

**NRVIA
Member of the Month**

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WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING AN RV INSPECTOR?

I never started out to be an inspector but wanted to learn more about my RV. I come from a military background in aviation where I worked and flew on various aircraft throughout my military career. If you have ever worked on an aircraft then an RV is not too far from working on aircraft in that they are mostly the same once they come off the assembly line but once a Sailor gets their hands on it the aircraft is never the same in wiring, parts, or pieces.

RV's are just about as cantankerous as aircraft, so I wanted to learn as much as I could about the RV's. I was looking at some opportunities for RV Tech courses when, by chance, I listened to "Living The RV Dream" podcast with John and Kathy Huggins and heard Terry Cooper talk about the RV Tech course. Well it turned out that Cooper was having a class not too far from where I lived in Indiana and I went up to attend. Once there we got the brief about RV Inspection Connection and what you could do, and it peaked my interest.

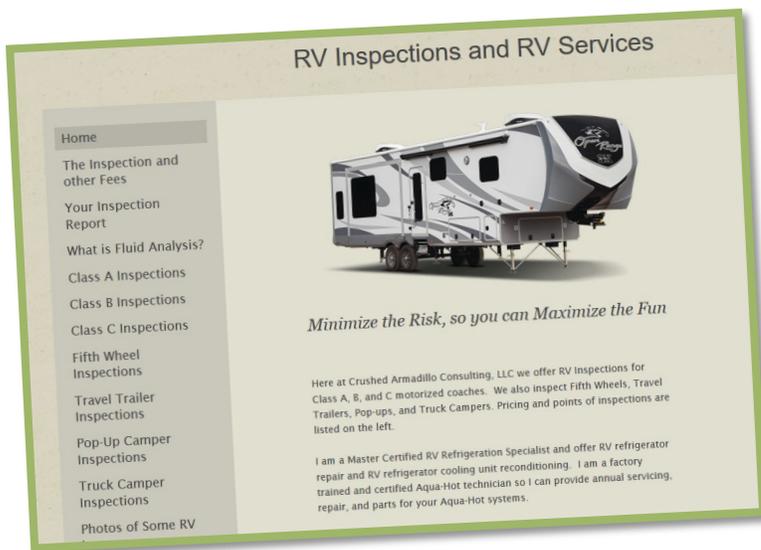
At the time I was looking at a 10-year plan to exit from my current job and operate my own business and like Cooper says everything just falls into place. I enjoy inspecting and looking at all the different RV's out there.

WHAT WAS YOUR RV BACKGROUND BEFORE BECOMING AN RV INSPECTOR?

My previous RV experience was mostly from working on the wiring on friends of mine rigs. I learned quite a bit. This experience also pushed me to learn more about RV's as once your name gets out there that you can fix electrical in RV's and folks start talking you start getting asked if you can do more than electrical. For the inspectors out there, I can't say how powerful that positive word of mouth endorsement is to your business.

DO YOU OWN AN RV AND IF SO, WHAT IS THE YEAR, MAKE, AND MODEL?

I currently own my Mesa Ridge fifth wheel. I am currently on my second RV and this one is an 18. I am currently working full time as electronics technician for the Department of Defense and I get to take my RV with on the east coast trips when we do installs. It's nice having the ability to take the family with you when the schedules all work out. My youngest is in college and when he graduates the wife and I will do some more extended trips. We do enjoy Wyoming so we want some trips out there.



WHAT TYPES OF MARKETING DO YOU DO ONLINE AND LOCALLY?

Most of my advertising is word of mouth, my website, and of course the NRVA locator for inspectors. I am currently doing RV refrigerator work in my area. Turns out the Amish use the RV refrigerators with a propane kit on them and I convert them over with the propane kit and I strip out the electrical part. So, word of mouth is about the only way you get in with the Amish. It keeps me busy.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE INSPECTION/CLIENT EXPERIENCE AND WHY?

I have two inspections that stick out in my mind: the Road Trek Sprinkler and the Possum in the pin box.

I had an older gentlemen that was looking at a Road Trek because his wife was going through chemo treatments and he wanted a camper van that he could park in the parking lot and then go down and take a nap if he needed. He had asked if he could watch as I inspected the rig and I said not a problem. The gentlemen was sitting near the van under a tree in the shade doing a crossword and asking questions every so often. Well I hooked the water and went to turn it on and water shot out of that van in three different spots. One of those spots shot a stream of water and hit that poor man square in the face. He went backwards in his chair and head over heels. All I could think about is that the client is going to be hurt but alas he popped up and had a very expressive conversation with the owner and told me he was done. I finished the inspection but there was the fear that your client was hurt and then not knowing what to do when your client tells him he is done and didn't need to see anything else.

The other one was while I was doing an inspection of a fifth wheel at a consignment lot. The salesman had the rig hooked up and I was doing my outside inspection. As I was coming to the front of the RV and looking at the pin box and where the umbilical cord goes into the junction box I caught some movement out of the corner of my eye. Well, when I shined the light up in there I saw a possum staring right back at me. You might not believe this, but he was not very happy. He let out a hiss that just about caused me to have a gastrointestinal event. I have no earthly clue how he got up there, but there he was. I did drop my camera and broke it and had to get a backup. By the time I got back to the RV the salesman had gotten the possum out of there. I never did get a picture of him, but it does stick out in mind.



WHAT TIP(S) WOULD YOU OFFER TO SOMEONE WHO IS CONSIDERING A NEW VENTURE IN RV INSPECTIONS?

The tips I would offer is to stay current, do your homework on the rigs before you go out and look at them. There is a lot of YouTube videos, visit the forums and see what issue other owners aren't happy about. These all good resources for you to use. Clear communications between you and the client. Get it all in writing, start your plan, execute your plan, and above all deliver on what you told the client you could do.

HOW HAS BEING A MEMBER OF NRVIA HELPED YOU IN YOUR RV INSPECTION JOURNEY?

NRVIA is a great resource that you can go back on. I always recommend the clients visit the website and make sure they read the Code of Ethics. This is what separates us from the others. It gives the client that warm fuzzy about the inspection process.

The NRVIA locator has been a great resource for bringing me clients. The locator has paid for itself many times over for me.

Jim was nominated by several of his customers and received the 2016 NRVIA Service Excellence Award.

