

ICOA Using Guest Reviews to Market Your Park

Contributed by Bob MacKinnon, CPO, GuestReviews.com

Guest Reviews is proud to provide our trademarked online reviews program to all ICOA member campgrounds through your new member benefit. It will be our pleasure to work with each of you as you register for and begin to use this valuable service. ICOA is bringing the Standard Guest Reviews program to your campground at a full, \$100 discount. This discount may also be applied to our more comprehensive management tools available under the DELUXE or PREMIUM level products we offer.

Today's reality is that we live in an electronic age, with campers now searching the internet for comments and ratings to help make decisions on where to stay. Survey data has shown there are six key reasons for including online reviews as part of your marketing plan.

1. ***Guests expect a feedback opportunity.*** According to a national study, 81% of those surveyed consider the availability of customer reviews to be "very important".
2. ***Guests seek credible information.*** 78% of the respondents to a Nielsen survey of Internet users stated that "consumer recommendations are the most credible form of advertising". Promote reviews and boost response volume - 50 reviews carry more credibility than 5 reviews.
3. ***Guests want an alternative to directory ratings.*** As the driver of purchase decisions, online reviews are second only to personal advice from a friend, and user reviews are more influential than third-party reviews.
4. ***Ratings provide a competitive advantage.*** Display your scores everywhere you can. Many parks are missing the opportunity to display their GuestReviews scores on GoCampingAmerica.
5. ***Reviews drive buying decisions.*** 82% of those who read reviews said that their purchasing decisions were directly influenced by those reviews.
6. ***Reviewers are your best customers.*** Consumers who contribute reviews or post messages will visit websites nine times as often as non-contributors do, and review contributors make purchases nearly twice as often. Recognize and thank your reviewers whenever possible.

ICOA and Guest Reviews are now working together to provide this Member Benefit that puts you in control of review management. It puts you in the driver's seat by channeling feedback directly to you. You get survey data, you get guest appreciation for providing the review opportunity, and you get to promote your park through your scores. It's a three-way winner for you and strengthens guest loyalty. Go to www.guestreviews.com for detailed information.

Bob MacKinnon of MacKinnon Campground Consulting is a leading campground industry consultant, instructor and Regent for ARVC's School of RV Park & Campground Management, and a 30-year veteran of the Walt Disney Company. He provides a broad range of services, including feasibility studies, business plans, and design concepts for park owners, buyers, and developers. Under the brand name GuestReviews™, he provides the ICOA Guest Satisfaction Survey Benefit.