

Used RVs keep travelers on the road

By RODD CAYTON, The Press-Enterprise

Just because credit is tight and home equity is trending southward doesn't mean the dream of vacationing in a recreational vehicle has to be parked.

People still are high on the idea of RV travel, industry representatives say, and there are alternatives to forking over big money for a new motor home.

The obvious one is the used motor home, said spokesman Phil Ingrassia of the National RV Dealers Association.

A late-model used RV will cost significantly less than a comparable new model, he said. An advantage to buying one from an RV dealer, he added, is the dealer provides some assurance that the vehicle has been checked out, and many late-model purchases qualify for an extended service agreement, similar to a warranty.

Another alternative to buying a new RV is fixing up one's old RV, said Valerie Parmenter, owner of V.I.P. Enterprises in San Bernardino, Calif.

V.I.P. performs full-body repair and interior and exterior renovations, which Parmenter said turns an old unit into something as good as new.

The work can include replacement of appliances and furniture, she said.

Parmenter has noticed more customers coming in and getting their old RVs fixed up, many of whom say they were considering buying a new model. Some, particularly first-time buyers, are purchasing older RVs, then immediately bringing them in, she said.

She said buying a used RV, then adding renovation costs — usually less than \$10,000 — still gets drivers on the road having spent less than if they had made a new RV purchase.

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