



# GO & DO PATHFINDERS

YOUR GUIDE TO MOTORING AROUND MICHIGAN

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in Michigan

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## GO &amp; DO

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A 21st Century Media  
publication managed by  
MediaNews Group

**ON THE ROAD****Essential road trip packing checklist**

The open road beckons millions of motorists upon the arrival of warm weather. In advance of the season's first road trip, drivers tune up their engines and plan their itineraries for the adventures that lie ahead.

While it may be tempting to get behind the wheel and see where the road takes you, those who have been around the block — or highway — a few times likely know that road trip planning involves careful packing for the voyage ahead. Bringing the right items along can go a long way toward ensuring a trip is enjoyable and runs smoothly. This list of must-haves can get anyone started on the road trip ahead.

- Proper paperwork. Don't forget to bring along a driver's license, vehicle registration, proof of insurance, and your rental car agreement if you are renting a car. In certain instances, you may need proof of COVID-19 vaccination and/or a negative COVID test. Double-check that you have it all before leaving.

- Vehicle manual. Even the most well-maintained car may suffer a breakdown on the road. Bring along the vehicle manual, which can help you diagnose minor problems. Keep your roadside assistance membership card at the ready in the event you need extra help.

- America the Beautiful Pass. If you plan to visit various national parks across America, an investment in the America the Beautiful Pass for \$80 provides access to the pass holder and three other adults to more than 2,000 recreation areas managed by five federal agencies. It's available by visiting [store.usgs.gov/pass/index.html](https://store.usgs.gov/pass/index.html).

- Important phone numbers. Bring a written list of important phone numbers in case your phone dies or



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Bringing the right items along can go a long way toward ensuring a trip is enjoyable and runs smoothly.

gets lost.

- Cash. Credit and debit cards are a reliable form of payment, but cash is king. Having cash on hand is a smart move in the event bank cards get lost. Cash also is especially useful when patronizing smaller establishments that might not take credit.

- Roadside emergency kit. Keep a tire changing kit, flares, tools, jumper cables, duct tape, and work gloves in the vehicle for emergencies.

- GPS and maps. GPS systems on phones and other devices provide step-by-step directions and can alert to traffic jams. But GPS can be compromised in areas where cellular or satellite service is interrupted by mountain ranges or buildings. The Maps.Me app enables you to download detailed maps that can be ac-

cessed while offline. Paper maps can serve as backups as well.

- Entertainment. Long road trips are full of opportunities to visit roadside attractions. For the times when the highway is a long stretch of nothing new, bring along movies, music, books, handheld games, and even trivia or mind puzzles to pass the time.

- Cooler with refreshments. Dining out is a great way to sample local cuisine from various regions of the country. But having snacks at the ready can save time and money.

The list of road trip essentials continues, but this is a good start. The list can be customized based on drivers' interests and their destinations.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*

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## ON THE ROAD

# Some tips for first-time RV drivers

Whether it's the welcoming weather or the chance to follow a favorite football team or, of course, the awe-inspiring foliage, fall compels many people to hit the open road. A car or truck might suffice for a day trip or weekend getaway, but those who want to travel more extensively often do so in an RV.

Recreational vehicles, or RVs, provide a taste of home away from home for millions of people every year. RVs allow people to visit even the most remote locations without having to worry about finding food or lodging. As welcoming as the interior of an RV can be, it's also easy for first-time RV drivers to feel a little intimidated. RVs are the largest vehicles many people will ever operate, and even long-time drivers will likely need some time to adjust. That adjustment period can go smoothly if drivers take steps to grow more comfortable behind the wheel before embarking on their trips.

## 1. Recognize that practice makes perfect

A cross country RV trip is a dream vacation for many people, but drivers must learn to crawl before they can walk. RVs are much bigger and heavier than cars and trucks, and practice runs can help drivers grow acclimated to that size. Don't begin a practice run without first noting the class and height of the vehicle. The online camper resource Camper Report notes that Class C RVs average 10 feet in height, while Class A RVs are typically between 13 and 14 feet tall. Measure the height of your RV prior to your first prac-

tice run so you can be sure you can make it beneath all overpasses on your route.

## 2. Why not take a companion along?

Drivers behind the wheel of a car or truck may not give a second thought to driving in reverse or navigating their way around parking lots. But such situations require some forethought, and even a little help, when driving an RV for the first time. A traveling companion can direct drivers into and out of parking spots until they grow more acclimated to operating an RV.

## 3. Utilize leveling blocks

RV leveling blocks help RVs stay level when parked on sloped surfaces. The RV experts at TheRVGeeks.com note that RVs need to be level in order for equipment to work properly. That's problematic if you park at a campsite with uneven ground. Even if equipment is functional when parked on marginally sloped surfaces, navigating your way through an RV parked on such ground is inconvenient if not annoying. Leveling blocks also can keep jacks from sinking into soft ground, making them an inexpensive yet useful accessory for any RV trip.

## 4. Practice dumping your tanks

Drivers whose RVs have toilets will eventually need to dump their waste. Drivers should practice this in advance of their first trip so they are practiced when the time comes to do it on



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

RVs are the largest vehicles many people will ever operate, and even long-time drivers will likely need some time to adjust.



# Tips

FROM PAGE 4

the road. Tutorials on YouTube can teach drivers how to dump their tanks.

Drivers also can invest in a highly rated, thick sewer hose to avoid being sprayed with waste while out on the road.

RV travel is a great way to experience the open road. First-time RV driv-

ers can try various strategies to get used to what it's like to be behind the wheel of these unique vehicles.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

A cross country RV trip is a dream vacation for many people, but drivers must learn to crawl before they can walk.

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## HOLIDAY TRAVEL

# How to beat the travel crowds this Memorial Day weekend

Summer travel figures to pick up as the world returns to relative normalcy after two-plus years of living under the cloud of COVID-19. Memorial Day weekend marks the unofficial beginning of summer, and this year the roads figure to be as busy as ever.

Data from AAA Travel indicated that more than 37 million people expected to travel 50 miles or more over Memorial Day weekend in 2021. That figure is likely to grow in 2022 as millions more individuals, including young children, are now eligible to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Travelers concerned about the prospect of sitting in traffic jams this Memorial Day weekend can heed these tips to ensure their weekends are more fun than frustrating.

- Avoid peak travel times. The easiest way to find yourself stuck in Memorial Day traffic is to hit the road during peak travel times. Many people have embraced the “leave early” trend to holiday weekend travel, so the roads may be busier than drivers would expect on Thursday afternoon and evening. If it’s possible, drivers can hit the road prior to 3 p.m. Thursday. If work and kids’ school schedules make that impossible, delay your departure until late Thursday night or before the sun rises on Friday morning. Late at night or very early in the morning might not make for the most accommodating travel time, but roads tend to be the least congested at these times.

- Expect the trip to take longer than planned. Delays are possible, if unlikely, even if you travel during off-peak hours. Recognition of that can make traffic jams or flight delays a little easier to man-



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Parents can prepare kids for potential delays by letting them know in advance that some setbacks are possible.

age. Parents can prepare kids for delays by letting them know in advance that some setbacks are possible. Build expected delays into your itinerary so you aren’t stressing out about missing anything. If travelers luck out and experience no delays, then the weekend begins that much sooner.

- Do your part. If you’re traveling by air, confirm everything you’ll need to get through security and onto the plane as quickly as possible. Make sure passports and other forms of identi-

fication are current. Pack bags wisely so there are no surprises at check-in time. The more details you tend to in advance of your departure, the less stressful your travel day will be.

- Consider a local destination. Another way to beat the crowds is to avoid joining them. The National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration estimates that roughly 40% of the American population lives in coastal communities. That means more than 120 million Americans can

drive to coastal areas without having to traverse potentially congested highways and interstates. Stay local for busy travel weekends like Memorial Day and reserve longer trips for other times of the year when fewer people are on the road.

Memorial Day travel is historically heavy. Savvy vacationers can employ various strategies to avoid the crowds this year.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*

**Avoid peak travel times. The easiest way to find yourself stuck in Memorial Day traffic is to hit the road during peak travel times. Many people have embraced the “leave early” trend to holiday weekend travel, so the roads may be busier than drivers would expect on Thursday afternoon and evening. If it’s possible, drivers can hit the road prior to 3 p.m. Thursday.**



Memorial Day travel is historically heavy. Savvy vacationers can employ various strategies to avoid the crowds this year.

PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

## ON THE ROAD

# RV buying made EZ: A beginners' guide

A recreational vehicle, also known as an RV or a camper, can be a worthwhile investment for people who want to travel at their leisure. RVs offer the benefit of traversing the open road without having to sacrifice the comforts of home. The RV market has been hot over the last couple of years as people have looked to RVing as a safe way to travel. According to the RV Industry Association, shipments of travel trailers and motorhomes were expected to hit their highest level on record in 2021, with more than 533,000 units sold by year-end.

Sizable purchases are seldom easy, and purchasing an RV is no exception. In addition to choosing the right vehicle, RV owners must learn maintenance, how to drive a large vehicle, towing, and campsite etiquette. Buying an RV is a long-term investment. These pointers can help the purchase go smoothly.

## New or used?

Purchasing a used RV can help people save money. However, upgrades and repairs may be costly. New RVs have the latest technology and no risk of prior wear and tear. Insurance premiums will be higher for a new vehicle, and a new purchase can be expensive depending on the features chosen.

## Figure out features and size

Take a hard look at what you are seeking in a camper. Do you want something that is just an alternative to tent camping? Are you interested in an RV



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION





PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Buyers should do their homework to get a vacation vehicle that fits their needs and budgets.

## RV

FROM PAGE 8

that can sleep a crowd? Do you have a tow hitch and a vehicle capable of towing an RV? These questions and more will determine the style and size of the RV that's right for you. Class A RVs are large, bus-shaped rigs between 20 and 45 feet in length. Class B are sleeper vans and are smaller than Class A. Class C rigs offer size but driveability and are built into a regular truck chassis. For trailer-style RVs, the options are fold-

able trailers, travel trailers, toy haulers, and fifth wheel trailers. They vary in size and features; but you'll need a truck to tow them.

### Usage frequency

When considering an RV, think about how often it will be used and where it will be stored when not in use. Garage storage may be challenging on a larger rig, and some housing communities frown upon parking RVs in driveways. This may affect the size you choose as well as the features you need, according to KOA, the RV camp site leader.

### Secure financing

As with other vehicles, shop around for the best rates on financing; you don't necessarily need to go with the dealer. Also, when buying a trade-in or used rig, hire a third-party inspector to go over systems to ensure they're in working order.

These are just a few things to consider when looking to purchase an RV. Buyers should do their homework to get a vacation vehicle that fits their needs and budgets.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*

## ROAD SAFETY

# Follow these tips to stop driving distracted

Driving fatalities in the United States are at the highest point since 2008, yet new research reveals that many are unaware of the enhanced risk and are actively making choices that increase the danger on our roads.

According to a new survey from Travelers, 57% of people think roadway safety is unchanged since before the pandemic. At the same time, over a third of drivers have experienced a near-miss because they were distracted while driving.

Our devices are a large part of the problem. One-third of respondents believe it is acceptable to use technology while driving and even more admit to doing so — 79% say they have made or received a phone call while driving, 74% have looked at map directions on a cell phone and 56% have read a text message or email. A growing number of drivers are also taking to social media, with 29% admitting to recording videos or taking photos using their smartphone, a number that's increased since 2019 along with the rise of TikTok and other social media platforms.

"When you're behind the wheel, every second matters, and anything that occupies your mind or vision is a distraction," says Chris Hayes, assistant vice president of Transportation and Risk Control at Travelers. "While it's tempting to use your phone, especially when it's alerting you to texts and calls, doing so is dangerous to you, your passengers and others on the road."

To help put a stop to distracted driving, Travelers is offering the following tips:

- Turn off notifications. Setting your phone to "do not disturb" before you begin driving is a good idea, as it can help prevent you from being tempted to check your phone for new notifications.
- Prepare beforehand. Check directions or set your GPS before you begin driving. Put your favorite playlist or radio station on before you hit the road.
- Let it wait. Do not make calls, text or otherwise manipulate your phone while driving. Even hands-free calls can pull your focus from the road. If you need to text, email, make a call, or use your phone for any other reason, pull over first.
- Recruit a passenger. Rely on your passengers to handle technology-related tasks, such as checking GPS, changing the music or radio station, and answer-

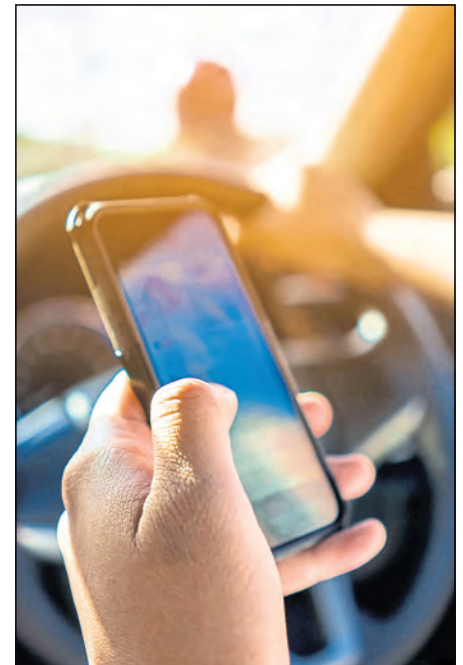


PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Over a third of drivers have experienced a near-miss because they were distracted while driving.

ing calls or texts.

▪ Speak up. Consider asking a distracted driver to put down their device. Eighty-seven percent of consumers who use a phone while driving say they would be less likely to do so if a passenger spoke up.

▪ Beware of other distractions. It's important to make driving your number one priority when you're on the road, and keep in mind that not all distractions are tech-related. For example, don't wait until your commute to eat, brush your hair, or apply makeup. Take care of such tasks before you start the car.

For more tips and resources, including compelling stories about real-world victims of crashes due to distracted driving, visit [travelers.com](http://travelers.com).

"There are more distractions than ever on today's roadways. Ultimately, making a concerted effort to change behaviors will help prevent injuries and save lives," says Hayes.

*Story courtesy of StatePoint Media*

## ON THE ROAD

# How to make camper travel more comfortable

The open road beckons millions of people across the globe every year. People's idea of the ideal getaway varies depending on the individual, but few can deny the appeal of a road trip that allows travelers to move at their own pace.

Campers can give road trips a more liberating feel. When tak-

ing to the road in a camper, drivers are not beholden to checkout times or many of the other restrictions that can govern how people spend their time on vacation. Campers may not have all the creature comforts of a five-star hotel room, but travelers can take steps to make their campers more comfortable.

- **Furnish the floors.** Few drivers give much thought to the floors in their cars and trucks. But camper floors deserve a little more attention. Camper rugs and runners can ensure your first step out of bed in the morning isn't a frigid one. Many camper carpets and runners are built to withstand heavy traffic and take

on all the dirt your hiking boots track in after a day enjoying the great outdoors. Custom-made carpets and runners may be a tad expensive, but budget-conscious travelers can find durable mats to warm their toes each morning for around \$20.

- **Take stock of the mattress.** Much like that fold up cot that

only comes out of the closet when your in-laws visit, a camper mattress is an afterthought until drivers go to bed on the first night of their trips, only to remember their factory-installed mattress is less than welcoming. Upgrading a factory camper mattress won't cost as much as replacing the mattress on the bed inside your home. In



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Travelers can take various steps to make their campers more comfortable prior to hitting the open road.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DANIEL SCHWEN/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Travelers can take steps to make their campers more comfortable.

fact, the most popular RV mattress sold by the custom mattress retailers at [MattressInsider®](#) will cost travelers less than \$1,000. That's an investment well worth making for the promise of a more restful night's sleep on the road.

▪ Warm it up. Weather is unpredictable, and that can make nights in a camper uncomfortable. A portable camper/RV space heater can help travelers combat cold nights when the mercury unexpectedly dips. Most portable electric space heaters are compact, meaning they won't take up much space inside the camper cabin. The market

for portable camper heaters is flooded, so drivers may want to spend some time researching all their options before purchasing a new heater. Some heaters feature an adjustable thermostat. Safety features like overheat protection and cool-touch exteriors can provide some added peace of mind when going to bed at night.

Camper may not be made for comfort. But travelers can take various steps to make their campers more comfortable prior to hitting the open road.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*

**Right:** Campers may not have all the creature comforts of a five-star hotel room, but travelers can take steps to make their campers more comfortable.

PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION



## CAMPING

# 5 must-have items for your spring camping trip

The spring camping season is here and it's time to get ready. These five must-have items are not only compact, they'll ensure you have fun and make the most of your trip:

**1** . Rest and relaxation. After a day of vigorous activity, you deserve to put your feet up. And there is no better way to relax than with a hammock. Hammocks that come with their own stand offer super easy set-up, instantaneously turning your campgrounds into a home away from home.

**2** . Tech support. Whether your day-time excursions include fishing, hiking or rappelling, wearable tech can support your adventures. The ProTrek PRT-B50 Series of watches feature a compass, an altitude/barometer and temperature measurements so you can stay oriented and safe. For those tracking their fitness goals, calories burned and step count offer valuable metrics that are recorded by the ProTrek Connected app. The app also offers a lineup of useful tools for the outdoors, including a Trekking Log that plots altitude points along the trail, and a Location Indicator, to help you track your route from pinned locations.

**3** . Delicious snacks. For a delicious evening snack, don't forget supplies for S'mores. To simplify your packing, get a kit that comes with all the ingredients and tools you need for gooey goodness, including roasting sticks. All you need to provide is the campfire.

**4** . Music makers. Speaking of campfires, the best nights under the stars are those accompanied by music. An acoustic guitar or ukulele is a welcomed addition to any campfire gathering. To shake things up a bit, bring along a portable keyboard, like the Casiotone CT-S200. This ultra-compact model is powered by six AA batteries and fea-



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

As you ease into the camping season, gear up with supplies that make every adventure amazing.

tures a built-in carrying handle and speakers, so you make music wherever and whenever you want. Weighing less than 8 pounds and small enough to fit into a slightly oversized backpack, it's the perfect instrument for on-the-go adventures.

**5** . Streamlined entry: Recreation Passport. Frequent campers in Michigan should not leave home without a Recreation Passport, which allows access to Michigan's 103 state parks and recreation areas, 140 state forest campgrounds, boat-

ing access sites, thousands of miles of trails and other outdoor spaces — all year long. It costs \$12 per vehicle when purchased during the time of license plate registration renewal through the Secretary of State, or \$17 at state parks, DNR customer service centers or Secretary of State offices outside of license plate renewal.

As you ease into the camping season, gear up with supplies that make every adventure amazing.

*Story courtesy of StatePoint Media*



It's not a true camping experience without enjoying S'mores by the campfire.



After a day of vigorous activity, you deserve to put your feet up. And there is no better way to relax than with a hammock.

PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

## ROAD SAFETY

# 4 easily forgotten road trip safety tips



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Drivers unaccustomed to having bicycles or storage units attached to their vehicles should make a few trial runs so they can get acclimated.



It's never a bad idea for drivers to have their vehicles serviced before a road trip.

Getaways come in many forms. A getaway can be restful and relaxing whether it involves a journey to a small island thousands of miles from home or a favorite campsite that's just a few hours away by car.

As the world gradually emerges from a pandemic that put travel on the back burner for billions of people across the globe, people anxious to get away from home may finally feel comfortable seeking getaways that don't involve air travel. If the open road beckons you in the months ahead, the excitement ahead can make it easy to overlook certain safety measures.

The following are four easily forgotten safety measures to keep in mind as you head off for parts unknown.

**1.** Have your vehicle serviced before hitting the road. The pandemic significantly affected people's driving habits. Millions of people spent the pandemic working remotely, and many have continued to do so even after being vaccinated. Total driving distances fluctuated throughout the pandemic.

For example, the Federal Highway Administration reported that the to-

tal distances driven in July 2020 had declined by 11% compared to the same month a year earlier. That decline was more drastic according to figures examining total distances driven in April 2019 and April 2020, when driving had decreased by 40% compared to a year earlier. Though driving may have increased as the pandemic wore on, it's still a good idea for drivers to have their vehicles serviced before a road trip. Request a full tune-up that includes an oil change, a battery check and a tire rotation. These services and other maintenance tasks like fluid refills can reduce the likelihood of breakdowns and reveal any issues that might make driving less safe.

**2.** Determine if your vehicle is the subject of a recall. Recalls are issued if a safety issue has been uncovered since a car hit the market. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has a list of recalls available on its website at [NHTSA.gov/Recalls](https://www.nhtsa.gov/Recalls). Recalls are fixed free of charge, and it's best to look well in advance of a trip to ensure you have time to take the vehicle in for its update.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

A map can help road trippers overcome service interruptions in remote areas and arrive at their destinations on time.

**3**. Get used to driving with accessories on the vehicle. Summer road trips are typically taken with bicycle racks attached to rear windows or the top of the vehicle. Drivers unaccustomed to having bicycles or storage units attached to their vehicles should make a few trial runs so they can get acclimated. Backing up with bike racks on the back of the car can be tricky for novices, so a little practice with the bikes on the back may be helpful. Drivers who intend to tow campers also may benefit from a little pre-trip practice.

**4**. Pack a map. Though maps have long since fallen out of favor due to the availability of GPS, people traveling to remote areas may find their smartphone signals fading in and out as they get closer to their destinations. A map can help road trippers overcome service interruptions and arrive at their destinations on time.

Road trips may be especially popular this summer. Some simple safety measures can ensure drivers and their passengers stay safe.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*

**Get used to driving with accessories on the vehicle. Summer road trips are typically taken with bicycle racks attached to rear windows or the top of the vehicle. Drivers unaccustomed to having bicycles or storage units attached to their vehicles should make a few trial runs so they can get acclimated.**

# IS INFLATION PUTTING A DAMPER ON YOUR SUMMIEER TRAVEL?

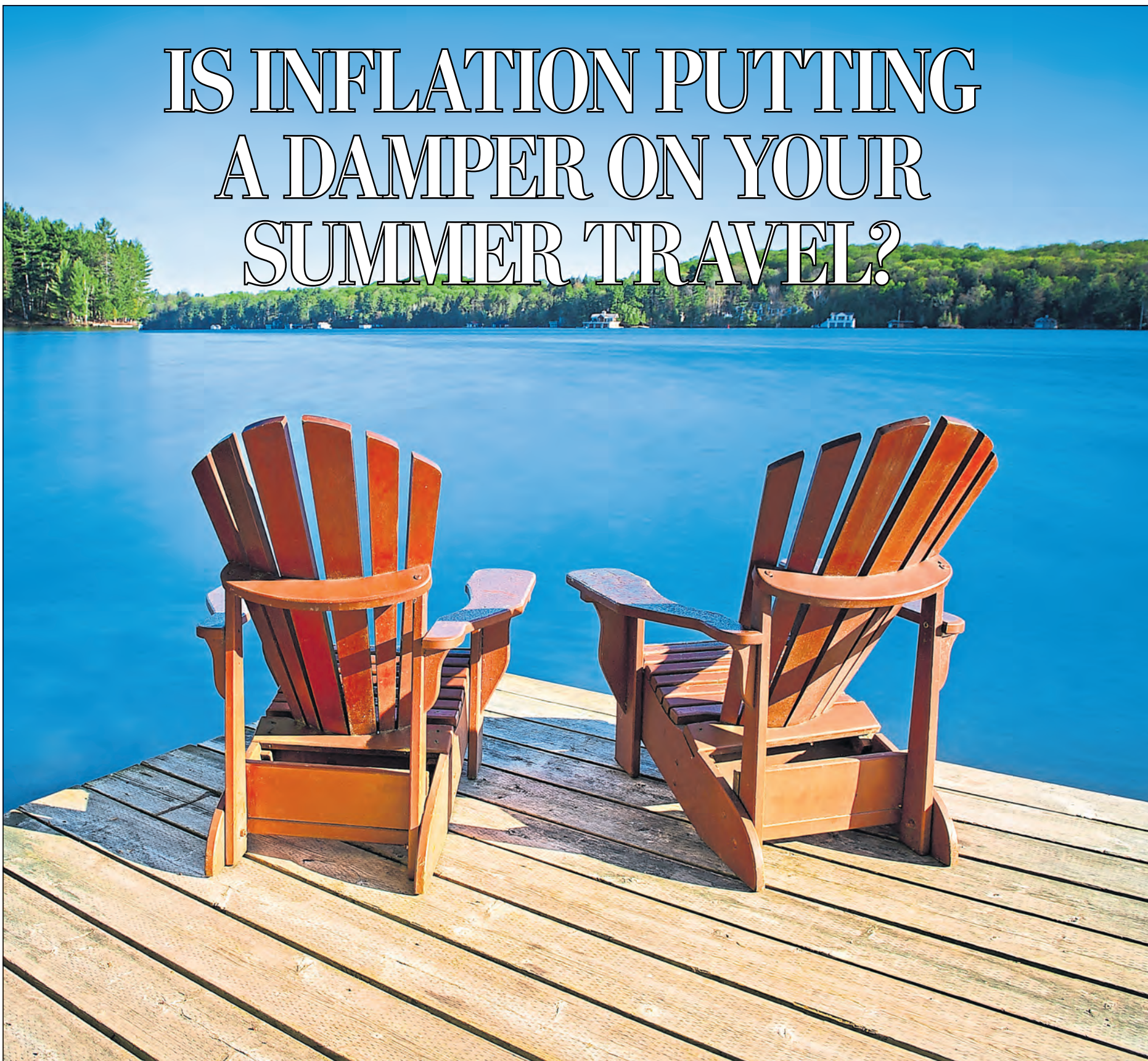


PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

With rising inflation showing no signs of braking, soaring automotive costs, including gas prices, repairs, rental cars and auto insurance, are threatening to put a damper on summer fun.



## TRAVEL BUDGET

# How to save for your summer trip

After two years of restrictions, summer road trips are top of mind for those looking to get out of town. With rising inflation showing no signs of braking, soaring automotive costs, including gas prices, repairs, rental cars and auto insurance, are threatening to put a damper on summer fun. This is why many consumers are preparing their budgets now to find ways to save.

In a recent Experian survey, 76% of Americans say they are actively looking for ways to significantly trim expenses from their monthly budget. The same survey found that a third of Americans who have auto insurance feel their recurring bill hurts their wallet the most. And 28% who have auto insurance say it's a recurring bill that they've had to decide between paying or not paying to avoid going without basic necessities such as shelter, food, electricity and utilities.

**Proactively finding ways to reduce costs allows consumers to get ahead of rising prices before they break the budget, and research shows that many consumers are already thinking about reaching out to their insurance provider to see if they can negotiate a cheaper price on their auto insurance. Seventy-eight percent of Americans who have auto insurance report they are likely to contact their auto insurance provider in order to negotiate a better rate within the next three months.**

Reports show that auto insurance rates are expected to continue to rise in 2022, meanwhile gas prices are the most expensive they've ever been. It's no surprise then that 34% of Americans say they're cutting back on driving expenses to save money during the current period of inflation.

Proactively finding ways to reduce costs allows consumers to get ahead of rising prices before they break the budget, and research shows that many consumers are already thinking about reaching out to their insurance provider to see if they can negotiate a cheaper price on their auto insurance. Seventy-eight percent of Americans who have auto insurance report they are likely to contact their auto insurance provider in order to negotiate a better rate within the next three months. Meanwhile, 24% say they are trying to save money by using online price comparison tools.

"Inflation is hitting many consumer's budgets and we encourage Americans to explore how to find ways to save on recurring bills. Make sure to keep your credit score high to obtain the best rates and terms on credit, and utilize all the resources available. Consumers can access their Experian credit score and report online for free and try our auto insurance shopping service to compare rates," says Rod Griffin, senior director of Public Education and Advocacy at Experian.

Experian's service can take the hassle out of finding better car insurance rates for your same coverage. It delivers multiple, tailored rates from more than 40 leading and well-established auto insurance carriers to consumers, potentially saving them more than \$900 per year. To learn more, visit [www.experian.com/save](http://www.experian.com/save).

As inflation continues to soar, finding ways to save money is becoming even more important. Reducing the cost of monthly expenses like auto insurance can go a long way in helping consumers keep more money in their pockets during their summer road trips and beyond.

*Story courtesy of StatePoint Media*



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

As inflation continues to soar, finding ways to save money is becoming even more important.

## CAMPING

# Michigan has plenty of scenic options for RV camping

**By Terry Jacoby**  
*For MediaNews Group*

As you head up north on an early Friday morning — hopefully the boss knows you took the day off — a popular game to help pass

the time is to count the number of recreation vehicles you pass along the way. Of course, subtract five points if one passes you. But where are all these RVs heading? Instead of passing them, maybe we should be following them be-

cause RV owners seem to know all the best scenic options to set up camp in Michigan. And let's face it, with 103 state park and recreation areas throughout the state offering diverse camping experiences and more than 1,000

campgrounds statewide, there is no shortage of primo spots to set up the camper and enjoy the rustic life — with water and electric hookups, of course.

Here are some of our favorite spots — but remember these don't

even cover half of the pinky finger on the Michigan mitten of scenic RV camping spots. Let's start with some of the not-so-secret spots: Tahquamenon Falls State Park in Paradise; Porcupine Mountains State Park in Ontonagon;



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Whether rustic camping or RV camping, there are plenty of lesser known spots with beautiful views and a variety of amenities throughout the state to enjoy.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

With 103 state park and recreation areas throughout the state and more than 1,000 campgrounds statewide, there is no shortage of places to set up camp this summer.

Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Munising; Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Empire; Sleepy Hollow State Park in Laingsburg; and Camp Dearborn in Milford. While Michigan has far too many wonderful campsites to list, here are a few lesser known spots to consider next time you load up the RV:

- Kestelwoods Campground:

Located between Cadillac and Manistee, in the heart of the Manistee National Forest. [kestelwoods.com](http://kestelwoods.com)

- Northern Exposure Campground: Located in Mesick in Northern Michigan. Call (231) 885-1199.

- Proud Lake Recreation Area: Located on the scenic Huron River with 4,700 acres of rolling

hills with two lakes and pine tree forests. Call (248) 685-2433

- Sun Outdoors Kensington Valley: Metro Detroiters can save gas money and still enjoy sandy beaches and freshwater in New Hudson. [sunoutdoors.com/michigan](http://sunoutdoors.com/michigan)

- Duggan's Family Campground: Located in Port Austin near the tip of Michigan's thumb

a stone's skip from Lake Huron. Call (989) 738-5160

- Ruby Campground: Another option in the thumb in Avoca with secluded spots along Mill Creek. [ruby-campground.com](http://ruby-campground.com).

- Harbortown RV Resort: Not all great adventures begin by heading north — go south to this gem in Monroe on Lake Erie. [harbortownrv.com](http://harbortownrv.com).

- JaDo Campground: One of many stunning locations in the beautiful Irish Hills in southern Michigan on scenic and historic US 12. [jadocampground.com](http://jadocampground.com)

- Timber Ridge Resort: The all-season resort is located just eight minutes from downtown Traverse City. Guests can enjoy camping in tents, RVs or cabins. [timberridgeresort.net](http://timberridgeresort.net)

## ON THE ROAD

# RV and camping facts and stats



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

RV ownership has increased over 62% in the last twenty years with a record 11.2 million RV owning households.

- The latest projection shows total 2021 National RV shipments ranging between 565,848 and 586,281 units with the most likely year-end total being 576,065 units. That total would represent a 33.8% increase over the 2020 year-end total of 430,412 units. It would also be a 14.1% gain over the current comparable record high of 504,600 units in 2017.

- According to the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA), Michigan continues to be one of the top 5 states for RV deliveries. In 2020, 16,571 RVs were shipped to Michigan, 1,336 RVs were shipped in the first quarter (January-March) of the year. So far, in the first quarter of 2021, more than 5,270 RVs have been shipped to Michigan.

- The total 2019 country-wide economic impact of RV sales and services is \$20.1 billion.

- Indiana overwhelmingly continues to lead the country in RV production, manufacturing nearly 83% of all RVs in the United States and Canada

- RV ownership has increased over 62% in the last twenty years with a record 11.2 million RV owning households.

- The 2019 economic impact of RVs in Michigan is \$3.4 billion. \$1.6 billion for RV manufacturers and suppliers, \$712.6 million for RV sales and services, \$1.1 billion for RV campgrounds and travel according to RVIA.

- The Michigan RV and campground industry supports 18,795 jobs, 1,173 RV businesses and \$969.9 million in wages.

- Go RVing and the RVIA commissioned a study highlighting how RV vacations present a clear budget benefit over other forms of travel. Popular RV mini-vacations can reap a cost savings of 21- 64% for a four-person travel party.

- RVs support a balanced and active lifestyle. In a Harris Interactive survey, owners reported that RV travel enables them to experience nature and outdoor activities and enjoy quality family time. RVers reported stronger bonds with loved ones and benefits to children. RVers also cited healthier eating on the road, sleeping in their own beds, and having their own bathroom facilities as advantages of RV travel.

- Research by GoRVing and the RVIA show that when fuel prices are higher, RVers save on fuel costs by driving fewer miles, taking trips closer to home and staying longer at one destination.

- According to a GoRVing survey conducted at a recent MARVAC RV & Camping Show:

- According to the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (DEGLE), as of April 2019, there are more than 1,354 licensed recreation vehicle parks and campgrounds in Michigan, which represent more than 157,000 campsites. ▪ A study by Michigan State University shows that 10% of all pleasure travelers in Michigan are campers. ▪ Buyers aged 35-54 are the largest segment of RV owners, according to a University of Michigan study commissioned by RVIA.

- New RVs can range in price from \$6,000-\$22,000 for folding campers; \$8,000-\$95,000 for conventional travel trailers; \$43,000-\$200,000 plus for Type C motorhomes; \$18,000 to \$160,000 for fifth wheels and \$60,000-\$500,000 for Type A motorhomes.

- The average spent on an RV \$75,000. Millennials spent the most, with an average of \$82,000.

- IRS tax deduction. For most RV buyers, interest on their loan is deductible as second home mortgage interest

## 80th Anniversary

As one of the oldest state associations, the Michigan Association of Recreation Vehicles and Campgrounds (MARVAC) has been connecting camping and RV enthusiasts with Michigan-based dealers, suppliers and campgrounds for 80 years. Founded in 1941, the association has been championing camping and RVing to consumers through outreach and the always popular RV Shows. The association introduced RV and camping shows to the metro Detroit area 55 years ago in 1966 with the original Detroit Camper and Travel Trailer Show, which has become the third-longest running public RV show in the country. The first show was held at the Detroit Artillery Armory on 8 Mile Road in February 1966. The southeast Michigan shows have also been held at Cobo Hall, the Pontiac Silverdome and was the inaugural show for the Novi Expo Center. It was also the first public show at Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi. Visit [marvac.org](http://marvac.org) to find campgrounds, RV resorts and RV dealers by region.

*Story courtesy of Michigan Association of Recreational Vehicles and Campgrounds*

## ON THE ROAD

# How to road trip in an electric car

Seasoned travelers know that few things match the excitement of taking to the open road. Whether you're heading off for parts unknown or following a carefully planned itinerary, a road trip promises to be a unique experience.

Drivers can up the uniqueness ante even further by taking an electric car on their next road trip. Many people who take driving vacations may fly into a new city or country and then rent a car as they prepare to hit the open road. Electric vehicles, or EVs, have become increasingly available in rental fleets in recent years.

Travelers interested in trying something new may be intrigued by the chance to get behind the wheel of an EV on their next road trip. This can be a great chance for drivers who are interested in one day purchasing their own EVs to get their feet wet.

Some drivers may not know what to expect when taking a long trip in an EV. Though it's understandable to have some hesitation, the following are some ways to navigate your first extended trip in an EV.

- Determine the charging time of your vehicle. The automotive experts at J.D. Power note that EVs come with different types of charging systems. Level 1 are the most readily available EVs, and these come with a standard 120-volt three prong plug that's common in modern homes in the United States. That's convenient, but charging using a Level 1 outlet may take a significant amount of time and only provide a few miles per hour of charging. If you're renting an EV, confirm which type of car you're getting and emphasize to the rental agency that you prefer a car that can be charged easily and effectively. One that can be charged overnight and provide hundreds of miles of driving time after a full charge is ideal.

- Look for EV-friendly lodging. Many hotels now feature charging stations exclusively for guests with EVs. Some hotels include



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Drivers can embrace various strategies to keep electric vehicles running strong on long road trips.

the cost of utilizing such stations in their parking fees, while others may charge an additional amount. Either way, the convenience of finding a hotel with its own charging station outweighs any extra costs, as cars can be charged overnight while guests are asleep, leaving more time to travel in a vehicle that's fully charged each morning.

- Find some RV parks along your route. RVs have required charging stations for years, so RV parks typically have these stations available for a nominal fee of around \$50. RVs typically are Level 2, so EV drivers that require Level 2 charging systems should be able to charge their vehicles at RV parks. In addition, many RV parks now also provide charg-

ing stations for Level 1 vehicles, though drivers should confirm which parks have such offerings prior to embarking on their trips.

- Drive in moderate weather. The software experts at Geotab note that cold weather affects EV range. Though battery thermal management systems have been designed to keep batteries within an optimal temperature range to minimize loss in battery performance, battery range is adversely affected when driving in extreme cold. Geotab notes that 70 F is the trip efficiency sweet spot.

Drivers can embrace various strategies to keep electric vehicles running strong on long road trips.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*



Electric vehicles, or EVs, have become increasingly available in rental fleets in recent years.

## ROAD SAFETY

# How tech can make you a safer driver

Technology has touched all aspects of modern life, including the way people drive.

For example, the days of printing directions in advance of long car trips are long gone thanks to global positioning systems (GPS) that are now built in to cars or easily accessible via smartphones. But technology hasn't just made it easier to get from point A to B. It's also made such journeys safer.

Modern automobiles are loaded with bells and whistles, many of which are designed to make it safer to operate and travel in moving vehicles. In recognition of the effectiveness of safety features like advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS), many insurance companies offer significant discounts to drivers who use them. Researchers with the insurance comparison website Insurify note that some insurers offer 10% discounts on premiums to drivers who use features like an ADAS while driving.

Drivers interested in tech-based safety features for their vehicles can consider these options.

- **Heated wiper blades.** Ice and snow pose a significant threat to drivers and their passengers. According to the Federal Highway Administration, 70% of roads in the United States are located in snowy regions, while Canadians need no such statistics to know that their roads are subjected to heavy snowfall each winter as well. Visibility is easily compromised when driving in snowy, icy conditions. Heated wiper blades can quickly melt snow and ice buildup on a windshield, making it easier for drivers to see the road ahead. Such blades also save drivers from the unenviable task of scraping ice off their windshields.

- **Night view assistance.** Many drivers admit to experiencing difficulty driving at night. Night view assistance technologies have been offered by luxury automakers for several years, and these devices offer more visibility than standard headlights. Some systems employ infrared emitters in headlight buckets and mounted



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Drivers interested in tech-based safety features for their vehicles can consider these options.

- **Infrared cameras** that identify and detect animals, pedestrians and other objects at night. Drivers simply activate their systems on their vehicle dashboards and are then alerted when the systems detect objects drivers may not see on their own.

- **Warning systems.** Warning systems have long been a standard in modern vehicles. Such systems utilize sensors and motion technology to alert drivers to potential problems. Lane assist technologies alert drivers when their vehicles begin to drift out

of their lanes and also when they are attempting to change lanes. These systems are now widely available, but they can be turned on and off, so drivers should make sure their systems are always on.

Technology is helping to make driving safer for motorists and their passengers. Utilizing systems and apps designed to improve safety on the road can reduce drivers' risk of being involved in motor vehicle accidents.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*



Technology is helping to make driving safer for motorists and their passengers.

**ROAD SAFETY**

# How motorcyclists can stay safe while riding

Many people are drawn to motorcycles because of the intensity and excitement riding provides. Motorcycles are fun and routinely draw attention from other motorists. What motorcycles add in terms of speed and excitement, they may lose in safety, especially when compared to cars and trucks.

The National Transportation Safety Board says motorcycle riders and their passengers have the highest risk of fatal injury among all motor vehicle users. Per mile traveled, motorcyclist fatalities occur nearly 28 times as often as passenger vehicle occupant fatalities in traffic crashes. Thankfully, the risks associated with riding motorcycles can be reduced with some simple safety precautions.

**Gear**

Motorcycle riders can improve the barrier between themselves and the road with the proper gear. Quality leather jackets and pants, helmets, gloves, and non-skid boots can protect the body from severe injuries.

**Improve visibility**

Reflective tape added to clothing can help motorcyclists become more visible to other drivers; otherwise, wear bright clothing colors. Also, riding with others as a group increases visibility.

**Familiarize yourself with the bike**

Motorcycle riders are not advised to take an unfamiliar bike into busy traffic. If the bike has never been ridden before, become familiar with its handling and responsiveness in a controlled area that isn't full of traffic before taking it on the open road.

**Stay out of blind spots**

Consumer Reports says roughly two-thirds of all motorcycle accidents are caused by a car driver violating a motorcycle rider's right of way. Motorcycle riders should never assume a driver sees them. Staying out of blind spots and steering clear of turning ve-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Motorcycle riders can improve the barrier between themselves and the road with the proper gear.

hicles can help.

**Adjust for weather**

Riding in the rain or in other difficult conditions is more risky since the roads are slippery. Slow down or keep the bike at home in inclement weather. Remove distractions. Stow cell phones away so your attention is not drawn away from the road.

**Remain sober and alert**

Don't ride while under the influence of alcohol or drugs (including over-the-counter if they cause drowsiness). Also, do not drive while drowsy, as it is just as dangerous as driving while intoxicated.

**Be aware of obstacles**

Motorcyclists need to be very careful about road obstacles, more so than other drivers. This includes uneven road surfaces, fallen branches, oil slicks, and/or wet spots. ConsumerSafety.org says a motorcycle has less contact with the road than a car, making it more likely to skid out of control or throw a rider from the bike.

Motorcycle riders need to be more cautious on the road because they are at increased risk for injury.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*



The risks associated with riding motorcycles can be reduced with some simple safety precautions.

## OFF-ROAD

# Dune buggy rides along Lake Michigan a summer must

By Susan Thwing  
For MediaNews Group

Looking for something fun — and sandy — to do in the sun this summer? Look no further than a dune buggy ride along Lake Michigan.

Lake Michigan's sandy beaches are a national treasure. The western coastline of Lake Michigan boasts one of nature's marvels — the most extensive collection of freshwater dunes in the world. The dunes were formed when glaciers covered Michigan, and then dissipated. With the deposits left behind being mostly

made of quartz, over time the ebb and flow of the water formed are now long shorelines of soft sand.

These beautiful dunes offer a variety of tourist attractions, including riding the dunes in a buggy.

Dune buggy riding is a fun — sometimes extreme — sport that takes the participant up, down, and across giant dunes and the rugged terrain that accompanies them. Among the top spots to ride dune buggies is Silver Lake State Park, which offers riding as well as walking and viewing. These massive dunes are nestled along the shore

of Lake Michigan and Silver Lake — the only sand dunes in Michigan where you can drive your own off-road vehicle (ORV)—and miles of pristine shoreline beaches designed for pure family fun and adventure.

Silver Lake State Park covers 3,000 acres on the shores of Lake Michigan with 450 acres dedicated to off-road dune buggy riding from April 1 through Oct. 31 every year. It is the only rideable dune on Lake Michigan as Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore was created to protect the dunes. Dune buggy rides at Sleeping Bear Dunes are



PHOTO COURTESY OF SILVER LAKES BUGGY RENTAL

Silver Lake Buggy Rentals opened officially for the season on May 21.

prohibited at any time of year.

## Ready to ride? Where to rent

One of the most popular spots to rent a dune buggy to drive yourself, family and friends across the sandy dunes is Silver Lake Buggy Rentals. Opened in 2001 by Mark and Judi Rippee, this company offers guests the unique ability to explore Lake Michigan, the Silver Lake Sand Dunes and the amazing views “in a safe and exciting way.”

And safety is key at Silver Lake. Co-owner Judi Rippee says “We aim for safety. We are a family-oriented company and believe in providing a safe, secure, but fun experience to our clients.” Ensuring guest safety includes requiring all guests to view an instructional video prior to hopping in the buggy, she adds. They also have available “Are you dune ready?” literature provided by the Department of Natural Resources.

Front office manager Kelly Niepokuj says guests can choose from four differ-

ent off-road vehicles: a two-seater Rover or the Rover Max, which is a two-seater with “good climbing capabilities.” A Yamaha 450 Kodiak is available for a single person to navigate and the Kawasaki Teryx is perfect for families or small groups. Because the Teryx is a faster, more powerful ride than the buggies, those who choose this option receive training from dune guides and drivers must be 21. Drivers for the other buggies need to be 16.

“The dune guides show guests how to operate on the terrain and get a feel for safe use, while still having fun,” Niepokuj says.

That includes instructions on how to get “unstuck.” Depending on the sand conditions, it is not unusual for guests to get stuck. Silver Lake staff are on site to help you if the situation calls for it, however guests are instructed on how to get unstuck in the pre-ride speech.

Silver Lake Buggy Rentals opened officially for the season on May 21. Niepokuj says they are gearing up for the more popular times,

such as Father's Day and the Fourth of July weekend, but plenty of opportunities for rentals are still available. Reservations are recommended and reservation times and/or dates may be changed up until 3 days prior to the original rental date subject to availability. The rental fee includes all permits, flags, and transportation of customers and vehicles to and from the dunes.

Two hours early bird discounts are available at 9 a.m., 9:20 a.m. and 9:40 a.m. each day. For more information on rentals, visit [silverlakebuggys.com](http://silverlakebuggys.com).

## Don't want to drive?

Mac Wood's Dune Rides, located in Mears, Mich., will drive you! The company offers a 40-minute, seven-mile dune tour mid-May through October driven by trained drivers. The tour — which is also accessible to the mobility impaired — climbs the dune summits specifically leased by the company, allowing visitors to take in a panoramic view of the lake.

Mac Wood's began in the 1930s when Malcolm



PHOTO COURTESY OF MAC WOOD'S DUNE RIDES

Mac Wood's offers a 40-minute, seven-mile dune tour mid-May through October driven by trained drivers.



“Mac” Wood offered dune rides on a converted ten-wheeled Model A Ford with balloon tires, according to his granddaughter Shelby Wood Olsen.

The tours provided a thrilling ride while stopping at scenic lookouts. Later Wood added scooters and other vehicles to his Mac Wood’s Dune Scooter Rides business. The business is still run by the Wood family.

“This is our 92nd year, I’m the third generation and my son is the fourth generation running the business. We think it’s kind of cool that we’ve kept it going,” Olsen said.

The vehicles carry 18-20 people, from ages “babies on up,” she said, adding that rides are on a first-come, first-serve basis. Wait times vary. Olsen says she’s expecting a busy season this year.

“People want to be out, they are ready to get back out after the years of COVID,” she says. “We’re expecting a good year, and

lots of fun.”

For more information on rates, visit [macwoodsdunerides.com](http://macwoodsdunerides.com).

These are just two options available for dune buggy rides along Lake Michigan. For a complete list of rental opportunities, visit [michigan.org](http://michigan.org).

### The rules to ride

Dune buggy owners also can drive on the Silver Lake State Park dunes. Whether renting, touring or driving your own state regulations apply.

To ride in Silver Lake State Park, you should have a Recreation Passport, an ORV license, and your vehicle has to be registered and abide by the rules set out by State regulations. You will also need a valid driver’s license. Most rental companies also require guests to have a time telling device and protective eye covering.

For Michigan regulations on each vehicle, visit [michigan.org](http://michigan.org).



PHOTO COURTESY OF MAC WOOD’S DUNE RIDES

The vehicles carry 18-20 people, and the rides are open to all ages.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SILVER LAKES BUGGY RENTAL

Looking for something fun — and sandy — to do in the sun this summer? Look no further than a dune buggy ride along Lake Michigan.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MAC WOODS DUNE RIDES

For those looking for the thrilling experience of riding the dunes but don’t want to get behind the wheel themselves, Mac Wood’s Dune Rides is a perfect option.

## CAMPING

# Your guide to rustic camping in Michigan

**By Terry Jacoby**  
*For MediaNews Group*

Car camping, dry camping and boondocking are different ways to enjoy the great outdoors without some of the modern conveniences — a more rustic adventure, if you will. Dry camping is simply camping without being plugged into utilities while boondocking refers more to camping in an RV

without water, sewer or electrical connections. Car camping refers to pulling up alongside a scenic lake in your car and throwing a tent or sleeping bag on the ground — if you have a sleeping bag or tent.

These are all permitted in Michigan on any state-owned land, except state parks, recreation areas, forests, and game areas. These types of camping

also are permitted in Michigan on state forest land but your site must be more than a mile from a state forest campground. Boondocking is legal in many parts of Michigan, particularly in the Upper Peninsula where there is a lot more wide open spaces to enjoy and fewer sites that offer the conveniences of water, sewer and electric. Michigan has plenty of wide-open spaces to see and enjoy but

most of the property is not government-owned — which means more restrictions — so make sure you aren't pulling up the RV on private property. Michigan law does allow for overnight parking at rest areas — and we have some nice rest areas. Just don't make a week of it — one night and it's time to move on. These different types of camping are often more rustic, secluded and even off-the-

grid with few if any services and/or amenities available. Some of the more popular boondocking spots in Michigan include Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area; Hovey Lake Campground; Marzinski Horse Trail & Campground; Lake Perrault Campground and Little Beaver Lake Campground.

Michigan is an ideal place for boondocking, dry camping and car camping because of the amaz-



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Michigan has nearly 140 state forest campgrounds located throughout the Upper and Lower Peninsula offering a rustic camping experience.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Backpacking or car camping (also known as dispersed camping) is permitted on state forest land as long as your site is located more than one mile from a state forest campground.

ing forests and countless inland lakes, streams and rivers. You are never far from fresh water in the mitten state. Each of the Great Lakes has its own character and attractions, from the dunes along Lake Michigan to the remarkable cliffs of Lake Superior. There also are many different wonderful areas to explore: from the Irish Hills along the southern tier to places along Lake Michigan from Benton Harbor to Petokey, to the Thumb, to Mackinaw City and Cheboygan, to Tawas City and Gaylord and Grayling — and all points in between. As longtime residents know all too well, the weather in Michigan can change in a hurry — we've all heard the saying: "If you don't like the weather in Michigan, wait 24 hours." This rustic style of camping requires the understanding that the weather can change so preparation is key. Make sure to bring jackets, sweaters and rain gear even

if when it's 80 degrees and sunny when you find your ideal spot. And it's not a bad idea to throw an extra pair of hiking boots in the backseat.

### Don't forget your passport

One thing to do before setting out for a Michigan camping adventure is to get a Recreation Passport, your key to accessing state parks and recreation areas, boating access sites, state forest campgrounds, thousands of miles of trails and other outdoor spaces — all year long. You must display your Recreation Passport on your motor vehicle, motorcycle or commercial motor vehicle when entering or parking in any Michigan state park or recreation area, state forest campground, designated boating access site or parking lot, state-designated trailhead, recreation staging area or access site related to trails/pathways. For costs and more information, visit

[michigan.gov/dnr/buy-and-apply/rec-pp](http://michigan.gov/dnr/buy-and-apply/rec-pp).

### Pack a tent

If you are going car camping, why not throw a tent in the trunk (or the boot as our English friends call it). Park your car and then hike to an even more remote spot that your car can't get to and pitch the tent. Make sure to check the weather and to leave some bread crumbs so you can find the car the next day.

Two things worth noting if you are car camping in the UP:

- The air coming off Lake Superior can be brutally cold so be prepared for a temperature dip north of the Mackinac Bridge.
- Did someone say bears? There are approximately 10,000 bears who call the UP home so packing bear spray is not a bad idea — and keep a lid on your food if you want it to still be there in the morning.



Michigan is an ideal place for boondocking, dry camping and car camping because of the amazing forests and countless inland lakes, streams and rivers.

## ON THE WATER

# What new and seasoned boat owners should know before hitting the water

By Stephanie Preweda

For MediaNews Group

As any true Michigander knows, boating season is upon us and the mitten's many lakes and cottages are gearing up for summer. Whether a first-time purchaser or a seasoned boater looking for an upgrade, Chris Schneider, owner of Schneider's Motorsports and Marine in Fair Haven, has some answers about what to look for when in the market.

Schneider's Motorsports and Marine has been selling and servicing boats of all sizes for about 20 years.

## New owners

**Q**: What are some basic maintenance requirements every first time boat owner should know?

**A**: For first-time boat buyers looking at a used boat, the biggest thing is to have a mechanical inspection and boat survey. When buying a new boat, you shouldn't have maintenance expenses but keep in mind fuel costs, yearly oil changes and inspections.

**Q**: Why should a first time boat owner choose a marina over self storage?

**A**: With self storage, you keep the boat on land versus direct access to water. Most marinas are full service and should be able to accommodate any type of question or service needs. With self storage, you have to physically take the boat in for repairs. Marinas are more of a one-stop shop.

**Q**: How does the body of water determine the type of boat I want to purchase?



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Buying a boat can be overwhelming. Consider these tips before taking the plunge.

**A**: It has everything to do with the type of purchase as long as it is within your budget. There are boats designed for inland lakes, then there are boats designed for bigger lakes. The bigger the boat, the bigger the body of water you can take on. But there are certain days you can't take a 60-footer on Lake Huron or Lake Michigan, depending on weather conditions.

**Q**: What are some accessories all boat owners should have?

**A**: The number one thing is safety. Proper safety kits are a must. The Coast Guard has certain regulations of what they want on your boat per its size. Safety kits include flares, dock lines, proper life vests, anchors and a first aid kit. Secondly, bumpers — or fenders — are a must.

**Q**: What are some costs first-time boat owners should budget for before deciding?

**A**: Fuel costs can differ depending on the boat. Some

boats take gas, others take diesel. Summer and winter storage is also something to consider. The cost of storage depends on the size of the boat.

**Q**: How do I determine if I'd like to buy new or used?

**A**: This falls in a similar category as buying a vehicle. I always explain to a first-time buyer to get something less expensive unless you 100% know that you're committed to boating. A used boat might be less costly for the first time. You

want to get the return on your investment.

**Q**: If looking at used boats, what are some common red flags?

**A**: When looking at a used boat, it's 100% based on condition. When you physically see the boat and if it's not in good condition, that's the first red flag. If a boat looks rough, then it is rough and wasn't taken care of.

**Q**: Do I have the option to test drive a boat?

**A**: A test drive should be mandatory. You need a feel for the boat before buying it. All of that can be wrapped up in the boat survey before final purchase.

### Seasoned looking to upgrade

**Q**: How can I determine the trade-in value of my current boat?

**A**: There are a lot of tools out there. Similarly to Kelley Blue Book, which can also be used, the National Automotive Dealers Association — or NADA — is a reliable source.

**Q**: When is it time to upgrade to a larger boat?

**A**: It depends on your wants and needs. Make sure you can afford a more expensive boat and feel comfortable operating a larger boat. But most people upgrade as their family grows and need more space.

**Q**: What are some technological improvements that are must-haves?

**A**: Electronics including a navigation system. It's good to have a list of what you want in an upgrade. Creature comforts is a broad word but it depends on what level of boat you're getting. There are so many different functionalities that come with different levels.

**Q**: Just as vehicles are affected, are there shortages for boat repairs?

**A**: Not necessarily. There's a supply shortage of new boats and some part shortages but it's always different. Manufacturers don't explain what, they mainly tell us if they are low on manufacturing. Lately it takes 12 months to have a new boat built at the earliest.

**Q**: How much does brand matter when upgrading?



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Boat owners looking to upgrade should make sure they feel comfortable operating a larger boat before pulling the trigger.

**A**: A lot. Recognition is important. There are brands that are good and others not as good. There's no trend among purchasers, it depends what you're looking for. In the automotive world, we have the big three and some overseas stuff. In the boat world, there's tons of manufactures. Depends on what you're looking for. Again, it comes down to your want list and some compromises are made especially today because of lack of inventory.

**Q**: Does a larger and newer boat mean a larger monthly insurance bill?

**A**: Not necessarily, It all depends on what you're doing. It's like going from a Cor-

vette to a Chevy Suburban. The Suburban is bigger but the Corvette is faster. It really just depends on what you're looking at, there's such a range.

**Q**: What's the most important thing to consider when upgrading?

**A**: Just that, upgrading. Make sure you are upgrading and not making a lateral move. Make sure to always have a boat survey done, especially with used boats. You want to get a second opinion.

**Right:** With self storage, you have to physically take the boat in for repairs, while marinas are more of a one-stop shop for boat owners.



## FISHING

# Michigan Fishing Guide: As the temperatures increase, so will the number of fish you catch



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

There are more than 11,000 inland lakes in Michigan, in addition to the Great Lakes that surround the state.

**By Terry Jacoby**  
For MediaNews Group

Eric Budreau has been fishing his whole life. He not only has a different tackle box for each type of fish he likes to catch, but he can even tell what type of fish has grabbed on to his line. “For example, if it’s a pike they will take a run right away and then all of a sudden they give up, and it’s

like you’re reeling in a log,” he says. Budreau, 43, runs charter boats and works for the popular Captain Chuck’s Fishing, Archery and Hunting shop ([capt-chuck.com](http://capt-chuck.com)) in Ludington. He predicts a huge summer of fishing not only along the shores of Lake Michigan but throughout the state.

“We have the big lake (Michigan) here in Ludington, but we also have many inland lakes that have a ton of great spots

to fish,” he says. “You can fish right along the shore and get some great crappies, blue gill, bass and even some perch especially in the summer.” One of the best spots, according to Budreau, is where Lake Michigan comes into Pere Marquette Lake. “You can fish right from shore for small mouth, rock bass and pike,” he says. “The perch fishing in there is phenomenal.” And then there is Lake Michigan — “the big lake.”

“The big lake is going to have a big summer when it comes to king salmon,” Budreau says. “As the water warms up they will head further out into Lake Michigan and you will need a boat to get to them.” Captain Chuck’s offers charters starting at around \$700 for four people.

The fishing forecast also is promising on the other side of the state. “We had a really good salmon fishing season this

spring,” says Gage Frazier, a lifetime fisherman who has worked at Anderson’s Pro Bait ([andersonspobait.com](http://andersonspobait.com)) in Port Huron for the past six years. “We had a lot of Coho salmon come back as well as Atlantic and Steelhead and even King Salmon. Since it was so cold and clear we lost a little of our early walleye bite but that will just set it up better for later in the summer.” Frazier says the Port Huron area is seeing some good-sized walleye, which are averaging around 2½ to 4 pounds. And walleyes are the big catch in the summer on Lake Huron. “You can catch small-mouth bass, perch and even salmon before they head out, but walleye is the big fish here,” Frazier said. “A lot of people fish near the (Blue Water Bridge) and down from there. There are 150 different ways you can fish down here to catch fish. It just depends on what you like to do.” Frazier says you can catch plenty of bass and pike on the inland lakes.

### DNR Fishing Guide

Before you jump in the boat, bait your hook or cast your line, every fisherman should have a copy of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) 2022 Michigan Fishing Guide in the fishing tackle box or even on your phone. Visit [michigan.gov/dnrdigests](http://michigan.gov/dnrdigests) for a digital version.

### License, please!

Another item you MUST have before you catch your first fish if you are 17 years of age or older in 2022 is a fishing license. Buy on the go: Purchase a Michigan fishing license 24 hours a day at [michigan.gov/dnrllicenses](http://michigan.gov/dnrllicenses)

### The new hot reel

One of the new hot reels on the market this summer is the Tekota 800 which go for about \$200-\$300 and are ideal for fishing Michigan’s big lakes.

### Where to fish

Where do you find that secret place to cast your line that only the fish know about? A good place to start is at [michigan.gov/fishing](http://michigan.gov/fishing) — head to the “WHERE TO FISH” section to access the Family Friendly Fishing Waters web application.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

If you’re not sure of the fishing rules and regulations in your area, it’s best to consult the state’s Fishing Guide.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

There are a few things every fisherman in Michigan should know before casting their lines, all of which can be found in the Michigan DNR’s annual Fishing Guide.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Families looking for a great place to drop a line can visit [michigan.gov/fishing](http://michigan.gov/fishing) for a list of spots that are easy to access, have a high likelihood of catching fish, and are all around family-friendly.

## ON THE WATER

# Snag a slip at these Michigan marinas this summer

By **Stephanie Preweda**

For *MediaNews Group*

While Michigan is known for its rich history in the automotive industry, Michiganders don't just stop with the keys to the car. After all, the mitten is surrounded by the Great Lakes and has thousands of lakes dotted across the state.

With Memorial Day weekend approaching, boat owners across the state are getting ready to hit the waves — either for a leisurely pontoon ride at sunset, or the thrill of a speedboat.

“Boaters in Michigan take for granted how great we really have it,” said Paul Vanderdonck, sales manager of Colony Marine. “We have freshwater lakes. Saltwater is so corrosive and destroys boats so quickly.”

But where are these large water toys stored during the winter? While some choose to self-store at home, others prefer the ease of a marina. Typically, a marina offers storage along with full-service amenities to keep boats maintained and ready for boating season.

“Marinas are like a community with so many amenities,” said Vanderdonck. “The marina community is stronger in Michigan than in some other states. It's a vacation home for a lot of people. They are friends with people on their dock, their kids grow up together in that environment on weekends and it's amazing.”

If you're looking for a place to cruise to this boating season, here are some full-service marinas worth visiting across the state:

## Bay Harbor Marina

5309 Wilder Rd, Bay City

▪ While consistently rated among the highest customer service satisfac-



PHOTO COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

With over 1,300 public boating access sites and over 80 harbors and marinas throughout the State of Michigan, the possibilities are endless for your next boating adventure.

tion in the industry, Bay Harbor Marina is also a preferred repair facility among most major insurance companies, according to their website

▪ Their full-service center includes year-round storage. They offer a 300,000-square-foot heated and unheated indoor storage room that holds 600 boats

▪ Offers the choice of floating or stationary docks for storage located several minutes from the bay. They offer a gas dock and party store, two bath houses with laundry facilities, a basketball court and heated pool. Dock fees include power, water and wi-fi

▪ For more information call 989-684-5010 or visit bayharborbaycity.com

## Colony Marine

*Multiple Locations*

▪ Family-owned since 1958 with three locations in St. Clair Shores, Algonac and Oakland County

▪ Known as the largest boat dealer in southeast Michigan, according to their website

▪ Offers year-round full-service including sales, financing, service and maintenance, year-round storage, market retail and customer service support

▪ Each location offers deep marinas with over 950 summer boat slips and winter storage

▪ Colony Marine has received several awards including 2019 Top 100 Dealer, Brunswick Ambassador Dealer Designation, Mercury Presidents Club

Award and several others

▪ For more information, visit colonymarine.com

## Anchor Bay Marina LLC

32550 Riverpoint St, New Baltimore

▪ With over 40 years of experience, Anchor Bay Marina, LLC is a full-service center including winterization, oil changes, engine diagnostics, electrical work, re-upholstery and detailing.

▪ An official Yamaha service dealer

▪ Offers full and half day boat rentals including pontoons, jet skis, kayaks, paddle boards and multi-person tubes

▪ They offer the option to dry stack indoor or provide

wet slip for outdoor storage with monthly or annual pricing.

▪ For more information call 334-857-2654 or visit anchorbaymarina.net

## Eldean Shipyard and Marina

2223 S Shore Dr, Macatawa

▪ Eldean Shipyard opened its doors in 1901 and has been servicing Lake Michigan for over 100 years. Family-owned and operated, they are one of the oldest active marinas and boatyard facilities in the U.S., according to their website

▪ Winner of several awards including Marina of the Year by Marina and Dock Age magazine, Boat

Dealer of the Year by Boat and Motor Dealer and several others

▪ They are a certified Michigan Clean Marina

▪ Popular destination for boaters not only in Michigan but also Chicago, Indiana and Wisconsin

▪ For more information call 616-335-5843 or visit eldean.com

## North Shore Marina

18275 Berwyck St., Spring Lake

▪ Full-service marina located a quarter mile from Lake Michigan

▪ West Michigan's largest boat repair facility, the 100,000-square-foot facility can hold up to 110 boats, according to their website

▪ Offers summer and winter storage, which includes haul-out, pump-out and spring launch.

▪ Their facilities offer a year-round service department, boat cleaning station, laundry facilities, heated swimming pool, restrooms and showers and they are located right next to Kitchel/Lindquist Dunes Preserve.

▪ For more information call 616-842-1488 or visit northshoremarina.com

## Beacon Cove Marina

36360 Jefferson Ave, Harrison Twp.

▪ Opening in 1980, Beacon Cove is a full-service marina located on Lake St. Clair.

▪ Voted “Best of the Best” by The Macomb Daily, they offer year-round service repair by certified Merc Technicians

▪ Amenities include 12 outside racks, composite docks, two bath houses, a picnic area, fuel dock, pump out and 25-ton travel lift.

▪ Some nearby attractions include Metro Beach, Gull Island and downtown Mount Clemens.





PHOTO COURTESY OF PAUL VANDERDONCK

Paul Vanderdonck, sales manager of Colony Marine, boating with his family during the summer.

- Offers winter storage with early signup discounts. Lifting and blocking are included in the storage pricing
- For more information call 586-463-3864 or visit [beaconcovemarina.net](http://beaconcovemarina.net)

### Menominee Marina

1000 1st St, Menominee

- Located on the Wisconsin border of the Upper Peninsula, right on Lake Michigan.

- The full-service marina offers several amenities including rest houses with showers, pet walk, dry use docks, grills with picnic tables, nearby beaches, washer and dryer and a playground

- Their Water Works Boaters Lounge includes four private restrooms with showers, 125-gallon aquarium, dining room, and a book loan program

- Offers year-round storage with 272 slips and 20 inner wall-side tie ups.

- For more information call 906-863-8498 or visit [menomineemarina.com](http://menomineemarina.com)

### Poseidon Marine

1590 NE Torch Lake Dr, Central Lake

- Located on the northeast end of Torch Lake specializing in waterfront systems

- Full-Service marina including maintenance and

repair, used boat sales, year-round storage, shrinkwrapping, detailing and transport.

- They offer dock and lift sales, along with dock repair and barge services.

- Recently added 12,000 square feet of boat and RV storage facility equipped with security cameras and six feet of security fencing.

- For more information call 231-544-2628 or visit [poseidonmarine.co](http://poseidonmarine.co)

### Emerald City Harbor

24200 Jefferson Ave, St Clair Shores

- Founded in 1959 and located in the heart of the Nautical Mile in St. Clair Shores

- Offers 500 boat wells, summer dockage and winter storage, boat and yacht brokerage and servicing including dewinterizing; engine, generator and outdrive repairs; hull and bottom painting; electronics installation and electrical repairs

- A range of amenities include covered wells, gas dock and pump-out facility, three boat hoists, bath house with showers, gazebo and picnic area along with several hosted harbor events

- Offer boat sales and also purchase boats

- For more information call 586-772-4200 or visit [emeraldcityharbor.com](http://emeraldcityharbor.com)



PHOTO COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

With Memorial Day weekend approaching, boat owners across the state are getting ready to hit the waves.

### Anchor's Way Marina

143 Anchors Way, St Joseph

- Full-service marina located on St. Joseph River, which slips into Lake Michigan

- Maintenance services include winterizing, shrinkwrapping, haul in and out, sanding, painting, preventative maintenance inspections, electrical work, oil change, mask work and rigging and more

- Storage facilities offer over 13 acres of gated outdoor storage and over 17,000 square feet of heated indoor storage

- Amenities include a riverside pool, two restrooms with showers and a convenience store

- They also offer boat rentals by the hour, day or week including pontoons, speed boats, jet skis and dinghy boats

- For more information call 269-982-0812 or visit [anchorsway.com](http://anchorsway.com)



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

The right marina for you and your family depends on a lot of factors, including services, amenities and oftentimes, nearby attractions.

## ON THE WATER

# Simple safety tips for water sports enthusiasts

Bodies of water like lakes, rivers and oceans often elicit fond memories of fun times spent under the sun. Safety should always be a priority when spending time on the water, especially when participating in water sports, including swimming and water skiing.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 40 peo-

ple die by drowning every hour of every day, which equates to around 372,000 deaths each year. Many of those deaths, the vast majority of which occur in low- or middle-income countries, are preventable, and safety is at the core of drowning prevention. Though drowning incidents are not as prevalent in the United States and

Canada as they are elsewhere in the world, the popularity of water sports in both countries underscores the importance of revisiting the various ways to stay safe when out on the water.

▪ Take water sports lessons. The carefree nature of spring and summer can make it easy for water sports enthusiasts to forgo

lessons before trying their hands at water skiing and wakeboarding. But such lessons can teach people techniques that can keep them safe on the water. Courses teach everything from how to get up and out of the water to how to properly handle a tow rope. They also can teach boaters how to navigate waters while towing

skiers, tubers and wakeboarders.

▪ Learn hand signals and go over them before getting in the water. The National Safety Council emphasizes the importance of basic hand signals, which can be used to help boaters communicate with the people they're towing. Hand signals are vital because water sports tend to be



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Safety should always be a priority when spending time on the water.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

The popularity of water sports underscores the importance of revisiting the various ways to stay safe when out on the water.



Safety should always be the utmost priority for anyone spending time on the water.

noisy, so nonverbal communication may be the only way boaters can communicate with the people they're towing. Signals can be used to communicate anything from directions of turns to speed requests to the condition of the person being towed. A list of hand signals can be found at [boaterexam.com/safety/safety-common-hand-signals.aspx](http://boaterexam.com/safety/safety-common-hand-signals.aspx).

- Inspect tow lines. The NSC advises inspecting tow lines prior to beginning. Such inspections can confirm that tow lines are not caught in the propeller or wrapped around anyone before the activity begins.

- Wait for the propeller to stop before getting back on the boat. People being towed should always wait for propellers to stop before climbing back into the boat. It doesn't take long for propellers to stop, and those extra few seconds can dramatically reduce risks for accidents or injuries.

- Avoid water sports at night. Visibility is compromised once the sun goes down. That can make it hard for boaters to see any obstacles that might appear in the water, and it also makes it very difficult for them to communicate with the people they're towing. As a result of such difficulties, the NSC urges water sports enthusiasts to only engage in such activities during daylight hours.

Water sports make summer even more fun. Safety should always be the utmost priority for anyone involved in such activities.



*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*

Water sports make summer even more fun.

ON THE WATER

# Finding the right boat for fishing in Michigan's lakes, streams and rivers



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

One important factor to consider when searching for the right boat for your family is the size of the body of water you want to fish.



The first step to finding the right fishing boat is to understand what you are looking to get out of the boat and how you want to use it.

**By Terry Jacoby**  
For MediaNews Group

Michigan offers plenty of open water, and what better way to enjoy the state's 36,000 miles of streams and rivers and more than 11,000 lakes than by boat — and with a fishing pole in your hand. But what are the best boats for fishing in Michigan? The best advice for getting the ideal fishing boat is to understand what you are looking to get out of the boat and

how you want to use it. In other words, match up your needs and wants with the boat that checks off most (all) of your boxes. Michigan is surrounded by FOUR Great Lakes and these water wonderlands can get rough — especially “when the gales of November come early.” Not every fishing boat is suited for waves that can exceed 3 feet and things can get dangerous in a hurry out on the open water. “Safety is the first consideration when buying

any kind of boat,” says Chris Schneider, from Schneider's Motorsports & Marine in Fair Haven. “If you are on the water and something happens, you can't just pull over. You have to have life jackets on board and know how to use them. Safety is the most important factor for any boat owner.” Another factor to always consider is the size of the body of water you want to fish. “It's 100% dependent on the body of water you want to fish,” Schneider says.



### BOAT REGISTRATION

For information about boat registration, see "The Handbook of Michigan Boating Laws & Responsibilities" available online at [Michigan.gov/Boating](http://Michigan.gov/Boating). Boat registrations are handled through the Secretary of State.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

There are many different options available when it comes to fishing boats, depending on your budget and what you're looking for.

The two most common styles of fishing boats are the tiller, where the boat runs via an outboard motor attached to the back, and one where the boat is controlled by a steering wheel. There are boats that you can use for fishing and pulling the family along on water skis but there also are boats designed specifically for fishing. "The biggest difference is the layout of the boat," says Schneider. "How it's set up to handle your fishing rods, handling your bait and tackle, handling the fish you catch. These are all very important for fishing." Like the difference between a guppy and a marlin, there is a big difference in price range when buying a brand new fishing boat. "You can spend \$10,000

on a fishing boat or \$25 million on a fishing boat depending on how you want to use it and obviously your budget," says Schneider.

Schneider's Motorsports & Marine offers three of the popular Wellcraft Fisherman Center Console boats, ranging in price from around \$33,000 (the 162 model) to \$189,000 (262 model). New Tiller boats start as low as \$12,000-\$15,000. Alumacraft has been around a long time and remains one of the more popular brands of aluminum boats. Center Console boats over 20 feet long are recommended for fishing the Great Lakes. They are often used for ocean fishing but also are ideal for the sometimes rough waters of the Great Lakes.



Fishing can be a fun activity for families with children of all ages, and in Michigan, there is no shortage of locations to take advantage.

## ON THE WATER

# 10 boating spots perfect for a day on the water

Michigan is a national center of classic boating, a hobby understood by simple geography alone—if not also by a summer climate perfect for outdoor pursuits. In the mitten, you are never more than six miles from the nearest body of water. The state is home to the Great Lakes and boasts the nation's longest freshwater shoreline at 3,300 miles.

The state has a long boating history too. The boat building industry boomed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but Michigan boat builders left their mark on history from developing speedy runabouts favored by Prohibition era rumrunners to creating landing crafts for Allied forces in WWII. Later, entrepreneurs—much as the state's famous father Henry Ford did with the Model T—brought boat ownership within the reach of pretty much every American consumer.

Here are some spots where you can join in the fun.

## 1 Lake Huron — Les Cheneaux Islands

Boating is the reason this chain of 36 islands, in which channels serve as roads, are visited. With calm, Lake Huron waves making the region friendly to boating options of all types. Each August, the area hosts an antique wooden boat show, and each day, the channels are teaming with them. The colorful boat houses that are tour-worthy attractions in themselves. The E.J. Mertaugh Boatworks was the area's first Chris-Craft boat franchise, or build your own to take for a spin. The Great Lakes Boat Building School is the only non-profit school of its kind in the Midwest.

## 2 Torch Lake — Alden

Rumor has it that National Geographic once named Torch the third most beautiful lake in the world, and whether it's fact or urban legend, those who've spotted the lake on a day (like many) when it resembles the Caribbean in its deep, multi-tone color, figure it's true enough. At 18 miles in length, Torch is Michigan's longest inland lake and popular for power boating and sailing alike. Its sand bars are so legendary that musician Kid Rock wrote a song about them. Torch also is the state's deepest lake and exceptionally clear. The quaint village of Alden, on the lake's southeast curve, boasts one of the few public beaches and the Dockside Restaurant. The lake's name connects to the re-



PHOTO COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

At 18 miles in length, Torch is Michigan's longest inland lake and popular for power boating and sailing alike.

gion's history, taken from the way native fishermen used torches to light their way.

## 3 Lake St. Clair — Detroit

If you're talking nautical history, you can't do much better than the story of this lake's name, given by an explorer who discovered it on August 12, 1679, on the feast day of Saint Claire of Assisi. Today, the lake that connects Lakes Erie to Lake Huron and the Detroit River is better known as both a shipping channel and popular lake for pleasure boats. It's so popular that 150,000 pleasure boats registered in the immediate area, and those mingle safely with the 3,000 freighters that pass through the shipping canal, partly due to the lake's size (26 miles by 24 miles) and numerous islands channels and bays. The wise also drop in a line. In 2013, Bassmasters named it the number one bass fishing lake in world.

## 4 Spring Lake and Lake Michigan — Grand Haven

The boating history of this pop-

ular tourist town goes back to the days when the fur traders were the ones plying the waters. It was also once a leading port for vacation ferries and passenger lines. Grand Haven hosts an annual Grand Haven Coast Guard Festival with ship tours as well as live music, parades and more. It's also been named the official "Coast Guard City USA." The area hosts an annual wooden and classic boat show, where owners can chose between boating in Lake Michigan and Spring Lake. Both Lake Michigan and nearby Spring Lake offer miles of shoreline, dunes, a boardwalk and particularly clear waters.

## 5 Big Manistique Lake — Curtis

The largest of the Manistique collection of lakes, this 20,000 acre lake connects to hundreds of miles of rivers and streams, making it attractive for boating and fishing alike. The lake is stocked with muskie, perch and whitefish. Boating itself is a draw too in the roomy lake ringed

by forests and classic lodges that make a great home base. Festivals include a Wall-eye Jamboree and new 906 Festival, which features Upper Peninsula food, art and entertainment. While you're there, try dining at Chamberlin's Ole Forest Inn on the waterfront.

## 6 Lake Charlevoix — Charlevoix and Boyne City

A USA Today poll once named this second most beautiful lake in the country, a close second only to California's Lake Tahoe. One reader said it's "where the Gods swim," noting its clarity and way the color is offset by surrounding hillside green. It's also where the sailors, power boaters and even those with a preference toward Italian boat design head. The town's host to a visit-worthy annual Venetian Festival highlighted by a candle-lit boat parade. There also are several marinas and outfitters on the lake as well as many of the state's most classic beach towns for shopping, great food and art.

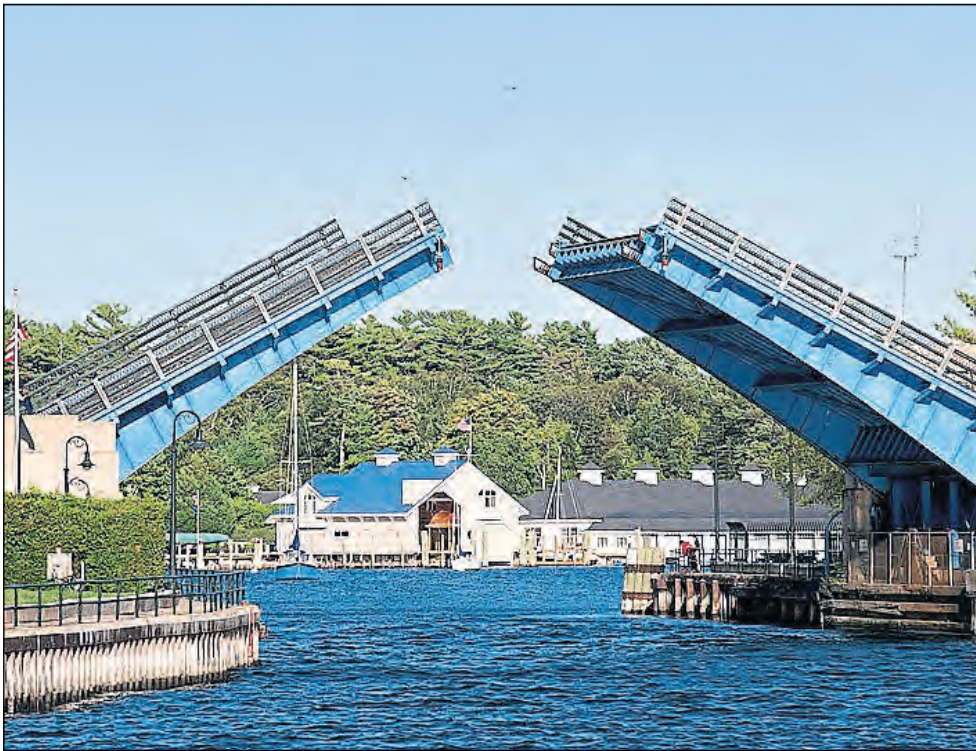


PHOTO COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

A USA Today poll once named Lake Charlevoix the second most beautiful lake in the country, a close second only to California's Lake Tahoe.

## 7 Grand Lake — Alpena

Visit the Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan in Alpena to check out the wooden sailing vessels and motorized ones built in the area to get a sense of the boating culture that continues in the region. You can also catch historic and new favorite wooden beauties at the (fiberglass and aluminum) at the Presque Isle Harbor Wooden Boat Show. Or just boat. Grand Lake is seven miles in length, 1.5 miles across and contains several islands. Ledges on the west shore rise 40 feet above lake level and contain unusual fossils.

## 8 Mullett Lake — Topinabee

With 26 miles of surface area, Mullett Lake is known as the lake with room for everyone, and power boats pulling water skiers share the lake with kayakers who like paddling its many inlets. Popular Aloha State Park is situated on the lake's shores. There also are marinas for fuel and snacks. The lake's Top of Michigan Marathon outboard race is the longest running of its kind in the country, and here you're part of the Inland Waterway, a series of connected lakes and rivers that can take you from one side of the state to the other by water.

## 9 Lake Leelanau — Leland

This lake's historic name translates to "narrow body of water," indicating Lake Leelanau has been a central

feature of this region since early settlement, and no wonder. Popular for boating, the lake is divided into two sections, North and South Lake Leelanau, connected by the Narrows and have a combined nearly 9,000 acres. The slower-traveled Narrows are popular for wildlife spotting and paddling and for a boating stop for a visit to Lake Leelanau's Boathouse Vineyards with award-winning wines with fun names like "License to Chill" and "Seas the Day" or for a trip to the grocery or nearby restaurants. You can boat to Leland too where the Lake Michigan harbor features the Fish-town area of repurposed shanties and numerous fishing charter options.

## 10 Gull Lake — Battle Creek

This deep, clear lake was discovered in the early days of Michigan tourism, due partly to its closer proximity to population centers like Chicago. Homes and cottages dot the shoreline of this lake popular for boating and scuba diving both. Many artifacts have been placed in the particularly clear lake to offer interest to divers. Among those are a phone booth, a motorcycle, a swing set, railroad tracks and two boats. The surface is an attraction too. The yacht club offers sailboat racing on weekends. There's a total surface area of more than 2,000 acres, and there's a notable sport fishery for trout, salmon, smallmouth bass, smelt and yellow perch.

*Story courtesy of Pure Michigan*



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Fishtown is a collection of weathered fishing shanties, smokehouses, overhanging docks, fish tugs and charter boats along the Leland River in Leland.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

There are several marinas and outfitters on Lake Charlevoix as well as many of the state's most classic beach towns for shopping, great food and art.

## OFF-ROAD

# 5 spots for ORV/ATV riding in Michigan

**By Susan Thwing**  
For MediaNews Group

Spring is here and summer is just around the corner, so it is time to get outdoors in Michigan! And if you want to add a little rustic zoom and an exciting twist to your nature adventures, there is nothing like the excitement of Off Road Vehicle (ORV) and All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) sports.

Travel Michigan's website [michigan.org](http://michigan.org) lists ORV trails that include all the good stuff to tantalize enthusiasts of dirt bikes, quads, dune buggies and more. The trails are everything from soggy mud bogs to twisty windy trails with lots of wooded areas, to rocky steep climbs.

So if you are you ready to take it off-road and enjoy the dirty, dusty, muddy, fantastically fun side of Michigan, here's a list of some top spots making all of the "best of" lists for ORV-ing:

## Silver Lake Sand Dunes

Silver Lake, located on the west side of the lower peninsula in Oceana County, has nearly 2,000 acres of sand dunes as well as a 450-acre ORV scramble area. It is considered a great place for those looking to try out a different style of off-roading. The open season runs from April 1–October 31. Make sure to stay in the correct designated area as the Dunes are divided into three areas: a pedestrian area (no vehicles permitted), the ORV Area (no pedestrians permitted), and an area leased by Mac Woods Dune Rides for tours. To explore the shoreline, riders can park within 50-100 yards of the water in the designated ORV Area and walk to the

beach. Vehicles are not permitted on the water's edge. Learn more at [michigan.gov/dnr/things-to-do/orv-riding/silver-lake](http://michigan.gov/dnr/things-to-do/orv-riding/silver-lake).

## Drummond Island

If traversing the deep woods is your idea of fun, then Drummond Island — located at the northern end of Lake Huron — is your perfect spot. Drummond's trails lend themselves to long extended trail rides. Experts suggest taking water, food, first aid, and tools in addition to extra clothing when traveling these trails, which are best suited to the rugged nature of ATV trails and 4x4 utility ATVs. Side-by-sides are also a good choice for exploring the ORV routes, which are some of the most scenic and rugged in Michigan. Drummond's DNR-sponsored trail system includes 60 miles of ATV trails and 40 miles of ORV routes — the largest in the state. Learn more at [visitdrummondisland.com/off-roading](http://visitdrummondisland.com/off-roading).

## Twisted Trails Off Road Park

Twisted Trails, located 40 miles south of Traverse City, in Copemish, offers 400 acres of 100% dedicated trails. The rides are designed to meet different skill levels and obstacles to provide a variety of adventures. In addition, Twisted Trails holds regular events including a DOG Party, Mud-athon and Keep Jeepin'. Live music on an outdoor stage, rock crawling, mud bogs, and a 1,600-foot sand track on the Twisted Trails Raceway are also available for entertainment. The Dusters Off-Road Club manages the park, extending across 400 acres and features a campground where you can spend the

night. Twisted Trails is free to access and open from May to October. Learn more at [twistedtrailsoffroadpark.com](http://twistedtrailsoffroadpark.com).

## Bundy Hill Offroad Recreation

Offering sandy dunes, hills and rocks and tree-lined trails, Bundy Hill's 350-acre off-roading area is for guests of various skill levels, which makes this a great place for both veteran riders and newbies. There's mud for individuals who want to sploosh in the mucky dirt and plenty of obstacles for 4X4 lovers. They also have a new dirt track for kids, dirt bikes and quads. The nearby campground is kid and pet friendly.

Bundy Hill rents out the park for corporate and other events, and also hosts a Jeep Invasion in September and nighttime Dirt Drags. Learn more at [bundyhilloffroad.com](http://bundyhilloffroad.com).

## The Mounds

Don't want to travel north in Michigan to off-road? Visit the Mounds — considered one of Michigan's premier off-road vehicle facilities. The Mounds is open 365 days a year; however, according to its website, "from March 15 through May 15, all trail areas of the Mounds are closed except for the 8-acre scramble area which is located to the north west of the ticket booth." The Mounds accepts ATVs, UTVs and dirt bikes. Learn more at [geneseecountyparks.org/mounds](http://geneseecountyparks.org/mounds).

## Free ORV weekends

In addition to those favorite spots, according to [michigan.org](http://michigan.org), residents and nonresidents legally can ride DNR-designated routes and trails in scramble areas



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PURE MICHIGAN

The Haywire Grade Trail celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2020.



With over 60 miles of ATV trails and 40 miles of ORV routes on Drummond Island, there's a lot to explore.

without purchasing an ORV license or trail permit. All other ORV rules and laws still apply. This year, Free ORV Weekends take place June 11-12 and Aug. 20-21, 2022.

Riders have access to the state's 4,000 miles of off-road trails and the state's six scramble areas (Bull Gap, Black Lake Scramble Area, Holly Oaks ORV Park, The Mounds, Silver Lake

State Park, St. Helen's Motorsport Area).

For a complete resource for ORV/ATV trails in Michigan, visit [michigan.gov/dnr/things-to-do/orv-riding/where](http://michigan.gov/dnr/things-to-do/orv-riding/where).



## ON THE ROAD

# Michigan state parks to receive new charging stations for electric vehicles

Lake Michigan's scenic coastline and other areas throughout northern Lower Michigan will become more accessible for electric vehicle users this summer with the installation of electric vehicle charging stations at select Michigan state parks.

Starting from Warren Dunes State Park in the southwest corner of the Lower Peninsula, north toward beautiful state park destinations at Holland and Grand Haven, Ludington, Orchard Beach, Leelanau and Petoskey on the Lake Michigan shoreline and additional points inland, an estimated total of 30 charging stations are scheduled to be installed beginning in June and continuing throughout the summer.

"This ability to link some of our state parks with electric vehicle travelers will provide a win-win situation for both parties," said Ron Olson, chief of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Parks and Recreation Division. "The enhancement will no doubt increase the number of visitors at these parks, while providing convenience and significantly increasing the range for EV motorists."

The rollout of the accessible stations across the state is being done in phases. State parks in the Upper Peninsula are scheduled to be part of the second phase, ideally to take place next year.

The installation will be the latest EV development after Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's administration announced in 2021 the development of a Lake Michigan EV circuit, amid ongoing ef-



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Grand Haven State Park in Ottawa County is among the 13 state parks set to receive charging stations starting this summer.

orts to employ green technologies throughout the state, including solar-powered amenities, carbon sequestration and numerous efficiencies.

"The DNR continues to look at innovative ways to sustainably manage our public lands and facilities," said Scott Whitcomb, the DNR's director of the Office of Public Lands. "Whether it's cultivating public/private partnerships to deploy EV charging at state parks or installing solar panels on our offices, the DNR is committed to being part of the solution that leads to a cleaner environment."

Installing the EV charging stations will also revisit a historic collaboration be-

tween Michigan's state parks and the automobile industry.

Beginning in the 1920s, cars became an increasingly popular form of transportation. This was especially important for park development as people began to travel in their cars to state parks.

After World War II, when car ownership increased further, the interstate highway system brought people, cars and parks closer to each other than ever before. The impact of this accessible road network to parks was significant.

The changes were evident in state road maps. In 1919, the state Legislature authorized the highway de-

partment to publish and sell a tourist map. By 1922, that map included state parks. In 1923, the map also contained information on recreational sites, camp sites and ferry schedules.

The popularity of cars and parks grew cooperatively. In 1922, Michigan's state parks saw a total of nearly a quarter-million visitors, but by 1930, a 40-fold increase had taken place with over 8 million people visiting state parks that year.

Michigan was also one of the first states to introduce roadside parks and recreational areas. Electric vehicle charging stations at state parks will help head both partners toward a

promising future.

"As the transition to an electrified mobility future continues to accelerate, innovative initiatives like these are vital to ensuring EVs can be more easily incorporated into our everyday lives, regardless of where you are in the state," said Trevor Pawl, chief mobility officer with Michigan's Office of Future Mobility and Electrification. "By identifying creative partnerships and opportunities, we are making significant progress in creating a safer, more equitable and environmentally conscious transportation future for all Michiganders."

The tentative list of installations includes two EV charging stations at Warren Dunes (Berrien County), P.J. Hoffmaster (Muskegon County), Charles Mears (Oceana County), Ludington (Mason County), Orchard Beach (Manistee County), Leelanau (Leelanau County), Young (Charlevoix County), Petoskey (Emmet County), Wilderness (Emmet County) and Interlochen (Grand Traverse County) state parks, four stations each at Holland and Grand Haven state parks, both in Ottawa County, and two stations at the Oden State Fish Hatchery in Emmet County.

As Michigan continues to welcome travelers to the state, increased access to EV charging stations is one way to continue to bring new leisure travelers to the state.

With tourism one of the industries hit hardest by the impacts of COVID-19, the Lake Michigan EV circuit builds on the contin-

ued success of the state's Pure Michigan campaign to help the industry recover by offering an exciting ecotourism attraction and reducing range anxiety for out-of-state visitors from population centers along Lake Michigan, like Chicago and Milwaukee.

"These EV charging stations are a tremendous way to encourage sustainable travel across our state, while sharing the tremendous beauty and recreation offered by our world-class state parks here in Michigan," said Dave Lorenz, vice president of Travel Michigan, part of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. "As we encourage travelers to 'Pursue their Pure' this summer, ensuring easy, reliable access to EV charging helps us continue to share these amazing opportunities with new travelers, without range anxiety."

The National Park Service recently joined the state of Michigan to announce an innovation partnership to promote accessibility to national parks throughout the state. Each park will provide an environment to pilot emerging mobility technologies that will help make national parks across the country safer, more equitable and accessible.

On a national level, similar efforts are also underway with electric vehicle charging stations being installed at scenic, cultural and civic destinations.

*Story courtesy of Michigan Department of Natural Resources*

## ON THE WATER

# Celebrating 75 years of Michigan boating



Celebrating 75 years of Michigan Boating

Boating has been a human pursuit for at least 8,000 years, with waters tempting us toward adventure, providing food and helping to build cities and economies. Those motivations for taking to the water have persisted and are still true today.

In 2022, Michigan is celebrating the 75th anniversary of the waterways program, created to support the access and infrastructure needed for boating: launches, marinas, gas docks, locks and dams, and the maintenance to keep these destinations accessible and operational.

The Michigan State Waterways Commission, a seven-member advisory commission appointed by the governor, was created in 1947 to advise on how Michigan would place, fund and manage harbors to provide safe, navigable boating on Michigan's Great Lakes. The program has evolved significantly since its early charge and today is looking toward the future of boating to ensure our state continues to be a world-class freshwater boating destination.

"Michigan is blessed with a fantastic diversity of water-based recreation, and our waterways program is integral to making the most of those opportunities and boosting quality of life for communities all over the state," said Ron Olson, chief of the DNR Parks and Recreation Division. "Nearly 90% of Michigan's registered boats are under 25 feet long, and many of those boaters rely on safe, accessible points of entry to get on the water."



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Michigan's waterways program is credited for the acquisition and development of nearly 1,300 public boating access sites across the state.

Olson credited Michigan's waterways program for the acquisition and development of nearly 1,300 public boating access sites. Through the harbor of refuge program, too, local and state harbors are available nearly every 30 miles surrounding the Great Lakes shoreline.

"The Michigan State Waterways Commission advises the DNR, the Parks and Recreation Division and the waterways program to ensure that boaters are part of the conversation and their voices are heard," Olson said. "Thanks to the many volunteer commissioners who have served our enviable waterways program

for the past 75 years and built a strong legacy for the future of Michigan boating."

## Origin, evolution of waterways management

Established by the Michigan Legislature in 1947, the commission was created to take advantage of federal monies made available from the 1945 Rivers and Harbors Act, which provided funding for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects on navigable waters of the nation. Congress then approved the plan for Michigan to create a safe harbor of refuge network on the state's Great

Lakes shoreline. This also funded:

- Protective breakwater structures still in use
- Harbor basin and channel dredging to establish many of the harbors we know today.
- Routine maintenance dredging responsibilities for which the state, in turn, would provide mooring and boat ramp facilities.

This plan formed the basis of the state's harbor program.

By 1949, the state had launched additional efforts to expand the harbor of refuge network by collaborating with local units of government (counties, townships and cities) on the construction, maintenance and operation of these

facilities. This started what is known today as the Grant-in-Aid Program, establishing federal, state and local partnerships in the development of Great Lakes harbor facilities. Today, there are 82 state-sponsored harbors.

In 1968, the functions of the commission were transferred to the Department of Natural Resources and added the responsibility of selecting and creating boating access sites (commonly referred to as boat launches) on Michigan's abundant inland lakes, too.

With this expansion of the program, funding to meet the needs of Michigan's boaters became a



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DNR biologist Nick Kalejs leads a short kayak expedition on the Muskegon River as part of the DNR's Wetland Wonders Challenge II, a program designed to foster appreciation for wetlands and Michigan's managed waterfowl areas.

priority, which is how Michigan became the first state in the nation to establish a state marine fuel tax. This carved out a portion of the state tax on the sale of gasoline for a fund that helps to provide boaters better, broader access to Michigan's waters. Michigan was the first state in the nation to establish such a fund, creating a model for recreational boating now used by many other states.

Today, Michigan is home to more than 800,000 registered recreational boaters, with the industry contributing \$7.8 billion a year to Michigan's economy. At 3,288 miles, Michigan's Great Lakes shoreline is longer than that of the Atlantic coast and our state is home to some 11,000 inland lakes.

### Celebrate waterways your way

Everyone is invited to help mark this Michigan maritime moment. Visit [michigan.gov/dnr/celebrateboating](http://michigan.gov/dnr/celebrateboating) to learn ways you can celebrate, including:

- Signing up for "Water Wednesday" texts
- Seeing aerial drone footage of some of Michigan's harbors and marinas
- Sharing your photos
- Learning about the upcoming Waterways Adventure Lab and Paint the Waterways programs
- Learning about new sustainable boating efforts
- Downloading free coloring pages
- Finding 75th anniversary merchandise

### Help shape the future of waterways

Boaters and others interested in having their voices heard are encouraged to learn more about the Waterways Commission, including reviewing past meeting minutes and upcoming meeting schedules. These public meetings are an excellent forum to share ideas and ask questions related to boating access, infrastructure and sustainability.

More on Michigan boating, celebration details and information on the commission can be found at [michigan.gov/boating](http://michigan.gov/boating).

*Story courtesy of Michigan Department of Natural Resources*

## ROAD SAFETY

# Is RV travel safe for children?



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

The Manufacturers Alliance for Child Passenger Safety published a statement in 2016 that discourages the use of motorized RVs for the transport of children.

An RV gives you access to unlimited travel, with a homey space that can be set up anywhere. You can feel the sense of freedom, but that freedom is limited. You also need to get to and from destinations safely. When it comes to motorized RVs — Class A, Class B, Class C — that safety can come into question. RVs are exempt from state car seat laws in some states, but every state has its own requirements when it comes to seat belts and car seats. According to SafeRide4Kids.com, which covers car seat laws in every state in the U.S., in Michigan:

Only the people sitting in the front seats need to wear a seat belt, children aged 4-15 in the rear; exemptions are medical reasons, model year before 1956, school buses, and vehicles not required to have safety belts.

If you don't follow the rules, Michigan officers can pull you over for violating the law (primary enforcement). The fine is usually minimal, \$25. However, regardless of the law, it's recommended that everyone wear a seat belt when on the road, particularly children.

## False sense of security

RVs are some of the largest vehicles on

the road, and though that can make you feel invincible, that's not really the case. Just because you're bigger, doesn't mean you're safer. The size and design of some RVs can make them more susceptible to being pulled around by wind gusts, puddles and bad weather. Blind spots can also be an issue with longer or wider RVs. Design features such as slide-outs, and materials such as wood or aluminum can be easily crushed in the event of a crash or rollover incident.

## Motorhome design

All that interior space in a Class A will look very appealing to a two-year-old, but the days of being free in a large RV as it's moving are over. Children should be strapped in to their seats according to the recommended guidelines (front facing, rear facing, seat belt, etc.). This is less likely in a Class A due to the RV's overall design. Alternatively, you can drive your toad and follow a Class A RV, ensuring that all young children have the appropriate seats and equipment.

Since Class B and Class C RVs are built on a regular van/truck chassis, they must meet the same safety standards as passen-



RVs are exempt from state car seat laws in some states, but every state has its own requirements when it comes to seat belts and car seats.

ger vehicles for the front so they are more likely to have the necessary features for car seat and booster installations. Choose an RV that comes already equipped with enough seat belts for the number of travelers, adults and children alike.

Remember, manufacturers are only required to comply to seat belt standards for the front passengers, not any rear occupants that may be traveling in the rig.

## Car seats and boosters

These have their own sets of rules, including being forward-facing. In many Class A RVs, seat belts are on side benches or in the living room recliners, which neither offers forward-facing as an option nor safety as the seat belts are typically bolted to the furniture frame or seat itself, not the floor, which offers sturdier support.

As for older children, including teens, if they are not in a booster seat (depends on the age and height of the child), usually the only option is a lap belt. Even with that option, children should be able to have their feet flat on the floor and the belt low on the hips (not at the midsection).

Isn't traveling in an RV supposed to be fun? Don't seat belts limit the flexibility and freedom everyone in the family so desires? The Manufacturers Alliance for Child Passenger Safety published a statement in 2016 that definitively discourages the use of motorized RVs for the transport of children. The safest option is to use a towable RV so that everyone can be buckled up.

*Story courtesy of Michigan Association of Recreation Vehicles and Campgrounds*

## ROAD SAFETY

# Take these steps to ensure safe driving at night



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

(Drivers can take certain steps to make it safer to drive at night.

Headlight glare becomes dangerous when visibility is impaired to a point where the risk of accidents is heightened. Glare is a growing problem for many modern drivers due to the increased use of light emitting diodes in headlights.

Driving at night is challenging because pedestrians, cars and other obstacles are difficult to see once the sun sets. However, a study from the U.S. Department of Transportation found that 88% of drivers noticed LED and HID headlight glare, with more than 30% saying the glare is “disturbing.” While LED lights may not actually be brighter, their “cool” spectrum make them appear so. Studies have found that blue and white light tends to hit people’s eyes harder, especially at night.

In addition, human eyes do not adjust to changes in lighting very quickly, according to Pierre Paul Driving School in New York. The older a person gets, the longer his or her eyes will take to adjust to changes in lighting. In fact, it can take up to seven seconds to recover from the blinding glare of headlights. That’s enough blindness to swerve off the road or potentially hit something.

While glare can be problematic, drivers can take certain steps to make it safer to drive at night.

- Clean the windshield. Dirt and grime found on the windshield can refract light and make glare worse. Therefore, clean all windows and mirrors thoroughly, inside and out.

- Repair scratches and cracks. Glare can be exacerbated by any imperfections in the windshield. Repair cracks or scratches promptly.

- Get a vision and health check. Changes to vision can impact how glare affects certain individuals. Vitamin A deficiency can cause night blindness, also known as nyctalopia. Eye shape changes, including a condition called keratoconus, can affect vision. Cataracts and diabetes also impair vision. Visit with a primary care physician as well as an eye doctor to diagnose conditions that can make night vision worse.

- Change your line of sight. Do not look directly into oncoming headlights. Rather, look slightly down and to the right side of the road so that you’re not focusing on the beams.

- Get glare-resistant coatings on eyeglasses. Speak with an optician about eyeglasses with anti-glare coating. This will significantly reduce the amount of glare. VisionCenters.com says standard plastic lenses reflect around 8 percent of the light that reaches glasses, while high-index lenses reflect up to 12 percent of available light. Anti-glare coating allows 99.5 percent of available light to reach the eyes, essentially eliminating glare. Those who don’t wear eyeglasses can purchase specific anti-glare glasses to wear in high-glare conditions, such as when looking at computer and phone screens.

- Flip the rearview mirror to “night” mode. This will make it appear as though lights coming from behind are dimmer.

These are some of the steps to take when glare becomes problematic while driving at night. Taking breaks also can help eyes recover.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*



Glare is a growing problem for many modern drivers due to the increased use of light emitting diodes in headlights.

## OFF-ROAD

# REV YOUR ENGINES



PHOTOS COURTESY OF OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION

Holly Oaks ORV Park offers 113 acres of challenging off-road trails with another 122 acres in the works.

## Holly Oaks ORV Park is in full swing

**By Susan Thwing**  
For MediaNews Group

Dust, mud, rocks and more — when you visit the Holly Oaks ORV Park be prepared to get dirty. The southeast Michigan off-road vehicle park — featuring 113 acres of challenging trails with another 122 acres in the works — is officially open for the season. The park includes hills, rock crawls, and more for full-

size vehicles, side-by-sides, ATVs, and motorcycles.

Jamie Weasel, supervisor of Holly Oaks, says the park team has already seen a busy start to the spring/summer with an average of 200 visitors each weekend since it opened in April. Throughout the summer, the park will be open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, then adding Thursday hours in June. During the winter off season, the

park is open one weekend a month.

“We have 108 acres of tracks open for Jeeps and four-wheel drive vehicles, including obstacles, trails and more,” Weasel said. “In July, we’ll open another 62 acres of riding trails as well.”

Located across Groveland and Holly townships near Groveland Oaks County Park and Campground on Dixie Highway,

visitors should take the Grange Hall Road exit off I-75 to get to Holly Oaks. The park is operated by Oakland County Parks and Recreation, in partnership with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Parks and Recreation Division.

Holly Oaks is built using former and active sand and gravel mines. It is a natural destination site for enthusiasts enjoying for all

types of ORVs — from full-size vehicles to all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and motorcycles. A highlight of the park is a 9,000-square-foot peak, called Mt. Magna, designed to replicate the experience of the rock formations in Moab, Utah that are popular with ORV enthusiasts. The fun, but challenging, activities also include 4x4 trails, single track trails for motorcycles, steep hills, water crossings and rock

crawls.

Visitors from across the state travel to this must see destination.

“Our guests are not just local. I’ve talked to many people who make the trek over from St. John’s and the west side of the state,” Weasel said. “Holly Oaks is a place for families, friends — we see dads and daughters come to ride for an afternoon, moms and the kids, groups of friends. It’s

a really fun place.”

Camping is also an option nearby.

Groveland Oaks County Park and Campground is located across from the park and provides large full hookup and modern campsites, group camping areas, eight cabins, four yurts and two Island pavilions for group parties. Reservations for cabins, yurts, group and select individual sites are available 11 months in advance. If you're interested in camping, call 248-858-1400 to make a reservation.

In addition to open road and track activities, the park has several special event days planned for the summer. Starting in May, the park has planned Disability Dirt Days as a series of off-roading events for individuals with disabilities. Rides are provided by volunteers. Music and family activities are also scheduled. Lunch is provided and each rider receives a free T-shirt. Other Disability Dirt Days are planned for June 12, September 25, and October 23. For additional information or to reserve your spot, text or call 248-221-8040 or email [adaptive@oakgov.com](mailto:adaptive@oakgov.com).

Weasel said the park staff is also planning a Women's Jeep Day and Youth Night activities for later in the summer.

New prices are now in effect for the park. Daily entry fees for the park are \$30 per vehicle that will be ridden. Season passes for \$250 and punch pass cards for \$120 are available, too.

“The punch pass is good for five visits — it's like purchasing four tickets and getting the fifth for free,” Weasel said.

Youth passes can also be purchased for \$15. Youth 12-15 must show their DNR ORV Safety Training Certificate to enter. Youth 16-17 must show a valid driver's license or ORV Safety Training Certificate. A Department of Natural Resources ORV license and trail permit are also required for entry. These are annual permits that can be purchased at the park. ORV licenses are \$26.25, and the permit is \$10.

According to the park website, orange flags are required on all vehicles. The flag must be “a minimum 10-foot height at stand still and 8-foot in motion and be rectangular, international orange in color, solid material, with a minimum length on the supporting side of five inches, and a minimum length on the base side of 10 inches.”

An additional 62 acres of land will be available this summer.

“The park is located behind Mt. Holly and the plan is to open up new acreage through the end of 2025,” Weasel said. “So each year when someone visits, they'll think ‘Wow, I don't remember that...’ Each year, there will be an excitement and newness to the park.”

For more information about Holly Oaks ORV Park, visit [oakgov.com/parks/park-sandtrails/holly-oaks-orv-park](http://oakgov.com/parks/park-sandtrails/holly-oaks-orv-park).



Mason Warner, 9, partnered with Billy Vicker for his first-ever ride at Holly Oaks ORV Park during Disability Dirt Day.



Orange flags are required on all vehicles at Holly Oaks, according to the park website.

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