

GOING GREEN

By Steve Froese



green [grēn], adjective

1. beneficial to the environment, using processes and/or technologies that are “environmentally friendly.” see also “eco-friendly.”

Since the dawn of industrialization, society has largely taken the environment for granted, and has consumed vast amounts of energy and materials unnecessarily. During the past few years, many industries have realized the importance of going green and the positive impact it can have on the environment. This has occurred mainly in the technology sector, but increasingly more traditional businesses are moving in this direction. The RV industry has taken notice of the importance of being environmentally friendly and this trend was promoted at the annual national RV trade show in Louisville in December. Some of the RV companies have demonstrated their interest and are now producing green coaches.

TRA Certification™¹ is a company committed to assisting and identifying RV manufacturers that are choosing to implement green initiatives. Recently, they have been targeting the RV industry since they recognize that environmental concerns and the RV lifestyle go hand in hand. Using ANSI (American National Standards Institute) consensus standards for new construction, they have developed a set of criteria for green RV certification.

But what does “certified green” really mean? What goes into the designation and further more, why should RV consumers even care?

Becoming green is not easy. Over the years society has become so complacent about environmental waste that it is difficult for industry to recognize when they are not being eco-friendly, and even harder to identify ways to actually reverse the trend. TRA gets involved at this level by assisting companies in identifying environmental waste while optimizing and streamlining their processes to prevent it. Further, they help identify and implement green initiatives. An RV manufacturer cannot be TRA certified to produce green products unless it can meet the stringent environmentally friendly production processes.

Once a company has been certified by TRA, any product line is eligible for one of four different levels of certification for recreational vehicles. These levels are Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Emerald. In order to attain one of the levels of certification, a product must acquire a minimum number of points in each of five categories. These are Resource Efficiency, Energy Efficiency, Water Efficiency, Indoor Air Quality, and Operation & Maintenance. Additionally, a product can earn points in a sixth category, Innovative Practices. To date, TRA has recognized six RV trailer and park models from various manufacturers as being “Green Certified.”