

DEC 9 2009 DOT Auto Safety Hotline				FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 100148	
Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire To Report Vehicle Safety Defects 1-888-DASH-2-DOT (1-888-327-4236) INTERNET:www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline				Date Received 16-NOV-2009	
U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration				Repository ☐	
				Reference No. 10292361	
OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)					
Name				Daytime Telephone Number	
Address				E-mail Address	
City		State	Zip Code	Evening Telephone Number	
ARNAUDVILLE		LA			
The information you provide will be used to identify potential safety-related defects. We may share your information with the applicable vehicle manufacturer during an investigation or recall in accordance with the routine uses described in the agency's Privacy Act notice. See 49 FR 53971 (Sep. 3, 2004).					
VEHICLE INFORMATION					
17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side 4VZBN2396YC			Make NEWMAR	Model DUTCH STAR	Model Year 2000
Date Purchased 3-MAR-2000	Dealer's Name and Telephone Number Coachlight RV Sales 417 3587444			Engine: No: Cylinders 6	Fuel Type: Diesel
Original Owner ☒	Dealer's City Carthage MO		State MO	Zip Code 68436	
Transmission Type Hydramatic	☒ Antilock Brakes	Powertrain Allison Transmission Eaton Rear End	Multiple Failure:		Incident Date(s) 25-MAY-2005 18-Sept-2009
☒ Cruise Control					
FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION					
Vehicle Component Code: 021000 SUSPENSION: FRONT				Failure Mileage 43000 63000	Failure Speed 0 0
ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE					
Tire Make		Tire Model (Name or Number)		Tire Size (Example P215/65R15)	
DOT No. (Example: DOTM19ABC036)		☐ Original Equipment ☐ Prior Repair		Failure Location:	
Tire Component Code				Tire Failure Type:	
ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE					
Make:		Date Manufactured:		Model No./Name:	
Seat Type:		Installation System:			
Child Seat Component Code:		Failed Part:			
APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION					
(Please describe in detail the incident(s), failure(s), crash(es), and injury(ies).)					
Crash ☐ Yes ☒ No	Fire ☐ Yes ☒ No	Number of Persons Injured	Number of Deaths	Reported to Police N	
Narrative Description of Incident(S), Crash(es), and Injury(ies). Please describe (1) events leading up to the failure, (2) failure and its consequences, and (3) what was done to correct the failure; i.e., parts repaired or replaced (and if old part is available).					
TL*THE CONTACT OWNS A 2000 NEWMAR DUTCH STAR RV TRAILER. HE REPLACED THE TIE ROD PARTS 16 TIMES THE BALL JOINT COMPONENTS WERE REPLACED 8 TIMES IN A NINE YEARS WHICH ARE ALL A PART OF THE STEERING FRONT SUSPENSION. THE CONTACT WAS ONLY REQUIRED TO PAY FOR LABOR. THE MANUFACTURER CONFIRMED THAT THE PARTS ARE WERE REPLACED DUE TO NORMAL WEAR AND TEAR AND WERE NOT DEFECTIVE. THE PARTS ARE NOT RELATED TO A RECALL OR WARRANTY. THE FAILURE MILEAGE WAS 43,000 AND THE CURRENT MILEAGE IS 64,000. (See ATTACHED sheet for corrections to the above information)					
Include, if available: Police/Fire Department Report, Photos, and Repair Invoice.					
ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY					
The Privacy Act of 1974-Public Law 93-579 This information is requested pursuant to authority vested in the National Highway Traffic Safety Act and subsequent amendments. You are under no obligation to respond this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist the NHTSA in determining whether a Manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If the NHTSA proceeds with administrative enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.					

I am the original owner of a 2000 Newmar Dutch Star diesel pusher motorhome on a Spartan Chassis. My background is that of a diesel mechanic, and I have always made maintenance on my RVs a priority. In 2005, I found that all the tire rod ends and ball joints of the RV had no protective rubber or very little rubber left. The rubber is for safety; it keeps the grease in and dirt, sand, water, etc., from wearing down the tire rod ends and ball joints, which in time could cause an accident. At the time my RV had only 43,000 miles.

When I contacted the Newmar company, the representative instructed me to call Spartan. The Spartan representative instructed me to contact their supplier, Granning Suspension. Honoring their 5-year warranty, Granning agreed to supply replacement parts, but they refused to pay for the labor installation of these parts.

On August 4, 2009, I again found that all tire rod ends and ball joints had no protective rubber left. I had traveled an additional 20,000 miles. I could not believe that in four years the problem had occurred once more. Tire rod ends and ball joints usually last the life of the vehicle.

I called Newmar and was told to contact Spartan, who told me to contact their supplier. It was "chase the dog's tail" anew. The Granning representative instructed me to have the RV front end inspected at a front end shop. As expected, all ball joints and tire rod ends had to be replaced. Granning then sent replacement parts at no charge, but refused to pay for labor replacement.

I question having to personally pay for replacement labor on parts that seem to be defective factory parts. These parts are just falling apart. I have had to replace a total of sixteen tire rod ends and eight ball joints in nine years. If this is not proof of a factory defect, what is? As of this date, the Newmar and the Spartan companies continue to refuse to acknowledge that there is a problem with RV tire rod ends.

I am an active member of the Louisiana chapter of the Newmar owners' club. At a recent rally, I found that nine RVs with a Spartan Chassis (years 2000 to 2005) had some or all tire rod ends and ball joints needing replacement. Some of these RVs are going through their second set of tire rod ends and ball joints replacements too. And we all have had to pay labor replacement. (See attached RV list.)

I do recommend that any RV with a Spartan Chassis be inspected for front end rubber missing. If the protective rubbers are not needed, the factory would not have installed them on the tire rod ends and ball joints. Traveling with defective equipment is not safe and could cause an accident. The other RV owners mentioned above will verify that there is a problem of defective tire rod ends.

I sincerely and respectfully ask that the National Highway and Traffic Safety Association check on this problem.

Sincerely

Arnaudville, LA

Ph.

E-mail:

Attachment: 1

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INVOICE

LAFAYETTE SPRING Co, INC.

Sales • Service • Parts
(337) 235-1142

1517 West Willow
P.O. Box 60757
Lafayette, LA 70596-0757

Springs for Automobiles
Trucks & Trailers
Complete Wheel Alignment



11

ARNAUDVILLE, LA

THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS !!

CASH

INVOICE #	066924	0
DATE	09/18/09	
TIME	10:21am	

TICKET	SLSMN	P.O. NUMBER	TERMS	ID	BILL ACCT.	PAGE		
44524	13		CASH SALE	3	11	63,149 miles 1 of 2		
QTY.	BKO	LINE	PART NO.	CORE	JOBBER	EACH	EXTENDED AMOUNT	
			N035766-LA, NEWMAR, DUTCHSTAR, 2000, Ser#:YC035442					
		lab	Labor (12)	1.00	hr @	320.00/hr	320.00	
			REMOVED BOTH FRT STEER AXLE TIRES TO REPLACE UPPER & LOWER BALL JOINTS & TIE ROD ENDS. REMOVED HUBS & SPINDLES ON BOTH SIDE.					
			REMOVED OLD BALL JOINTS FROM SPINDLES & INSTALLED NEW UPPER & LOWER BALL JOINTS IN SPINDLES PER GRANNING SPECS.					
			?					
			REINSTALLED SPINDLES ON MOTORHOME.					
		lab	Labor (43)	1.00	hr @	360.00/hr	360.00	
			REMOVED BOTH OUTER TIE ROD ASSEMBLIES & MIDDLE RELAY ROD.					
			INSTALLED NEW TIE ROD ENDS IN ALL 3 RODS & REINSTALLED RODS ON VEHICLE. CONFIRMED ROD LENGTH WITH PRINTS & ADJUSTED TO SPECS.					
		lab	Labor (44)	1.00	hr @	320.00/hr	320.00	
			INSTALLED NEW INNER & OUTER WHEEL BEARINGS IN BOTH FRT HUBS.					
			REINSTALLED HUBS WITH NEW WHEEL SEALS & FILLED HUBS WITH OIL.					
			REINSTALLED FRT STEER TIRES & TORQUED WHEEL LUGS.					
		FWAL	FRONT WHEEL ALIGNMENT (37)				120.00	
			GAUGED CAMBER, CASTER & SET TOE ON FRT STEER AXLE. VEHICLE DROVE STRAIGHT. CENTERED STEERING WHEEL.					
			?					
			WHEN VEHICLE WAS TEST DRIVEN ABS LIGHT WAS ON. RAN SCAN & LFT FRT SENSOR WAS BAD. REMOVED OLD SENSOR & INSTALLED NEW SENSOR.					
			TEST DROVE & ABS LIGHT IS OFF.					
2	0	PDC	3782	BCA BEARING	.00	25.31	50.62	
2	0	PDC	3720	BCA RACE	.00	11.93	23.86	
2	0	PDC	HM212049	WHEEL BEARING	.00	32.05	64.10	
2	0	PDC	HM212011	BEARING RACER	.00	16.64	33.28	
6	0	flag	CTP180200	1-8 X 2 COTTER	.00	.06	.36	
			BALL JOINTS, TIE ROD ENDS & WHEEL SEALS WERE SUPPLIED					
			BY GRANNING SUSPENSION					
SALES		CREDITS	UNITS	ITEMS	FRGHT/HDL	CORE	LABOR	SUBTOTAL

Continued

Received by X _____

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INVOICE # 066924 0
DATE 05-18-88
TIME 10:21am

TICKET	SLSMN	P.O. NUMBER	TERMS	ID	BILL ACCT.	PAGE	
44524	13		CASH SALE	3	11	63,149 miles	2 of 2
QTY.	BKO	LINE	PART NO.	CORE	JOBBER	EACH	EXTENDED AMOUNT
2	0	MISC	HAZ-MAT HAZ-MAT DISPOSAL	.00		10.00	20.00
1	0	MISC	ABS SENSOR MISC PARTS	.00		69.83	69.83
			MILEAGE-63151				

#

SALES	CREDITS	UNITS	ITEMS	FRGHT/HDL	CORE	LABOR	SUBTOTAL	
262.05	.00	17	7	.00	.00	1120.00	262.05	
CHECK: 1492.61					(LA) 55.28			110.56
					(LA) 55.28			.00
						TOTAL		1492.61
						Cash		

Received by

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SPARTAN FRONT END REPAIRS

OWNER	CHASSIS #	SERIAL #	NEWMAR YEAR//MODEL
[REDACTED] Arnaudville, La [REDACTED] Ph. [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] 4VZBN2396YC	[REDACTED]	2000 Dutch Star
*Note: Had all tire rod ends & ball joints changed in 2005(Cost \$400); had tire rod ends & ball joints changed again on 9/16/09 (Cost \$1000). Difference of 20,000 miles since first repair.			
[REDACTED] Sunset, LA [REDACTED] Ph. [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	2001 Dutch Star
*Note: His RV is a second-hand, and the tire rod ends and ball joints have never been changed. All rubbers are missing.			
[REDACTED] Sunset, LA [REDACTED] Ph. [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	2000 Mountain Air
*Note: Had all the tire rod ends and ball joints changed in 2005(Cost \$400); now in process of having all the tire rod ends and ball joints changed again (cost \$1000). Difference of 14,000 miles since first repair.			
[REDACTED] Kenner, LA [REDACTED] Ph. [REDACTED]	4VZBN23901C	[REDACTED]	2001 Mountain Air
*Note: Had the ball joints and some tire rod ends changed in 2006. We checked the tire rod ends and ball joints (9/14/09); the tire rod ends have to be replaced.			
[REDACTED] Hammond, LA [REDACTED] Ph. [REDACTED]	MMGT	[REDACTED]	2002 Mountain Air
*Note: All tire rod ends and ball joints rubbers are bad. Ray had a front end shop check the front end and was told that all are bad.			
[REDACTED] Hammond, LA [REDACTED] Ph. [REDACTED]	*Note: Had his RV front end changed at the Spartan factory (August 2009)		

[REDACTED] 4VZVT10935C [REDACTED] 2005 Mountain Air
Baton Rouge, LA [REDACTED]
Ph. [REDACTED] *Note: His RV tire rod ends rubbers are bad.

[REDACTED] 4VZBN1B984C [REDACTED] 2004 Kountry Star
Ragley, LA [REDACTED]
Ph. [REDACTED] *Note: The RV ball joints rubbers are bad.

[REDACTED] 4VZBN24901C [REDACTED] 2001 Dutch Star
2001
[REDACTED]
Prairieville, LA [REDACTED]
Ph. [REDACTED] *Note: The RV tire rod ends and ball joints rubbers are missing.
