

Subject:

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2019 Projected To Be Third Highest Year On Record For Total RV Shipments

By: RV Industry Association Staff

RV shipments are expected to moderate slightly in 2019, according to a new forecast prepared by longtime RV industry analyst, Richard Curtin, PhD, who is also a professor at the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center.

In the Spring 2019 issue of the RV RoadSigns newsletter, Curtin projects total RV shipments will range between 475,500 and 444,500 units this year with the most likely final total being 460,100 units. While this total would be a slight dip of 4.9% from the 2018 year-end total of 483,700 units, it would also position 2019 as the third highest year for RV shipments on record.

Curtin believes that the RV market will see a somewhat sluggish start to the year with 1st quarter shipments being impacted by unusually harsh weather and the federal government shutdown, shifting shipments into the 2nd quarter. Robust RV retail sales, healthy RV inventory levels, and strong income, employment and household wealth factors will continue to exert a positive force on the RV market.

Curtin also predicted that navigating the current economic environment will require companies to focus on flexibility and innovation – in both product development and customer service – more than ever. “It is likely that new RV features and designs will account for larger shares of the market. Adjusting products to these emerging trends represents the best near- and long-term strategy for manufacturers,” he said.

“Appealing to new population segments requires a total makeover,” added Curtin, who has authored RV RoadSigns for four decades. “That includes everything from the initial contact with customers, to a new adaptive selling environment, to innovations in shared ownership.” These initiatives urged by Curtin are points of emphasis for RVX, the newly invented RV industry trade show that will make its debut at the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City, Utah from March 12-14, 2019. Billed as “The Kickoff to Camping Season,” RVX will bring the industry together in a venue where manufacturers and suppliers can unveil the latest RV products to their dealer partners. RVX also provides the first spring opportunity for dealers to write new model orders and ensure that lots remain full of the products today’s RV consumer is looking to purchase.

According to Curtin, RV sales will continue to benefit from the aging baby boomers as well as millennials. The number of consumers between the ages of 55 and 74 will total 79 million by 2025, 15% higher than in 2015, and the number between age 30 and 45 will total 72 million by 2025, 13% higher than in 2015.

Rising RV Sales Increasing Demand For Campsites

(3/4/2019) Story by Jeff Crider

Eight years of record and near record RV sales are creating more demand for campground sites and prompting a growing number of developers and investors to either rebuild existing parks to appeal to 21st century RVers or build new parks from the ground up.

Woodall's Campground Management (WCM), sister publication of *RVBusiness*, recently spoke with developers, investors and existing park owners who are building more than 20 new RV parks and resorts in seven states.

Longtime campground industry consultants who prepare feasibility studies for RV park developers and lenders said they are experiencing unprecedented demand for their services.

"I'm as busy as I've ever been," said David Gorin, who along with being the former president and CEO of the National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds (ARVC), is also an RV park developer and consultant who joined with Jayne Cohen to form the Gorin + Cohen Consulting Group. "We're probably doing three to four feasibility studies a month."

Joe Moore, a Mineola, Texas-based consultant who founded his consulting business four-and-a-half years ago after 12 years expanding and improving The Vineyards Campground in Grapevine, is also the busiest he's ever been.

"I have been inundated with clients. I've never been this busy with brand new startups," he said, saying he's aware of 16 new parks in various stages of development in Texas, West Virginia, Wyoming and Colorado, among other locations.

Moore added that while the glamping industry has taken off, so too has demand for long-term RV sites as a result of the growing numbers of retiring Baby Boomers.

"The Baby Boomers are retiring at a rate of 10,000 a day," he said, adding, "Fifteen percent of those 10,000 want to hit the road or do some form of camping. If you think of that number of people coming into the market, month after month, you've got a lot of new people.

"Then you have more and more people who are going long-term and they're taking up spaces, basically taking spaces out of inventory," he continued. "In the past five years, there have been close to two million RVs sold. That's a lot of RVs on the road chasing a fairly static amount of inventory."

And as more and more RV sites are taken out of inventory by retiring Baby Boomers, market demand increases for new RV sites, but that's not the only factor driving demand for new RV parks, according to consultants.

They have note that many people who buy RVs are people who work in the construction industry, nursing or other specialized fields that require them to live and work in different parts of the country for weeks, months or, perhaps, for two or three years before moving on to their next work assignment. Some communities also have a shortage of available rental housing, which prompts these transient workers to find rental space in existing RV parks and resorts.

But in several areas of the country, the number of transient workers exceeds the number of locally available RV sites, explained the consultants *WCM* spoke with.

Prompting developers and landowners to increasingly look at building RV parks in these areas to satisfy the demand coming from these transient workers.

"Probably a quarter of my business is people wanting to build because of businesses and construction workers coming in (and needing a place to stay)," Moore said. "It's carpenters, electricians, pipe fitters and concrete people. Some are traveling with their wives, but a lot of them are finding jobs (in outlying areas) and their wife stays back home."

Gorin added that it's not just the construction industry that's creating the demand.

"There is a big market for hospital workers and other traveling workers," he explained. "There is a huge market near Amazon warehouses, fulfillment centers and amusement parks."

"In most areas, there are not enough places (for temporary workers) to rent," noted Homer Staves, a Billings, Mont.-based campground industry consultant, adding that construction projects involving wind and solar energy farms are also creating demand for RV parks in remote areas of the country.

How Horse Trailer Accessories Work

BY CHRISTOPHER LAMPTON

If you want to know what accessories you should add to your horse trailer, you should probably ask a horse. The horse, if he or she could talk, might ask for a feed bag for fighting off the munchies on those long trips, a head bumper for protection against rough roads and low ceilings, or maybe some bungee cords to help tie up loose items in the trailer so that they won't go flying around when the driver hits the brakes. The horse might also appreciate a brush rack, which will give you a convenient place to keep its grooming accessories, and a saddle rack to provide the perfect spot for -- you guessed it -- saddles. Or maybe the horse would just like a poster of Secretariat for the trailer wall.

A horse's owner probably also have some ideas about what sort of accessories would be useful or attractive, both inside the trailer and out. An accessory bag would be great for carrying horse-related items -- on the way to a horse show, for instance, or just for a ride in the woods. Reflective signs and safety tape are great for the outside of the trailer and make it safer for the horse to ride in, but other accessories just make the trailer look better. For a cool ride that will make both you and your horse (or horses) proud, consider spinners for the hubcaps or just a bumper sticker that reads, "I'd rather be riding my horse." Your trailer will look happier and your horse may feel more appreciated. On the next page, we'll take a more detailed look at the sort of accessories that will help you and your horse ride safely and in style.

Perhaps the most important accessories for a horse trailer are the ones that go on the horse. And the one the horse probably will appreciate the most is a head bumper. This is a "cap" for the horse that protects its head from bumps, either against the roof of the trailer when the driving gets rough or against the top of the door frame on the way in or out. Trailer pads can help keep the horse comfy while bumping up against the walls of the trailer. And so that nothing hits the horse during those same rough moments, a bungee cord is one of the best ways to tie down loose objects. An entry ramp for the horse might also be useful, but some experts believe that the horse would rather have some less shaky method of stepping up into the trailer, because the shifting motion of a ramp can be frightening.

(Smooth out the ride for your horsees by using the [Gooseneck Air Hitch](#) from [Air Safe Hitches](#))

Some of the best horse trailer accessories are also the most practical. A good emergency kit is essential. Accidents happen, and if one happens to your horse trailer, you'll be glad to have the supplies you need to take care of any injuries to your horse. (You might also want to keep a second kit, either in the trailer or the tow vehicle, for taking care of humans. And remember to carry a jack, should you need to fix a flat in a hurry.) A saddle rack will help you save room in your tow vehicle by stowing the saddle in the trailer. Feed bags will give your horse a chance to grab a meal while in transit; triangle feed bags are available with straps that attach to hooks inside the trailer. And because horses can't necessarily wait for a bathroom break, a muck rake will come in handy for cleaning up any unpleasant surprises your horse leaves behind.

Any and all of these accessories will be appreciated by your horse. However, the horse's owner might like a little external décor for the trailer. Several Internet vendors specialize in bumper stickers, magnets and decals for the trailer, with pictures of horses and clever horse-related sayings on them. Children riding in the tow vehicle would probably be entertained by any of the plastic models of horse trailers available from toy companies. And if you have some money left over after buying the essentials, you could even hire an artist to paint pastoral scenes on the trailer's side. The driver in the next lane will appreciate the view.

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How to Pass While Towing

BY SCOTT C. BENJAMIN

Most drivers can relate to the frustration of following a cement mixer or even a huge recreational vehicle over a steep, seemingly never-ending mountain highway, or possibly down a twisty, single-lane country road. There's no place to go -- you're stuck. The vehicle in front of you is moving at a snail's pace, and for a reasonable amount of time, you're patient. "Surely this guy is going to turn off," you think to yourself. But as mile after mile ticks away on your odometer, you realize that you're simply stuck where you are right now -- staring at the back end of a giant camper with tourism stickers from all 50 states.

It's time to do something about this. First, you make a few tentative moves to the edge of your lane, avoiding oncoming traffic as you do, just to see if you can survey the situation ahead of the camper. It's exactly as you suspected: The trailer is the only thing standing between you, the open road ahead and the posted speed limit -- which happens to be nearly double the **speed** that you're traveling right now. Just as you have so many times in the past, you safely and successfully accelerate around the lumbering dinosaur and slip back into the correct traffic lane. Just as simple as that, you're back on schedule.

Now imagine that the shoe is on the other foot. Well, maybe not completely on the other foot, because we want to find out what it takes to be able to pass while towing. So, in the new scenario, imagine that you're driving a pickup truck that's pulling a large camper, one that's several feet longer than your tow vehicle, as a matter of fact. Now imagine that you're on that same two-lane country road. About a quarter of a mile ahead, you see that a farmer has just entered the roadway hauling a trailer full of freshly cut hay. It's a slow-moving rig, so you quickly find yourself approaching the farmer's rear bumper. Now, of course you're excited to get to your lake property to begin the long weekend of camping, backpacking and boating; however, there's just one thing in your way -- this load of hay.

It's important to understand that you might not be able to handle this situation the same way

you would in your sleek sedan. Passing while towing is an entirely different ballgame. In fact, as you'll find out on the next page, there are times when passing may not even be an option -- at least not a safe option.

Even if you're pulling a heavy trailer down the road, there may be times when you encounter slower traffic. Maybe it's a heavy piece of construction equipment or that trailer overloaded with hay that we just mentioned. Whatever the situation may be, you will probably be tempted to pass. Sometimes, passing is an appropriate action; other times, it may not be so wise.

It's true: Passing while towing requires more effort from the driver and a lot more effort from the tow vehicle. Good judgment on the part of the driver is essential to a successful (and safe) pass.

Of course, there are always going to be unlimited variables in every passing situation. These may include environmental issues like rain, glaring sunlight or even high winds, but in general, you should keep the following few key points in mind when you're passing while towing:

- **Signal early:** When you're towing a trailer, it's a good idea to signal a little earlier than you normally would simply to alert the other drivers around you to exactly what you're up to. Ideally, they'll give you the extra room that you need to complete your passing maneuver.
- **Pass only on level ground:** Never attempt a pass while towing on an incline or steep descent. Remember, you're pulling a significant amount of trailer weight behind you, and your tow vehicle won't behave the same as it does when there's no camper or boat attached. Trying to accelerate around slower traffic as you climb a hill may leave you stuck beside the vehicle that you're trying to pass. Attempting a pass on a steep decline may lead to higher speeds that are unsafe, too. Pass only on level ground when you can see what's ahead of you clearly.
- **Use your mirrors:** Seeing what's in front of you is important, but seeing what's behind you can be just as important when you're passing another vehicle. Use your mirrors to make sure that another vehicle isn't attempting to pass you as you pull out into the passing lane. Your mirrors are also important tools to use to determine when you can merge back into your lane of traffic after the pass is complete.
- **Make slow movements with the wheel:** Ease out into the passing lane, and ease back into your traffic lane once the pass is complete. Never make abrupt movements with the steering wheel when you're passing another vehicle. Rapid movement of the steering wheel could cause trailer sway -- and you definitely don't want that.
- **Regain control of trailer sway:** Trailer sway can be caused by several things -- high winds, fast movement of the steering wheel at high speeds or even wind buffeting from passing vehicles (including the vehicle you're attempting to pass). No matter what the cause, trailer sway is always a little bit scary and rarely easy to recover from, so you should know what to do if it happens. First, release the accelerator, but do not brake. Braking will only magnify the situation. Keep both hands firmly on the steering wheel and allow your vehicle to slow down and straighten out. If you experience extreme trailer sway, you should activate your trailer brakes by hand. Again, don't use the tow vehicle brakes to stop trailer sway.
- **Allow for the extra length of the trailer:** As simple as this seems, a lot of accidents are caused by drivers simply forgetting about the extra length of their trailer and returning to their traffic lane a little too soon. Using your mirrors throughout the passing procedure can prevent this from happening.
- **Be aware of your position on the road:** This one is self-explanatory. Just stay alert, know what's happening all around you (in every direction) and perhaps, most importantly, use good judgment.

Bucket List RV Trips for 2019 (Con't)

Continued from Feb News etter.....

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

The first national park in the U.S., the largest super volcano on the continent, and the home of Old Faithful, myriad other geysers, waterfalls, grizzly bears, wolves, bison, and elk, Yellowstone should be on your bucket list even if you never own an RV in your lifetime. Mostly in Wyoming, but with large expanses in Montana and Idaho, the 2.2 million-acre park is larger than Rhode Island or Delaware. Whatever you do, don't miss Mammoth Hot Springs, where calcified rock has carved terraces and sculptures right into the landscape.

Just about every approach to the park is gorgeous, and the park itself has nearly a dozen RV-friendly campgrounds to choose from. Fishing Bridge RV Park — the only campground welcoming only hard-sided RVs — is closed for 2019, so if you're looking to come during the off season, Mammoth Hot Springs Campground is the only one that's open year-round and charges \$20 a night.

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

If you doubt the Appalachians can hold their own with any other mountain range on the continent, travel this 469-mile stretch of road from Rockfish Gap, Virginia, to Swain County in North Carolina. Coupled with sweeping views of some of the oldest mountains on earth, you'll see 300 miles of forest, tons of wildlife, rock tunnels, and two national parks (Shenandoah and Smoky Mountains). Along the way, you'll find the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina, the Birthplace of Country Music Museum in Bristol, Virginia, Chimney Rock in North Carolina, and Thomas Jefferson's Monticello estate in Charlottesville, Virginia.

There are dozens of RV-friendly campgrounds along the Parkway, including those at the national parks on each end. Few match the charm of Mama Gertie's in Swannanoa, North Carolina. Near Chimney Rock and Lake Lure, Mama Gertie's offers mountain-top RV sites with not only dramatic views, but full electric, water, and sewer hookups. Spots start at \$37 a night, but those premium views will cost \$59 a night, or \$70 for a deck to view them from.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

If you've always wanted to explore the nation's capital, but didn't want to pay premium hotel prices or airfare, D.C. is a great place to travel to via RV. Be warned, however, that it isn't a great place to travel in with an RV. Even seasoned RV drivers say that height restrictions, parking issues, and tight streets make it tough to navigate. By all means, see the monuments, go to the Smithsonian museums, visit the government buildings, and pop into Arlington National Cemetery. Just take public transportation to them.

So where should you stash your RV while touring? Cherry Hill Park in College Park, Maryland, is the closest site to the city, is open year-round, and has a bus that takes you right to a Metro station into the city. It also hosts a night tour (\$50) and day tour (\$90) that includes transportation to and from the park. RV sites go from \$73 to \$93 per night, so more frugal travelers may want to consider the \$45 to \$50 spots at Lake Fairfax Park in Reston, Virginia. It has a bus to the Metro station in Reston.

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS

This isn't just Blue Ridge Parkway, Part II. Great Smoky Mountains National Park is 816 square miles unto itself, and you won't see much of it from where the Blue Ridge Parkway drops you in Cherokee, North Carolina. Actually, for this trip, we'd recommend coming into the park from the other entrance in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and taking in all the touristy goodness of the Ober Gatlinburg amusement park and ski area, the Ripley's Aquarium, and, in nearby Pigeon Forge, Dolly Parton's own amusement park, Dollywood. The latter has roller coasters and other thrill rides, but the Southern cooking, country music, musical revues, barbecue and bluegrass festivals and more that make it more than just some fair-food-and-cheap-thrills theme park.

What if you actually want to go into the park, hike the trails, see the historic homes in Cades Cove or just enjoy the views from U.S. 441? The park itself offers RV options ranging from \$18 to \$27 a night, which is less than the cost of many facilities beyond the park's borders. Some of the costlier places may have better amenities, but they'll be farther from Clingmans Dome, the highest point in Tennessee.

SAN JUAN ISLANDS

Parked in the Salish Sea and surrounded by British Columbia to the north and west, the San Juan Islands are part of Washington State but feel like a world all their own. Your RV will have to hop a ferry to get here, but once you arrive you'll find quaint harbor towns, former British and Colonial forts, old-growth forests, old lime kilns, views from above the clouds, orcas, and maybe the occasional celebrity.

here are RV-friendly campgrounds in the San Juan Islands, but most have limits on the size of RV. The fairgrounds on San Juan Island are just a mile from the ferry in Friday Harbor, have electric and water hookups, and rent spots for \$45 a night. Moran State Park on Orcas Island and the Lopez Islander Resort on Lopez Island are also fine options.

CAPE COD

For many New Englanders, the ideal summer features a showing of "Jaws" at the Wellfleet Drive-In, fish and chips at Baxter's in Hyannis and, maybe, a drag show in Provincetown. But whether you're into whale watching, fishing, or just whiling away the hours on the beach, Cape Cod provides the essential New England coastal experience without making you truck out to an island.

Sure, the Cape is more a bungalow or bed-and-breakfast kind of place, but it doesn't hate RVs by any means. With nearly two dozen RV parks along the Cape, you'll be well served by places such as Atlantic Oaks in Eastham (from \$53 a night) or Old Chatham RV Resort in Dennis (\$76 a night) with full hookups, Wi-Fi, laundry, and bathrooms with showers.

FLORIDA KEYS

Let the kids go to the theme parks and let hardier folks than yourself deal with mosquitoes in the Everglades. You have some bonito to catch, some coral reef to explore, and a famous author's cats to visit. Whether you're the laid-back sort who'd like nothing more than to catch a fish in the morning and eat it at night or a more free spirit whose day only starts when the sun sets, the Florida Keys are among the most unique places to pass the time in the U.S. — even though they're only tangentially connected to the States.

Grassy Key RV Resort in Marathon puts you in the middle of the keys for prices ranging from \$61 a day for the most basic spot to \$193 a night for a deluxe spot on the waterfront. But if you simply have to party right in Key West, Geiger Key Marina goes the full Jimmy Buffett with spots from \$105 to \$155 a night, waterfront views, and lots of booze and seafood. To get closer to downtown and go a bit cheaper, Leo's packs in RVs for \$67 to \$90 a night.

KENTUCKY BOURBON TRAIL

If you love yourself some traditional Kentucky bourbon aged in charred oak barrels, the Kentucky Bourbon Trail is about as close to heaven as you're going to get. Established in 1999, the trail links distilleries including Jim Beam, Heaven Hill, Four Roses, Maker's Mark, Woodford Reserve, Wild Turkey, Bulleit, and Angel's Envy into one comprehensive trip that even gives visitors transportation options for getting from distillery to distillery.

A lot of people take this trail by RV. Our favorite parks: Elkhorn Campground along the Elkhorn Creek in Frankfort right near the Buffalo Trace Distillery, or the My Old Kentucky Home State Park in Bardstown, near Heaven Hill and Maker's Mark. Each has full hookups for than \$30 a night, reserving some funds for all that bourbon tasting.

NAPA AND SONOMA

It seems as if every state now has its own "wine country," but the Napa and Sonoma valleys are still the nation's wine country. California produces more than 80 percent of U.S. wine, and does so in a place where you can drive through the redwoods and hike the coast all in the same weekend. If you love wine and this isn't on your bucket list, get a new bucket.

RVs are a familiar sight on Wine Country roads, with Sonoma and Napa encouraging visitors to stay outdoors and enjoy the natural beauty. Meanwhile, many of the local RV parks know what they're about: Calistoga RV is not only within walking distance from a golf course and arts center, but more than a dozen wineries. The Cloverdale KOA puts visitors right in the middle of the Alexander Valley wine region, while the Sonoma County Events Center has an RV Park

amid Russian River wineries on the site of the Harvest Fair, the largest regional wine competition in the U.S.

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Air Safe Hitches
264 Lincoln Ave
Island arkh, New York | 11558
Tel. 321-939-2132
Fax. 866-201-3391
airsafehitches.com

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