Red Rover’s Improvements to a 1995 Roadtrek 190 Popular
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In the fall of 2009 we bought a used 1995 Dodge Roadtrek 190 Popular. It was in good shape, except for some usual problems. We replaced all the tires. Although they had plenty of tread, they had unsafe sidewall cracks due to age. We had new brakes and drums installed, shocks replaced, and an alignment performed at a truck repair shop. The seller had all the RV’s repair records, so we knew its history of careful maintenance. The furnace controller was bad and needed to be replaced by our nearby RV service store.

We saw many things we could improve or make more personal. Almost every Roadtrek owner finds ways to adapt the RV to their needs and we learned of others’ experience through the Yahoo Roadtrek list. The CyberRally Roadtrek list has occasional tech tips. We kept track of what we did and jotted them down so other owners might benefit from our improvements. We do not claim originality for any of these ideas and will be happy to answer inquiries. **Caution:** Before you carry out any of these improvements, check your RT carefully, as models change from year to year. YOUR ROADTREK MAY BE DIFFERENT.

**Headlight brightener.** The plastic headlight covers were frosted and did not let enough light through. Our auto body shop refinished our covers. You can buy headlight refinishing kit at the auto store. New lens replacements are quite expensive.

**Clothes hooks.** We bought nine brass double clothes hooks from the hardware store and installed two on the front overhead cabinet door, two over the driver’s seat, and the rest near the ceiling between cabinets and doors. We hang clothes on them at night.

**Reflexit window insulation.** We bought a roll of Reflexit insulation in the home improvement store. The flexible material can be cut with ordinary scissors, and consists of two aluminum foil sheets with bubble-wrap between. We cut pieces to exact-fit the windows for cold weather use. They install with a friction fit or with Velcro hook and loop fasteners. We bought a jumbo-size automotive folding reflective sunscreen for the front windshield. An unanticipated bonus is the Reflexit material provides a 100% blackout for blocking ambient light or views into the RV – great for privacy while dry camping or at Wal-Mart.
**Travasaks.** Many owners of Roadtreks and other RVs have found conventional sheets and blankets a pain to use. We bought two Travasaks, sleeping-bag like bedding that is roomy and has a winter side and a summer side. These can be used on our twin beds or the king size bed. They make compact rolls when not in use. Travasack is out of business. Go to [www.RVsuberbag.com](http://www.RVsuberbag.com) or [www.hacksack-leisure.com](http://www.hacksack-leisure.com) for the identical product. Single or full sizes available in colors as well as larger sizes. Expensive but worth it.

**Shelves over doors.** We purchased Eagle Creek zipper packs that fit neatly into the narrow shelves over the RV doors. One holds basic tools. Another holds electrical cords and chargers. We made tags that list the contents of each pack. Toilet articles, first aid kit, pills, and other small items can use individual packs. We have a *Tundra* fire extinguisher at the end of the shelf on the passenger side. Unlike the dry powder model that is impossible to clean up, this extinguisher is described as easy to clean up after discharge.

**Atomic clock.** Walmart sold us an attractive battery operated atomic radio digital clock with side panels exactly matching the paneling in the Roadtrek. It is a La Crosse Technology 2N8 VO4U. The cost was about $25. The clock also has an indoor and outdoor temperature sensor and display. We placed the remote outdoor sensor in our big storage box. The 12”-wide clock fits in a ledge just ahead of the air conditioner. To keep it from falling out while traveling we rigged a thin elastic cord to two small screw eyes on either side. For when the air conditioner is in use, we mounted four Velcro pads on the left rear cupboard door and move the clock. We continually heard a beeping at 6 AM. On checking we found the clock has a settable alarm and it had inadvertently been switched on. // We bought a digital alarm clock with red numbers and mounted it with Velcro on the TV cover where we can see it at night. Red numbers are a good night light.

**Tire monitors.** We bought Tire Minder monitors to keep track of tire pressures and temperatures. The valve sensor button batteries have a short life, so be sure to carry spare batteries. On many trips the tire monitor fails to operate or operates intermittently when cold, but works after we drive awhile.

**Red Rover signs.** We decided to call our RV Red Rover. We removed the spare tire cover and used a hair drier and plastic putty knife to soften and remove the old Home and Park logo on the tire cover. For $37 we had a vinyl sign made with our Red Rover logo on it – a Standard Poodle head with the words RED ROVER (see header.) We carefully applied that to the spare tire cover. Next we found a sign shop that made magnetic signs, so we had two round RED ROVER signs made and applied them to the sides of the RT.

**Console declutter.** With various 12 VDC plug-in devices (inverter, battery chargers, rear view camera, GPS, and CB radio), the front of the RV can be a maze of wires. We bought a four-socket 12 V unit from an auto store. Then we made a wood fixture that slides beneath the oak console atop the motor housing. The fixture has industrial hook and loop facing so tire monitor and other gadgets can be held in place. We fastened the fixture to the oak tray with two screws. The four-socket unit is on the driver’s side. The wood fixture allows consolidating wires for less mess.
Place for detergent and soap. We learned from the Roadtrek list of a simple project to store bottles of dishwashing detergent, hand soap, and 409 cleaner. We bought a piece of white Marine Board and sawed out a piece 25” W x 5-3/4” L. We unscrewed the bottom curtain rail from the kitchen half-window and screwed the board piece into the wall below the window and behind the faucet. We replaced the bottom curtain rail. Bottles stack neatly and securely behind this fence with little reduction in daylight from the window. A small C-clamp stop keeps the bottles from falling sideways.

Better refrigerator cooling in hot weather. In very hot weather our Dometic refrigerator struggled and failed to keep the box cold. We found at www.snydersrvrefrigeration.com a universal Snyder Kit for Norcold and Dometic refrigerators. It consists of a plastic plenum and a 12 VDC vaneaxial fan that is operated by a thermostatic switch. The fan runs automatically when the fridge is on to cool the fins in back. The fridge must be pulled out to install the kit. Shut off the LP gas at the bottle. Undo the frame screws, cut the silicone seal under the bottom front frame with a butcher knife, unplug the 120 VAC and disconnect the 12 VDC, and detach the LP gas line – following the illustrated kit directions. Installing the kit was easy after some trimming of the top of the plenum with tin snips. Then we “burped” the fridge by laying it on each side and its top for 30 minutes. After replacing the fridge in its hole, we conducted a manometer test on the LP gas line to make sure the fridge LP gas regulator was set at exactly 11.5” of water. The Snyder Kit performs very well.

The box interior temperature still rose so we bolted on an air scoop. We bought a 5” white vinyl fence post top from Lowes and sawed it in half. We drilled three mounting holes into the half cap and the underlying grill. We used three stainless steel 10-32 machine screws 1-1/2” long, three stainless steel washers, and three stainless steel shake-proof nuts to hold the scoop at the top rear of the exterior fridge compartment louver grill. This scoop brings ram air into the back of the fridge while moving. It improves refrigerator temperatures and doesn’t blow out the LP gas flame.

To further improve our airflow while moving we screwed a simple single metal baffle to the inside top of the external door to the back of the fridge. It deflects the air scooped in from the fencepost-top scoop (described above) and directs it up toward the cooling fins. We also fabricated a spoiler to create turbulent air along the louvers above the exterior door. It is mounted at the leading edge. Streamlined flow airflow is thus converted to turbulent airflow to better extract the hot air from the fridge compartment.

We noted that cold storage rooms often have transparent vinyl strips for doors. Workers can pass in and out, but the curtain of strips keeps most of the cold in. You can buy replacement strips 6-inches wide x 2-feet long to attach to a refrigerator bar. We bought 4 such strips at a cost of less than $3 each from www.pvcstrip.com. We shortened them to touch the bottom of the fridge compartment. We overlapped the strips by 1/3, trimmed them to fit, and attached them at the top with zip ties to the expandable bar. We have unrestricted access to the contents of the fridge, and the cold air does not spill out when we open the door to add or remove foot items.
Refrigerator temperature. We bought a Chaney remote thermometer from Amazon. One sensor goes into the freezer and the other in the main compartment. The display screen is magnetic and we placed it on the face of the stove vent hood. Lithium batteries are required for the freezer sensor. One sensor conked out after 1.5 years, so we ordered another unit.

Spice box. Beneath the topmost kitchen cabinet is a narrow cabinet for spices. The spice you need is always at the rear. We obtained a bamboo box that fit the cabinet and modified it by cutting away a small slot where the box blocked the latch. Now we pull out the box and select what we need for seasoning.

Bathroom door hook. Our bathroom door would fly open at inopportune moments such as when cornering while traveling 95 MPH in four-lane traffic. We bought some screen door hardware and made a stand-off hook eye. We screwed the hook eye into the top corner of the clothes cupboard and the hook into the top corner of the bathroom door. Before moving we hook the door closed. For extra protection against door swing we stretch a bungy cord from two clothes hooks across the two doors.

Generator. We called the Roadtrek factory about the possibility of installing an Onan generator in the empty generator compartment. They advised against it as it would require lowering the gas tank and other major modifications. After consulting Internet information we bought a highly recommended Honda EU2000i pull-start portable generator. Where to put it? We had a rear hitch installed. The installer cut the right end off the under-floor storage box and replaced the end and sealed it. That cleared enough space to install the hitch.

Late in 2011 we found a used Onan generator. A nearby friend with a RT had removed and installed an Onan generator several times, and said he would help us if we bought it. $800 later we had the used generator ($700 to $800 is the going price – new it costs $2800 to $3500). Our RT already had the necessary gas tank fitting. We lined the generator compartment with a sound-reducing mass-loaded vinyl, found on the Internet. The generator worked for a while, then failed due to slip ring corrosion. Our friend repaired the generator. Tip: Put a selector valve in the gen fuel line with a stub hose to let you put Seafoam stabilizer into the generator without treating the entire gas tank.

We’ll be happy to talk with any RT owner interested in adding a generator. See a detailed report on the Yahoo Roadtrek List files that Lynn Brucker has written about the repair of the Onan generator. It’s called “The Onan Saga.” Photos there are listed under Red Rover – Onan. We also have created a PowerPoint presentation on how owners can maintain or repair their Onan generator. Ask for it if interested.

Generator box fabrication. Before we installed the used Onan generator, we scoured the Internet, farm stores, home and hardware stores looking for a metal box to hold a Honda generator. It had to be lockable as Honda generators are targets for thieves. (If you get a Honda, engrave your name and phone number on the housing to identify your generator if stolen and recovered.) Not finding a suitable box, we drew plans and had
one fabricated by Mark Proul. The box was a custom fit for the generator. It has doors for access to the pull-start handle and controls, and vent grills at both ends. We completed the setup by adding a Radio Shack vent fan inside to the grill on the right end. We also added a run timer to display the elapsed hours of generator operation for oil change purposes. On the floor of the box we placed a piece of high-density foam flooring to dampen vibration and noise. Finally on the Internet we found some flexible sound-insulating material that was self-sticking to line the interior so the generator can be run quietly inside the diamond plate aluminum box. We installed a weatherproof electrical outlet on the outside of the box nearest the back door of the RV so the generator can be run at any time. The box has handles on both ends for easy lifting. The box fastens to a cargo carrier basket with U-bolts through the bottom.

**Swingaway bike rack.** We ordered a StowAway2 Swingaway Bike Rack that included a cargo carrier basket that the generator box can be mounted in. The well-built hitch carrier swings out of the way so the large rear RT door can be opened. We now use something better. It is a front-mounted Xport bike rack that fits into a Reece front hitch receiver. It holds two folding bikes or regular size bikes. It does not intrude into vision from the windshield. CAUTION: Hitch installers, such as U-Haul, may warn against the front hitch as there is no frame attachment point available. The weight of two bicycles and the hitch seems to be light enough to not stress the hitch attached to sheet metal.

**Big cargo box.** We realized there was not sufficient storage space in our RT for long kites, folding chairs, dog food, a screen room, ground rug, and cave exploring gear. So we ordered a Max Cargo Box from the Stowaway2 manufacturer. It mounted to the Swingaway hitch replacing the bike rack and cargo basket. The box has its own tail lights and lighted license plate holder accessory. We sawed a wood dowel rod to prop the lid open while loading and unloading the box. The box lid will stay open on its own, but only in the swing away position – the lid hits the spare tire before reaching the latch point. The hitch installer wired the RV and box tail lights. The Cargo Box can hold the Honda generator.

**LED lights.** Many Roadtrek owners have replaced incandescent light bulbs with LED lights. They are available in cool white or warm white. To test, we bought some of each. We prefer the warm white color, but cool white is brighter. We replaced the reading lights (0.05 amp) and the main overhead lights (0.1 amp), but not the fluorescent light over the dinette. There is a significant reduction in current draw by using the LED lights.

**Shower head.** From the Roadtrek list we learned that one shower head was superior to the OEM model for providing good water pressure and using limited water. We purchased an Oxygenics white shower head and a separate shutoff valve. It allows taking a shower by wetting down, then shutting off the shower while soaping up, and resuming the spray when fully lathered. We have never run out of hot water showering in our RV.

**Upgrade kit for ceiling vent fan.** FanTastic Vent makes an upgrade kit for the ceiling vent fan that includes a blade rotation reversal switch. Most of the time you want to exhaust air from the RV. The reverse switch draws air into the RV and is handy for
expanding the shower curtain for rapid drying immediately beneath the fan. If you call the factory you can buy the modification kit. Also, a kit is available with remote control and rain sensors to automatically close if it starts to rain (K6600RWH).

**Shower curtain.** We replaced the old bulky plastic shower curtain. We purchased two nylon shower curtains and sewed them together to make the correct size (1.5 shower curtains.) We upgraded the FanTastic Vent fan in the ceiling to one with a reversing switch to draw air in. The air pressure holds the shower curtain away from one's body while showering. After showering the nylon curtain dries rapidly because the vent fan is turned to draw air into the RV rather than blow it out.

**Rubber bathtub mats protect carpets during showering.** We noticed that shower water wet the carpet in the toilet compartment and in the aisle. We bought one rubber bathtub mat and cut it to cover the lips of the carpet and solved the problem. Plastic carpet runners would work as well.

**Small folding stool for shaving legs**. There isn’t much room in a RT aisle shower. Lynn found a small plastic folding stool at Camping World. B&R Plastics 12”H step stool, that is handy for shaving legs, setting the shampoo and soap down within reach, and to aid in toweling dry after the shower. We store the stool in the aft floor compartment.

**House power upgrade.** We installed an Inteli-Power 4600 converter three-stage charger upgrade for the original Magnatek converter and a Trimetric Power monitor. The monitor provides a readout of real time battery power volts and amps and amp-hours for the house battery and vehicle battery. It allows you to plug in at home and not overcharge the battery. This is among our top 5 upgrades.

We had a Progressive Industries hard wired 30 amp power protection system located in the outside compartment, by Dan Neeley, a Roadtrek owner. It provides protection between the campground post and the RT power to protect against undervoltage, over-voltage, power surges, and lightning strikes.

**Foam rubber floor covering.** At Home Depot and Lowes there are interlocking floor mats made of dense rubber foam for under $10. They are gray and have a simulated diamond plate non-slip pattern. We cut them to fit the recessed floor. We cut a circular hole for the front table leg socket. The mats make a soft surface for walking and insulate the floor in cold weather. They can be removed easily for showering.

After two years using the gray foam interlocking flooring, we found a foam interlock flooring in a butcher block dark oak wood grain pattern. It has a durable clear vinyl atop the wood grain surface. We bought one carton. The flooring can be seen at www.FoamTiles.com. We bought ours at www.rubberflooring.com.

**Interior mirrors.** We noticed that the wood paneling on the pantry and clothes cabinet doors made the interior appear smaller. At our local glass shop we had two mirrors cut
and installed on those vertical cabinet door faces. These cost about $20 each including installation and they make the interior appear far more spacious.

**Clothes dividers in cabinet next to the toilet compartment.** The clothes cabinet next to the toilet compartment has two shelves and the three compartments. We measured the interior and made a corrugated cardboard mock up of pigeon hole dividers, two rows of four holes each in each of the bottom and middle compartments. Lynn keeps her clothes in the middle holes and Roger rolls up his clothes and places them in the bottom two rows of four holes. These pigeon holes make it easy to find articles of clothing rather than paw through a stack of clothes. The final compartment dividers were made of ¼” Masonite sawed to telescope together.

**Corian counter top.** A splurge! For a Christmas present Roger went to a Corian counter fabricator and obtained a price of $500 to replace the existing Formica counter top with a new Corian top. The price included fabricating covers for the sink and stove and re-plumbing the kitchen sink. The fabricator had a wide selection of left-over colors and patterns (all one price) so we selected the “most expensive” deluxe white.

Some newer RTs have a pull-out board, but ours did not. The fabricator, Counter Advice in Dayton, OH, made a 14” x 19” x ½” white board with a pull hole for $20. We bought a ½” aluminum channel and a small oak board to mount the Corian board beneath the pantry cabinet. It pulls out for use, slides in out of the way.

**Sink faucet.** The original sink faucet spout would not clear some of our cooking pots. Before we had the counter top replaced with Corian we bought a Moen faucet with a taller spout. It used the same four-inch spacing holes as the original. Later, when we went to replace that new faucet with a still taller spout and pull-out sprayer, we found that the potential replacement would require a third hole in the Corian top – a modification we did not think was essential.

The new faucet spout reach is too short! We ordered a taller, longer Moen faucet spout from the Internet. It won’t fit! Drat! money down the drain.

**Kitchen cabinet drawers on slides.** Our Roadtrek has two shelves and three compartments in the kitchen cabinet beneath the sink. We put cooking pots and pans on the shelves. We had to kneel on the floor to reach the pans in back. We learned about some compact ball bearing slides made for cabinet drawers. We ordered four 18” flat ball bearing slides that would allow two drawers to be pulled out to their full length. Slides are made by BRD. We made two tray-like drawers with low sides and mounted two slides beneath each drawer. Locate the slides widely under the top shelf to slide and store thin cutting boards. Now we can pull a drawer completely out to a 100% cantilever position and select the right pan without kneeling.

**Rear view camera.** We Googled on “Rear View Camera” and checked the various models available. Some systems carry a price tag over a thousand dollars. We had a choice of a wireless system or a wired system in which the camera is connected by
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coaxial cable to the control unit and monitor. All the reviews we read said the wired unit gives a better quality picture than wireless units. We found Rear View Safety’s Model RVS-770613 had extremely good reviews and cost about $230. Although installation instructions were minimal, we installed the rear view system and mounted the camera on the RV top immediately above the top brake light. We mounted the monitor on the dashboard at a place where it protrudes only a little into the driver’s view of the right hand windshield wiper. The Roadtrek has a rear window so a rear view camera is not absolutely necessary, we thought, but we have found it is extremely useful when backing into campsites, maneuvering around gas stations, and for watching traffic behind in blind spots not covered by our exterior rear view mirrors. Forget the reverse-only option. Wire in the power directly. If you would like our full illustrated installation instructions, contact us at roger.brucker@sbcglobal.net.

We saw a RT with a fresnel magnifier on the rear window that would provide a wider view of the rear in case the camera is too costly. Auto stores sell them.

13-inch HDTV/DVD. Our RT came with a small tube TV, removed by the previous owner, but it was not a digital model. We measured the space to determine the best size. We purchased a 13-inch Skyworth HDTV/DVD that operates on 12 VDC. We chose the 13” model because it would fold flat rather than rest diagonally across the corner as would a larger screen model. It is made rugged for truckers and RVs. It comes with a 120-VAC adapter, but it draws less power using the 12-VDC cord plugged into the Roadtrek TV power socket. It is a Model SLC-1369A-3. We bought a Peerless swing arm mount, PA730-S, and installed that where the old TV used to be. We plugged the Skyworth TV antenna into the Roadtrek TV antenna socket using a 3-foot coaxial antenna cable from Radio Shack. The Skyworth 13” TV/DVD uses 1.2 to 1.3 amps on TV and 1.5 amps when playing a DVD. We found more than 20 TV channels in the Dayton, OH area. The manufacturer’s instructions warn against leaving the TV power plugged in when starting the vehicle as power surges can sometimes fry the electronics. Lynn sewed a quilted slipcover to protect the TV during transit and when not in use.

Virgin Mobile wireless. Virgin Mobile and several other cell phone companies offer a MiFi device that will connect to the nearest cell phone network and afford wi-fi access for email, weather, and other uses while on the road or parked. Time can be purchased $10 for ten days (100 MB) and $40 for 30 days unlimited, but plans keep changing. It uses the Sprint network, not as wide coverage as the Verizon network, but considerably cheaper than any other pay wi-fi.

Most places along the Interstate road system and elsewhere the Virgin Mobile connects to a cell tower. However, we have camped “beyond cell tower range.” An exploration of the Internet for cell phone amplifiers led us to a truckers’ solution. We bought a Wilson Electronics trucker cell phone antenna and amplifier. We mounted the antenna on a spring atop a 5/8 electrical conduit 56” long. The conduit fits inside a ¾” plastic water pipe that is attached to the spare tire bracket with U-bolts and stainless steel hardware. The wire feeds through the rear door without leaking. We hid the wire in the top rear cabinet on the left side and mounted the blue amplifier on the forward wall of
that cabinet. A 12 VDC plug connects the amplifier to power, but we replaced it with a permanently wired illuminated switch. We positioned the small amplifier atop the cabinet just over the driver’s head, hid its wire between the ceiling vinyl and cabinet tops. The main antenna ground plane is above the roof, and can be raised up to 4 feet higher in remote areas beyond the Interstates.

**Vehicle battery charger.** We keep our Roadtrek parked in our driveway winter and summer. In winter after a long cold spell we used to have to jump start the vehicle. It was a pain to shovel away the snow and hook up the smart charger. We installed a 12-volt socket on the left side of the wall below the dashboard, clearing the parking brake pedal, and ran the wiring through a grommet into the engine compartment, sealing it with silicone sealant. We clamped the positive and ground wires to the respective battery terminals. The positive wire has a fuse holder and fuse to protect the battery. Now when the weather forecast is for cold, we plug our smart charger into the new socket. We use a Battery Tender Plus by DelTran Corporation. The smart charger is powered by the 120 VAC from the house where the RV power cord is plugged in.

If the battery is weak or has corrosion on the terminals, the RT’s engine may go “click, click, click” instead of starting. We called AAA for a roadside rescue while parked next to a Walmart. We bought a battery terminal wire brush in the automotive department and cleaned the terminals and the attaching clamps. It still required a jump. We have had no further starting trouble. A trick: start in **neutral** if it won’t start in **park**.

**Door pockets.** Inside the toilet compartment door we hung a set of shoe pockets to hold toilet articles. These were modified to fit the door from a larger set of shoe pockets we found at Walmart, and fastened to the door with heavy duty Velcro hook and loop fasteners and screws. We also found a hanging pocket for the front passenger side door at Walmart. It holds the atlas, Chapstick, and other small stuff. From Amazon we found two sun-visor pockets to hold CDs, credit or discount cards, insurance card, sunglasses, etc.

**CB radio.** We inherited an old CB radio and antenna when we bought the Roadtrek. The radio was bulky and the audio reception was more noise and swearing than useful information. After becoming stopped in several miles-long traffic jams, we thought maybe a CB radio could be handy to learn the cause of the delay. We found a compact CB radio, a Midland 75-822 all-in-one unit. In addition to the 40 channels it has weather channels. Its antenna is too short to have much range, but the unit can be plugged into a window-mount antenna. A previous owner had fabricated a window mount for a short bottom-loaded CB antenna. **CAUTION:** Language may not be suitable for children!

**Rear table.** Our Roadtrek came with a large rectangular table and a small oval table. After several years of use, we changed the large table top to make it 4” longer in the back and a larger radius on the front corners to let larger users slide in easily. We made a corrugated pattern to check clearances, and took it to a counter top fabricator. We had a sheet of 5/8” SA Plywood and picked a Formica laminate pattern close to the original. The new top cost $100 plus the plywood. It uses the mounting flange from the old table.
We saw that pre 1995 Roadtreks had a second leg for the big table, but ours was missing. We borrowed a heavy chrome-plated steel table leg from a friend, and fabricated a copy of the leg from aluminum square-tube and an aluminum L-shape, obtained from Lowes. We bolted the bottom to the shaft and it works as good as new.

**Left side lower storage compartment organizers.** We bought a milk crate storage box to hold small items such as black tank tabs, latex gloves for black tank emptying, a water pressure gage, electrical plugs and adapters, and tools. We bought three round canvas storage bags from Amazon designed for jumper cables, and used them to store a jumper cable, coiled hose and an extension cord. They close with a zipper. We also bought a collapsible water bucket from Camping World.

**Fresh water.** We travel in winter when it is prudent to keep the fresh water tank empty. We found a clear plastic narrow rectangular beverage container made for refrigerator use that holds 1.5 gallons of water. We placed it on the left wall of the kitchen, where it fell over and split, spilling water everywhere. We bought another and secured it with two screw eyes and a short bungee cord, so it can’t fall over. The spigot hangs over the edge of the counter. We use it winter and summer.

Unfortunately, the plastic can develop leaks. We have purchased several replacements, and patched up leakers with silicone sealant. We may make one from Plexiglas if we can’t find a more sturdy water container. (The latest one from Arrow seems to be holding water.)

**Vacuum cleaner.** We bought a recommended Bissell Model 33A1 Pet Hair Eraser hand vacuum cleaner that runs on 120 VAC. It picks up dirt on floors and seats.

**Gimbal-mounted fans.** We bought two white Sirocco 360° cabin fans (Model 807CA-WBX by Caframo) 12 V. Made for marine use, they redirect the A/C output. We mounted one on the left side just aft of the kitchen cabinet near the ceiling to direct cool air to the rear seating and sleeping area. We mounted the second on the bulkhead near the monitor panel to circulate air up front. The fans have 3 speeds and can be set for 2, 4, or 6 hours of operation, with automatic shutoff. We wired the fans into nearby 12 VDC wires. Source: [www.sandiegomarine.com](http://www.sandiegomarine.com)  $85.

One of the fans quit working. We called the factory and they sent us a replacement to us free of charge.

**Pet water dish.** Since we often travel with our Standard Poodles, we have two spill-proof pet water dishes on the floor. Made by Valterra, they have a locking lid to keep the water in place even on bumpy roads.

**Tune-up at 100,000 miles.** Some Roadtrek owners recommended a complete tune-up of the Dodge 3500 at 100,000 miles. This included new spark plugs, new wires, new rotor and cap, and replacement of transmission fluid. Erratic fuel gage has been a problem in our Dodge, so we replaced the fuel pump sender and fuel filter because fuel pumps were
known to die after 100,000 miles. We had the differential drained and refilled at 90,000 because it seemed noisy. We have the tires rotated at recommended intervals and change oil every 5,000 miles. Our 1995 Dodge is very reliable.

**Extra shade.** We found two extruded plastic awning channels at Camping World. One will slide into the crank-out awning channel and provide two channels. We ordered a 90% sun blocking fabric awning drop for the awning that slides into one of the new channels. The awning drop is deployed by stretching it out and staking it down through grommet holes we had installed every two feet in the bottom of the side curtain.

We also bought two lengths of white plastic awning extrusion. From one length we cut a piece to fit over the rear door. We cemented it with automotive trim cement and screwed it to the fiberglass RT top above the rear door. Lynn sewed an awning to fit the channel. We found two different awning fabrics that we liked and went with the RV blue and white exterior decor. So the awning is double sided, and we can slide it in the channel with either side up. That was such an easy addition that we cemented a length of plastic channel to the driver’s side extending from the kitchen window to the end of the left rear side window. Lynn sewed a side awning of the same two awning fabrics. Both awnings have grommets at the bottom for guy cords to ground stakes. The larger awning uses tent fiberglass replacement poles for structure and tent poles with guy ropes at outer corners.

**Handiest screw driver.** A stubby screwdriver along with six bits of your choice belongs in every Roadtrek tool pouch. The handle comes in your choice of colors and holds five bits around its perimeter and the sixth but in its shaft collet. The Picquic Stubby Custom Screwdriver that we bought contains the following bits: Square drive #0, #1, #2, #3 square bit (fits most Roadtrek Robertson screws, Phillips #2, and Slotted 3/16”. Price was $10.70, shipping $3.58. [http://www.firehawktech.com](http://www.firehawktech.com). We liked the screwdriver so well we bought two more in larger sizes for the RT.

**Fiberglass top shines like new.** We waxed the Roadtrek in April 2011 and it began to look dull again. We found POLI GLOW, a non-wax product for restoring the gel coat on plastic boats. It was pricy, $75, for a kit that contains a bottle of Poli Glow, Poli Prep, an applicator, and a worthless scrubber. You dilute the Poli Prep 2:1 and spray it on the plastic. Use the green side of a scrubber sponge to get the black stain off, and rinse with a hose. After the plastic dries, apply 4 to 6 coats of Poli Glow with the applicator. It is easy to do and no rubbing is required. At the end of the process the fiberglass looks like new again, and the shine will last a more than a year. Google on Poli Glow. We bought it from Amazon. It is well worth the money, but the job takes a lot of effort.

**Paper towel holder.** Where to put the paper towel roll? After several unsatisfactory tries, we found a chrome-plated paper towel holder at Camping World. It is a simple bar with a hook on one end. A bracket fits over the top uppermost cabinet over the stove. It keeps the roll from unrolling and is out of the way.

The chrome towel holder has popped off the door several times on rough roads. We have replaced it with two screw eyes in the same location and a 11” bungy cord
between them that passes through the core of the paper towels. The 11-inch bungy cord is threaded through the towel roll core and will hold the roll snugly against the cabinet door and keep it from unrolling. We located the paper towels on the long top cabinet door over the stove and sink just behind the place where the privacy wall intersects the cabinet over the stove.

**Foot mat for outside door.** We bought a GYPSY Resilient Vinyl Loop Mat 3’x 4’ to serve as a durable outside landing mat while camping. Ours is blue, but other colors and sizes are available. Rain does not affect it and it rolls up for storage.

**Awning leaf trap.** The groove between the awning and the body is a trap for leaves and twigs. If you wash your RV the leaf fragments may run down the side. Following a RT owner’s suggestion, we purchased a 20 foot roll of 1/2” x 3/8” clear vinyl tubing at Lowes. It cost about $6.50 for the roll, but 10 feet cut from a large roll could cost more. We used a plastic pie server and cleaned out the groove, followed by water hosing the groove clean. Then we stuffed a 10 foot piece into the groove. Finger pressure worked for most of the groove but we used a screwdriver to force the tubing into the narrower parts of the groove. Trim the ends with tin snips or a utility knife. No more side leaf stain.

**Sponge storage.** Sink sponges are always in the way. We found some sponge holders with suction cups for holding the sponges inside the sink. But the sponges were always in the way. We removed the suction cups and replaced them with plastic bag clamps, and clamped them to the marine board soap keeper above the sink.

While boondocking in a Walmart parking lot we found that all windows were blacked out with Reflexit except the kitchen window. We made two Reflexit overlapping panels and installed them next to the kitchen window. Slide the panel for a little daylight.

**Extra power outlets.** After draping power cords awkwardly through the RT, we decided to install 120 VAC and 12 VDC outlets on the passenger side below the long seat and beside the gas furnace. We removed the third seat cushion and drilled into the toilet compartment below the toilet deck. We drilled another hole from below the toilet deck into the space next to the passenger side wheel well. This provided a direct path for splicing into the electrical outlet below the third seat. We fished a #14 Romex pair through the two holes and mounted a shallow box and outlet next to the furnace. We tested with a multimeter and found a live 12 VDC wire in the furnace wiring harness. We spliced into that and a ground, and a new 12 V outlet next to the new 120 VAC outlet. We spliced in a 7 amp fuse into the 12 V feed line. It was an easy improvement.

**Porch lights.** We found a LED porch light and bought a blue illuminated switch, but we did not install either of them. Instead we found LED strip lights in 16-foot lengths. The ones we selected are 12 VDC waterproof and come in a 16-foot roll. We also bought a 12 V dimmer and several jacks. We mounted the dimmer on the trough just above the passenger seat after installing a jack plug in the dimmer faceplate. The dimmer and jack were wired into the passenger side map light. The strip lights have an adhesive strip that peels off. We cleaned the underside of the awning with 404 and mounted 11 feet of strip
light on it. You can cut the strip in designated places. We made a short power cord and a
long power cord to plug into the dimmer jack. The short cord is for use when the awning
is not extended. The long cord reaches from the dimmer jack to the outward extension of
the awning. The dimmer has an OFF position and increases the brightness of the LEDs
from very dim to dazzling white. Set it on dim for campground romantic ambience.
Several brands are available from Amazon. Ours is HitLights LED Flexible Lighting.

**Computer storage box.** Storage of our two laptops was haphazard until Roger built a
wood box to fit between the driver’s and passenger’s seats. The box is 5/8” plywood 20”
wide x 26” long x 7” high. There is a slot in the rear end through which the laptops and
their power cords can be slipped. There is a compartment in the front to hold a plastic
box containing a small printer and writing supplies. We take our dogs many times so pile
one, two, or three foam dog pads on top of the box. They just fit.

**UPDATES:** As we gain experience (good or bad) we will update this list of
improvements. We will be happy to email it without charge upon request. Ask for the
latest edition at roger.brucker@sbcglobal.net. You can send this list to others without
permission. We welcome a description of your RT improvements!

Roger Brucker & Lynn Brucker