

CAMPGROUND

INDUSTRY E-NEWS

**CONSUMERS SEE
SAFETY IN RV TRAVEL
AS CORONAVIRUS FEARS
MOUNT - STORY P2**





Consumers see safety in RV travel as coronavirus fears mount



TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — It's no secret that the coronavirus, which has been causing millions around the world to reevaluate their vacation plans, has reached the U.S.A.

With nearly two dozen deaths and confirmed cases in multiple states, the coronavirus is bound to affect domestic travel and vacation plans as individuals and families try to stay away from confined places attended by large crowds.

But half way through the winter season, south Florida resorts are at high occupancy and north Florida resorts are gearing up to welcome RVers from all over the country during the spring and summer seasons, said Bobby Cornwell, president and CEO of the Alabama and Florida Associations of RV



Parks and Campgrounds, the nation's largest campground association, an affiliate of the National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds:

"Our members are reporting strong demand and reservations for this coming spring and summer seasons," Cornwell said, adding, "RVing has always been considered the most flexible form of vacationing, allowing families to tailor their entire vacation experience from beginning to end. It is, obviously, also a very safe

form of vacation since you are protected by your own home on wheels."

Pat O'Neill, owner of Camp Gulf RV Resort in Miramar Beach, Fla., said: "We are 100 percent full for the coming spring and summer season. In fact, come April 1st, we start taking reservations for the 2021 season, and as always I expect our beach front lots to get booked within minutes a year ahead of occupancy. The beauty of vacationing in an RV park is that while you have others staying in lots next to you, it is up to you to decide

how involved and engaged or how close you get to others, as opposed to sitting on a plane or a crowded theme park or hotel."

Amir Harpaz, an association board member, recently travelled in his RV with his wife and three kids from Key West to the Florida Panhandle, visiting member parks and talking to their guests. Along the way, he spoke with Mike and Wendy Crate, who travel the country in a 45-foot Prevost with their two young kids who are in second and fourth grade. When asked if their vacation plans have changed due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the Crates responded: "Our summer plans often include a trip out of the country involving long hours of travel at crowded airports. In light of the

travel restrictions and potential dangers associated with the Coronavirus, our family is so happy we decided to plan an RV adventure this summer instead. While our friends are worried about whether or not they will be able to take their trip, our kids are making a priority list of all the amazing things want to see and do on our RV vacation. Our RV gives us the flexibility to tailor our vacation to our family's needs, in the safety of our own surroundings, and we can easily change our itinerary if we need or choose to do so. We are in control of our vacation."

This sentiment of RVers feeling safe and in control of their travel plans seems to be widespread. Thomas Sparrow, owner of Auburn RV



Park in Auburn, Ala., stated: "Our business is up over last year at this time, and reservations for the coming months are strong. Unlike some other travel and vacation accommodations, we have not seen a decline. It's been the opposite. We are not sure if the increase is a direct result of the Coronavirus, but many

of our RVers and campers have expressed they are happy to be traveling and living in the safety of their own RV." "As an association," continued Cornwell, "we are extremely fortunate to be in such a unique accommodation industry. Each one of our members offers a unique and different experience –

from beach front to wooded country side to fully fledged water parks, and you can experience them all with your RV, or in a variety of glamping units many parks offer to guests without RVs. If you have not experienced this form of incredible vacation, I cannot begin to tell you what you are missing, and at times like these, there is no better time to start.

For information on where to travel and camp in Florida or Alabama, please visit www.campflorida.com and www.campinalabama.com or call the Association office at (850) 562-7151 for a free printed campground directory or for assistance with your travel plans.

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