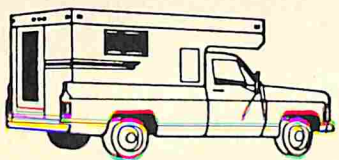


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Camping & Travel

By Hank Andrews



Tents Still Popular

THANK goodness, the tent is still around. Tents are still popular and growing in numbers.

The energy crisis has helped tent manufacturers. Plus the fact that tents are economical to buy.

Kampgrounds of America (KOA), the popular chain of camping sites, has conducted surveys and found that there has been a strong, steady growth in tenting in the past six years. In 1971, seven percent of KOA's camping customers used tents; the figure was eighteen percent in 1976.

"We expect that the figure will continue to rise in the next five-year period as Americans switch to smaller cars to save fuel and dollars," said KOA vice president Donald Ryan.

Not being dumb, KOA operators can see the trend and now are encouraging tenters to use its 800 locations in the U.S. and Canada.

"We have set aside more areas for tent campers," said Ryan.

Not many people know it, but it is possible to pull into 150 KOA's, rent a 9 x 12 foot tent for around \$11 per night for up to four persons. The tents are equipped with comfortable cots or air mattresses. In Canada there are some 23 KOA's that offer rental tents.

Families can save by preparing their own meals and doing the cooking the way they want to do it. It certainly is

one way to cut down on the growing, and discouraging, cost of travel.

The tenting industry believes there will be a trend toward lighter tents, mainly because of the influence of backpackers. Tent prices also are expected to go up from four to seven percent in some lines.

Still, it will be possible to buy an 8x10 foot tent for under \$100. However, you should be careful in buying a tent. Some imported tents have not been the best buys in recent years.

Also, you should check out what material is in the tent you plan to buy. Some dealers believe that polyester and cotton combinations will replace nylon to some extent.

The tent industry has had its ups and downs. In 1974, there was all the talk about flame retardant materials and people became cautious. There is a label on tents that turns people off to a certain extent. It reads; "This tent is treated for flame retardancy but will burn if left in contact with a continuous flame."

Another plus for the camping industry is that many people are going in for canoe camping and that calls for a tent that is not too heavy.

The recent drought in the West hurt some tent sales and also may have a drastic effect on hunting in many west-
(Continued on page 31)



Use of tents by campers is increasing, according to some camping officials. The energy crisis is one reason for increased tent use. These campers are at Picton, Ontario.

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