national economy
- More than 23 million Americans participated in snow sports last year, including downhill skiing, snowboarding, cross country skiing and snowshoeing
- Annual registration of snowmobiles is reported at 1.4 million, and average use is up 10%
- Archery participation in America climbed about 14% from 2012 to 2014, boosting the number of archers to 21.6 million
- Growth in outdoor adventure sports is strongest among outfitters offering stand-up paddleboard instruction, cabin rentals, interpretive trips, environmental education and paddlesports activities
- Promotional campaigns like Discover Boating (led by NMMA), Go RVing (led by RVIA) and Take Me Fishing (led by RBFF) are generating billions of impressions and have a collective estimated budget of nearly \$45 million annually.

Our conclusion in the comparable forecast last year was that recreation activities will increase as more people seek active, healthy, “high value” vacationing. Even more now, we see America’s great outdoors as a perfect fit for this desire.

Who Is Buying RV’s Today?

The following article sent in by Sally Haynes

There was a time when the word ‘RV’ was associated with older purchasers who, after a lifetime of work, finally retired and bought into an RV to see more of the country, and the world at large. However, research has shown that the RV industry is thriving ([US News – RV Sales Booming](#)) and the reason for this is that the market is getting younger with each passing year. According to the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA), the fastest-growing group of RV owners in 2013 belonged to the 35-44-year-old age group, which is just slightly less than the industry’s largest group of owners (aged 45 to 54). In the 1980s, the average RV owner was aged 50; these days, that number is closer to 48, with further drops expected ([RVIA Faq’s](#)) over the next few years.

The change has been spurred on by RV manufacturers themselves, who realize that to attract younger buyers ([CNBC – RV Buyers Getting Younger](#)), specific features must be given importance. Fitness, for instance, is an important consideration for those in their 30s and 40s and RVs today contain features such as bicycle and kayak racks, which are majorly tempting for those who typically head out to lakeside and forest destinations, to hone their fitness while getting up close to Nature.

Modern RV parks have also woken up to the demand for better fitness offerings, by offering clients a wide array of fitness installations, gyms, etc. Some parks offer guided walking activities in nearby natural areas, while others make life easier for clients via rental bikes, kayaks, and more. Indeed, in recent years, the concept of the luxury RV Resort has made RV life more tempting than ever for singletons and families with young children alike. If you are travelling to Texas, for instance, check out [SunRV Resorts](#), an example of how these days, there is little difference between a stay at an RV resort, and a good three- or four-star hotel. Top RV resorts have shuffleboard courts, outdoor pools, games rooms, tennis and pickleball courts, and more. Also lined up are a host of activities, including dancing, parties, activities for kids, etc. RVs are therefore an ideal choice for families with small kids who wish to have fun while their kids are entertained with a host of led activities and games.

RV Parks are also catering their services and facilities to different demographics. Again in Texas, for instance, the Fort Amarillo RV Resort is built to please the discerning spa goer, with an indoor heated pool, hot tub, fitness room, and a stream-fed fishing pond promising to take stress levels back to zero.

The RV purchaser these days is also someone who longs for the plentiful [Health Benefits of Nature](#), which have been verified by many recent studies. Forest settings, it seems, will lower levels of harmful stress hormones, but also help everyone from those recovering from cancer, to children with ADHD. RVs, then, appeal to health-conscious purchasers who are beginning to forego traditional city sightseeing breaks in favor of relaxing breaks in the many natural paradises that pepper America. Current studies show that the average American child spends as little as 30 minutes in unstructured outdoor play, and over seven hours each day in front of an electrical device. An RV holiday is the ideal antidote for our over-reliance on technology.

Reduced costs are another reasons why RVs are becoming more attractive to buyers of all ages, across the globe. In the UK, RV sales are hitting record numbers, and a number of collateral markets have sprung up to cater to the burgeoning demand. Take the RV insurance sector – in the UK, [Specific Insurance Coverage](#) is catered to RVs of all types and sizes, covering any damage which may occur to the vehicle itself, as well as emergencies, campsite and vacation coverage, etc. Moreover, RV manufacturers now offer a wide range of vehicles catering to all budget types, so that cost is a lesser issue than it was even a decade ago. Banks are also more willing to finance an RV purchase, so that even couples in their late 20s are buying into the RV trend.

The RV industry has enjoyed solid growth, with figures indicating that the industry has enjoyed an 11 percent gain year on year, and a 116 percent gain since its recession low, in 2009. Experience has shown that as the RV industries expands, the demand from younger buyers

continues to grow, meaning that the nature of RV vehicles, resorts and associated services, will probably be changing over the next few years, in more ways than we can imagine.

RV Jobs: Living the Life - While Making a Living

RV jobs enable you to enjoy the RV lifestyle, while still earning a paycheck. You can say goodbye to the typical 9-5 and begin living your dream now. As you'll soon discover, job opportunities abound. And having an RV can open the doors to many jobs where housing is not provided.

Already have an income? Then find yourself a rewarding volunteer position that will take you and your RV to new and exciting places.

Many employers will have RV hookups on site, or they will provide hookups at an RV park or campground nearby. Always ask the potential employer if RV hookups are provided, or if there is a place to park your RV for the duration of the job. And since your RV is self-contained, boondocking is always an option - all you need is a place to park.

Article topics:

- RV Jobs at Resorts
- Temporary/Travel RV Jobs
- RV Jobs on Public Lands
- Self-Employment
- Common Jobs
- Where to Find RV Jobs

RV Jobs at Resorts Why take a resort vacation for a week, when you can stay at the resort for the entire summer! Of course there will be some work involved - but the fun times you'll have while off duty will more than make up for it.

The atmosphere of working in a place that sells fun and excitement can make work seem more like play. That's what I've learned anyway - and after experiencing it yourself you may feel the same.

Several resorts have a campground and provide an RV site. These can make for the perfect RV job.

Resorts Can Include Amusement Parks - Addicted to roller coasters? Get your fix with the perfect RV job at Six Flags, Knotts Berry Farm, Busch Gardens, Adventureland (which hires 400 work campers every summer), or one of several other amusement parks in the US and Canada.

Theme Parks - Disneyland, Disney World, Universal Studios...hang out with Mickey Mouse or Indiana Jones and become a "cast member" where make believe is your job. How cool is that!

Ski Resorts - Dreaming of mountain slopes covered with virgin fresh powder? Experience the ultimate RV job on a mountain. Every winter, ski resorts are hiring instructors for downhill skiing, snowboarding, and cross-country skiing. You'll also find jobs in gifts shops, ski shops, lodges, shuttle bus driving, parking, maintenance, and ski patrol. One of the best winters of my life was spent working and snowboarding at Mammoth Mountain Ski Resort in California.

Golf Courses- Do you love to play golf? Why not find a seasonal job at a golf course. Positions range from working in a golf shop, golf instructor, caddy, groundskeeper, marketing, food and beverage, aquatics, tennis, fitness and more.

Hotels/Motels - From luxurious hotels in the city to rustic and secluded wilderness lodges, all have opportunities for employment. You can work in Alaska, the Florida Keys, and anywhere in between.

Dude Ranches (Guest Ranches)- Mend your city slicker ways and get your hands dirty on a dude ranch. Jobs can include tour guide, gardening, corral work, housekeeping, wrangler, dining staff, or office staff. And in your spare time you can be John Wayne.

Want to be an Instructor at a Resort? Several resort locales will have all kinds of fun and exciting teaching jobs for those with experience. Here is just a sampling of activities that need instructors:

- Swimming
- Scuba Diving
- Horseback Riding

- Golf
- Tennis
- Downhill Skiing/Snowboarding
- Cross-Country Skiing
- Paddle Boarding/Paddle Surfing
- Surfing
- Kayaking
- Water Skiing/Wakeboarding/Parasailing
- Rock Climbing
- Fishing/Fly Fishing
- Fitness/Pilates/Yoga

Temporary/Travel RV Jobs

Here is a list of opportunities that would make great RV jobs. These are typically temporary and/or involve travel.

- **Property Caretaker/House-Sitter**- This is where property owners higher a caretaker to perform various duties while they are away, or year-round. You can find work at a house, ranch, bed & breakfast, farm, lodge, hostel, nature retreat, homestead, etc.
- **Campground Host** - One of the best RV jobs. Get the chance to live in beautiful surroundings at a national park, state park, or private campground. Government run campgrounds will offer a free campsite - however don't count on a paycheck from Uncle Sam. When taking a job at a private campground, you'll be paid. You may also be required to work longer hours. Duties can include collecting campground fees, answering questions, and performing light maintenance.
- **Company/Product Representative**- Your RV can be the perfect vehicle for traveling the country while representing a company or product. You will have to sacrifice some freedom though, as you will have to travel to the places the company sends you.
- **Wagon Master for RV Tours** - RV jobs that pay you to take a tour. How about that! Get a chance to guide a group of fellow RVers on a tour across the US, Canada, or overseas. A couple of the larger tour companies are Tracks RV Tours and Fantasy RV Tours.
- **Christmas Tree or Pumpkin Sales**- This is a rather popular RV job. Spread holiday cheer by selling Christmas trees or pumpkins. Typically, you earn a commission from your sales. You can make anywhere from \$1000 to \$5000.
- **Lighthouse Keeper**- Unfortunately "progress" has almost done away with the lighthouse keeper. You can still find work, though it will most likely will be volunteer only - and instead of taking care of an oil lamp and lens your duties will be greeting visitors and providing historical information.
- **Website Sales Fulfillment Centers** - Fulfillment centers have several temporary positions available during the busy holiday season. These can make great RV jobs, as the larger websites, such as Amazon.com have warehouses all over the country. Duties can include handling inventory and packing orders.
- **Carnival/Circus**- When working for a carnival, you get to travel to a different town every 10-12 days. The downside is you may have to work long hours and the pay can be low.
- **State Fairs**- RV jobs at state fairs can be fun and exciting. I worked stage security at the Iowa State Fair one summer and enjoyed seeing several live performances. Other jobs can include ticket sales, maintenance, parking, patrol, and ticket taker.
- **Farm Work** - During harvest time, farms higher several workers to help pick tomatoes, strawberries, grapes, etc. Other jobs can involve planting, peeling, or packing fruits and vegetables.

RV Jobs on Public Lands

Live and work in some of the most beautiful places in the world on America's public lands. You will find temporary paid positions as well as volunteer work. And if you love [RV](#) boondocking (as I do), then an RV job on public land is the perfect fit.

US Forest Service

The Forest Service hires several workers each summer and paying jobs can include visitor services, maintenance, forestry aid, and range aid. I worked out of Gunnison, Colorado one summer as a forestry aid and it was an awesome experience. Highlights included hiking to the top of some 14,000 foot peaks, and seeing Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. Want to volunteer? Volunteer positions can include wilderness stewards, trail clearing, office

work, and campground hosts.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

With 261 million acres of public land (almost half of all public land in the US) there are plenty of volunteer opportunities. You're sure to find a job you'll enjoy! Here is a sampling of positions: campground host, restoration, river ranger, interpretive guide, hiking leader, archeology, geological surveys, conservation, photography, artwork, and trail maintenance.

National Park Service

America's crown jewels, the national parks, hire around 10,000 temporary and seasonal employees annually. Paid positions can include visitor services, park guide, biological science technician, park ranger, and maintenance. Of course an RV job as a campground host wouldn't be too bad either! Even if you didn't get paid.

Wildlife Preserves The Nature Conservancy - Volunteer to help the environment at one of many nature preserves across the country.

US Fish and Wildlife Service - 42,000 people volunteer for the US Fish and Wildlife Service performing a wide range of jobs such as wildlife surveys, tour guide, laboratory research, habitat restoration, photography, and more.

State Parks Have a favorite state park? Chances are, they'll be hiring each summer. You'll find both paid and volunteer positions. Typical positions include campground host, visitor services, and maintenance.

US Army Corps of Engineers Work, play, and live the life on a lake. The Corps of Engineers encompass 12 million acres of land and water. Volunteer opportunities can include campground host, visitor center staff, park & trail maintenance, fish & wildlife habitat work, and water safety.

Self-Employment Want an RV job where you make the rules? Go where you want, when you want, and work when you want - that's the freedom of being self-employed.

Have a hobby or skill that can earn you money? If you need a workshop, consider a SURV (Sport Utility RV, aka Toy Hauler) as these have a "garage" in the rear.

Need an office? Create one in your RV. You can outfit your office with a laptop or desktop computer, printer, scanner, cell phone, etc. And for internet, you can use Wi-Fi - however for more reliable service I would recommend Verizon Mobile Broadband or RV satellite internet.

Possible RV jobs for self-employment:

- **Virtual Assistant**- Use your cell phone or computer to do work remotely from your RV. With today's excellent cell phone coverage and wireless internet it is now possible.
- **Online Business**- Sell products on eBay or Amazon. Don't have a product? Try drop shipping (you sell the product and it is shipped from a fulfillment center). Or, start your own website to market your services, sell your own e-books, or provide information on a subject you know well.
- **Vendor** - Sell items at flea markets, swap meets, RV shows, state fairs, or craft shows. Quartzsite, Arizona has several shows each winter and many vendors stay the entire winter, along with thousands of RVing snowbirds.

Common Jobs Have you considered working for a company that has multiple locations across the nation? This would give you the advantage of staying with the same employer and being able to relocate every now and then.

Another possibility would be working for Lowe's or Home Depot temporarily. Both chain stores higher around 50,000 seasonal employees every spring.

There are traditional jobs that would make suitable RV jobs. Below is a list of occupations where the work is temporary or where employees are not expected to hold jobs for very long. The nice thing about these jobs is that you can find them just about anywhere.

- Waiter/Waitress
- Cook
- Baker
- Fast Food Restaurant
- Construction

- Painter
- Carpenter
- Mason
- Welder
- Landscaping
- Lawn Care
- Janitor
- Nurse
- Cashier
- Computer/Office Work
- Grocery
- Retail
- Sales

Where to Find RV Jobs There's no better time than now to start living the dream with an RV job. More and more young adventurers are full-time RVing, along with those who are retired. There are too many good opportunities to pass up, as you've probably realized by now. Here is a list I've compiled of places to find paying RV jobs and volunteer work. This should get you started on the rewarding road to RV adventure.

Paying Jobs

- **RV Publications** - The classified section of RV publications is a great place to check for RV jobs.
- **Temporary Work Agencies** - You never know what kind of work you might find from a temp agency. I once found work for an RV show, which was a fun experience.
- **CoolWorks.com** - The mega site for all types of seasonal jobs. They even have a category for jobs with RV spaces.
- **Xanterra Parks & Resorts** - The nation's largest operator of park-based hotels, restaurants and stores. You can find jobs in national parks, state parks, and resorts.
- **KOA** - Has nearly 500 campgrounds across the US and Canada. Jobs include cleaning, outdoor maintenance, front desk, greeters, management, and activity directors.
- **Recreation Resource Management** - Hires 500 seasonal employees annually to work at campgrounds, day use areas, stores, marinas, and boat ramps.
- **American Land & Leisure** - Find campground hosting jobs at over 400 campgrounds nationwide.
- **National Park Service** - Search for jobs in National Parks.
- **US Forest Service** - Learn about seasonal jobs on National Forests.
- **Caretaker-Jobs.com** - Find caretaker/house sitter jobs with this service.
- **The Caretaker Gazette** - Caretaker and house sitter jobs and information can also be found here.
- **International Virtual Assistants Association** - Work remotely from your "mobile office" as a virtual assistant.
- **SummerJobs.com** - Search for jobs at camps, amusement parks, resorts, national parks, hotels, environmental organizations and more.
- **Staffing Medical USA** - Information on becoming a traveling nurse.
- **Workamper News** - Lots of information, tools, and postings for RV jobs/work campers.
- **Workers On Wheels** - A great resource with information on RV jobs and work camper opportunities.
- **PGA Job Finder** - Love golf? Find work at a golf course here.

Volunteer Work

- **Good Sam Club** - Volunteer alongside fellow RVers from the world's largest RV club.
- **Bureau of Land Management**
- **US Forest Service**
- **National Park Service**
- **US Fish & Wildlife Service**
- **US Army Corp of Engineers**

- **Volunteer.gov** - Find volunteer work with several federal agencies here.
- **The Nature Conservancy**
- **Habitat for Humanity RV Care-A-Vanners** - Volunteers travel in their RV to Habitat affiliates and assist in house construction and renovations.

How Fifth Wheel Hitches Work

It's probably not a stretch to suggest that everyone is familiar with the standard semi trailer design. Not only do they tower over nearly every other vehicle on the highway, but they're often the longest vehicles on the road. Big rigs are capable of towing trailers that carry literally tons of cargo weight. But how do they do it?

Sure, semi trucks have gigantic diesel engines, and those have a lot to do with moving that much weight. But how can the vehicle support and hang onto that much trailer weight in the first place? A relatively puny ball hitch -- the type you'd find below the back bumper on any pickup truck, SUV or recreational vehicle -- would snap off under that much weight. So what's the secret?

There's no real secret, except that semi trucks don't use ball hitches. They rely on a heavy-duty trailer attachment system, one that closely resembles towing equipment you can add to your own heavy-duty pickup truck -- a fifth wheel trailer hitch. Fifth wheel hitches are designed for carrying much heavier loads than the typical ball hitch can handle. The front edge of the trailer extends over the rear bumper of the pickup truck. The attachment point is in the bed of the truck, not at the rear bumper. When properly installed, the weight of the trailer is actually pressing down between the cab of the pickup and the rear axle. This allows the truck to carry a significantly greater amount of weight -- a much larger trailer, in other words.

The fifth wheel hitch (the part that lives in the bed of the pickup truck) is a large, flat plate that has a shape similar to a horseshoe. The metal rails that run beneath the hitch attach to the frame of the pickup truck for strength. The trailer connects to the fifth wheel hitch via a downward-facing pin -- called a **king pin** -- along with a plate that rests on top of the fifth wheel hitch plate. The king pin locks into position so it is secure within the hitch but can pivot to accommodate turns.

The flat plate of the trailer and the flat plate of the fifth wheel hitch are in constant contact with one another. They slide against one another continuously when the trailer is in motion, so lubrication between these two components is critical.

As far as towing equipment pricing goes, fifth wheel hitches run the gamut. They seem to start around \$500 for an "economy" fifth wheel hitch and go beyond \$3,000 for a top-of-the-line model. As a general rule of thumb, as the gross trailer weight rating of the hitch increases, so does the price. Of course, the high-end hitches also feature various design attributes that make them valuable to someone pulling a heavy trailer. [Air Hitches](#), Sliding hitches, better bearings and heavier attachment hardware are just a few examples of features that can drive the price of a hitch upward.

Let's just say that you've decided to install a fifth wheel hitch in the bed of your heavy-duty pickup truck. Will you need to have someone install it, or is it something that you can easily handle on your own? Read the next page and decide for yourself.

Prior to installing a fifth wheel hitch on your truck, regardless of whether you decide to do it yourself or have it installed by a professional, you must ensure your vehicle is rated to hold the extra weight of the trailer that you're planning to attach. It sounds rather elementary, yet this point is often overlooked. The owner's manual is a good place to start, and if you can't find the information there, make sure to contact the vehicle's manufacturer for a clear answer.

When the hitch is properly installed in the bed of the pickup, it will be positioned so that the weight of the trailer is between the cab of the truck and the rear axle. The installation instructions will give you the exact placement for what the manufacturer considers to be the - optimum towing position.

However, you can't simply bolt a fifth wheel hitch to the bed of your truck, attach a trailer and hit the road -- the hitch has to be properly anchored to the frame of the truck first. After all,

you're going to be supporting and pulling a lot of weight with a fifth wheel, so it had better be secure. You'll need to install a rail kit, too. The rail kit acts like a foundation for the hitch. The rails attach to brackets that attach to the frame of the truck.

If possible, you should attempt to purchase a complete fifth wheel hitch installation kit that was designed specifically for your vehicle. This will save you a lot of time and frustration, as these custom-fit kits require no drilling or welding. The kits contain all of the hardware you'll need for a basic installation, and the holes in the brackets line up with pre-existing holes in the vehicle's frame. If you buy a universal installation kit, you may find that you'll be required to either drill holes in the vehicle's frame or weld the brackets in place to properly mount the hitch.

Another point to consider during your installation is that the rails that support the fifth wheel hitch should never be installed over a plastic bed liner. Even though the rails will initially secure tightly, the plastic will ultimately disintegrate, leaving you with a loose hitch. If you have a pickup truck with a spray-in bed liner, you're in luck -- fifth wheel hitches can be installed in a bed that has a spray-in bed liner.

If you're able to purchase a custom-fit installation kit, the installation of a fifth wheel hitch requires little more than a good deal of measuring, followed by bolting the brackets and rails to the frame of your truck. With that said, many people opt to tackle this rather uncomplicated installation in their own garage or driveway. Of course, if you are unable to purchase an installation kit that was designed for your specific vehicle, or if you have any reservations about being able to complete this project on your own, you can hire a professional to do the job for you. As long as there are no complications, it won't take a certified mechanic very long to complete the installation of your latest piece of towing equipment. After all, if they're accustomed to installing towing hitches on other tow vehicles, installing a fifth wheel hitch in the bed of a pickup truck shouldn't be all that difficult.

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"We Sell for Less - Buy from us and save"

What to Put in Your RV Toolbox

By Jeff Adams

Just about anything in your RV, trailer or tent that can snap, crack, rip loose, tear, bend, leak, spark, or fall off will do exactly that—and always when you're out enjoying nature 40 miles from nowhere.

The whole trick to maintaining inner tranquility and not letting a mini disaster spoil your trip is to have a well-equipped RV toolbox on hand. This contains mostly inexpensive yet important items that newcomers and veteran campers alike should pack for every trip, both big and small.

Tools for Your RV Toolbox

No matter how well constructed your rig might be, eventually something will have to be tightened, loosened, pounded flat, pried or cut. Here are some basics that can help you deal with everyday problems and annoyances:

- **Socket wrench set** (standard and metric) for tightening and loosening bolts and machine nuts.
- **Phillips head and flat bladed screwdrivers** (large, medium, small) for tightening and loosening screws; also for prying items apart.
- **Standard pliers** for holding machine nuts while installing or removing, or squeezing items together.
- **Channel-lock pliers** (medium and large) for dealing with oversized machine nuts or turning pipes 10-inch Crescent wrench-for when sockets won't fit properly.
- **Small drill bit set** with sizes ranging from 1/16- to 1/4-inch. Get the type that works with both metal and wood.
- **Cordless drill with spare battery** for turning the drill bits that make the holes. Also good for lowering and raising trailer stabilizing jacks.
- **Sturdy claw hammer** enables you to straighten what got bent, bend what got straightened, drive nails and stakes, and pull 'em out again, and provide "persuasion" where needed.
- **Pocket knife** for cutting rope and twine, stripping wire insulation, or just whittling if you're so inclined.
- **Hobby knife** with blade protector and extra blades, extremely sharp, for making very precise cuts in canvas, vinyl, tape, paper, wood and some plastics.
- **Wire cutters** for cutting electrical wire, or turning metal coat hangers into marshmallow skewers.
- **Small tape measure** to determine how much electrical wire you're going to need, or how much ground clearance you'll have while trying to get over that boulder embedded in the road.
- **Mini hacksaw** with extra blades good for cutting away twisted bolts, damaged metal work, thicker plastics...anything where a knife won't work.
- **Small two-way bubble level** to make sure your rig is properly leveled so you're not sleeping with your feet higher than your head.
- **Folding tree saw** for cutting trees that have fallen across the only road out and you can't back up. Emergency use only; rangers and camp hosts frown when you start your own tree service on government and private land.

Adhesives Help Keep Things Together

While glues can't mend a broken heart, they'll fix just about anything else and can save a situation that's going from bad to worse.

Adhesives are available for many specialized purposes. Here's what you'll want to add to your collection of RV tools:

- **"Super" glue** for high strength repairs.
- **Vinyl adhesive** for fixing tears in same-named fabrics.
- **Threadlocker glue** to prevent screws and bolts from vibrating loose.
- **Multi-purpose adhesive** for re-affixing door seals, loose trim and molding, and re-sticking peeling decals.
- **Silicon sealant** to keep the rain from creeping in.
- **Seam sealer** (for tents), for keeping the dew on the outside.

Another "sticky" item that can spare you from disaster is a small set of adhesive-backed hook-and-loop tabs. And don't forget that universal fix-it that's good for practically any repair: **Duct Tape!**

Hardware and Fasteners When tape or glues just won't fix it, a "heck-bag" of assorted wood, machine and self-tapping screws, plus small bolts in a few sizes and lengths with matching nuts and washers can save you from uttering a few choice curse words when something substantial busts loose.

A bundle of plastic zip ties (removable and permanent) is also handy for cinching things together while out in the forest.

Toss in a couple of spare cabinet door catches too, to prevent your toiletries from flying all over the bathroom while traveling.

Let There Be Light Nothing is more aggravating than your coach lights blinking off right at

dinnertime. Or having a Highway Patrol officer wave you over because a brake light is out. That's why having a few select electrical items in your well-equipped trailer or RV toolbox can be unbelievably handy.

First and foremost is an assortment of **fuses in various amperage ratings** to replace blown fuses on your power converter/charger or power panel. A blown fuse is usually the result of pulling too much amperage on one circuit, or an electrical short; but sometimes they'll "pop" for no good reason. Be sure to replace a blown fuse only with the same size, never larger. A fuse that blows repeatedly is a good indication that you've got a short somewhere that must be repaired, otherwise the same problem will persist.

A collection of **spare bulbs** for brake, turn and running lights are also a must, and can save you from a traffic violation or worse. Make sure you have interior light bulbs as well.

A miniature voltmeter is helpful for tracing shorts and measuring battery voltages.

A **small roll of 10- to 12-gauge insulated wire** can help you bypass a problem area, and be sure to include **a roll of electrical tape** to prevent sparks or fuses from blowing.

A battery-operated or butane powered soldering iron and **solder** is helpful for making solid electrical repairs when you're out in the boondocks with no AC power.

And a nice option is a head-mounted flashlight, for working in the dark where you need both hands free.

If all else fails, a box of **weatherproof safety matches** is ideal. You can use them to light a fuel lantern or a properly prepared campfire to hold back the night. Use with caution; they burn like a firecracker fuse and you can't blow them out!

Hand Protection to Keep on Hand

While campground repairs often call for a delicate touch, there are many jobs that are just plain dirty. For those tasks, you should stock a dozen pairs of latex or nitrile rubber gloves, plus a sturdy pair of leather work gloves for the rough stuff. And afterwards, you can refresh yourself with some pre-moistened wipes or waterless skin cleanser. All these items can be found at home improvement centers and grocery stores.

The "Miscellaneous" Department Some last-but-not-least items you'll want to have in your trailer or RV toolbox:

- **Tube of ball hitch lube** to minimize grinding while towing.
- **Small travel-size can of spray lubricant.**
- **Spare fresh water hose washers.**
- **Roll of Teflon plumber's tape.**
- **Wide tipped felt marker (permanent)** for making signs, marking your belongings, and keeping track of which wire is which.
- A coupler or kingpin lock can take care of security concerns you might have about your trailer being stolen; and for any other situations not previously mentioned: an assortment of bungee cords to strap things down.
- And finally:
- **Two-way radios**-for backing your rig into a site, hitching up the trailer, monitoring the kids, and more. The hands-free/headphone type is preferable so you can keep both hands on the wheel. Eliminates the need for your spouse to shout instructions.

So there you have it...the ultimate basic toolbox. Over 46 must-have vacation savers, and they all fit in a standard 24-inch x 11-inch x 11-inch toolbox.

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