

RV BUSINESS



DEALER AWARDS

RV Business Magazine • 2300 Middlebury Avenue • Elkhart, Indiana •

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Local Business Named Into Top 50 RV Dealers in North America

Garfield, MN – Recent headlines declare the recession to be on its way out, with many eyes on the recovery of the recreation vehicle industry as a precursor of nationwide economic trends. Emphasizing the good news is the announcement of RV Business magazine’s Top 50 RV Dealers in North America, which included local dealership Steinbring Motorcoach at 7390 County Rd 82 in Garfield.

This is the second year for the program, and the first time including dealers in Canada. The response was overwhelming in spite of the general economic atmosphere this year. “What really makes this story amazing is that even with the headwinds of 2009, we received about 40% more applicants than in 2008,” said RV Business publisher Sherman Goldenberg. “The competition was a lot tougher this year, which tells us that those who applied and especially those who were selected by the judges are truly exceptional. You know they have to be doing something right to not only withstand the down economy, but to exemplify best business practices at the same time.”

Dealers nominated by U.S. and Canadian were invited to apply for the Top 50 program. After the applications were collected, a panel of independent industry judges convened to review the applications and select the Top 50. Criteria were not based on sales, but on customer service and satisfaction, employee training and education, and sound

planning and initiatives. This year, five times as many applicants had to be cut than in 2008, which made it a difficult process for the judges, according to Goldenberg.

“There was a lot of discussion and debate,” he said. “It was really hard for the judges to narrow it down, so those dealers who made it in should be particularly proud of this accomplishment.”

The 50 finalists collectively generated approximately \$1.6 billion in sales last year and have received hundreds of awards from manufacturers and their local communities. Of the 50 dealers selected, the top 10 were additionally honored as Blue Ribbon dealers including Steinbring Motorcoach.

Two Blue Ribbon dealers received special recognition in 2009 as winners of the Dave Altman Award. This lifetime achievement award is named after California dealership Altmans Winnebago founder Dave Altman, a respected and civic-minded retailer who passed away in 2008. Receiving 2009’s Altman Awards were veteran West Coast dealer Herb Nill of Guaranty RV, Junction City, Ore.; and posthumously, industry pioneer Johnny Ketelsen, whose legacy stretches from founding Ketelsen RV, now owned and operated by son Gary in Hiawatha, Ia., to Blue Ribbon dealer Ketelsen Campers of Colorado, Wheat Ridge, Colo., owned and operated by son Randy.

The Top 50 were recognized by RV Business and their industry peers at an Oct. 7 awards dinner at the RV Dealers International Convention/Expo at the Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas at which Fox News contributor and former presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee was the keynote speaker. “Mr. Huckabee’s appearance and speech were well-received by all those who attended, no matter their political persuasion. He helped make our evening even more notable,” Goldenberg said. “He was very supportive of our program and what we’re trying to accomplish for the good of those working in the industry, the RVing community and the RVing lifestyle as a whole.”

To help bring the RV Business Top 50 to fruition, several members of the industry lent their support in the form of the Leadership Alliance. These companies provided sponsorship because of their willingness to help support and promote professionalism across the board in the RV industry. The 2009 Leadership Alliance companies are Coach-Net, ADP Lightspeed, Blue Ox, Cummins Onan, Freightliner, RV Trader, Ultra-Fab Products and Protective Insurance.

To view the complete list of the Top 50 dealers and to learn more about members of the Leadership Alliance, visit www.RVBusiness.com.

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About the Top 50 RV Dealers Program: The program's purpose is to showcase credible role models and establish best business practices benchmarks at the retail level of the RV industry in terms of staff training, performing warranty and service work, managing aftermarket stores, superior consumer care and being good citizens of their respective communities. The dealerships were selected among those nominated as the best by the North America's RV manufacturers. The program was founded and coordinated in 2008 by RV Business magazine with additional support provided by the Leadership Alliance.