

America's Largest RV Show Reports Record Attendance

America's Largest RV Show, held in Hershey, PA reported record attendance at this year's event with a turnout of 36,410 people for the Retail Days alone. The event held September 12th through 18th saw a 4 percent increase in attendance from 2010 and set a new record for the history of the show. The show was over 1.3 million square feet and had over 1,050 new units on display – an increase of 6 percent compared to 2010. There were 165 booth vendors in attendance - a 15 percent increase over 2010; and manufacturer square footage increased by 5 percent compared to last year.

This year's show battled national media attention as flooding hit the area the week prior to opening. "We received hundreds of phone calls and emails asking if the show was still opening," Rebecca Lenington, Executive Vice President of the Pennsylvania RV and Camping Association (PRVCA) said. "Thanks to the PRVCA staff and the understanding and the cooperation of our exhibitors, set-up of the show went as scheduled and we opened on time without having to make any changes to the show's program."

Industry Days were the focus of the first two days of the show allowing dealers one-on-one time with manufacturers and the opportunity to see the debut of the 2012 products. "There's a lot of value in Hershey's Industry Days," Dan Saltzgiver, owner of Reicharts RV and Camping Center and Show Chairman. "We send staff to the show both days so that everyone has a chance to see the new product and get a chance to talk with manufacturer representatives and suppliers."

The educational events were a hit for attendees and exhibitors alike. Eight featured speakers brought new business ideas to their audiences. Keynote speakers Randy Sobel and Scott McKain brought fresh ideas pertaining to today's economy allowing attendees to walk away with some new approaches to their business.

Retail days brought consumers who were ready to shop. "Consumer attitudes were positive and it looks like we'll bypass our 2010 sales," Nick Palm of Tiffin Motorhomes said. "We had an excellent show. Bob Tiffin attended all retail days and was impressed with PRVCA's management and consumers' attitudes."

"PRVCA did a phenomenal job," Chris Colton owner of Colton RV said. "Sales have exceeded last year's sales and we've sold more gas products than in the past. It was a good show and Mother Nature was on our side this week."

"We are very happy with how the show has been," Gene Ulrich, Sales Manager of Stoltzfus RV of West Chester said. "As of Saturday night, we surpassed any sales we've ever done."

"The show finished well for us and we're pleased," Don Laird, President of Lime Lake RV said. "A lot of people are really getting into the green phenomenon and that's been a real plus for us."

"It was very encouraging to see such a positive consumer attitude," Jeff Kline, owner of Gayle Kline RV said. "Sales are good."

Supplier booth vendors also experienced good sales. "For a product debut, it was everything and more," Drew Schiller, President and inventor of Bag Rack said. "I received a lot of validation for the product and signed six distributors during Industry Days."

The Show also provided hourly seminars for both new and experienced RVers. "I get a lot of attendees in my seminars who have yet to purchase an RV," Gary Bunzer, the RV Doctor, said. "They find value in being able to apply what we discuss in the seminars to make a better informed decision when they buy. And they know the Hershey Show is THE place to get a good deal on a brand new RV! Those who already have a coach, love, not only to look at the new models, but they glean value from the great educational topics presented at the show. I'm guessing everyone walks away with something; a new recreation vehicle, or a new product, or valuable information about maintaining their recreational investment. Everyone wins!"

The universal appeal of RVing, as well as the ability to shop and compare 56 manufacturers at one place, continues to attract thousands of people to Hershey. "We couldn't be more pleased with the success of the 2011 Show," Lenington states. "We are in planning mode for next year's show to make it even better." The 2012 PA RV & Camping Show will be held on September 10 – 16th. For more information, visit www.largestRVshow.com.