RVIA’s leadership team is taking steps to rejuvenate the National RV Trade Show.

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Want to know what kind of products suppliers will have on display in “the bowl” or the area between the RV manufacturer display areas at the Kentucky Exposition Center during the 54th Annual National RV Trade Show in Louisville, Ky.? Then you’ve come to the right place and should keep reading.

For more information on any of the products in this section, simply type the website address that appears below a respective product listing into your website browser. Viewers of the digital edition of RV PRO can simply click their mouse on any listing to be taken directly to the respective company’s website.

**INVERTER CHARGER**

**Schneider Electric / Xantrex,** Burnaby, British Columbia, offers the Freedom HFS Inverter Charger with a built-in 55-amp battery charger. The Freedom HFS marks the evolution of the bestselling Freedom HF and XM, which have been installed in more than 300,000 RVs, boats and trucks. The Freedom HFS is a solution to replace broken converters. By offering clients the option to upgrade to the Freedom HFS, retailers will achieve an increase in parts/service revenue.

[www.xantrex.com](http://www.xantrex.com)

**TRAVEL TRAILER LEVELING SYSTEM**

**Lippert Components,** Elkhart, Ind., introduces the Ground Control TT, the first one-touch automatic leveling system designed specifically for travel trailers. No more cranking, no more bubble levels, no more headaches. Just hit the auto level button and walk away. Four leveling jacks and the new Smart Jack tongue jack work in harmony to level the coach in minutes. Several RV brands will be debuting this system at the 2016 RVIA show.

[www.lippertcomponents.com](http://www.lippertcomponents.com)
Inverter Service Center of White House, Tenn., is a repair and service shop that’s laser-like focused on one thing.

Given the company’s name, it’s probably not hard to guess what that is.

For more than 16 years, the facility has built a reputation for its top-notch troubleshooting, repair, replacement and maintenance of inverters and inverters with chargers.

Leading the team of three highly skilled inverter gurus at Inverter Service Center (ISC) is manager PJ Gonzalez. He has two employees: Randy Seabolt and Jordan Hall.

Seabolt, who has been with the business for seven years, has almost 30 years in the marine industry and runs ISC’s service department. He has done almost every job in the boat-building process including electrical, engines, framing, generators, and underwater hardware.

Hall has been with ISC for three years and works with phone tech support, online tech support, repairs in the service department, website development, social media, and marketing. He’s also been instrumental in bringing on RV-related lines like TRC, Dometic and Thetford.

Randy Seabolt, who runs Inverter Service Center’s service department, pulls wires inside the service shop’s latest project, a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter van that is being custom finished with electrical, wood interior and all the bells and whistles.
What Gonzalez and his team enjoy about the inverter business is that it’s always changing – crossing different industries including marine, RV, specialty truck, backup power, and renewable energy.

“You never know what the next person on the other end of the phone is wanting to power with an inverter,” he says. “Could be a dog grooming van, construction lighting trailer, or a fluid transfer pump for a refueling truck, or anything else that may seem out of the ordinary.”

Primarily, Gonzalez and his team work with inverters with chargers, which are mostly found on the higher-end motorhomes that they service, including diesel pushers retailing for upward of $2.5 million. However, they also are found on some Class C motorhomes and some towables, such as toy haulers. Inverters without a built-in charger are becoming more popular, Gonzalez says, on the less expensive RVs.

And generally, when it comes to solving problems with inverters, the ISC team doesn’t have much of a problem locating the issue and solving it.

The challenging problems, Gonzalez says, usually come from the wiring in the RV and helping owners and technicians resolve the issue. While he and his team generally only handle issues related to inverters, they often find they must help with the battery or other areas that may be causing a short in the inverter.

“We had one in particular that would intermittently damage the inverter itself due to high voltage from the generator or shore cord,” he recalls. “The troubling part was we couldn’t get the high-voltage problem to occur while testing. We knew it was high voltage from the failure with the inverter, and suspected a loose AC neutral connection somewhere in the coach.”

Gonzalez says he and his staff had to trace the issue from the transfer switch, then the output of the transfer switch to a bus bar above the bed in the rear of the coach.
“Sure enough, the main AC neutral connecting to that buss bar was loose. We could wiggle that wire under load and see the high voltage on the one leg of power,” he says. “We tightened up that connection and the problem was solved. But not before we fixed the inverter twice. The total job, with repairing the inverter twice, took about a day and a half.”

Gonzalez says ISC didn’t charge the customer for the second repair and stuck to the original labor estimate, which was only for a couple of hours. But what was more important to the team was that the customer was happy and his problem was resolved.

**A Light Bulb Went Off**

The ISC is Gonzalez’s brainchild. In mid-2000, Gonzalez came up with the idea while working for Marysville Marine Distributors, which served as a distributor of inverters for Trace Engineering. At the time, Gonzalez says, lease bus customers were using a certain type of inverter made by Trace that his company would ship back to Trace for repairs.

Many of the inverters would come back from Trace as not needing to be repaired. To help cut down on unnecessary shipping and decrease costs, Gonzalez decided to set up a test bench. If nothing was wrong with the inverter, he would educate the customers on how to correct the issue.

“Testing turned into simple repairs I could perform on my own,” recalls Gonzalez. “Trace Engineering noticed I wasn’t sending as many units back; and I said I was testing them and sending back to the customer if nothing was wrong.”

“So they said, ‘What do you think about becoming an authorized service center and us sending you customers needing repairs?’ And I said, ‘OK.’

Gonzalez says the company flew him out to the company’s facilities for training in areas such as testing, diagnostics and repairs. When he returned, he began stocking up on parts and moving into doing full-service repairs for inverters.

Gonzalez could not have foreseen that one simple act on his part
would turn into a multimillion dollar idea and a lucrative career. “I never imagined the need was so large for inverter repairs,” he says.

**Perfectly Timed Growth**

Around the time that this service center was taking off, parent company Marysville Marine Distributors also was experiencing growth. The company built and moved into a new 10,000-square-
foot building at its current location in 2001 – vacating leased space in Goodlettsville, Tenn. Initially, about 500 square feet in that building was set aside for the repair lab and service parts for the ISC.

“Within a year we outgrew that space and moved back to Goodlettsville, Tenn., in 2002,” Gonzalez says. “We stayed in Goodlettsville until our new building was built in 2005.” The second 10,000-square-foot building was constructed solely for the ISC.

Without going into specifics, Gonzalez says future plans are to continue to increase revenue at the ISC.

“We have expansion plans, plus we want to expand on the number of product lines that we offer and we want to capture a little more market share in the renewable and backup power industry, which we do a lot with already. But we want to continue to grow that part of it,” he says. “And just like anybody else, we want to continue to grow the number of RV dealerships that we deal with and expand on the service side of things – so just a lot of things that we want to do to get additional growth.”

These goals seem to align with the overall industry, which is experiencing good growth, according to Mitul Chandrani, senior marketing manager for the Xantrex brand at Schneider Electric. His company offers inverters that cross multiple industries including RV, marine, heavy duty and work trucks. Last year was a record year for RV and Class 8 heavy-duty truck manufacturing, he notes.

What’s more, Chandrani says the growing awareness among RVers about the benefits of inverters with chargers over converters also is helping inverter sales in the aftermarket. And he says RV manufacturers are slowly shifting to inverters with chargers for entry-level RVs.

Randy Hall, branch manager of the Tennessee location for Marysville Marine Distributors, says he thinks Gonzalez and his team have done a phenomenal job of growing this part of this business into what it is today.

“They have done this by continually keeping up with the technology as it so rapidly changes. They continually meet or exceed our customers’ expectations by striving to deliver the best customer service in the industry,” says Hall. “This is truly where their success lies and what sets us apart from our competition.”

Customers Love ISC

While Inverter Service Center serves a niche market, it has grown into a successful business, now accounting for about 8 percent of the parent company Marysville Marine’s total sales.

The service business has developed a loyal client base that appreciates ISC’s quick turnaround times and knowledgeable staff.

Paul Whitehead, owner of Portland, Tenn.-based Mister RV Service, has been going to the Inverter Service Center for 10 years and says the business is fast and gets the job done. His company does mobile RV and boat repair.

“With other subcontractors, I’d probably have to wait four to
six weeks; with them I can usually get it in a couple of days or that
day,” Whitehead says. “When I drop things off to get repaired they’re
always fast. It’s always a pleasure to do business with them.”

Whitehead says he also appreciates being able to call the ISC
team for immediate troubleshooting over the phone.

“At a lot of places you have to wait an hour or they may say
they’ll call me back four or five hours later,” he says, adding that
it’s the complete opposite at ISC. “They’re really experienced in
what they do. They’re the experts.”

Whitehead says his business is fairly small, but he feels like ISC’s
staff treats him equally with much larger businesses.

“I’m just a small customer who only spends $5,000 to $10,000
a year compared to other customers who may spend $100,000
to $200,000 a year,” he says. “But they treat me just the same.”

Randy Dennis, who works in the conversion repair/maintenance
department for Whites Creek, Tenn.-based Nitetrain Coach, says
he’s either bought inverters from ISC or had ISC repair some of
the inverters in his coaches. Nitetrain Coach has about 100 entertainer
coaches that it leases out to singers or actors.

The ISC team knows how to get the job done, according to
Dennis.

“They’re a wealth of knowledge and they are great to deal with,”
he says. In fact, Dennis says he looks to Gonzalez as his “go-to”
guy when it comes to inverters and batteries, adding, “There are
times when I won’t talk to anybody else because they won’t have
an answer.”