

Monaco RV Rally draws modern nomads

Julia Van Susteren, HTR News 6:17 p.m. CDT July 23, 2015



Modern nomads from around the country are gathered at the Manitowoc Expo Center through Saturday, July 25, to meet at the 2015 Monaco International RV Rally. More than 150 attendants are exchanging travel tips, swapping stories and gawking at brand-new luxury Monaco RVs. The Monaco International RV Club chose to meet in Manitowoc because of its proximity to the upcoming Family Motor Coach Association event in Madison July 29-Aug. 1.

Cari Mitchell, rally master for Monaco International RV Club, said Manitowoc never runs short on things to do and is well-liked by visitors. “People really like this Expo Center, the Manitowoc people are very kind, there’s bike trails for people to explore, and in Manitowoc, we’re located near Lake Michigan,” Mitchell said. “This year, we organized a fishing charter, and the group that went couldn’t have enough positive things to say about it,” Mitchell added. “So as a group, they’re in awe of this area. I can’t tell you one specific place people love, because there’s so many.” Of course, RVers aren’t discriminating when it comes to location. Wanderlust is a common trait among RV owners.

Harry Hentschel, a rally volunteer, said years of being unable to travel motivated him to purchase an RV. “Growing up, we never took vacations, and until I was 25 or so, I had never visited more than three states,” Hentschel said. “What better way to see the country than in your own house?” Hentschel said the personal backgrounds of RVers are as varied as the places from which they hail. “People from all over, not only geographically, but retired truck drivers, doctors, attorneys, engineers, entrepreneurs, burger flippers, retired military people, all come to these rallies,” Hentschel said. “When you meet up for dinner, and come together to chat and get ‘hydrated,’ everyone has something in common: their house on wheels.”

Dan Mitchell, Cari Mitchell’s husband and another rally master for the Monaco International RV Club, said RVing creates a broad sense of community. “My wife and I met a couple, John and June, around Mountain Creek, Georgia,” Dan Mitchell said. “We got talking, so I asked, ‘What’s your surname?’ They said, ‘Oh, Depp.’ Yes, Johnny Depp’s father and stepmother are members of our club. We’ve become good friends since then, and meet up every spring in that area.”

Cari Mitchell added: “Two years ago at a rally, we made various friends throughout the U.S., and not too long ago, we all met just outside Minnesota, went through the Black Hills, Glacier National Park, Yellowstone ... and because we were in the mountains, we took turns cooking or finding reception and became this community. Through camaraderie, just by talking to other people, we’ve seen so many things we otherwise wouldn’t have.”

Richard Halverson, vice president of Monaco International RV Club, hopes the younger generations’ predilection for dynamic, flexible lifestyles will attract them to RVing while they’re still young and employed. “Younger people have a tendency to scratch their heads and say, ‘You mean you live in it *all the time* and travel *all over* the country? That sounds pretty neat!” Halverson said. “If you’re taking a vacation, you have to think about hotels, but RVers just park wherever is convenient in the area, explore around, and if we want to take our time, we ask the campground if we can stay a little longer.”