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January, February, March 2017

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It is an honor to submit this first message as President of the Owners Association. I especially want to thank all the previous and current Board Members for their volunteered time and service to all KOA owners. A list of our current Board is included in this issue.

A special thanks to our immediate past president, Homer Staves, for the great contribution he has made to the OA’s continued growth and the development of our operational work plan.

From this operational work plan, several committees were developed. The intent of the committees is two-fold -- We want to get more owners involved and we want the Owners Association to have a dedicated focus on key issues. The individual committees provide a concentrated contact for owners and corporate to submit their ideas and concerns.

Prior to the February Board Meeting, Board Members contacted owners in their areas, and the Board discussed their responses at the meeting. We included the many issues our owners provided to us, and as a result added several new ad hoc committees to those previously established. The new committees we added are: ACCOMODATIONS COMMITTEE, MERCHANDISE COMMITTEE and a CANADIAN COMMITTEE. We have listed a brief description of all the ad hoc committees that will be working on your behalf along with the Chairs and Co-Chairs of all of these committees. I urge you to consider becoming a member of one of these committees. Please contact the committee chair or our home office to let them know you would like to serve.

Another very important issue we discussed involved a review of the proposed contract changes KOA is considering to our franchise agreements. We reviewed the draft *critically* and relayed our responses and concerns to KOA. We *did not endorse* the draft document. The OA thanked KOA for bringing the proposed changes to us for review. Members feel that the proposed changes that we made to KOA are in the best interests of the Franchisee/KOA partnership. We will continue to monitor the situation.

I hope that you believe we are taking positive steps to represent all franchisees as we continue to express to KOA our opinions as independent owners. A big thanks to KOA Corporate for the opportunities they are providing in asking for, and strongly considering, our review of pending issues to the system. Our goal remains to continue developing a strong and positive relationship with corporate as we all work toward the growth of our own independent businesses and the KOA system.

We are pleased to announce three platinum sponsors that have offered their support to us this year. Independence Bank, Philadelphia Insurance Company and Southeast Publications have stepped up to support our organization and franchisee members. If you have an opportunity to thank them on our behalf, we would be most appreciative.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for your support and participation in the Owners Association. Anyone who thinks the board volunteers are “Yesmen,” or worse, please join our board or at least get active on the committee of your biggest concern. Please, let’s focus our passion and energy to build on what has taken many so much effort to build.

I wish you all a very successful camping season.

With Gratitude,

Greg Batts
KOA OWNERS ASSOCIATION

Area 1
TENNESSEE, NORTH CAROLINA, SOUTH CAROLINA, ALABAMA, GEORGIA, FLORIDA, KENTUCKY, VIRGINIA, WEST VIRGINIA

GREG BATTS, PRESIDENT
KENTUCKY LAKES/PRIZER POINT KOA 17146
1777 PRIZER POINT ROAD
CADIZ, KY 42211
Phone: (270) 522-3762
Email: prizerpoint@prizerpoint.com

JEAN MCCLENDON
NASHVILLE NORTH KOA 42106
1200 LOUISVILLE HIGHWAY
GOODLETTSVILLE, TN 37072
Phone: (615) 859-0348
Fax: (615) 859-0366
Email: jean@nashvillecountryrvpark.com

Area 2
OHIO, DELAWARE, NEW JERSEY, NEW YORK, PENNSYLVANIA, MAINE, VERMONT, MASSACHUSETTS, NEW HAMPSHIRE, MARYLAND, CONNECTICUT, RHODE ISLAND

TIMOTHY CARTMELL
HONESDALE POCONO KOA 38184
50 COUNTRYSIDE LANE
HONESDALE, PA 18431
Phone: (570) 253-0424
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CHERYL ARNOLD
THOMPSON/GRAND RIVER VALLEY KOA
6445 THOMPSON ROAD
THOMPSON, OH 44086
Phone: (440) 298-1311
Email: info@grandrivervalleykoa.com

Area 3
MICHIGAN, ILLINOIS, INDIANA, NORTH DAKOTA, SOUTH DAKOTA, NEBRASKA, MINNESOTA, WISCONSIN, IOWA

LIBBY DEROSA
COVERT/SOUTH HAVEN KOA 22228
39397 M140 HIGHWAY
COVERT, MI 49043
Phone: (269) 764-0818
Email: southhavenkoa@yahoo.com

LYDIA FODOR
LUDINGTON EAST KOA 22234
11713 W. 40TH Street
BRANCH, MI 49402
Phone: (213) 480-0303
Email: info@peremarquetecampground.com

Area 4
LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI, KANSAS, MISSOURI, OKLAHOMA, TEXAS, ARKANSAS

STERLING ROHDE
AN ANTONIO/ALAMO KOA 43112
602 GEMBLER ROAD
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78219
Phone: (210) 224-9296
Fax: (210) 224-8169
Email: sterling@sanantoniokoa.com

DIANE KING, SECRETARY
SPRINGFIELD/RT 66 KOA 25137
5775 WEST FARM ROAD 140
SPRINGFIELD, MO 65802
Phone: (417) 831-3645
Fax: (417) 863-0295
Email: threekingsmo@yahoo.com
BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017

Area 5

ALASKA, WASHINGTON, OREGON, IDAHO, MONTANA, WYOMING

IRIS SHUPE, VICE PRESIDENT
BAY CENTER/WILLAPA BAY KOA 47121
PO BOX 376, 457 BAY CENTER ROAD
BAY CENTER, WA 98527
Phone: (360) 875-6344
Email: ishupe9@gmail.com

HOMER STAVES, PAST PRESIDENT
WHITEFISH/KALISPELL KOA 26161
3191 PARKHILL
BILLINGS, MT 59102
Phone: (406) 656-7086
Fax: (406) 656-7086
Email: hstaves@stavesconsulting.com

Area 6

HAWAII, CALIFORNIA, NEVADA, UTAH, COLORADO, ARIZONA, NEW MEXICO

KEVIN FALLON
CRESCEANT CITY REDWOODS KOA 5102
4241 HWY 101 North
CRESCEANT CITY, CA 95531
Phone: (800) 562-5754
Email: admin@crescentcitykoa.com

CRAIG SISCO, TREASURER
FORT COLLINS/LAKESIDE KOA 6261
1910 LAKESIDE RESORT LANE
FORT COLLINS, CO 80524
Phone: (970) 484-9880
Fax: (970) 493-8900
Email: info@fclakesidecg.com

Area 7

CENTRAL & EASTERN CANADA

MATT STOVOLD
TORONTO N/COOKSTOWN KOA
139 REIVE BOULEVARD
COOKSTOWN, ON L0L 1L0
Phone: (705) 498-2267
Email: mstovold@rogers.com

RICHARD MARCOUX
1000 ISLANDS/MALLORYTOWN KOA 55208
1477 COUNTY ROAD 2
MALLORYTOWN, ON K0E 1R0
Phone: (613) 923-5339
Fax: (613) 923-1114
Email: rkmarcoux@gmail.com

Area 8

WESTERN CANADA

JIM BROWN
HINTON/JASPER KOA 51124
50409 B HIGHWAY 16; Box 5052
HINTON, AB T7V1X3
Phone: (780) 865-5061
Email: brownkoa4@shaw.ca

JEFF SUTHERLAND
VP OF FRANCHISEE SERVICE
PO BOX 3055
BILLINGS, MT 59114
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Email: jsutherland@koa.net

WILLIAM RANIERI
3416 PRIMM LANE
BIRMINGHAM, AL 35216
(800) 678-9976, (888) 461-2062
Fax: (205) 823-2760
Cell: (205) 587-5309
Email: info@koaowners.org
2017 BOARD PLAN AND COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS

Full Board of Directors

Major Objectives: Help build the KOA system and expand communications with KOA, Inc., the Owners Association, State/Provincial leadership and individual members.

Immediate Objectives and Action Plan:
1. Promote the Owners Association.
2. Monitor the development of the Branding Program.
3. Monitor the implementation of K2.
4. Supervise and assist the individual committees as needed.

Branding Committee: Chair: Homer Staves
To continue to monitor activities and proposed changes to the Branding Program and keep the membership updated and informed of any changes.

Convention Committee: Chair: Lydia Fodor
1. Work with KOA to assist with the planning of future conventions.
2. Explore the opportunity to arrange a function to recognize Area Presidents as well as educate new owners/first-time attendees.

Peer-to-Peer Committee: Chair: Matt Stovold
The quality and success of every KOA is important to all KOAs in the system. Educate and provide campgrounds with a resource in the event they need assistance.

1. Volunteer to assist any campground in the lower 5%.
2. Develop a means of reaching campgrounds in the bottom 15%.
3. Provide a tool for the Quality Assurance teams that they can use to inform any franchisee that needs assistance with any problem of how to reach the committee.
4. Arrange for committee member or another franchisee to provide assistance.

Quality Assurance Committee: Chair: Tim Cartmell
Quality Assurance Manual is incorporated by reference in every franchise agreement. This committee will work with KOA Corporate to recommend changes and improvements to the manual and explore all current KOA policies.

1. Be proactive by reviewing the manual early in the year.
2. Review recommended changes provided by KOA.
3. Make specific recommendations to KOA for modifications to the manual.
4. Review and make specific recommendations to KOA on corporate policies (cancellation, VKR sales, outside booking opportunities, utility credits, etc.).

Membership Committee: Co-Chairs: Craig Sisco and Kevin Fallon
This committee’s objective is to encourage all KOA campgrounds to become members of the Owners Association.
1. Develop a list of KOAs that are not members.
2. Assign specific non-members to Area Directors for personal contact.
3. Responsible for ongoing contact with first-year franchisees.
4. Develop the 15-second elevator speech that informs owners what the OA does and the benefits of joining.
5. Pursue new vendor partner members and sponsors.
6. Continue to develop strong working relationships with corporate;
7. Develop stronger relationship and better communications with state/provincial associations. Provide the state/provincial associations with help in how to run a meeting and information on the banking procedures available through the OA.

**Communications Committee: Co-Chairs: Diane King and Iris Shupe**

Provide improved communications between the Owners Association and all of the members.

1. Supervise the production of 4 newsletters.
2. Provide an option for the owner to get the newsletter via email.
3. Deliver *Quick Communications* 6 – 12 times a year.
4. Request and format communication topics from other committee chairs.
5. Work with Executive Director to produce the Annual Report.
6. Work with Executive Director to produce and deliver the sponsor email blasts.
7. Explore the anonymous feedback platform.

**Awards Committee: (anonymous committee)**

This committee is responsible for promoting and selecting winners of the OA awards.

1. We Are Family.
2. WorkKamper of the Year.
3. Explore Honorable Mention opportunities for nominees.

**Canada Committee: Chair: Richard Marcoux**

This committee will work on French language bilingual requirements/issues with the Directory/RYS.

1. Will work to identify border/approved vendors for Canadian merchandise and supplies across the border.
2. Consider marketing fund flexibility and all KOA/Provincial relationships with vendors as well as government/lobby issues.

**Accommodations Committee: Co-Chairs: Libby DeRosa and Tim Cartmell**

This committee will address exploring more vendors, reduced cost for purchase and delivery; review the possibility of adjustment of width, quality, inside/outside specs and amenities, and ROI.

**Merchandise Committee: Co-Chairs: Cheryl Arnold and Diane King and Richard Marcoux (Canada)**

This committee will work with KOA to staff a knowledgeable retail merchandiser at the corporate office; explore adding more logo merchandise, identify Canadian suppliers, utilize deals with group suppliers. Expand marketing merchandise to increase revenue and provide more profit for franchisees and for KOA.

If you would like to volunteer for any of the OA Committees, or if you have any suggestions or comments, please contact a Committee Chair.
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## 2017 State & Provincial Presidents

If you have any news from your state that you would like to share with other members please send to info@koaowners.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017 State &amp; Provincial Presidents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CALIFORNIA/NEVADA</strong></td>
<td><strong>COLORADO</strong></td>
<td><strong>TEXAS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Fallon</td>
<td>Deborah Brunovsky</td>
<td>Marshal Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crescent City/Redwoods KOA 5102</td>
<td>Ouray KOA 6158</td>
<td>Concho Valley KOA 43111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4241 Highway 101 North</td>
<td>PO Box J</td>
<td>6699 Knickerbocker Rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crescent City, CA 95531</td>
<td>Ouray, CO 81427</td>
<td>San Angelo, TX 76904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(707) 464-5744</td>
<td>(970) 325-4736</td>
<td>(325) 556-6446</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:sixriversred@icloud.com">sixriversred@icloud.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:koaouray1@gmail.com">koaouray1@gmail.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:shgray1@gte.net">shgray1@gte.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NEW ENGLAND</strong></td>
<td><strong>MONTANA/WYOMING</strong></td>
<td><strong>UTAH/IDAHO</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COLORADO</strong></td>
<td>Homer Staves</td>
<td><strong>NEW ENGLAND</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NEW ENGLAND</strong></td>
<td>Kevin Fallon</td>
<td><strong>MONTANA/WYOMING</strong></td>
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<td><strong>OHIO</strong></td>
<td>California/Nevada</td>
<td><strong>UTAH/IDAHO</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HEARTLAND-AR, OK, KS, MO</strong></td>
<td>Jeff Peterson</td>
<td><strong>NEW ENGLAND</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ILLINOIS</strong></td>
<td>Anita Perry</td>
<td><strong>UTAH/IDAHO</strong></td>
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<td><strong>INDIANA</strong></td>
<td>Lori Hotstetter</td>
<td><strong>NEW ENGLAND</strong></td>
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<td><strong>INDIANA</strong></td>
<td>Eyeota Perkins</td>
<td><strong>OHIO</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ILLINOIS</strong></td>
<td>John Downing</td>
<td><strong>OHIO</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ILLINOIS</strong></td>
<td>Rock Island KOA 13156</td>
<td><strong>OHIO</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2311 78th Avenue West</td>
<td>100 South KOA Drive</td>
<td><strong>OHIO</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rock Island, IL 61201</td>
<td>Wellington, KS 67152</td>
<td><strong>OHIO</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(309) 787-0665</td>
<td>(620) 326-8300</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:john@rockislandkoa.com">john@rockislandkoa.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:heartlandkoa@yahoo.com">heartlandkoa@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:kamp@hockinghillskoa.com">kamp@hockinghillskoa.com</a></td>
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<td><strong>OREGON</strong></td>
<td><strong>SOUTH CAROLINA</strong></td>
<td><strong>WASHINGTON</strong></td>
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<td><strong>OREGON</strong></td>
<td>Michael Greig</td>
<td><strong>WASHINGTON</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>OREGON</strong></td>
<td>Corvallis/Albany KOA 37176</td>
<td><strong>WASHINGTON</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33775 Oakville Rd. SW</td>
<td>Logan/Hocking Hills KOA 35133</td>
<td><strong>WASHINGTON</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany, OR 37321</td>
<td>29150 Patton Road</td>
<td><strong>WASHINGTON</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(541) 967-8521</td>
<td>Logan, OH 43138</td>
<td><strong>WASHINGTON</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:alcoka@pacifier.com">alcoka@pacifier.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:camp@hockinghillskoa.com">camp@hockinghillskoa.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:krosier@racpack.com">krosier@racpack.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SOUTH DAKOTA</strong></td>
<td><strong>WESTERN CANADA</strong></td>
<td><strong>WESTERN CANADA</strong></td>
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<td><strong>SOUTH DAKOTA</strong></td>
<td>Tony Callahan</td>
<td><strong>WESTERN CANADA</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SOUTH DAKOTA</strong></td>
<td>Kennebec KOA 41101</td>
<td><strong>WESTERN CANADA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOUTH DAKOTA</strong></td>
<td>307 South Highway 273</td>
<td><strong>WESTERN CANADA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennebec, SD 57544</td>
<td>Mt. Vernon, KY 40456</td>
<td><strong>WESTERN CANADA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(605) 869-2300</td>
<td>184 KOA Kampground Road</td>
<td><strong>WESTERN CANADA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:camp@kennebeckkoa.com">camp@kennebeckkoa.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:psko@hargray.com">psko@hargray.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:brownkoa4@shaw.ca">brownkoa4@shaw.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MINNESOTA</strong></td>
<td><strong>KENTUCKY/ TENNESSEE</strong></td>
<td><strong>EASTERN CANADA</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MINNESOTA</strong></td>
<td>Gene Rowland</td>
<td><strong>EASTERN CANADA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carissa Vannoy</td>
<td>Renfro Valley KOA 17113</td>
<td><strong>EASTERN CANADA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bemidji MN KOA 23125</td>
<td>184 KOA Kampground Road</td>
<td><strong>EASTERN CANADA</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>510 Brightstar Road NW</td>
<td>Mt. Vernon, KY 40456</td>
<td><strong>EASTERN CANADA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bemidji, MN 56601</td>
<td>184 KOA Kampground Road</td>
<td><strong>EASTERN CANADA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(218) 444-7562</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kamp@bemidjikoa.com">kamp@bemidjikoa.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:kingstonkoa.owner@hotmail.com">kingstonkoa.owner@hotmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:kamp@bemidjikoa.com">kamp@bemidjikoa.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:psko@hargray.com">psko@hargray.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:brownkoa4@shaw.ca">brownkoa4@shaw.ca</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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BOARD ACTIONS ON RESOLUTIONS RECEIVED AT THE NOV. 2016 ANNUAL MEETING

The board discussions and actions on the resolutions are as follows:

**Area 1 Resolution** was We request KOA Corp to work on solution to improve cell phone service with all major cell phone carriers, including resolving internet service problems and cell towers on property.

The resolution requested KOA, Inc. to work with owners on this request. After discussion, it was determined that the OA cannot contribute as an action item because of the various companies that service. Jim moved that we not accept Resolution from Area 1 and reply to them to provide suggestions on how OA can specifically assist. Craig seconded. The motion carried.

**Area 4 Resolution** We, the Heartland Owners Association, ask that the National KOA Owners Association request the KOA, Inc. make the national online reservation and KOA Application have a reservation cutoff time that is park specific and adjustable individually for each campground by the 2017 camping season.

Discussion was regarding reservation cutoff time. Richard moved we accept the resolution. Homer seconded. The motion carried and full discussions will occur with KOA.

**Area 4 Resolution** was We, the Heartland Owners Association, ask that the National KOA Owners Association request that KOA, Inc. allow campgrounds to sell VKR cards at any time prior to the guest’s renewal date and remove the current 90-day prior-to-date restriction in an effort to grow revenue within the system and provide campgrounds ability to do what the guests’ request.

This resolution was regarding VKR renewal. Homer moved we accept the resolution. Craig seconded. The motion carried and discussions with KOA will begin.

It was clarified that we will send a letter to corporate to summarize our meeting and action items that need to be addressed by KOA.

The resolution presented last year regarding the 800# was also discussed. The 800 number can be changed on campground listings in the online KOA website; it can be taken off the website as well. It will still be on the directory

It was suggested that we remind owners that they need to answer voice mails and emails during off season and all times of year, and to remember to update their voice mails when re-opening their campgrounds for the upcoming season
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2017 KOA Owners Association
Associate Members
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THE FOLLOWING ARE ASSOCIATE MEMBERS OF THE KOA OWNERS ASSOCIATION. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THESE VENDORS PAY DUES TO SUPPORT THE OWNERS ASSOCIATION:

Adventure Golf Services
LEE FIVENSON
PO Box 6319
Traverse City, MI 49696-6319
231-922-8166
lee@adventureandfun.com
http://www.adventureandfun.com

Based in Traverse City, MI, Adventure Golf Services is the industry leader with over 30+ years industry experience specializing in: miniature golf course and family entertainment center (FEC) design; development and construction of permanent, portable and modular miniature golf courses as well as other sports and golf related products for clients worldwide. We have a client portfolio consisting of both large and small companies to include: Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, Norwegian Cruise Line, Princess Cruise Line, Disney, Jack Nicklaus, Glenlivet, Ripley Entertainment, Mall of America, and more. Our design / build services team can help design and properly build a simple or very elaborate miniature golf course that meets any space / budget specification as well as any look-and-feel to be achieved.

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574-534-0034
bobphillips@canterburyrv.com
http://www.canterburyrv.com

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sales@chadwickmfg.com
http://www.chadwickmfg.com

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Framingham, MA 01701
800-914-4606
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Website Content
The Owners Association is currently working on updating the website: http://koaowners.org. You can find all useful information such as current Board Members, Committees, State/Provincial Presidents etc. on the site. Also there is updated information regarding current members in your region as well as Associate Members. You can also pay your dues online. Please visit our site regularly for updates such as state/provincial meetings. If you would like to send photos or videos of your events to share with other members, please feel free to do so.

LET US KNOW WHAT OTHER TYPE OF CONTENT OR MATERIALS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE POSTED ON THE SITE.

If you would like to submit an article, please feel free to do so. If there are any issues you would like us to address in future issues of the Owners News please email us at info@koaowners.org with suggestions or comments.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!
Doug Mulvaney (KOA Inc) and myself presented at the 2016 KOA Convention in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The subject was, “Top 10(?) Ideas For Your Campground”.

Since Doug and I both enthusiastically champion “making money”, that became the main point in our presentation. From there, we outlined ideas (such as replacing water faucets in all the campsites). We ranked the topics by their ability to “make money”. Both Doug and I enjoy working with each other and, with Beth’s help, we produced our presentations. For those of you who may not have attended either of our presentations or didn’t attend the Convention; I’m going to talk about the highlights in this article.

Loren and Doug’s Two Main Ideas

There were two important points in the presentation.

- Whatever you do has to make money.
- You have to have fun doing it.

What do Loren and Doug mean by “having fun”? It is often possible to combine your passion or hobby into something you do in the camping business. This is what makes it fun! By way of example, one of our fellow franchisees loves restoring old tractors; particularly John Deere Tractors. He has some of the tractors on display at the campground, but he also uses them for hay rides. Does he make money? Yes. Perhaps not a lot of money, but the customers love the hayrides and they are enthusiastic to stay at his campground. Most importantly, he has fun talking about the tractors and restoring them.

Another one of our customers, and fellow franchisee, loves restoring fire engines. He has 2-3 fire engines on his campground. He speaks fondly of them, the customers love to hear about them, and there are people that come to the campground specifically to visit with him and look at his latest acquisitions.

However, there are a couple of key caveats. You can’t let this passion override running the business. It can be part of the business, but it can’t become the business. By way of example, I know another franchisee (no longer in business) who was absolutely convinced that his Elk Herd was going to attract thousands of customers and he was going to quickly get rich. Loren, being from Montana (where there are quite a few elk), couldn’t see the attraction. Anyway, he focused all of this energy on maintaining an Elk herd and very little on improving
the campground (it badly needed improvement). In less than 18 months he and his family had sold the campground and lost a considerable amount of money in the process. In short, you may be able to utilize your interests (hobbies) to produce a “bit of uniqueness” in the business; however, don’t overlook the core subjects. You must provide great customer service and remember that your key money maker is renting accommodations (sites). It is the “rental of sites” that provides the money to make your mortgage and bank payments. Renting sites is where money is made. People will come and rent sites to enjoy the activities on your campground and perhaps your passions can supplement those activities and provide additional interest to your guests.

PATIO SITES ARE #1

As Doug and I ranked ideas, we ranked them by their ability to make money and, more importantly, their ability to give you a fast return on investment. In other words, if you borrow this money, how fast do you get your money back? Patio Sites are right at the top.

The first Patio Site that Loren is aware of was built by Don Gill, the former owner of the Buffalo, Wyoming KOA. Interestingly enough, Don referred to it as a “Patio Site” (this was probably 15 years ago). Don’s Patio Sites worked extremely well. In fact, he had a Canadian customer that rented it for an entire month and paid him in full a year in advance!

Between Doug and Loren, we have never heard of anyone who regretted building a patio site. A patio site is normally rented for 1½ times the rate of the site before it became a patio site. The average cost to build a Patio Site (per Doug) is $2,750. If you are currently renting a similar site for $60/night, you can raise the price to $90+/night. Therefore, $30/night (new $$) x 100 nights = $3,000 (Paid off in one year!!).

A patio site does not have to be a Big RV Site. The Standard 60’ Long Pull-Through Site will work excellent, you just have to limit the size of RVs that use it. The musts for a patio site are:

- A fire ring with seating around it (smoke moves).
- Lighting
- Privacy.

KOA allows lots of individuality with Patio Sites such as hot tubs, LED accent lighting, and anything you can imagine. The Patio itself can be made out of concrete, wood, pavers, or composite decking. They all work very well. Personally, Loren’s favorite is
composite decking or pavers elevated on a treated wood structure.

The Great Falls KOA is building 4-5 Patio Sites at the time you are reading this. Doug Mulvaney (KOA Inc) has lots of pictures and information on Patio Sites. He loves to share this information. One of the nicest things about Patio Sites is “it allows free use of your imagination” as long as the basics are adhered to. Patio Sites definitely make money and the payoff is one camping season!

MORE #1 IDEAS

As previously mentioned, Doug and I had several #1’s and a couple are noted below.

Big RV Sites – A Big RV Site is 80’-90’ long, typically a pull-through, and is set on a 45° angle. It will have a 50-Amp receptacle, two sewer hook-ups, etc. There is no question that there is a huge demand for these sites and Loren sees no chance of it diminishing over the next several years.

As many of you know, we built almost 100 Big RV Sites at the Great Falls KOA. I’m finding we will pay them off in 3-4 years. However, others have paid them off in less time.

Repairing Log KOA Kamping Kabins – There isn’t a Log Kabin that can’t be made to look new again. Generally, the repair cost is recovered in one camping season. There are many more details and a call to myself, Beth, Doug, or Jill Currier (KOA Inc) will provide you with exactly what you need and also how to fix any Kabin to make it look like new.

Although it may sound self-serving, the One Room KOA Log Kamping Kabin has the highest ROI (Return On Investment) of any of the onsite accommodations. Furthermore, KOA’s data shows extremely strong demand for the One Room KOA Kabin. Hence, further reason to fix up any Kabins that you have or perhaps add more.

To be clear here, we are not anti- lodges or kottages (units with bathrooms, kitchens, etc.). If you do not have such a unit, adding a “Deluxe Accommodation” will almost always increase the nights in one and two room Kamping Kabins by approximately 10 camper nights per year. In short, the two work very vigorously to complement each other.

SOME EASY (CHEAP) IDEAS?

Doug and I made a point of presenting easy (cheap) ideas as well. Again, a call to either of us can provide additional details. The following enumerations are some of them.

✓ Replace all of the faucets at every site in your entire campground. New brass faucets can be purchased for $5.52/ea. Having new faucets throughout the campground helps eliminate the appearance of being “old and tired” to the perception of “being new”.
✓ Replace all of the receptacles in all electric pedestals; particularly the 15/20 Amp and the 30 Amp RV receptacles. This can be done very inexpensively and again gives the perception that things “aren’t old”. At the same time, repaint the outside of the pedestals.
✓ Put sewer caps on all of the sewer risers.
✓ Install new Bug-Tight LED lighting in the Kabins. This is a very important item. The reality is: cleaning bugs out of the lights is something we all dread; particularly in the middle of a camping season. Hence, it doesn’t get done! The new LED Light will give you 100-foot candles on the floor and you can read a magazine inside the cabin. It makes the cabin seem like new. The following photos illustrate better than any words.

✓ Replace some (or all) electric pedestals. Here again, we are trying to portray the idea that an “old tired campground” is trying to “become new and lively” again. If you go through and replace a few pedestals in each row, you’ll find that your customers want those sites and not the other ones. There are many good pedestals on the market. Loren’s personal favorite is the Eaton Powerhouse, but it will run you about $800/ea. On the other hand, it definitely changes the appearance of the campground.

CONCLUSION

In many ways our KOAs look the same as they have to our customers who have returned after 10-20 years. In many cases, it’s more of a cosmetics issue. If you’d like to discuss any of this in more detail, don’t hesitate to give Doug or myself a call. As I said, our presentation covered way more items and we’d be happy to share our ideas with you.

In our next article, we will discuss “Family Style Bathrooms”. Family Style Bathrooms increase customer satisfaction, camper nights, and the ROI (return on investment) is 2-3 years. It is an idea whose time has come.

It appears it’s going to be another good year in the camping business. All of us here at Prairie Kraft and the Great Falls KOA wish you the very best. Call us if there is anything we can help with.

Your friends in Great Falls,

Loren, Beth, Jane, Sara, and all the folks at Prairie Kraft and the Great Falls KOA.

(Editor’s note: Please note that this article does not necessarily represent the opinion of the Owners Association, but is the opinion of the individual. We invite all members to submit articles to our newsletter and remember the opinion expressed do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Owners Association and not the OA.)
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Puns for Educated Minds

1. The fattest knight at King Arthur’s round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.

2. I thought I saw an eye-doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.

3. She was only a whisky-maker, but he loved her still.

4. A rubber-band pistol was confiscated from an algebra class, because it was a weapon of math disruption.

5. No matter how much you push the envelope, it’ll still be stationery.

6. A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.

7. A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.

8. Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.

9. A hole has been found in the nudist-camp wall. The police are looking into it.

10. Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.

11. Atheism is a non-prophet organization.

12. Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other: ‘You stay here; I’ll go on a head.’

13. I wondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.


15. The midget fortune-teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.

16. The soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.

17. A backward poet writes inverse.

18. In a democracy it’s your vote that counts. In feudalism it’s your count that votes.

19. When cannibals ate a missionary, they got a taste of religion.

20. If you jumped off the bridge in Paris, you’d be in Seine.

21. A vulture carrying two dead raccoons boards an airplane. The stewardess looks at him and says, ‘I’m sorry, sir, only one carrion allowed per passenger.’

22. Two fish swim into a concrete wall. One turns to the other and says, ‘Dam!’

23. Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, so they lit a fire in the craft. Unsurprisingly it sank, proving once again that you can’t have your kayak and heat it too.

24. Two hydrogen atoms meet. One says, ‘I’ve lost my electron.’ The other says, ‘Are you sure?’ The first replies, ‘Yes, I’m positive.’

25. Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused Novocain during a root-canal? His goal: transcend dental medication.

26. There was the person who sent ten puns to friends, with the hope that at least one of the puns would make them laugh. No pun in ten did.
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It comes as no surprise that KOA has decided each of us will have to opt for one of its three “brands” by 2020. Forcing those of us who have resisted this needless market segmentation was inevitable. What is surprising, however, is the amount of effort and expense the company keeps pumping into its campaign to convince everyone that this exercise makes sense, culminating most recently in yet another slick report, “The Guest View on Brand Positioning.”

Released at convention, the report is long on conclusions and short on underlying data. So, for example, while the report finds “a solid increase in awareness of KOA’s brand positions,” at no point does the report define “awareness” or how it is meaningful. Elsewhere, the report concludes that four of every five non-KOA campers “have a favorable opinion of KOA quality because of our brand positioning program,” without a shred of justification for using the word “because.” Might that favorable opinion be the result of KOA’s increased media presence and ad buys, regardless of the actual media content? Could it be ever-improving word-of-mouth, as suggested by the system’s overall increase in net promoter scores?

There are so many gaps in the report’s logic that the only thing we can accept with certainty is that KOA is a well-regarded name, and more so every year. But that only underscores that KOA is the brand, not its “Journey,” “Holiday” or “Resort” permutations, and the strength of that brand rests on the aggregate quality of all our campground facilities and the customer service we provide. The KOA trinity merely tweaks the details, so that a Holiday will have cabins but a Journey won’t—or maybe it will. A Resort will provide food service while a Journey or Holiday won’t—or maybe they will, too, depending on their owners and how they want to serve their campers.

Mostly what the branding criteria do is assure more of the same as one transitions from Journey to Holiday to Resort: more RV spaces of a minimum width and length, more physical amenities, more recreational opportunities—more, more, more. So the only thing this segmentation does is create the perception of “good, better, best” about which some campground owners have already complained, but without a whole lot of differentiation among the core products being offered. It’s like buying a TV and deciding whether you want high-def or ultra high, wi-fi enabled or not, LED-LCD or plasma. How much are you willing to spend? How many bells and whistles do you want? In the end, it’s still just a television.

With 20-20 hindsight—how ironic, given the target date for everyone to fall in line—the whole branding exercise must be seen instead as a missed opportunity to create something truly meaningful. Instead of creating distinctions without a difference, how much more exciting and useful might it have been if the branding effort had identified—and encouraged the creation of—real differences in the camping experience.
Let’s face it: the KOA brand these days signifies an increasingly antiseptic, “safe” and mediated experience, in the same way that the Disney empire creates faux environments in its various theme parks. But it wasn’t always thus. As described by landscape architect Martin Hogue, the modern concept of camping—of people escaping their comfortable homes for an extended encounter with “nature,” hiking to and clearing a site, hunting for game, collecting water and firewood—dates back to an aristocracy that would take to the Adirondacks with a supporting cast of porters, cooks and other servants to do the actual work. But for all that logistical help, the experience still had a basically raw quality: no running water (except in a stream), no electricity, pit toilets and a certain vulnerability to cold and wet weather. In Hogue’s words, “Stripped of any but the most vital conveniences, the camp is literally and figuratively open to the stimuli of its natural surroundings.”

What was once a rich man’s indulgence, however, increasingly became available to the masses, thanks first to the automobile and then to the accelerating development of camping technology, which eliminated the need for all that human labor. But that same technology also insulated campers from the stimuli of their natural surroundings. What followed, as recently observed by Hogue in his fascinating essay, “A Short History of the Campsite,” “was the idealization of nature as peaceful and non-threatening. . . . Nature,” he added “is expected to remain comfortable, visually and emotionally inspiring; but its atmospheric effects should be negligible.” Any KOA campground owner who has fielded complaints about bugs, snakes, skunks, rain, cold fronts, humidity or local farmers spreading manure on nearby fields can empathize.

Unfortunately, everything we do as KOA campground owners only accelerates that divorce from nature, even as KOA’s marketing efforts are bent ever more toward assuring campers of the opposite. We add “cabins” that are indistinguishable from small houses, replete with hotel amenities like linens and soap bars. We upgrade our wifi systems so our campers can access the same level of service that they enjoy at home. We add outdoor lighting, walkways and handrails at every turn, build flowerbeds and create patios with lawn furniture and gas grills. In short, the more we “upgrade” our campgrounds the more indistinguishable they become from our campers’ backyards—and at some point the campers may begin to notice.

Or as Hogue wonders: “The ability to watch a nationally televised baseball game from the concrete pad outside a late-model RV using campground-provided cable, or to send emails wirelessly from the campsite picnic table—standard amenities at most KOAs—bespeaks the near total elimination of boundaries between home and away. Is this the point at which the labor of camping—or, rather, the absence of it—ceases to hold any of its old, once almost mythical power?”

None of this is to say that KOA is on the wrong path—only to observe that there may be more than one path through the woods ahead. We at the Staunton/Walnut Hills KOA are as complicit as any in providing patio sites and cabins, tending our flower beds and spending big bucks on a wifi upgrade. But it is a caution against the sort of mindless progression that culminates in the current rage for “glamping,” for which there undoubtedly is a market but which has the same relationship to “camping” that Space Mountain has to the asteroid belt.

Which brings us back to KOA’s “brand positioning” and the missed opportunity it represents. How much more useful it would have been if this impulse had led to an examination of truly different camping experiences, and how those different experiences could be communicated and delivered to the camping public. Instead of “Journey,” “Holiday” and “Resort,” what if the KOA brand included “Backwoods” or “Rustic”—and, yes, “Overnighter” or “Resort,” since those labels actually convey information less nebulous than “Journey” or “Holiday.” Or how many other camping concepts could be envisioned, each presented with a certain baseline of KOA quality but each with its clearly differentiated amenities and expectations?

We’ll never know—that ship has sailed. But meanwhile, let’s not kid ourselves that the brand positioning exercise is in any way meaningful. It remains, alas, a solution in search of a problem.