

Car Mate: Where Quality is a Priority

There's a company in Leeper, Pennsylvania, that has made a big splash in the trailer industry. Not only does it offer American-made trailers utilizing USA-made parts, but it also offers the industry's best warranty. Meet Car Mate Trailers Inc.

"What makes us unique is our quality," said George Karg, marketing director for Car Mate. Gregory Snyder, president of Car Mate, confirmed that. Snyder said, "Our trailers are built to last a long time. The end user may never have to buy another Car Mate trailer unless they want a larger size or need additional trailers for their business."



Car Mate was established in 1982. Prior to that, the company was formerly known as Pennstyle Campers, which was founded in 1974 by James Pfendler. And even earlier, it was called Pennwood Trailer Sales, and that began in the early 1960s.

Car Mate began by producing small cargo trailers. Their product line grew, and before too long they were making larger enclosed cargos and open-utility trailers. Today, Car Mate employs over 80 people. Their network of 80 dealers are located in the Northeast United States and Eastern Canada.

"Our dealerships normally do not extend westward past Elkhart, Indiana. That's the trailer capital of the world," Snyder said. "Our 80 dealerships do extend from Michigan all the way to the Atlantic seaboard, including a dealer in Eastern Nova Scotia. From Virginia into Canada we are very competitive. We're always looking to expand further westward and farther south," he added. The cost of freight is added to a trailer's price, according to Snyder.



Car Mate is so confident in its quality that it offers a “Lifetime Plus 10” warranty. The trailer’s roof, floor, and lights are guaranteed for the life of the vehicle. There’s also a five-year workmanship warranty, which protects customers against any defects in materials or workmanship.

“The Plus 10 refers to the warranty on the axles. We use Dexter axles, because they’re the best in the industry and Dexter warrants the axles accordingly,” said Snyder. He added that the current best-selling product is their custom cargo trailer that is 16 feet long and 7 feet wide.

Individuals aren’t the only ones buying Car Mate Trailers. There are some organizations known to the public who also believe in those vehicles. “I know the Mario Lemieux Foundation has at least three of our trailers, and the Michigan, Virginia and Pennsylvania Farm Bureaus have several custom-built trailers in their fleets for their mobile classroom labs,” Snyder said. Other repeat buyers include those from landscape companies, housing contractors, municipalities, nonprofit organizations and many more, according to Snyder.

Snyder also noted that ever since the Marcellus Shale drilling began, demand for Car Mate trailers has been steadily increasing. “It used to be that at this time of the year we would get very busy. But in the last three years, we’ve been very busy the entire year,” Snyder said.

When hiring employees, Snyder mentioned he often looks at graduates from area technical schools as well as veterans. “Some level of skill is needed for the labor jobs here, but it’s not rocket surgery,” Snyder said. The average time spent building a new trailer is about two weeks—from order entry to be ready for shipping, according to Snyder.

Car Mate employs welders, painters, carpenters, and some machinists. The company uses an assembly-line approach to the finished product. The frame is welded near the start of the process, and the trailers are painted near the conclusion of the procedure. It is definitely a “team approach” from beginning to end.

Car Mate Trailers, Inc. has a motto: “Trailers that work for a living.” Not only do their trailers work, but they also last—despite all of the work they do. The company that was formed in 1982 is still going strong, and they’d like to be your “mate” for life.

