

SUMMER  
2021

**TACO**

Promoting RV Travel  
& Camping in Texas

[www.tacomembers.com](http://www.tacomembers.com)

# News

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**PLUS**



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# Largest Campground Show in the Southwest!

## September 14 & 15, 2021

**You Don't Want To Miss  
This SPECIAL  
Three-In-One Event.**

1. Meetings/Informative Classes
2. Trade Show
3. Live Fun Auction Fundraiser  
For Our Legislative Affairs Efforts



**1** First, we have an awesome lineup of speakers and topics for the 2021 TACO Meeting and Trade Show:

1. "Software Simplified" – Patrick Spellman, Astra
2. "Dealing with Rowdy Campers" – Brian Seigerman, Marshall & Sterling Insurance
3. "Park Models and Glamping: Are They Right For You?" – Roundtable
4. "The Importance of Visuals" – Nichole Poisson, Franchise Development Manager, KOA
5. "Disaster Preparedness" – Patrick Hardy, CEO Hytropy
6. "ADA Now and in the Future" – Kelly Jones, Great Escapes Resorts

There is also a special informative session on "What You Need to Know About the 87th Legislative Session!" It deals with commercial property taxes, property tax appraisal, water fees and more. Don't miss this!

**This is what a couple of our speakers have to say about our upcoming show.**



**Patrick Hardy**  
Hytropy

"TACO's Fall Conference is going to be a benchmark for tremendous resilience, and demonstrates a solid commitment to the health, safety, and welfare of everyone. I am excited and honored to be presenting and I want to hint that I have a great surprise for everyone who attends the class. It will be an experience they won't soon forget!"



**Brian Seigerman**  
Marshall & Sterling

"Getting together with the Texas Campground Owners this fall will be fantastic! Looking forward to swapping stories about the 2021 camping season."

**2**

Second, we have a fantastic group of exhibitors, including our preferred providers Astra and Rowley Insurance, plus some new vendors that will be introducing themselves to our members. All our vendors are excited to finally be in person, meeting with our members. In addition to a variety of excellent exhibitors, we also have a special Park Model and Glamping Accommodations Exhibit, that will include several park models, glamping wagons, a bathhouse and more.



**3**

Third, the TACO Live Auction will be the most fun you have had at a live auction! Bring a nice item or two to help fund the legislative affairs efforts of TACO. This last legislative session was huge for TACO and very expensive.



All this, PLUS a special entertainment event, *Linda Davis and Crew Wake-Up Call!* Linda Davis is a three-time Grammy-winning entertainer. You will laugh and be encouraged by this special mini concert just for you!

**It's not too late  
to sign up  
for the  
TACO Show  
online.**

**For more details  
and the schedule go to  
[tacomembers.com](http://tacomembers.com).**

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# DID YOU KNOW?

provided by:



## Are a service animal and emotional support animal the same thing?

As a park owner, you get to define the pet policy for your park. However, did you know you legally must allow service animals in your park, and the animal owner does not have to provide proof? Learn more below about service animals, emotional support animals, and your rights as a business.

### *What defines a service animal and what can I ask for "proof"?*

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (the ADA), when determining if a dog is a service animal, staff may ask only two specific questions: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability? and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform? Staff are not allowed to request any documentation for the dog, require that the dog demonstrate its task, or inquire about the nature of the person's disability.



### *Are a service animal and emotional support animal the same thing?*

The ADA makes a distinction between psychiatric service animals and emotional support animals. For example, if the dog has been trained to sense that an anxiety attack is about to happen and take a specific action to help avoid the attack or lessen its impact, that would qualify as a service animal. However, if the dog's mere presence provides comfort, that would not be considered a service animal under the ADA.

### *So what can I do as a park owner to best prepare my park?*

*Rowley Insurance recommends a few simple things will help prepare you for animal guests in your park:*

1. Determine your park's pet policy. We suggest requiring leashes and not allowing dogs with a history of aggressive behavior or tendencies, at a minimum; but consider your needs for your park. Remember that regardless of your policy, you must allow service animals.

2. Create a written pet policy release for guests to sign upon check-in. This will not always waive your liability as a campground owner in the event of an incident, but it doesn't hurt. You can find an example at [RowleyInsurance.com/Resources.htm](http://RowleyInsurance.com/Resources.htm)

3. Educate your staff on service animals – what you can and cannot ask guests at check in and how to best accommodate your park guests.

**For additional questions, visit [RowleyInsurance.com](http://RowleyInsurance.com) or [ADA.gov](http://ADA.gov).**

Source: The Americans With Disabilities Act, [ada.gov](http://ada.gov)

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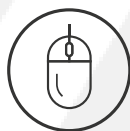


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# RVIA Study: 56 Million People Planning an RV Trip this Summer



A recent survey of America's 180 million leisure travelers found that 31% are planning on going RVing this summer, announced Craig Kirby, president and CEO of the RV Industry Association (RVIA).

"More and more Americans are ready to travel this summer and 56 million of them are planning to go RVing in an RV they rent, own or borrow," said Kirby. "Even with other forms of travel returning, the desire to use an RV to get outdoors and experience an active outdoor lifestyle is stronger than ever. RVing has been cemented as a mainstream travel option that is here to stay."

Asked their reasons for considering RV travel, the respondents cited an interest in exploring the great outdoors, flexibility to work or attend school remotely, and a desire to travel with children and family members as their top three motivations. The least popular response was unreadiness to take other kinds of trips.

The survey data reveals 90% of leisure travelers plan to travel this summer and 60% of leisure travelers plan to travel more or the same amount in the next six months. The desire to travel is even stronger among RVers, 91% of whom said they plan on traveling more or the same amount in the next six months.

"Interestingly, a full 10% of current non-RVers plan to travel in an RV this summer," said Kirby, who noted that a quarter of leisure travelers are considering the purchase of an RV in the coming months. "That's great news for the RV industry as it strives to meet the record-breaking demand for RVs."

The survey also showed that RVing is a year-round activity with 65 million Americans planning to take an RV trip in the next year and 34% of leisure travelers planning on renting an RV in the next year. ★



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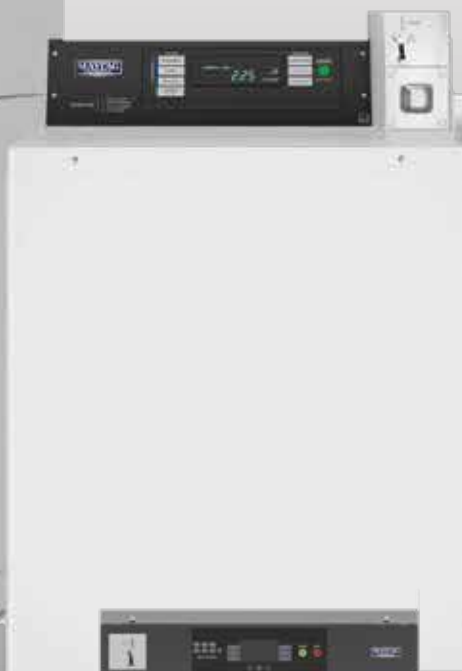


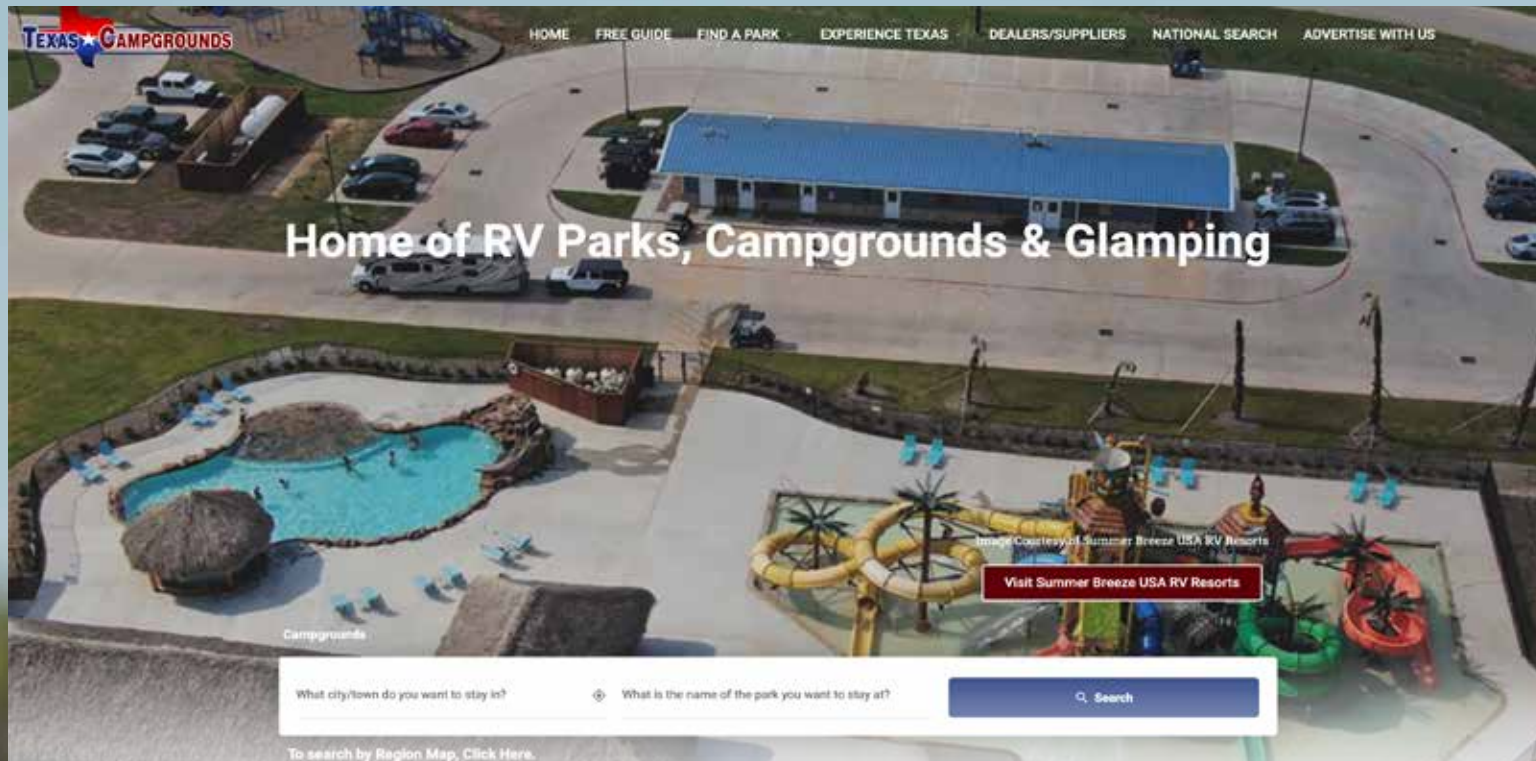
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# TACO Unveils Redesigned TexasCampgrounds.com

Camping and RVing enthusiasts looking for great places to camp in Texas now have a faster way to do it: TexasCampgrounds.com has been redesigned with a search bar front and center on its homepage, according to a press release.

"All you have to do is enter the name of the park or the place you want to visit and hit search and you'll find places to camp right away," said Brian Schaeffer, executive director and CEO of the Texas Association of Campground Owners (TACO), which hosts TexasCampgrounds.com. "We've also placed a link just below the search bar that takes you to a map where you can explore camping options in different regions of Texas."

Schaeffer said TexasCampgrounds.com has seen a 25% increase in website traffic since last year, reflecting the record increases in RV sales and consumer interest in camping during the pandemic.

"We think the redesign of TexasCampgrounds.com will help the rapidly growing numbers of camping enthusiasts as they do their trip planning, whether it's a quick getaway or a family vacation," he noted.

The redesigned TexasCampgrounds.com also provides links to RV dealers, repair centers and RV aftermarket suppliers; other travel and tourism resources in Texas; as well as the annual RV Travel and Camping Guide to Texas, which is available for free in both digital and print formats.

Links are also provided to TexasCabinRentals.net, which highlights campgrounds, RV parks and resorts with rental accommodations, and to EnhancedCamping.com, which provides listings of campgrounds and RV parks across the country along

with listings of popular local restaurants, RV service centers, dog groomers and other services people need while they camp.

"We've tried to create a one-stop shop for camping enthusiasts, so they can find everything they need," Schaeffer said of the website, which was designed by TXAD Web Development and Design, a division of Crowley-based Texas Advertising.

Campgrounds, RV parks, and RV dealers and service providers will also find a greater variety of advertising options on TexasCampgrounds.com, including photos in sliders that identify parks by name, according to the release.

"Oftentimes on websites, you'll see pretty pictures of campgrounds but it's not clear where the photos were taken. We identify the parks in all of our photos and hyperlink the names. If you click on the name, it will immediately take you to the park's website," Schaeffer said.

Braden Walker, a consultant for TXAD Web Development and Design who redesigned TexasCampgrounds.com, said the redesigned site has new software, which makes it faster and easier for consumers to navigate the site from both laptops and mobile devices. Advertisers also now have access to a new portal that makes it easier to load photos and videos they would like to showcase on the website. If you would like to have your RV park listed on TexasCampground.com, call the TACO office at 817-426-9395.

"There is so much more now that electronic devices can do," he said. "The more current your software is, the better experience you're going to have. We not only wanted to dramatically upgrade the look and feel of the site but its overall functionality." ★

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# DID YOU KNOW?

by: Carol Stevens  
General Manager -  
Lelands Cabins [www.lelandscabins.com](http://www.lelandscabins.com)

## The Popularity of Staycations is Spreading.

**You simply need to be ready.**

*Small improvements both behind the scenes and right out in the open are going to be what sets you apart from competition.*

*Here are some quick ideas:*

**Keep it clean:** You are going to want to put systems in place to ensure restrooms stay clean and stocked, and that general cleanliness is maintained. Landscaping can be just as important to maintain. You want proper signage to welcome your guests, and you want your park to be aesthetically pleasing to the eye upon arrival.

**Safety:** Usually, campsites are in nature, and there are things in nature that humans do not get along with. A simple virtual pamphlet can educate your guests of the dangers as well as provide helpful tips on how they can be worry free while staying.

**Inventory Control:** It is important to have good systems in place to keep track of inventory no matter what you offer.

**Quality Checks:** Everything from bike and boat rentals to RV hookups need to be perfectly maintained. You may need to spend a few bucks updating electrical hook ups or replacing an old canoe or bike, but that is better than them not working or breaking. Simple amenities and facilities will help give your business that **WOW** factor your guests are looking for.

*I hope these suggestions help you fly high over your competitors.*

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# Federal Loan Programs for RV Parks and Campgrounds

by: Bruce Hurta



Are you seeking financing for an RV park or campground? Have you encountered some reluctance from your banker? Many bankers don't have experience lending to this industry and haven't recognized its potential. As an advocate of SBA and USDA federal loan programs for small businesses, I can tell you that these programs accommodate many owner's financing needs when their banks could not. Even some of my competitors, who also originate SBA and USDA loans, would prefer lending to businesses in industries in which they have more experience. I advise existing and new owners of RV parks and campgrounds to continue shopping if they encounter a lender who isn't friendly toward their loan request. Talk to associates in the industry to learn which lenders view RV park and campground loan requests favorably.

SBA and USDA lenders originate small business loans with federal backing so that we can almost always provide lower down payments, longer repayment terms, and easier qualifying criteria than traditional bank loans. We offer financing for the following types of loan requests from RV park/campground operators:

- New Construction
- Business Expansion
- Business Acquisition
- Partner buyout
- Refinancing For Lower Payments

These federal small business loan programs are not available for mobile home parks or properties where most revenues result from long-term residents. Visit with an official SBA or USDA participating lender to determine your business' eligibility. In many instances, these federal loan programs offer financing with down payment requirements half of traditional bank financing.

Also, most conventional bank loans are short-term with maturities less than five years. SBA and USDA loans provide long-term financing up to 25 years for RV park/campground properties.★



## Texas Legislature 1st called Special Session

by: Ron Hinkle, TACO Legislative Consultant

The Texas Legislature is still in limbo due to a combination of 57 Senate and House Democrats using a well-known parliamentary maneuver to break a quorum of the Texas House of Representatives, so that bills cannot be passed by the House of Representatives. The Speaker of the House then ordered a "Call on the House" rule that essentially requires the Sergeant-at-Arms and law enforcement officials to arrest and bring back missing legislators to the Texas House chamber and literally lock them in until a quorum is established, and legislative business can continue.

To date, the Texas Democrats have vowed to stay out of the state until the end of the 30-day Special Session, which ends August 7, 2021.

A full report of the 2021 Texas Legislative Sessions will be given at the TACO Meeting, September 14-15, 2021.★

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# Younger travelers fuel boom in RV 'glamping' amid pandemic

by: Briella Tomassetti Published July 20 Updated July 21 Travel FOX 5 NY

When it comes to camping, it's all about personal preference. But this summer, many people are swapping those small tents for spacious RVs to elevate their experience in the great outdoors.

The trend is commonly coined as "glamping" — outdoor camping with more comforts and amenities, a.k.a. glamorous camping.

"RVs give you more control over your surroundings. You get to bring your bathroom with you. You get to bring your bedroom with you. You get to have an air conditioner," RVshare CEO Jon Gray said. "These things are wonderful all of the time, but cast in the light of a pandemic, they're incredibly important."

Gray said that when COVID-19 put the brakes on travel, RVs were there to salvage the industry by allowing people to get around safely while maintaining social distance.

"So, that basically brought a lot of new people into RVing," Gray said. "Four out of five bookers that we had on our platform last year were new to the platform, so these were a lot of people that were trying RVing for the first time."

Founded in 2012, RVshare was the first service where owners could list and rent out their vehicles online. All renters have to do is type in their location and pick-up and drop-off dates. Once they

hit the search button, they can filter the results by price, type of RV, and more.

"Once you book from them and you come to pick it up, you walk through the RV, find out how to use it, do a test drive to make sure you're comfortable driving it," Gray said.

As of late April, bookings were already up more than 800% compared to the same time last year.

But there's a new demographic driving the surge in RV culture: 61% of millennials agree that outdoor travel is more appealing now than ever before, according to a consumer travel survey posted to RVshare's website.

"As the millennial generation is growing up, having kids, and focusing on family travel," Gray said, "they're bringing their earlier desire for experiential travel and combining it with the idea of wanting to have more than one bedroom, wanting to go camping but not sleep on the ground."

And if you're thinking about buying an RV, you might have to be patient. More than 148,000 units were sold within the first three months of 2021 and the demand has been hard to keep up with, according to the RV Industry Association. ★

Many people are swapping those small tents for spacious RVs to elevate their experience in the great outdoors.



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- Park sits on 30 beautiful acres.
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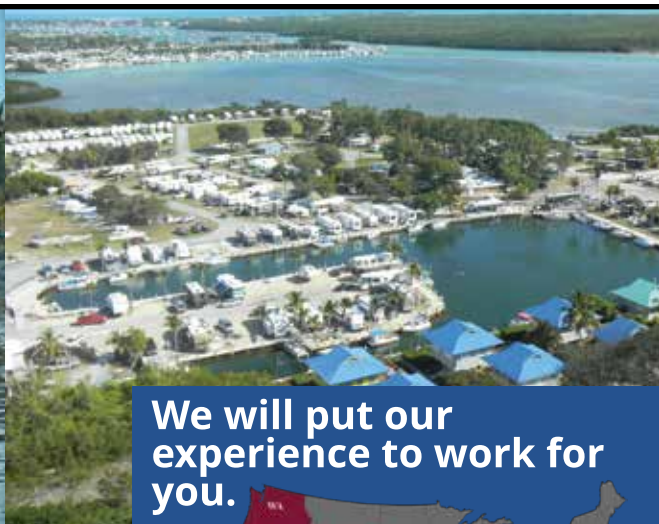


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# Are You Sure the Price is Right at Your Park?

by: Michael Moore, AGS

In the middle of a supply chain class I'm taking for my Masters in Business Administration (MBA), I was reminded of the actual reason that retail outlets have sales or cut prices. Yes, it's to make some money, but, more accurately, it's because they have too much of something and they need to get it out of there. It can be clothes, electronics, or, in our case, RV sites. How many times have you seen a campground, new or old, offer some kind of special discount, such as staying two nights and getting the third free?

But have you asked why they (or you) do this? Is it a promotion for a brand-new park, in the hopes that saving money will reel them in? Maybe it's to fill in those shoulder-season vacancies that every campground must mitigate.

Whether you're one of those parks that regularly offers specials, or not, this year is as good as any to re-evaluate your strategy. As I mentioned before, camping is hot, maybe hotter than ever heading into 2021. Several campgrounds report having the busiest winter season they've ever had during a time when they normally can shoot a cannon down the middle of their park and not hit anyone. Future reservations are looking just as good, depending on which part of the country you're in, which begs the question – are you priced right?

Never mind specials, which you may not need if things are looking positive. The question is: Are you raising your rates this year?

There's no doubt millions of businesses around the country have been hit hard or wiped out completely, but campgrounds have been (no pun intended) immune from a lot of it. If your reservations looked good last year and are looking even better this year, there's no reason not to raise rates. It's like one of the founders of the Texas

Association of Campground Owners said to a new park owner – “If you raise your prices 10%, you won't lose 10% of your business. But, you will get 10% more on 90% of your business – do the math!”

Let's not forget the number of new RVers hitting the road this year. Do they have any idea what your rates were last year? They didn't buy their RV because of the exact price you posted six months ago. They bought that RV because they know it's still an affordable way to travel and see this great country. You're still offering a high-quality experience at a very reasonable price and well below what a hotel or resort would cost.

This (increasing) price strategy also holds true for those parks that cater to long-term guests. How many parks have waiting lists for monthly sites? A waiting list means your rates are way too low! Anything over 80% occupancy means there is upside potential in your rates.

Some owners use rate increases to “thin the herd” of folks they would just as soon see move on, and then replace them with guests who are not nearly as “high-maintenance.” Everything in life goes up from utilities to fuel to food – you can't keep up with rising costs by never increasing rates. You are offering a wonderful experience and lifestyle at your park – price it accordingly.

**Bottom line:** Don't be afraid of raising your rates. If you are committed to having quality staff members, excellent amenities, and constantly upgraded facilities, it takes money. The cost of stocking your store, purchasing wholesale propane, or even office supplies will inevitably go up.

You have big plans for your park, and good for you! Correct pricing is just a reflection of the value of your hard work. ★



Michael Moore is the general manager of AGS Guest Guides, a division of Texas Advertising. You can email him with any questions or concerns at [michael@texasadvertising.net](mailto:michael@texasadvertising.net) or visit [www.AGSPub.com](http://www.AGSPub.com).

“Don't be afraid of raising your rates. If you are committed to having quality staff members, excellent amenities, and constantly upgraded facilities, it takes money.”

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