

RV travel bigger than ever for 2003

BY STACIE CARLSON

Special to the Record-Eagle
Recreational vehicles (RVs) are no longer for retirees looking to spend winters in Florida or summers traveling the open road.

Nowadays, RVs are a family affair — with all of the luxuries associated with home combined with the convenience of mobility.

“After the 9-11 terrorist attacks, family RV usage was really thrust back into the limelight,” said Jeff Belanger at TC-RV in Traverse City.

“For a long time, RVing was associated with retirees, but that changed overnight. Now, more and more families want to camp, and they’re doing it closer to home. People are

looking for comfort, convenience and square footage.”

Prior to purchasing an RV, experts suggest that people should have some ideas about how much time they’re planning on spending in the RV. That will help determine size requirements and amenities.

“RVers fall into a few categories,” said Gary Dellinger, general manager at Burnside RV Center in Gaylord. “Some plan on living in their RV for three months in Florida and some plan on camping only a few times a year. Some people want all of the conveniences of home, like air conditioners and microwaves; some don’t.”

RV amenities go well beyond air conditioners and microwaves to include a host of innovations.

“The most popular electronic gadgets found on RVs are televisions, VCRs, satellite dishes, video game systems, cellular phones, laptops and personal computers, surround sound CD and DVD players,” said Nicki Denton, project coordinator at All Seasons Communications (in association with the Michigan Association of Recreation Vehicles and Campgrounds). “Other options include slide-out walls that expand to create a bigger living space, slide-out awnings for a shaded outdoor sitting area, patio lights and Global Positioning Systems.”

For those seeking total comfort, Denton also noted that many RVs can be furnished with leather reclining chairs and sofas, luxury queen-sized beds, gas fireplaces, multiple-burner range tops, ovens, double sinks and skylights.

Along with their personal amenities, RV manufacturers have made some noteworthy refinements to improve RV performance.

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Record-Eagle/Jim Bovin

The recent Northern Michigan Camper & RV Show at the Grand Traverse County Civic Center drew people looking for the latest in recreation travel vehicles. RVs are starting to look more and more like home, since manufacturers assume that owners will be spending a lot of time in them. Details like oak woodwork and the latest in amenities like stereo systems, at left.



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