

Michigan KOA Franchisees Featured on CNBC Make It

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Mark and Karla Lemoine, owners of the Coloma/St. Joseph KOA Holiday, shared their story of leaving corporate America for campground ownership on the

BENTON HARBOR, Mich. (June 29, 2023) – Kampgrounds of America, Inc. (KOA) franchise owners Mark and Karla Lemoine recently shared their story of campground ownership on [a video feature](#) for CNBC make it. The feature highlighted the couple's decision to leave the job stability of a career with the Michigan state government and liquidate assets to purchase a campground in 2016. Purchased for \$1.6 million, the Coloma/St. Joseph KOA Holiday in Michigan is now valued at \$6 million.

Lifelong campers Mark and Karla took the leap to own a campground when Mark began questioning his stress and future in government work. Within six months of becoming entrepreneurs, the Lemoines purchased a franchised KOA campground in Benton Harbor, Michigan, a rural lake town between Grand Rapids and Chicago. The couple sold their home and withdrew their savings to complete the purchase.

"We saw the wear and tear of working for corporate America on Mark and on our family dynamics," Karla said. "Now, owning our business, we're the bosses. We create and manage stress. For us, it's a healthier lifestyle. People think a steady job, a steady paycheck and a good employer is security. Mark had been through a couple of downsizings in his career, and I think we just realized you can't always count on [those things]. We decided to take control of our own future, our own destiny."

When the family purchased the campground, it had been serving guests for 42 years. The Lemoines immediately renovated the bathrooms and updated the camp store. A café, providing additional revenue, and new accommodations were also added, further upgrading the campground. Site additions include RV Sites with KOA Patio™ and glamping tents to meet the increasing demand for expanded RV amenities and glamping units.

"We describe it as a midlife reset where we just punch the button and did everything very different," said Mark. "And when everything you own is literally underneath your feet, you got to figure out how to make it work."

That hard work has resulted in Coloma/St. Joseph KOA Holiday achieving one of the KOA system's highest net promoter scores (NPS), earning a 91 in their 2021 and 2022 seasons. Since 2019 alone, they have grown nights by more than 18% and registration revenue by 77%.

"Karla and Mark have been a perfect example of utilizing the power of a brand and franchise organization while bringing entrepreneurial grit and creativity to the partnership," said Bill Gottwals, senior vice president of franchise operations. "It's no wonder they earned KOA's highest award for new campgrounds 'the Rising Star' within their first five years of ownership."

Looking forward, the Lemoines plan to keep operating and improving the campground, which they consider their retirement fund. To view the Lemoines' complete story, [visit the CNBC Make It website](#).

ABOUT KAMPGROUNDS OF AMERICA

Kampgrounds of America, Inc. has been the definitive leader in outdoor hospitality for more than 60 years. United under the mission of "connecting people to the outdoors and each other," the company consists of two unique brands: KOA and Terramor Outdoor Resorts. KOA, the world's largest system of privately-owned, open-to-the-public campgrounds, consists of more than 500 franchised and owned campgrounds. With unrivaled brand visibility, KOA also offers campground owners and operators unparalleled support in campground education, design, recruitment, marketing and technology. Terramor Outdoor Resorts, a glamping venture, opened its first flagship property in Bar Harbor, Maine in 2020. Literally meaning 'Love of Land,' the brand focuses on delivering a refined and upscale outdoor experience. For more information, visit [KOA.com](#) and [TerramorOutdoorResort.com](#).