



Your NW GMC Club

Washington,
Oregon, Idaho,
Western Montana,
Alaska, British
Columbia, Alberta

The origin of the GMC Motor home

In the days after NASA landed the first man on the moon, General Motors engineers set out to design the ultimate Earth traveling machine. Drawing on the excitement of the times, this vehicle had to embody a revolutionary vehicle design and construction. This was not to be just another recreational vehicle. The common design of the times for RV's was a boxy, awkward, top-heavy vehicle on a truck chassis. The GM vehicle was to be pioneering in every way. Design work began in 1970 with release planned for the 1973 model year. The design would draw heavily on General Motors proficiency in several areas. First, it was to be front wheel drive. The drive train and front suspension are the same design that had been used successfully in the Oldsmobile Toronado since 1966: the 455 cubic inch Oldsmobile engine mated to a Turbohydramatic 425 transmission with torsion bar suspension. The rear suspension employs GM's leadership in bus design, using dual swing arms (one leading and one trailing) with a single air spring on each side. Automatic controls are incorporated into the suspension to allow the vehicle to compensate for changes in loading and maintaining a

level driving condition at all times. The use of front wheel drive and the independent swing arm rear suspension brought many advantages to this design. The lack of drive shafts and axles passing under the coach allowed a very low floor height compared to other motor homes, as well as a low overall height and low center of gravity for the coach. This gave an almost car-like driving ability. The emphasis for the design was to be on the traveling experience, not extended "in the woods" camping. The vehicle was to be manufactured in 23 foot and 26 foot models. Although the design was refined along the way, the basic vehicle was never altered. Body panels from 1973 will fit a 1978. Because of the oil embargo and the energy crisis of the 70's, "gas guzzling" vehicles like motor homes fell out of favor. The motor home was never a high volume vehicle and was rumored never to have been profitable for the automotive giant. General Motors decided that manufacturing plants would be better used in the production of light trucks. Production of the GMC motor home was discontinued in the 1978 model year after manufacturing 12921 units. It's estimated that 7000 to 8000 are still in registration.



Our club is made up of GMC motor home owners in the Pacific Northwest and Western Canada. We are a chapter of the Family Motor Coach Association (FMCA). Our club gained its charter in the fall of 1983 with 22 coaches. Today our membership numbers about 80 GMC coaches. The principal objective of the club is the preservation and maintenance of our GMC motor homes. Rallies are held every other month, February through December, at various locations throughout the Northwest and Canada. These rallies provide an opportunity for members to share information on operation and maintenance, parts availability, mechanical updating and “how to” ideas for interior as well as the exterior of the GMC. Of course, we always take time to play, visiting various points of interest at rally locations and getting together for evening activities where we meet old friends and make new ones in an informal atmosphere.

We welcome your application for membership. The initial membership fee is \$60.00 (US) for a couple or \$50 .00 (US) for singles. This fee includes your Cascaders name badge(s). Renewal, thereafter, is \$20 (US) per year, due each October 1st. The only requirement is that you own and have an interest in preserving these GMC motor homes and that you belong to the Family Motor Coach Association (FMCA) (call 800 543-3622 or <http://www.fmca.com/>) You need to include your FMCA membership number on your Cascaders membership application. When you have joined FMCA, call the secretary or print out an application on line and send it in.



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