



January 2021 Newsletter

Happy New Year RV Wheelers.

Hopefully we've reached a turning point with the virus and we will all get back to some form of normalcy at some point in the future. I'm sure all of you agree we are tired of being in a lockdown situation. I am looking forward to our monthly meetings and an opportunity to meet our new members.

Just as a reminder (October Newsletter) everyone's dues will roll over into 2021 so do not "renew" your membership for 2021. I know we will still suffer through a period of time before restrictions are lifted and we can enjoy our community amenities and most of all, camp without any restrictions as a club/group.

Again, as a reminder, if you plan an outing and want some company, let me know where you're going and I'll let the rest of the club know. They in turn can make their own reservations and

meet up with you. Once we see fewer restrictions we can start officially camping as a club again. For those of you who plan a trip on your own, please be safe.

It appears our article in the last issue of the Village Breeze caught the attention of our community Channel 6 personnel. They contacted me recently and asked if I would Zoom a meeting with them. So on January 4th at 10:30am I'll be doing an interview on their morning broadcast in order to highlight our club.

Recently some club members have received a **scam** email requesting money using my name as a recipient of the money. So you are all aware, **it is a scam**. The email address used next to my name is not the email address Laurie (my wife) and I use.

For our new members, we've received these in the past and I'm aware other clubs in our community have been targeted as well. Please be aware of these emails and always contact the person by phone or email from the members list on our website to verify.

If you're not camping make sure to maintain your batteries and air pressure in your tires. It doesn't hurt to do an occasional walkthrough to make sure the interior of your motorhome is ok and free of unwanted 4 legged guests. Make sure your vents and windows are closed to prevent water damage as we've already experienced some rain earlier this week.

We've had some discussion lately regarding staying connected while on the road. Laurie and I use a hot spot which is tied into our cell phone plan. Other means of staying connected are available and after a little research you will find some ideas I've included in this newsletter.

Data Usage

Many mobile internet services charge according to your data allowance plan. The amount of data dictates how long you can use the internet for and for what types of activities, as certain tasks online use up more data than others. For instance, streaming a TV show on Netflix eats through a great deal more data than looking up a recipe or checking your email. Video streaming also typically needs a stronger connection than browsing mostly-text webpages.

Consider how frequently you use the internet. Do you mainly use it for navigation and to look up your next RV park or are you a digital nomad that spends several hours a day online for work? How often you're using the web also has a major impact on how much data you use.

To get an idea of how much data you might go through, check out a data calculator online like this one from Verizon.

Location

The second consideration to think about is the types of locations that you plan on traveling to. Are you one to go boondocking far off the beaten path or do you prefer to stay closer to civilization in RV parks? This will be a factor in what services are available to you.

How to Get Internet While RVing

There are four main options that RVers have for internet on the road:

Cellular

Satellite

WiFi

Cable Internet

Each comes with its own set of advantages and disadvantages. Let's take a look at each of these and help you figure out which may be best for you and your RV. woman looking at phone beside body of water

RV Internet Option One: Cellular

Cellular internet uses the same technology as your smartphone's internet service to connect other devices to the web. If you get good reception, speeds are typically fast enough for HD video streaming.

Mobile Hotspot

Using cellular data can be as easy as simply turning on the mobile hotspot feature on your phone. This feature is built into many plans, meaning you don't need to purchase any additional equipment or pay extra. Just remember that whatever data you use on other tethered devices will count towards your monthly phone data allowance.

Always be sure to check with your cell phone provider for their mobile hotspot rules.

Jetpacks and Mobile Hotspot Devices

Some carriers go beyond mobile hotspots on phones and offer separate hotspot devices. These are small units that use cellular data to connect devices to the internet via WiFi. You connect to the internet just as you would connect to your WiFi network at home. Separate mobile hotspot devices and the service are not included in your typical phone plan. This service will need to be added on.

Cellular Internet Costs

Utilizing your phones existing hotspot may not cost anything extra. For plans with hotspot devices, carriers may charge anywhere from \$35/mo to over \$100/mo, depending on your data allowance. You may also need to purchase the device itself separately upfront.

Pros and Cons of Cellular Internet for RVs

The biggest advantage of cellular internet is the quality and ease of use. Mobile hotspots are easy to set up, and you can use your existing cell phone provider who will roll it all into one bill. When you do get service, it's typically fast and reliable. It's also the most portable internet option, meaning you can take your device with you anywhere— even on the trail!

On the downside, you will not get service everywhere. If your phone doesn't have reception, neither will your cellular hotspot. A little research ahead of time will often tell you whether or not a carrier gets reception at a place you want to go.

Be wary of cell providers' "unlimited data" claims. While you do technically have access to unlimited data, speeds are typically slowed down after you hit 15 GB or 30 GB. The slower speeds are often not enough to stream video, so you still want to use the web sparingly on these plans.

Who Cellular Internet Is Best For

Cellular internet is best for those who are sure there will be reception at the places they'll be camping and don't plan on doing a lot of streaming. This is a great option for digital nomads and those working from their RV.

man sitting on cliff with laptop on legs
RV Internet Option Two: Satellite

You've probably seen RVs parked at a campground that have satellite dishes mounted on the top. These are for satellite TV or internet. Both technologies require the dish, which sends and receives signals to a satellite in space.

Satellite Internet Costs

Satellite internet service typically costs \$50/mo-\$150/mo, depending on your provider and plan. A dish can cost anywhere between a few hundred dollars to \$5,000.

Satellite Internet Advantages and Disadvantages

Satellite is great because you'll get service where no one else does. Because it relies on a satellite in the sky and not a tower with limited range, you can pick up signal just about anywhere.

On the downside, conditions have to be just right. The dish has to have an unobstructed, clear view of the Southern sky. This is tricky when you're camping in a forest. And even if you do get service everywhere, it isn't always fast. Satellite is also the priciest option with the most expensive equipment.

Who Satellite Is Best For

Satellite internet is best for those who plan on frequenting rural areas with little cell reception.

RV Internet Option Three: RV WiFi

The next option is WiFi. These are networks that you'll find at RV parks, rest stops, and other public locations.

WiFi Costs

Unless you are subscribing to a network of WiFi hotspots, you don't need to worry about signing up or paying another bill monthly. You can find free WiFi at many RV parks and public locations.

WiFi Advantages and Disadvantages

The biggest advantage of RV WiFi is that it is easy and cheap. Simply sign in to the WiFi network, and you're connected.

The downside is that you need to be at a place that offers WiFi. Though many RV parks offer this nowadays, it certainly isn't standard. You also need to be close to a router or purchase a signal booster. Walking a few steps away from the RV park can leave you disconnected. Additionally, connection may not be great, especially in the afternoons and at night when everyone is trying to get online. It is the most unreliable option, but great for those on a budget who don't really plan on using the internet too much on the road.

Who WiFi Is Best For

WiFi is the best option for those who don't plan on needing internet connection at all times wherever they go.

white Maul type-C motorhome

The Occasional Option: Cable Internet

You might come across some parks that offer cable or DSL internet. This type of internet is wired using telephone lines or fiber optic cable and is what you'll find in most households. Because you need the physical cable, it is not available in too many places.

Cable Internet Costs

A subscription to a cable provider is typically between \$50/mo-\$100/mo, plus any equipment that you need to purchase, such as a modem or router.

Cable Internet Advantages and Disadvantages

Cable internet is the fastest and most reliable option. There are usually no data limits, meaning you could stream Netflix all day if you wanted to! However, it's only available if there's a cable connection, meaning you can't take it with you wherever you go. Many RV parks do not offer cable internet.

Who Cable Internet Is Best For

Cable internet is best for folks who plan on staying at one place for a long period of time.

Mark Tate
RV Wheeler President