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**Airstream® Debuts AIR Lab**

*Product development staff triples at company known for prioritizing innovation and constant improvement*

**Jackson Center, Ohio (Nov. 1, 2017)** – Airstream, maker of the iconic riveted aluminum travel trailer, recently launched AIR (Airstream Innovation and Research) Lab, an expanded research & development center at its manufacturing plant in Jackson Center, Ohio.

The 22,000-square-foot facility is the latest manifestation of Airstream’s historic commitment to innovation. This culture was established by founder Wally Byam in the 1930s and is still embraced by every segment of the Airstream community: from corporate management to factory craftsmen to Airstream owners.

“Airstream has been committed to being on the cutting edge since Wally realized that the curves, aluminum and rivets used in making the sleekest aircraft were the answer to building an aerodynamic, durable travel trailer,” says Airstream President and CEO Bob Wheeler. “We are humble stewards of that tradition.”

AIR Lab doubles the previous space used for testing and development, and includes numerous work bays. The R&D staff has also grown to triple its previous level. That team includes engineers, designers and former production workers with deep knowledge of the product. But this group is just the tip of the innovation spear at Airstream.

Customers play a key role on the Airstream innovation team. The company has a strong bond with owners of its products, and they, too, are encouraged to offer feedback and suggestions based on their widely varied travel experiences. Indeed, the company often prioritizes its efforts based on owner input, designing to the customer experience and focusing on how to improve it.

One example: climate control. Airstreamers are always looking for better and quieter HVAC, so the R&D team devoted a great deal of attention in that area, eventually developing a nearly silent air conditioning system with Quietstream™.

“We think of talking to our customers as a vital part of the R&D process,” says Wheeler.

Airstream associates are also empowered by the company’s culture to offer ideas and insight to improve both the product and the business.

“Everyone is encouraged to contribute ideas,” says VP of Product Development and Engineering McKay Featherstone. “We have a lot of passionate people here. Folks who work the [production] line will say, ‘Hey, give us a new concept for window closeout. It’s got to be beautiful, lightweight, and



functional.’ But those people are also going to play around and come up with something on their own. They innovate.”

Airstream’s iconic curved aluminum look hasn’t changed much in eighty-plus years, and with good reason. Founder Byam didn’t believe in change for its own sake or as a marketing tool. He believed in constant improvement. So, while it may be hard for the uninitiated to tell a 1988 Airstream from its 2018 counterpart, the newer model incorporates a long list of improvements. Refinements to the layout, frame, wiring, waste system and suspension make for an ever-improving experience for Airstream owners.

Among the company’s historic industry-firsts are: flush toilets, pressurized water systems and hot water heaters, all designed specifically for travel trailers. Today’s R&D focus builds on that tradition of meeting consumers’ wants and expectations – both big and small.

In addition to steadily improving existing core systems, Airstream innovators continue in the Wally Byam tradition by working to integrate the latest technologies into its products. Among the results of these efforts is a reimagining of the customer experience, and a next generation of smaller Airstreams that employ composite materials and inspired design to create trailers, such as Nest and Basecamp, that can be towed by small SUVs. New manufacturing techniques have been developed to further boost Airstream’s already unsurpassed durability, quality and strength.

When we hear the term “iconic,” we tend to think of an unchanging classic. But as Airstream understands, in our modern world it’s one thing to become iconic, and quite another to remain so. The latter requires hard work, connection and a commitment to innovation. Airstream has these things; it was born that way.

### **About Airstream**

Airstream, manufacturer of the iconic “silver bullet” travel trailer, is the longest-tenured recreational vehicle manufacturer in North America. Following founder Wally Byam’s credo, “Let’s not make changes, let’s only make improvements,” Airstream has remained a timeless classic. Byam’s vision for Airstream trailers was to use these design- and quality-driven products to allow people to dream, travel and explore the open road. A subsidiary of Thor Industries, Airstream is based in Jackson Center, Ohio, where a team of craftsmen remains dedicated to preserving the brand’s legendary reputation for quality and innovation. For more information, please visit <http://www.airstream.com/>, call 877-596-6111 or contact Airstream, Inc., 419 West Pike Street, P.O. Box 629, Jackson Center, Ohio 45334.

More news about Airstream, our dealers and current travel trailer and touring coach models can be found at <http://www.airstream.com/>. For the latest news on Airstream, “like” us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on Twitter [@Airstream\\_Inc](#).

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