

## Your Community

Typically, RVers make a significant contribution to communities that welcome them. They can have a huge positive economic impact. They can also be one of the best civic resources a community can encounter. RVers are often the ones you see building Habitat for Humanity homes, assisting with disaster relief programs, and even cleaning the highways.



*"I have personally watched this RV community grow for the past 20 years. I have witnessed their civic generosity, I have stood beside them in church, and I have observed them serving as jurors in my courthouse. I believe service organizations, businesses, and the county as a whole have been enriched as a result of their involvement."*

*-Polk County Judge John Thompson*

## A Thoughtful Creed

We ask all Escapees members (and encourage all RVers) to abide by these rules, and we provide a letter to them so that they can pass the dry-camping creed on to others who appear to be abusing this privilege.

**T**ake care to follow the rules.

**H**elp clean the area.

**O**pening slide-outs is NOT OK.

**U**nder no circumstances run your generator.

**G**uests are what you are; please act like one.

**H**appy to be welcome, shop Wal-Mart.

**T**ell other RVers the rules for parking.

**F**or longer stays, go to a campground.

**U**nderstand you are just resting or shopping.

**L**abor at being a good neighbor.

We feel that enforcement of this code will do much to reduce the tensions between retailers who encourage RVers and the campground owners who may feel slighted.



**Overnight**  
**Parking in**  
**Your**  
**COMMUNITY...**

# An Alternative View on Overnight Parking...

The Escapees RV Club is a strong advocate of the proper and sensible use of parking facilities. We own more than a dozen RV parks across the country, so we understand the perspective of RV park owners, but also see the importance of an alternative resource. We are specifically concerned about the restricting of overnight stops in commercial business parking lots such as Wal-Mart. This resource is a privilege that we strive to defend for the RV traveler. Please take a few minutes to find out why.



## Safety on the roads

While RV parks and campgrounds are typically the best accommodations for RVers, sometimes commercial parks are full, or perhaps the RVer simply cannot find a local park, especially if it is late in the evening. Other issues come into play as well. For instance, how tired is the RV driver? We continue to believe that, were it not for Wal-Mart and other similar locations that offer a resting place to RVers, you would see an increased accident rate. Far too often, RVers will drive too long, too late, or continue searching for an RV park way past their safety and comfort zone. Knowing that they are welcome to pull into a Wal-Mart parking lot and get a few hours rest anytime of the day or night is an enormous safety net for the traveler.

*"We have had an RV for twenty years and have used Wal-Mart parking lots all over the country. When you are working and only have a few days to visit areas, you travel into the wee hours of the morning."*

*-Jerry & Rita Schroeder*

## What's the Difference?

There is a major difference between camping and overnight parking. Commercial campgrounds offer electricity, disposal, water, restrooms, and many other amenities. This is a far cry from a Wal-Mart parking lot. There will always be a need for campgrounds, and they certainly have their place in the RV world. On the other hand, there are times when RVers are simply passing through an area.

Perception is the biggest factor in this whole issue. Some campground owners seem to think Wal-Mart, or any other private entity that allows an RVer to park overnight, is stealing their business. They often accuse RVers of being cheapskates if they opt to stay in a parking lot. We don't believe people buy an RV (which costs thousands to hundreds of thousands of dollars) and set out to explore the country via parking lots.

## Does This Pose a Health Hazard?

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, which investigated a series of complaints in 1999 through 2000, "Despite the apparent widespread occurrence of this practice, the Department has not received any health-related complaints pertaining to locations where recreational vehicles are allowed to park overnight at places other than campgrounds. This includes highway rest stops, truck stops, and shopping center parking lots."

Overnight stays in private parking lots are used when circumstance makes them the most sensible solution.

Ideally, there should be all kinds of RV parking options—commercial, public, and private. Not every option should come with a price tag or license attached to it.



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## RV dwellers did more than police for one area

**I** work for one of the companies located near the waterfront, and I've watched the debate over RV parking with growing disgust. We used to file complaints with the police, but we gave up when nothing was done.

We filed complaints about repeated incidents of tagging—spray paint on our building and dumpsters. We filed complaints

about people urinating and defecating in our stairwells. We filed complaints about people dragging mattresses, blankets and other refuse into our stairwells. We filed complaints when my co-workers no longer felt safe leaving at night because there was a stabbing less than a block away

### voice from santa barbara

**Scott Carpenter**

from our office building.

The police were never there, until a group of three RVs found our area.

The RV residents have kept people from defacing our building. They've kept away the group of drunks who smashed their empty bottles all over the parking lot. They've kept our stairwells clear and our area safe. They pull in after business hours and socialize, letting others know that they've staked the area as theirs and the troublemakers aren't welcome.

So now, at last, the Santa Barbara Police Department has found our area. Why? To issue tickets and drive away the people who have

helped us all these months. And once they're gone I'm sure the police will go with them, leaving us once more with urine and feces in our stairwells, not feeling safe enough to work after dark, and with increased costs to repair the damage to our building and our cars when we get tagged and broken bottles puncture our tires.

I think I liked it better before the police found us.

*Scott Carpenter lives in Santa Barbara.*

For more information, please contact us at **888-757-2582** or visit [www.escapees.com/website/parking](http://www.escapees.com/website/parking)