
The Origin of the GMC Motorhome

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 RVs 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 provided 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' and 26' 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 70s, "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 12,921 units. It's estimated that 7000 to 8000 are still in registration.

GMC Cascaders

A chapter of FMCA for owners of classic GMC Motorhomes in the northwest United States and Canada.



www.gmc-cascaders.com

About Our Club

We are a chapter of the Family Motor Coach Association (FMCA).
www.fmca.com

Our club members, located in the Pacific Northwest United States and Western Canada, are owners of classic GMC Motorhomes. The club was chartered in 1983 with 22 coaches. Today, our membership includes more than 80 coaches. We are dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of the GMC Motorhome.

Rallies are held in locations throughout the Northwest US and Canada. Rallies provide an opportunity to travel, socialize, visit local sites and events, and share information about GMC operation, maintenance and upgrades.

Join Us!

We welcome your application for membership. To join:

1. You must be a member of FMCA. Please join FMCA before submitting your application to our club. Join using the link on our web site and save \$10.
2. You must own a GMC Motorhome.

You will find our membership application form, cost and instructions, on our web site under Join Us.

www.gmc-cascaders.com

Membership fees can be paid through PayPal.

Questions about membership?
membership@gmc-cascaders.com

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