



Xantrex products undergo rigorous testing before being introduced to the market. The company uses a highly accelerated life testing (H.A.L.T.) chamber to make sure that its products can withstand the rigors of harsh environments.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF XANTREX

# Xantrex Powers the RV Industry

**The Canadian-based supplier continues to bring smaller, more powerful inverters to the motorhome and towables market.**

By *GARRISON WELLS*

Xantrex Technology is a global power broker. Literally.

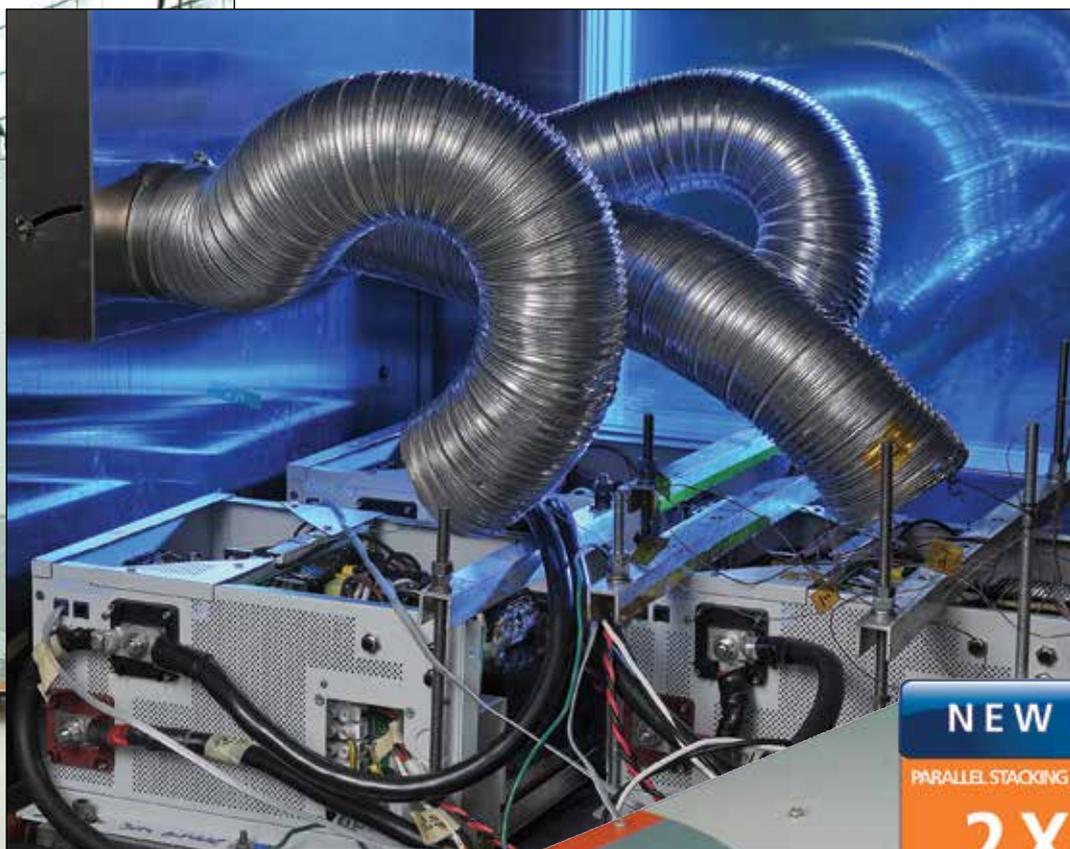
With North American offices in Elkhart, Ind., and Vancouver, Canada, the subsidiary of France's \$27 billion behemoth Schneider Electric has sales offices worldwide for its mobile power products.

Think mobile power inverters and chargers for the RV industry.

While Xantrex has been around since 1983, when it opened in Vancouver, Schneider's acquisition of the company in 2008 for \$479 million was a virtual game changer.

It wasn't just a capital boost. The deal opened up a vast, worldwide market for Xantrex.

"We changed tremendously with that acquisition," says Mitul Chandrani, Xantrex marketing manager. "Schneider operates in more than 100 countries and



The Xantrex Freedom SW inverter/ charger offers 120 volts of power and can be stacked on top of another Freedom SW inverter to double the power output.

NEW FEATURES	
PARALLEL STACKING FOR	SERIES STACKING FOR
<b>2X</b>	<b>120/240</b>
OUTPUT POWER	Vac APPLICATIONS



has sales offices worldwide. Being part of Schneider gives us the ability to sell through those local offices.”

Schneider also has stringent quality procedures, he adds, which has translated into stronger, even more reliable products to add to Xantrex’s already trustworthy line. All of the company’s new generation products are tested in H.A.L.T. (highly accelerated life testing) chamber under extreme thermal and mechanical conditions to identify and correct any subtle design issues early in the product development stage. This ensures the product platform is robust enough to withstand the rigors of harsh mobile applications, according to Chandrani.

“Our products are used in a wide variety of conditions – rough terrain and seas to extreme climate conditions, so it is important to simulate these environments in controlled conditions, evaluate product performance and make necessary design

changes for improved reliability and performance,” he says.

Xantrex’s products are UL approved, he adds, which helps sales.

“If you got to a retail store, you will come across a lot of products that are not UL approved,” Chandrani says. “It’s very important when a product is used in a mobile application like an RV that it is UL approved.”

Schneider’s worldwide name recognition doesn’t hurt.

“There’s also the goodwill,” Chandrani says. “Many Schneider brands such

as APC, Square D are well-known globally. There is goodwill associated with the Schneider name.”

Meanwhile, Xantrex kept its name in the mobile power market (RV, marine and trucking applications), taking advantage of its existing reputation and name recognition. About 75 percent of Xantrex’s sales are in North America, with U.S. its primary market, but it also sells to Europe, South

# Xantrex Powers the RV Industry



Xantrex assembles its power products at its facility in Vancouver, Canada. The company is part of Schneider Electric, a \$27 billion French company with offices worldwide.



America and Australia. The RV market in those areas are strong, particularly Australia.

“Australia will experience the most growth in RV market, primarily that’s the reason we sell there. RVs are popular in those markets,” Chandrani says.

The bottom line for Xantrex, of course, is the bottom line. That has also gotten a boost, Chandrani says. While the company suffered along with the rest of the RV industry in the downturn years of 2008-2009, it projects a 22 percent increase for 2012.

“Our RV market for the first six months has gone up dramatically,” Chandrani says.

## Xantrex’s New Generation of Inverters

With the acquisition, Xantrex got what amounted to a fresh start – combining an aggressive marketing program with new products and a broader market. The marketing message, designed to answer the question: “Who are these guys?” was a key piece of the strategy.

“In the last three years,” Chandrani says, “we have been trying to position ourselves as a trusted supplier in power solutions.”

New products combine high tech,

lighter weight, a slew of new features and lower price points.

They include the Freedom HF New Generation and the Freedom SW New Generation inverter chargers. The Freedom SW was launched in November 2011 at the National RV Trade Show in Louisville. The Freedom HF was launched in January.

The 12-volt Freedom SW comes in two models: a 2,000-watt model with the 100-amp charger and the 3,000-watt model with a 150-amp charger.

The Freedom SW “has quickly become Xantrex’s leading seller and has been well-received,” Chandrani says. “It’s a pure sine wave product. It has a good price and good features.”

Among features of the Freedom SW are series and parallel stacking. If users need additional 120-volt power they can parallel stack another Freedom SW to get twice the inverter power and battery charging capacity. For example two Freedom SW 3000’s operated in a stacked configuration can provide up to 6,000 watts of continuous inverter power or 300 amps of bulk battery charging when operated from shore power or a generator.

Series stacking enables the pair of

Freedom SW to generate 120/240-volt split phase output.

This gives the Freedom SW ability to operate a 240-watt application such as a dryer. It also works well in tandem with a 120/240-volt split-phase generator, Chandrani says.

“If the generator is the primary source of power, and the start-surge power required by the loads exceeds the generator’s capacity, the Freedom SW contributes to the power so that the loads can start and continue to operate,” he says. “It works in synergy with the generator.”

Other notable features of the Freedom SW include:

- A built-in transfer switch that automatically transfers between inverter power and incoming AC power;
- A power-factor corrected, multi-stage charger for fast, efficient charging;
- Temperature-compensated charging for a variety of climate conditions;
- An ignition lockout feature that helps to prevent unnecessary battery drain when the alternator is not providing power;



Xantrex continually monitors its products to ensure they meet quality control standards.

- A wide operating temperature range, from -4°F to 140°F (-20°C to 60°C);
- Conformal-coated circuit boards for humid environments;
- Dual input/dual output AC interface for the 3,000-watt model, and;
- An ability to charge batteries that have been drained to extremely low voltage.

Building on the success of the 12-volt models, Xantrex will be introducing the Freedom SW series in 24-volt models at the upcoming National RV Trade Show. The 24-volt models will be available in two models – 2,000 watts with a 50-amp charger and 3,000 watts with a 75-amp charger. These models will sport the same features as its 12-volt counterparts.

At least part of the drive behind sales of the Freedom SW is the reputation of its predecessor, the Freedom 458. The 458 “is the best-selling product of all time in RV,” Chandrani says.

It’s a modified sine wave product, he explains, adding, “It still sells. Customers still want it.”

“I think it’s a solid platform,” Chandrani says. “People love it. It’s a reliable product. Our time is so precious and on an average people get about two to three weeks of vacation a year. If you have an RV, you want the most reliable onboard system available. SW is benefitting from the name Freedom.”

Like the Freedom SW, the Freedom HF also comes in three models. It is smaller and lighter weight. Featuring modified sine wave output, models come in 12 volt, 1,000 watts with 20-amp charger; 1,000 watts with 55-amp charger and 1,800 watts with 40-amp charger. This is one of the least expensive, smallest and lightest units on the market today, according to Chandrani.

“For someone who wants a very cost-effective product; somebody who owns a trailer or fifth wheel that doesn’t require a lot of power, then the Freedom HF would be a good solution,” Chandrani says.

The Freedom HF technology also comes in power inverter mode only. The XM1000 and XM1800 watt inverters with 1,000 watt and 1,800 watt continuous power rating are based on the same platform as the Freedom HF. They don’t have a built-in charger like the Freedom HF.

Behind the sales leading Freedom SW and HF is the PROwatt SW. The PROwatt is a veteran, launched in 2009, and Chandrani calls it the most affordable branded pure sine wave product on the market. It comes in three models: 600 watt, 1,000 watt and 2,000 watt.

The PROwatt “was like a game changer for us,” Chandrani says.

Xantrex’s power products, however, aren’t just for RVs alone. Its power inverters and chargers are also geared for commercial and industrial uses as well as the marine industry.

Each market, Chandrani says, makes up about a third of Xantrex’s total sales. In the last few years, he adds, most of Xantrex’s products can be used across market lines.

“If you own a boat, you can rely on the same product for the boat as for the RV,” he says.

Other uses abound, though, some not entirely expected.

For instance, there is a band that uses Xantrex products to power musical instruments at concerts. Also, Xantrex supports ILCHASE, a company that supplies data on weather storms to government agencies, universities and major television networks in ongoing weather research projects.

The company also is key to a number of outreach programs, including Floating Doctors and the Planetary Coral Reef Foundation, both using Freedom SW products for power. Floating Doctors is a non-profit medical relief team that travels the most remote parts of the world to deliver medical care. It’s the world’s first global mobile medical team.

Planetary Coral Reef Foundation has championed a global effort to preserve and protect coral reefs, which are vital for their importance to the ecosystem. PCRFF is conducting scientific underwater research work aboard 113-foot vessel Mir using electronic instruments.

And it’s all powered by Xantrex.

### Calling the Doctor

Among the company’s most popular features these days, however, are its web efforts. There is a user-friendly, easy-to-navigate

*continued on page 77*

# Xantrex Products Found in Major OEMs

Xantrex's OEM partners include such major players as Jayco, Forest River, Thor and Winnebago.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the things manufacturers value the products for are the same products consumers clamor for: multipurpose, reliable and flexible use inverters and chargers, according to Mitul Chandrani, Xantrex marketing manager. He says products from Xantrex found in major RV manufacturers' units include the 1,000-watt to 2,000-watt power inverters. That includes the XM1000, XM1800, PROwatt SW 1000, PROwatt SW 2000.

"High-frequency, low-cost inverters are very popular with RV OEMs," Chandrani says.

For example, the XM1000 and XM1800 have modified sine wave outputs with a built-in transfer switch that senses when outside AC power is available and transfers loads from the inverter to the source of incoming power.

They are flexible, too. Both models have GFCI outlets. Users can plug electronics and appliances directly into the unit. They can also be hardwired so AC power is available through other receptacles in the coach.

The PROwatt SW 1000 and 2000 feature pure sine wave output and are available with an optional transfer switch. Consumer-friendly, they have GFCI outlets and a USB port to charge cell phones and other handheld electronic gadgets. They also can be

used for household electronics and appliances such as coffee blenders, small refrigerators and small microwaves.

New OEM products from Xantrex include the Freedom SW system, which includes the SW 2000W or 3000W inverter/charger, Automatic Generator Start, System Control Panel and Freedom Sequence Intelligent Power Manager. Freedom products are among Xantrex's most popular offerings, Chandrani says.

"We are the only manufacturer right now that offers a completely integrated power system where all onboard components can communicate with each other and be managed through a single control panel. All these components are manufactured by Xantrex," he says.

"The Freedom SW System allows for system expansion – for example, if you decide to add an additional Freedom SW unit, it can still be managed through the single control panel," he explains. "The key from an OEM's point-of-view is that our system offers single-click programming, as there is only control panel to deal with. If a motorhome owner changes settings and wants to revert to manufacturer (RV OEM) settings, he can do so easily, which I don't think is the case with other manufacturers."

Xantrex's Freedom Sequence Intelligent Power Manager is the brain of the system that provides automatic power and load



Chandrani

management for RVs when powered by shore power or generator. By automatically shedding and re-engaging loads, the unit helps avoid circuit breaker tripping.

"This is extremely useful in motorhomes that have many electronics and appliances," Chandrani says.

He says future OEM demand likely will be smaller inverter solutions typically under 2000 watts that don't strain a vehicle's battery and can operate essential electronics and appliances.

PRO



Xantrex Freedom Sequence Intelligent Power Manager offers an integrated power system where all onboard components can communicate with each other and be managed through a single control panel.

# Xantrex Powers the RV Industry

continued from page 75

igate Website, Tech Doctor, YouTube and Twitter offerings galore, Chandrani says. The Xantrex website has a dedicated section for RVers which covers product categories, comparisons and technical information applicable for the RV market.

“The best working is Tech Doctor,” he adds.

Written by Don Wilson, a sales application specialist, it’s a consumer-friendly, non-PR’ish feature on Xantrex’s website that answers consumer questions about power products.

“One of the things that is so unique is that you read Tech Doctor and you don’t get a blatant sales pitch. You know it’s Xantrex, but in the article you never get a mention of our products. It’s purely educational and that’s the comment I get from people,” says Chandrani, who came up with the idea.

Readers have even suggested articles,

including one on how the size of inverters affects performance and inverters versus generators.

“I went to Google and couldn’t find any articles about the size of inverters, so we did that,” Chandrani says.

The print versions were so well-received Chandrani produced them as YouTube videos. Xantrex Tech Doctor YouTube videos are in three languages: English, Spanish and French.

The two Xantrex YouTube channels have received more than 80,000 hits this year with Tech Doctor Videos receiving the most views. Chandrani says this shows that the end-users and installers very much appreciate educational content in a video format.

Tech Doctor still allows Xantrex to get its message out, though. It’s just subtle.

For instance, the company has a piece on the importance of the UL rating, which

could translate into sales because Xantrex products have earned that rating.

“People look at all those symbols (when they shop),” Chandrani says. “Most people don’t understand what it means. That’s a very important article for us.”

The future for inverters calls for smaller, lighter, more powerful units.

“It’s like cell phones,” Chandrani says. “Now you see the inverters coming in a much smaller package. Products are smaller and more compact.”

And as the price between pure sine wave and modified sine wave inverters narrows, consumers shift more toward pure sine because they power more appliances.

“There will be a proliferation of sine wave products,” Chandrani predicts. “People would rather buy a pure sine wave product so they do not have to worry about appliances. We will invest more in sine wave technology in the future.”

PRO

<b>ROBUST QUALITY</b> standards for enhanced performance & durability	<b>IN-HOUSE DESIGN</b> and engineering platform for world class manufacturing	<b>COST ADVANTAGE</b> over similar offerings from most competing brands	<b>CERTIFICATION</b> to UL458 regulatory standards
<b>KNOWLEDGE BANK</b> for industry education & dealer training			<b>WIDE RANGE</b> of products for both OEM & aftermarket applications
			
			
<b>INVERTERS</b>	<b>INVERTER/CHARGERS</b>	<b>ENERGY MGMT. SYSTEMS</b>	<b>ACCESSORIES</b>

For sales inquiries, contact Kevin Chawrun at 604-422-2610 or [kevin.chawrun@xantrex.com](mailto:kevin.chawrun@xantrex.com).

[WWW.XANTREX.COM](http://WWW.XANTREX.COM)

© 2012 Schneider Electric. All Rights Reserved. All trademarks owned by Schneider Electric Industries SAS or its affiliated companies.

