

outdoors

RV dealers try to change minds at Camper Show

By Lem Messer
outdoors writer

Recreation vehicle manufacturers and dealers will be trying to change some minds about RVs at the Detroit Camper and Travel Trailer Show which starts Friday for a 10-day run at the W. Eight Mile Armory in Oak Park.

They will be trying to convert critics who believe RVs are more expensive than they are, get poor mileage and aren't used enough to justify their purchase. They're asking the public to consider these points:

- Nearly 80 percent of all new RVs sell for less than \$12,000. New travel trailers, which are the best selling type of RV on the market, average approximately \$5,000. Folding camping trailers sell for an average of \$3,000.

- Campgrounds are usually at least three to four times cheaper than staying in a motel or hotel. Some public campgrounds charge no fees.

- RV owners use their RVs an average of 23 days a year, and more than 25 percent of all RV owners use their vehicles one to four months a year, according to a University of Michigan study. The study said "the fear of non-use is extremely ill-founded."

- Manufacturers have increased the fuel efficiency of motorized RVs over the last three years. Most of today's motorhomes, including the biggest, can get 10 to 15 mpg, and there are compact motorhomes on the market that can get more than 20 mpg.

The U-M study, in which 1,500 telephone interviews were conducted, showed that nearly two-thirds of the heads of U.S. households believe that "camping is the best vacation a family can take." Nearly two-thirds of all families said they've been camping sometime in their lives, including 37 percent who said they've taken at least one camping trip in the past three years.

The survey showed that camping will likely increase. The median number of camping trips expected to be taken by active campers in the next three years is 4.5, compared to 3.5 over the past three years.

And recreation vehicles are perceived to be a good value in the eyes of a majority of the families interviewed. Asked to compare RVs with "other ways people spend their money," more than half of the respondents said they believe RVs give as much or more value for the money, while one-third said less value. Twenty-five percent said RVs give more value.

"The percentage of respondents who say RVs give

more value than other products is more than twice as high as the proportion of respondents who now own an RV," the survey said. "This indicates that the RV market is far from saturated."

THE DETROIT SHOW is the largest in the country and will include vans, motorhomes, travel trailers, pop-up tent campers and truck campers.

Hitches, awnings, steps and porches, toilets, suspension systems, heaters and air conditioners will be among the accessories shown.

Campground exhibits and information on tourism, camping clubs, financing, insurance and maintenance will be available.

The Michigan Association of Recreational Vehicles and Campgrounds is sponsoring three contests in conjunction with the show. MARVAC is looking for the best camper recipe, the best camper family and the best camper club. For entry forms, telephone 855-5110.

Show hours are 2-10 p.m. weekdays and non-10 weekends. Tickets are \$2 for adults, \$2 for children 6-12 and \$1 for senior citizens 62 and older. Discount tickets are available at participating RV dealers. Parking is \$2.

ANGLERS are reminded that Brest Bay in Lake Erie has unsafe ice. In bays where ice is safe, good catches of perch are being taken, such as inside the "banana" at the Pte. Mouillee State Game Area in Monroe County.

In Oakland County, panfish are being taken in Gerundog Bay in Cass Lake, Lake Louise, Maceday Lake, Square Lake and White Lake. Crappies are being caught in Lake Sherwood and in Gerundog Bay of Cass Lake. Best baits are minnows for the crappies and chub for pike.

Cedar Island and Osborn lakes are also reporting good panfish catches. Bluegills are being caught on Kent lake using minnows or waxworms. And large pike are being taken on suckers in Union Lake. A 34-inch was caught there recently.

The DNR also reports that pike spearing has been good on Elizabeth, Big Seven and Cass lakes in Oakland County. If your pike decoy is attached to a line that has a barbed hook, it is considered a fishing line.

Pontiac Lake is producing nice-sized perch — a 13-inch was taken out of that lake last weekend. Try using minnows or waxworms for bait.

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