

2015 WCM Campground Business Directory!

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\$2.50 U.S./\$3.50 Canada

The Independent Voice of the North American Campground Business

Vol. 46 No. 1 • January 2015

Hard Work, Family Effort Earn Wisconsin Park Jellystone's 'Camp-Resort of the Year' Honors

**ARVC
Con/Expo
Coverage!**

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Family fun is at the heart of the Isaacson family's operations at the 2014 Camp-Resort of the Year in Caledonia, Wis. Photo courtesy of Caledonia Jellystone.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

By Justin Leighty

Industry Sees Continued Growth in Network Branding



There's a growing movement in the RV park and campground business toward branding of parks, and, judging by what we're all seeing in other hospitality and leisure sectors, it's probably only going to keep accelerating for years to come.

In touching bases with people at the annual **Kampgrounds of America Inc. (KOA)** Convention in November in Charleston, S.C., as well as the **National Association of RV Parks & Campgrounds (ARVC) Outdoor Hospitality Conference and Expo (OHCE)** in Las Vegas in early December, it seems as if the outdoor-hospitality market is increasingly mirroring the indoor-hospitality sector with regard to the growth of identifiable brands.

"Ultimately, I think campgrounds that qualify as good businesses will gravitate to brands over time," said **KOA President and COO Pat Hittmeier**. "I think in the next 20 years you'll see more and more divisions and more and more brands in our marketplace. It's just inevitable. You have big corporations buying more campgrounds and they want their own brands. We've (KOA) got our brands, and so does **Cruise Inn**, with what they're doing, as well as **Leisure Systems**. Even in RV dealerships you're seeing that."

And KOA, in introducing three separate brands within its own system to better define what guests can expect at various franchised parks, is pursuing an enhanced branding strategy of its own.

KOA and 82-park-strong Leisure Systems Inc. (LSI), headed up by **President Rob Schutter Jr.**, immediate past-chairman of ARVC, are the two longest established franchise systems — and both are extending their brands by progressively adding parks to their networks. In addition, as Hittmeier mentioned, there are more outfits looking to build networks out of independent, privately owned campgrounds: Cruise Inn RV Parks, introduced at the OHCE in Knoxville, Tenn., 14 months ago, has attracted 15 parks in its first year and currently has commitments from another seven RV parks with more reportedly in the works.

We also saw the introduction of **United RV Parks (UP)** at this year's OHCE in Las Vegas, an altogether new network started by a Southern California RV park operator that's attracted eight members in its first few months to pool marketing resources among family-owned parks.

These kinds of brands certainly can have staying power.

Just because brand names haven't yet become as commonplace in the campground sector as they are in lodging and amusement doesn't mean they won't. As Hittmeier said, "I think we're usually the last to respond because we're at the smaller end of the scale. This aggregation of businesses into brands or into common ownership is a process you see going on in other industries, other businesses. I just think it's apparent that it's going to naturally happen in our business as well." **WCM**

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www.woodallscm.com

January 2015

Vol. 46 No. 1

G&G MEDIA
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Woodall's Campground Management is published monthly by G&G Media Group LLC at the above address.

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CalARVC Sets Schedule for RV Park Days

The **California Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds (CalARVC)** will be hosting several RV Park Days in 2015 offering one-day sessions structured to facilitate networking and learning.

According to CalARVC's *Coffee Talk* newsletter, sessions will include presentations by industry experts while leaders in their field will spend one-on-one time with each delegate.

The schedule for RV Parks Days includes:

Jan. 27 – Join CalARVC at **Bakersfield RV Resort**, a GuestReview & Good Sam top-rated park. Featured experts include PR expert **Jeff Crider**, one of the top published consumer public relations writers in the industry. Learn how to structure your marketing plan to include a good public relations component and how to maximize your CalARVC/ARVC PR benefits. **John Pentecost** of **Hart King** will share his insights on best employee practices, including trading space rental for work. Plus he will cover the ins and outs of the new mandatory paid sick leave act. Vendors from around the country will be bringing their expertise and knowledge straight to you. Later join in the fun during the popular park tour, evening dinner and campfire.

April 7 – CalARVC's SoCal destination this year is **Pechanga Casino & RV Park** in Temecula. Guest speakers are top California industry real estate agent **John Grant** and financier **Kevin Rappleye** of First Community Bank. If you plan to invest in an upgrade, considering your exit strategy or just need to know your options, then these California experts will help you find the answers. The afternoon will feature expert roundtables, park tour, dinner and campfire. **WCM**

Cruise Inn RV Parks Forges Considerable Progress A Year After Launch, Stages Inaugural Convention

'It's been really fun — different in a lot of ways from the indoor hospitality sector, but in many ways similar,' said CEO Scott Anderson. 'I think I've brought as much to the outdoor industry as it has brought to me.'



Cruise Inn RV Parks' management team includes (L-R) Scott Anderson, Kathy Palmieri, Linda Profaizer and Adam Frisch.

When the members and staff of **Cruise Inn RV Parks** gathered Dec. 5-7 in Las Vegas for the new network's inaugural convention at the Hard Rock Hotel, they had plenty to celebrate.

In the 13 months since the official launch of the Cruise Inn brand to the RV park sector, 15 parks joined the network, and according to CEO **Scott Anderson**, another seven are in the pipeline. In addition, Cruise Inn picked up another nine solid prospects at the **National**

Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds (ARVC) annual Outdoor Hospitality Conference and Expo (OHCE) just a few miles away.

It was at that same annual ARVC event in 2013 in Knoxville, Tenn., that Anderson and Cruise Inn's other backers — including **Vantage Hospitality Group Inc.** founder, President & CEO **Roger Bloss**; Vantage COO **Bernie Moyle**; **Alan Benjamin**, CEO of **Benjamin West**, a furniture and equipment

supplier to the hotel industry; **Alan Tallis**, a 30-year hotel veteran formerly with **La Quinta** hotels; **Adam Frisch**, a residential Aspen developer; and **Ian Steyn**, owner of the **Jellystone Park Camp-Resort in Larkspur, Colo.** — launched Cruise Inn, with the goal of bringing hotel-industry advantages to the RV park and campground business.

Cruise Inn's growth is right on the target Anderson projected last year — 15 parks the first year and 35 the following year.

At the start of the Cruise Inn conference, Anderson told *Woodall's Campground Management* that he's pleased with the pace at which parks are joining Cruise Inn. "We'd always be happy if it was a little better, but not disappointing by any stretch," the hospitality-industry veteran said.

One of the accolades Cruise Inn quickly earned came less than three months after its launch, when the American Lodging Investment Summit named Cruise Inn one of the most innovative and new concepts in the hospitality industry.

Glenn Haussman, editor in chief of *Hotel Interactive*, introduced the Cruise Inn RV Park brand at ALIS and facilitated a discussion between Bloss and attendees. Hundreds of concepts were submitted and this session spotlighted the top four.

"Of all the new products, brands and concepts announced in 2013, Cruise Inn RV Park is the one that I'm most excited about," said Haussman in an announcement after the ALIS conference. "The Cruise Inn team is very smart and they're perfectly positioned

Cruise Inn — continued on page 14

HUD Advisors Recommend Agency Back Off on Park Model RV Memo

Two months after the **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** issued a memo that threatened to cause problems for RV parks and campgrounds with park model RVs as well the manufacturers of the RVs, an advisory committee recommended HUD rescind the memo.

The **Manufactured Housing Consensus Committee (MHCC)**, a group established by law to advise HUD, met Dec. 2 for its first time in two years, according to a variety of groups, including the **Illinois Manufactured Housing Association (IMHA)**, the **National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds (ARVC)**, the **Michigan Association of Recreation Vehicles and Campgrounds (MARVAC)** and the **Indiana Manufactured Housing Association-RV Council Indiana (IMHA-RVC)**.

While the MHCC covered a lot of topics in the meeting, three of their recommendations were relevant to HUD's memo — which said the agency in April will begin to count factory-built porches as "living space" that counts against the 400-square-foot maximum size for a park model to be considered an RV and not a manufactured home.

The committee, in mostly unanimous votes, adopted the following, according to the IMHA:

- A change to exempt from HUD regulations, recreational vehicles and park models built and certified in accordance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard 1192-2015 or American National Standards Institute (ANSI)

standard A119.5-09.

- A recommendation for HUD to rescind its October 2014 memorandum regarding recreational vehicles, and delay further enforcement until new regulations are adopted.

In addition, according to ARVC, the MHCC:

- Recommended that HUD grandfather existing park model RVs in order to protect park operators and consumers from enforcement actions as HUD implements new regulations.

The recommendations are a good sign, according to Jeff Sims, ARVC's director of state relations and government affairs, since Congress failed to take action on U.S. House Resolution 5658, a bill that, if passed, would exempt park model RVs of 400 square feet or less from the Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974, which forms part of the HUD code. HR 5658 would also protect the legal status of park models that have been placed in campgrounds during the past two decades.

"We have every reason to believe that House and Senate bills addressing the park model porch issue and other related issues will be introduced in the new Congress," Sims said. "When and if the timing is right, ARVC may again ask its members to contact their Congressional members."

ARVC teamed up with the **Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA)** and the **National RV Dealers Association (RVDA)** to support the legislation and to urge HUD to rescind its October memorandum. **WCM**

Camping in Ontario Celebrates 45th Year, Names New Board



The 2014-2015 Camping In Ontario/OPCA board of directors gathers together for a photo.

Camping in Ontario/OPCA (Ontario Private Campground Association) celebrated its 45th anniversary at its annual convention Nov. 16-19 at **Blue Mountain Resort** in Collingwood, Ontario, according to the association.

More than 160 people gathered for the event, which featured a variety of fun and educational opportunities.

Association members took in sessions covering topics like branding, online reservations, human resources, customer service, marketing and government relations, to name a few. Attendees also took part in a wildly popular mini Olympic-style recreation session. It was a great chance for members to experience being the participant, not the organizer, and to benefit in a team-building exercise.

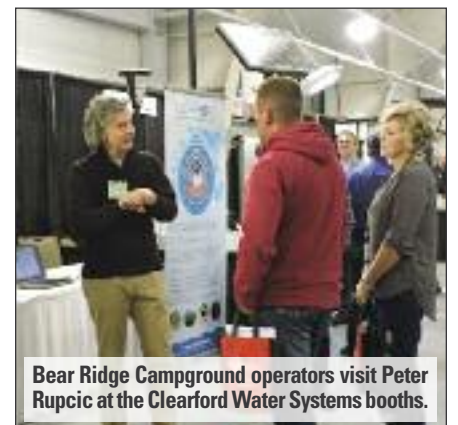
The annual general meeting happened Nov. 18 in conjunction with the convention. The new executive of the board of directors was introduced with **Bruce Dressel** of **Jordan Valley Campground** continuing in his role as president, **John O'Brien** as first vice president; **Leonard Koekkoek** as second vice

president; **Wendie Dupuis** as secretary/treasurer, and **Robert Trask** as past president.

New board members include **Ron Parker** of **Mountain Trout Camp**; **Ellie Giammatolo** of **Windmill Point Park and Campground**; and **Diane Houle** of **Blueberry Hill Motel & Campground**.

Leaving the board of directors after many years of service were **Tammy Gillespie** of **Neys Lunch & Campground** and **Bruce Martin** of **Green Acre Park**.

As the year wraps up, Camping In Ontario is working on finalizing the *2015 Camping In Ontario Directory* or, as eager campers refer to it, the 'Bible for camping in Ontario,' the association reported. The directory will be



Bear Ridge Campground operators visit Peter Rupcic at the Clearford Water Systems booths.

distributed at 14 consumer shows throughout Ontario, Alberta and Quebec beginning in mid-January and through to the spring. Copies will also be made available through Anderson's Brochure Distribution in the eastern United States. **WCM**