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Outdoor Recreation Key to Overall Wellness

Camp Hill, PA, June 5, 2009— Research has shown that outdoor recreation provides stress relief, improved physical and mental health, and social and economic benefits. Dr. Andrew Lepp, assistant professor of recreation, park and tourism management at Kent State, perceives outdoor recreation as a vital element to alleviate stress for families and individuals. Despite the many benefits, a recent AP-Gfk poll showed that 56 percent of Americans will not take a leisure trip this summer – up from 51 percent in 2005. One-third of Americans surveyed said they have cancelled at least one trip because of time and money constraints. In a 2007 article for Kent State’s website, Lepp identified five mental and physical benefits of camping and outdoor activities that can be attained close to home:

- Good for the Mind: Prevention and reduction of stress improved self esteem, confidence and creativity; spiritual growth; increased senses of exhilaration, adventure and challenge
- Good for the Body: Aerobic, cardiovascular and muscle fitness as well as improved immune system functions
- Even Better Social Life: Bonding with like-minded people and increased pride in the community and nation.
- Economic Benefits: People active in the outdoors are more productive at work while outdoor recreation creates new jobs and increased property values. Outdoor activities are also more economical, as a whole, than most other forms of recreation and travel.
- Outdoor Benefits: Increased environmental awareness and preservation of valuable natural resources.

According to GoRVing.com, 70 percent of RVers say they walk more when on RV trips than when they are at home. Increased physical health is not the only benefit. RVers said they are also mentally healthier and happier than non-RVers. Children benefit greatly from being in the outdoors. According to research from Harvard Professor Dr. John Ratey, outdoor activities help increase learning, regulate mood and improve self-esteem and motivation in children.

While many Americans may be cancelling plans for far-from-home summer vacations, PA campgrounds are anticipating a busy season. According to the National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds, many private park operators are investing in new amenities this year, which include everything from activity centers and miniature golf courses to skate parks and water slides. Many are even adding technologies such as Wi-Fi service and cable TV.

Families across the country are looking for inexpensive ways to escape the stress and the routine of day to day life. Well, there’s no better place to look than outside. One of the best ways to explore the outdoors, is in an RV. RVing is one of the most affordable, ways to see the great outdoors and explore all it has to offer. And there’s no better place to see the latest in RVs than at America’s Largest RV Show held September 16 – 20, 2009 at the GIANT CenterSM in Hershey, PA. For more on RV adventures or to view PA’s camping guide *Explore PA*, visit www.parving.com. Why? Because you shouldn’t have to spend a lot on something called free time.

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