

Winnebago WIPs parts into shape

By Mary Anne Shreve

Margy Fisher, parts service manager at Fretz RV, Souderton, PA, is excited about Winnebago's recently launched online interactive parts catalog, dubbed WIP. The technology allows her to call up a three-dimensional picture of a specific RV model, rotate or flip it to any angle, highlight a desired part and view it in 3-D, then order it – all on one screen. The ability to research the part and order without having to navigate through different programs and screens will halve the time spent on the ordering process, she says.

"It used to be we'd have to go to one place to find a part number, then open a whole other program to order it. Now, it's all right there – that's what you want? Click. Done. Gone," says Fisher.

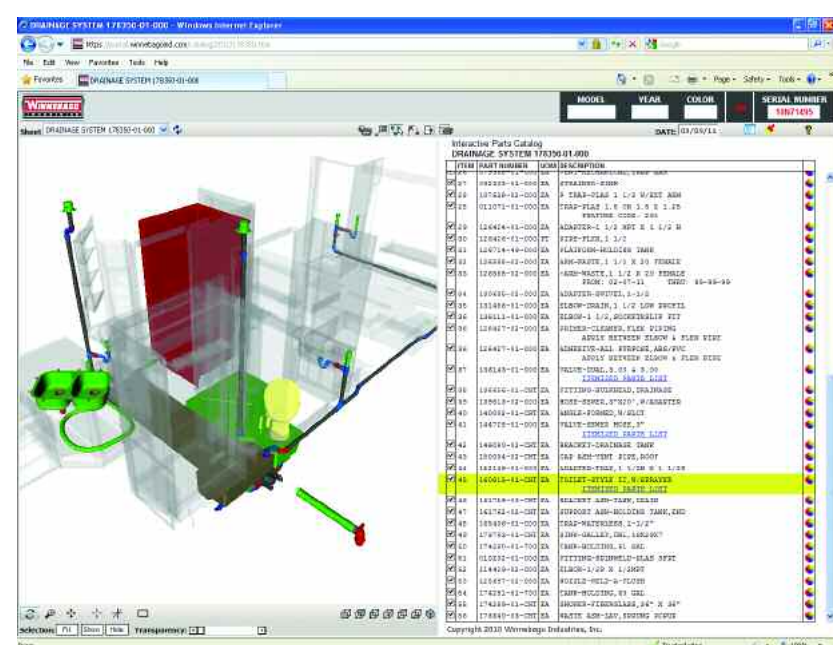
It's also much easier to identify parts when they're in 3-D, she says, and that feature – an industry first – "will make a tremendous difference in making sure we order and receive the right part."

The Winnebago Interactive Parts catalog intro'd last fall and is being rolled out now to dealerships. With a database that includes 80 million parts, it's "one of the most complex projects Winnebago has ever taken on," says Steve Evenson, director of parts and service. Models for 2011 onwards are in 3-D; older models dating back to 1975 are in the database in the older diagram format.

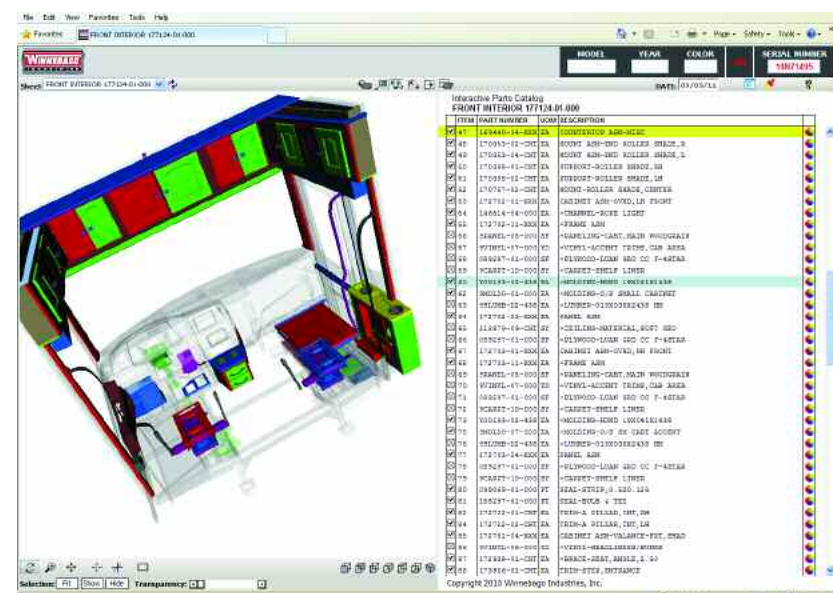
"You can pull up a 2011 model's front end, look at all the parts in 3-D, then you can make the front disappear to see what parts are behind it, peeling it down layer by layer," says Evenson. "You can put in a description of the part you're looking for or search by model, serial number, or part number." The system then shows price and availability. Other features allow dealers to check their order status and get tracking information and freight charges on one screen.

Ensuring dealers get the right part the first time is "a critical element of our long-term strategy to improve customer satisfaction," says Evenson.

Winnebago's system of numbering every part, combined with the catalog's new 3-D technology, "gives you a fighting chance of getting the part order right," says Melanie Leber, parts administrator for Winnebago. Having an accurate picture ensures everyone is on the same page,



Managers can specify an RV by model, year, and color, then view the desired part in 3-D and order it from the same page.



Units can be viewed in layers to show where a part is located in relation to other components.

since "what the customer calls a whatchamacallit, the service manager may call a thingamajig, and I may call a doodad."

Winnebago is also pressing its vendors to upgrade their products' images to 3-D technology, says Leber. ■

Reprinted with permission from RV Executive Today.

The Problem with Parts?



The March issue of "RV Executive Today" features an article entitled "The Problem with Parts" which takes a serious look at the state of parts availability and support in the RV industry. The article is based on surveys and feedback from dealers and highlights some alarming, if not disturbing, issues and trends that clearly indicate how most manufacturers leave their dealers and retail customers high and dry when it comes to service and parts.

Winnebago Industries has always and continues to place a priority on providing industry leading parts and service support. In the article, parts managers listed five problems they encounter. See inside for how Winnebago Industries stacks up.

The Problem with Parts is that No One Else has Winnebago Industries' Solution



1 Some manufacturers/suppliers don't have a parts return policy.

Winnebago Industries has offered parts return for as long as we've been in business. In fact, we offer you two choices when it comes to returning parts:

1. Return the part immediately to have the account credited.
2. Return it on our annual Inventory Exchange Program, and be credited at 100%.

Why have unneeded parts in your inventory? Our highly knowledgeable parts sales team will help you order the right part, and help you return a part.

2 Some manufacturers/suppliers don't have online parts catalogs.



Unlike other RV manufacturers, we offer a free, on-line parts catalog via our Web site at www.winnebagoind.com. (Did we mention free?) In addition to a parts catalog, you can also access paint codes, wiring diagrams, plumbing diagrams, product brochures and operator's manuals online. You don't need a special password or clearance either to access this information. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to the public. Other manufacturers offer limited to no online support, provide

"send us a picture" parts support, or even charge for wiring diagrams – if they are available at all!

3 There's no uniform parts numbering system.

Winnebago Industries automotive-style parts numbering system is clear, consistent and has been in place for decades.

4 Replacement parts are frequently unavailable, especially when OEM's close or change hands.

Winnebago Industries has been in business since 1958. While some manufacturers have fallen by the wayside or been purchased by another company, Winnebago Industries remains the most recognized name in motor homes and we aren't going anywhere.



At our headquarters in Forest City, Iowa, our main warehouse is the largest building in our complex at 400,000 square feet. It is in this building that we process between \$3.5 to \$4 million in parts (most of which we manufacture) every week. So, whether we manufacture the part at the time of the order (like if you need a holding tank for a '80 Brave – we can do it!), or if it is a part from a supplier, we can fill that order and help you get your customer back on the road.

5 It takes too long to receive ordered parts.

The first program of its kind, our TripSaver® Fast Track Warranty Program guarantees 24-hour delivery for in-stock emergency warranty parts. Parts are shipped directly to dealers overnight so in the unlikely event of trouble, owners can get back on the road as quickly as possible.



Additionally, our first time fill rate on parts is an incredible industry leading 99.3%. That means when a parts order is placed, 99.3% of the normally stocked parts are processed and sent on the first pick cycle.

Parts are not the only thing we lead in. Winnebago Industries is committed to our dealers and owners satisfaction. Our service and warranty support is the top in the industry. Here are some highlights:

- 40 percent parts markup – who else in the industry offers that? No one.
- Every new Winnebago Industries coach comes with a complimentary one-year membership in our 24/7 Roadside Assistance Program. Coverage includes free tire changing, lockout assistance, emergency fuel delivery, trip routing and more.
- Every coach we produce is backed by our rock-solid reputation and our extensive warranty coverage.
- 12-month/15,000-mile basic limited warranty
- 36-month/36,000-mile limited warranty on structure
- 10-year limited parts-and-labor roof skin warranty
- Operator's Manual customized to each specific motor home – our manuals provide information and operating instructions for all the components and accessories in that specific motor home – everything from the refrigerator to the water pump. We are the only manufacturer in the RV industry that organizes and prints this information specifically for each coach.
- A dedicated Owner Relations department that retail customers can access for factory support, as well as technical advisors for helping your service staff diagnosis and fix a problem.



The fact is, there is a real difference in how manufacturers support their dealers and owners. Keep this in mind next time you are serving a motor home, or recommending one to a customer!