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# Darren Koepp

## My RV Works - Mobile RV Repair



Photos provided by the Koepps and Misty Mountain Design Co.

Before becoming a full-time RVer, Darren Koepp worked as an engineer helping to automate airports and aerospace assembly equipment.

But, when he and his wife, Anne, hit the road in 2007, he stumbled upon a business opportunity that allows him to make more money than he ever did as an engineer.

The opportunity was born out of necessity.

"As a full-time RVer, I didn't feel comfortable taking my home to a dealership, moving everyone out, getting into a hotel and leaving my entire home with the shop for weeks at a time just to get something fixed," Darren explained. "So, I learned how to fix things myself, and that turned into a passion."

With a 2-year-old daughter and newborn son, big repairs were too stressful on the family routine. So, if Darren could fix a problem himself, everyone was happier. Besides, he wanted to be a "daddy on demand" who was available whenever his family needed him.

"I knew my engineering job wasn't going to meet our long-term goals, and I was tired of missing the major milestones in my kids' lives.

"I applied for a patent to automate RVs and my plan was to do that for a living, but God had a different idea," he added. "With nothing more than faith that God would provide something better, Anne and I decided that I'd quit my job where I made upward of six figures."

A short-time later, Darren learned about the Mobile RV Academy, and signed up for the home-study course simply to learn more about how his own RV worked.

Once he had more knowledge about RV systems, the campgrounds the family stayed in would ask him to help guests who had problems with their RVs. Word spread and people would call for help as either free favors or at nominal fees.

"One day, I was angry and disgruntled about having to work on some guy's water heater. I really didn't want to go, and was dragging my feet and feeling sorry for myself," Darren explained.

"I walked left instead of right and bumped into a guy in a van who was working as a mobile RV service technician," he added. "If I had been there five minutes later, I'd have missed him. It was divine intervention.

"We didn't talk long; we had just a few words of conversation," said Darren. "The tech was onsite with his wife and kids

Top: The My RV Works crew - Darren and his wife, Anne, and their two kids. Bottom: As a mobile RV tech, Darren works on all types of RVs and the systems that make them work.



doing a quick repair before they went off to do something as a family. He was from Buffalo, NY, and they spent winters in Arizona.

"I asked him, 'You make money doing this?' and he replied 'About \$80,000 working in Arizona during the snowbird migration.' I was absolutely floored," Darren explained. "He encouraged me to learn everything I could about RVs and start repairing them."

That chance encounter gave him a new dream. He called Terry Cooper, the instructor who had created the home-study course. The next thing he knew, Darren was at an RV dealership in Texas learning advanced repair skills.

After the training was completed, Darren went to work for an RV dealership for two and a half years to get more experience. They stayed in their RV rent-free at the dealership. He also started taking on side jobs. Ironically, he was soon making more money working on his own during the weekend than he did working 40 hours a week at the dealership.

That prompted Darren and Anne to venture out on their own where he makes

repairs, and she runs the office, parts and warranty side of the business.

Darren doesn't do any major repairs like remove slideouts or work on transmissions. However, he does have a knack for repairing electrical and hydraulic systems, as well as heaters, water pumps and air conditioners - all the things that can ruin an RV outing when they stop working.

"I just pull up next to someone's RV, walk 30 feet and I'm on the job," he explained. "I don't have a support network of other technicians or supervisors I can call over to a repair bay for help."

One of the biggest challenges he had was amassing the inventory he needed to do same-day repairs. He started with a few thousand dollars of parts, and built it up over time so that he maintains about \$80,000 in parts inventory today.

He hires a bookkeeper to manage the books, but bills customers and accepts payment on the spot. Customers book appointments by visiting his website at [www.myrvworks.com](http://www.myrvworks.com) and filling out a detailed intake form. The information provided allows him to know what

equipment and parts he'll likely need to complete the job.

His repair rate is \$150 per hour, plus a service charge based on travel time and distance. He promotes his business by having a door magnet on his work truck with information about how to contact him. If he's going to be in an area for an extended period, often he takes a day to drop off business cards at campgrounds. Web searches and referrals drive most people to his business.

"In the beginning, I thought if I played Johnny Appleseed and populated business cards in enough RV parks that people would find us," he explained. "But, to be honest, most of our customers do not come from RV parks, but from people living in the area."

Darren and Anne also put on seminars at campgrounds and rallies to help people learn how to fix simple problems, and that often generates jobs to do more complex repairs people aren't comfortable doing on their own.

"While I am making a repair, Anne will often work with customers explaining how things work," he said. "She has been a full-timer since 2007 too and knows a lot!"

Although Darren spent several years working in a dealership as a technician, he said that people don't really need to do that in order to make a good living on the road.

"If you're smart when it comes to technical things, you can basically read the manuals and jump right in," he explained.

He suggested that people who want to become mobile technicians focus on refrigerators, water heaters, air conditioners, furnaces and water pumps - systems he calls bread-and-butter repairs. He has developed a series of training videos that are available on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/c/myrvworksinc](http://www.youtube.com/c/myrvworksinc)

"Working for someone else, I missed so many milestone events in the lives of my kids that it just broke my heart - and theirs," he explained. "We decided we would rather raise our kids to understand entrepreneurship so they knew they had options in their lives, too."

For more information about My RV Works or for help in getting started in a mobile repair business, email Darren at [info@myrvworks.com](mailto:info@myrvworks.com).