

# Roadtrek Motorhomes Inc.

This Canadian Company Continues to Lead the North American Market for Class B Motorhome Sales – and Chairman Jeff Hanemaayer Sees a Positive Long-Term Trend. ‘We’re Just Getting Into the Baby Boom Generation.’



Roadtrek Chairman Jeff Hanemaayer joined the company's predecessor, Home & Park, in 1982, and has overseen Roadtrek's expansion into the U.S. market.

## VITAL STATISTICS

**COMPANY:** Roadtrek Motorhomes Inc.

**LOCATION:** Kitchener, Ont.

**FOUNDED:** 1974

**KEY PERSONNEL:** Jeff Hanemaayer, co-chairman; Andy Weller, co-chairman; Jim Hammill, president; Paul Cassidy, vice president of sales; John Brown, director of materials; Ted Klaver, controller; Howard Stratton, plant manager; Alex Naftasescu, engineering manager

**PRODUCTS:** Class B motorhomes

**PHYSICAL PLANT:** 120,000 square feet on 10 acres

**EMPLOYEES:** 250

**W**hen Canadian land developer Jac Hanemaayer thought about buying a motorized RV in the mid-1970s, his primary concern was that he didn't want to become what he called a "weekend bus driver."

So, large Class A motorhomes were out.

"He started to look at Class B motorhomes, but nothing on the market was designed very well," recalled son Jeff Hanemaayer, now chairman of Roadtrek Motorhomes Inc. "So, he designed one himself and brought it to a small two-man operation that was about six months old. After he got his custom-designed vehicle built, he liked it so much that he bought the company."

That company — Home & Park Vehicles Ltd. — was the predecessor company to Roadtrek, which has been the No. 1 van camper manufacturer in North America since 1990.

Of course, Home & Park motorhomes, built on Dodge van chassis, didn't catch on immediately.

"He bought the company, sort of as a hobby," Jeff Hanemaayer said. "The initial designs were more evolutionary with larger beds and expandable bathrooms."

It wasn't until the late 1970s as Jac Hanemaayer was pursuing his interest in racing catamarans that he ran into enough people who were interested in buying his motorhomes. But even then sales were limited to Canada and the company built only 40 or 50 van campers a year with a handful of employees.



Roadtrek has the capacity to build up to 40 units a week at its 120,000-square-foot facility in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. The company offers Class B coaches built on both Chevrolet and Mercedes-Benz Sprinter chassis.



Roadtrek refers to its 210-series coaches as “the ultimate widebody Class B.” The company extends the van frame 18 inches beyond the rear wheels – increasing the overall length to 21 feet, 11 inches – and the body features a gradual widening that then adds an additional nine inches at the rear wheels.

A major redesign occurred in 1980 when Jac Hanemaayer lowered the roof and dropped the floor to between the rails on the high-top Roadtrek van camper to make it more aerodynamic for better handling and higher fuel mileage. The company also designed a standup shower by closing off the hallway between the living area and bedroom.

The company changed its name to Roadtrek in 2008. “The name ‘Home & Park’ caused some confusion because we only had one brand, and everyone called us Roadtrek anyway,” Hanemaayer said.

“If you’re a really large company, you might need multiple brands. But we’re happy with just one brand, and people knew us by that name.”

Joining Home & Park in 1982 at age 18, Jeff Hanemaayer began to develop a larger market. In 1983 Home & Park expanded into the U.S. market and switched its retail focus from automotive stores to RV dealerships.

In late February, Roadtrek announced a “multimillion-dollar” investment by Industrial Partners LLC (IOP),

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## PRODUCT PROFILE

**ROADTREK MOTORHOMES INC.** builds five basic Class B models – three on 8,600- and 9,600-pound GVWR **CHEVY EXPRESS VAN CHASSIS** and two on imported 8,550- and 11,030-pound GVWR diesel **SPRINTER CHASSIS**, in lengths ranging from 18 feet 9 inches to 23 feet.

Multiple floorplans are available in each line, with Chevy units getting 16-18 mpg and the diesel-powered Sprinter models achieving between 21-23 mpg.

For the 2010 model year, Roadtrek introduced the first **SPRINTER-BASED CLASS B** with a slideout extending three feet from the rear of the coach in the **20-FOOT ROADTREK SS-IDEAL**.

MSRPs for Chevy-based **ROADTREKS** start at **\$79,000**; Sprinter-based units start at **\$99,300**.

## OEM Showcase *from page 39*

a Chicago-based private equity firm, to “provide both financial resources and management assistance” to the company, with IOP Operating Partner Andy Weller being named Roadtrek co-chairman.

Like other RV manufacturers today, Roadtrek has begun incorporating more composites in its units. “That’s an area where the North American RV industry is behind the Europeans,” Hanemaayer said. “We are actively investigating the use of more plastics to reduce the weights of our products so that we can increase the fuel mileage.”

In 2010, Roadtrek led the North American market with 44.7% of retail sales, according to Statistical Surveys Inc.

Although the total Class B market is relatively small, Hanemaayer sees a strong future for van campers.

“The long-term trend is definitely positive,” he said.

With the average Class B buyer in his mid-60s, “The age of our buyers is starting to drop,” Hanemaayer asserted.

“We are just getting into the Baby Boom generation,” he said. “There will be a demand for Class B’s that (Class A and C) builders have felt for the last 10 years because they get younger buyers.

“The other favorable demographic trend is buyers who have two or fewer kids,” he added. “They don’t need an RV that sleeps six, and they are taking shorter trips so they don’t want a Class C or Class A sitting in their driveway taking up space.”

Roadtrek is well-positioned to maximize any favorable shift in demographics. The company’s Kitchener facility is capable of building about 40 Class B motorhomes a week.

Curiously, it’s only a coincidence that the vast majority — about 90% — of Class B’s are built in Canada.

“American (RV) manufacturers dominate the market in the U.S. and Canada — except for this tiny segment,” Hanemaayer said. “We could be in Michigan, but we just happen to be in Canada. Class B’s are a small segment of the total RV market, but it’s not an easy segment for larger manufacturers to do well in. Just because we’re small doesn’t mean we don’t have different model demands from our customers. There are not a lot of good-sized manufacturers in the U.S. who can do that effectively.”

Will Roadtrek ever consider building Class C or Class A motorhomes?

“We always have thoughts, but don’t want to talk about future development plans,” Hanemaayer said. Δ



Roadtrek motorhomes feature a fiberglass body covering a steel cage-reinforced frame. The company also has begun incorporating more composites in its units. “We are actively investigating the use of more plastics to reduce the weights of our products so that we can increase the fuel mileage,” said Hanemaayer.

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