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UNIQUE DISPENSER SHOWCASES PROPANE'S VERSATILITY

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MERGER MINDSET

Propane retailers take us inside the acquisitions process, explain their reasons for selling

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Don Vicari
General Manager, Ebbetts Pass Gas Service

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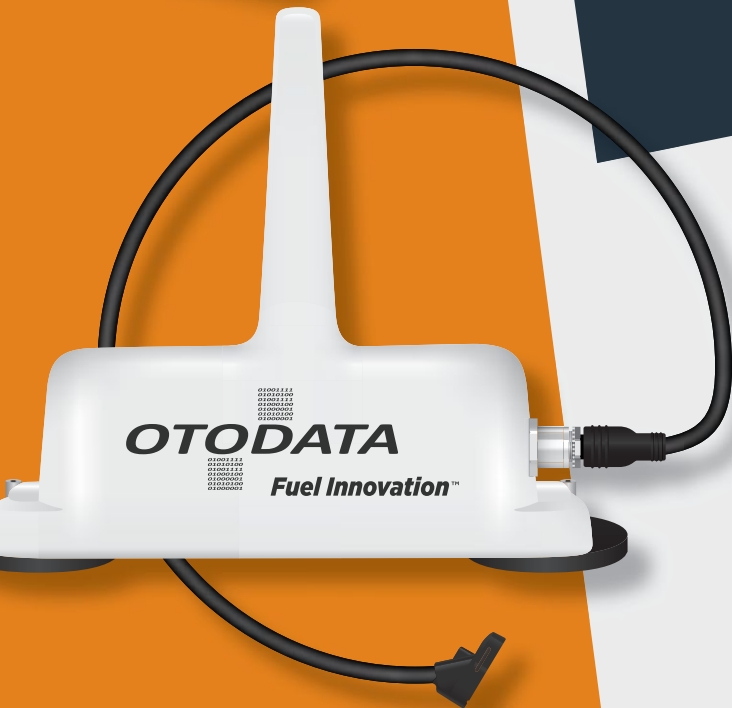


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“This dispenser will bring the public – cars, fleet trucks, lawn mowers, pickups, school buses, you name it – to one location for demonstrations, education and training.”

DAVE WAGER
Minnesota Propane Association

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Jim Ferrell writes about the challenges that Ferrellgas faced in recent years and how the company is now positioned for the future.

lpgasmagazine.com/jim-ferrell

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ON THE COVER

Leaders of recently acquired companies explain what goes into the process of selling. Clockwise from top left: Photos courtesy of Kevin Irland, Paraco Gas, ThompsonGas; Dimiraira/iStock / Getty Images Plus/Getty Images (background)

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EDITOR IN CHIEF
Brian Richesson
216-706-3748 / brichesson@northcoastmedia.net

MANAGING EDITOR
Ellen Kriz
216-706-3764 / ekriz@northcoastmedia.net

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Carly McFadden
216-363-7930 / cmcfadden@northcoastmedia.net

ART DIRECTOR
Kim Traum
216-706-3779 / ktraum@northcoastmedia.net

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Courtney Townsend
216-363-7931 / ctownsend@northcoastmedia.net

▶ Production

PRODUCTION SERVICES MANAGER
Chris Anderson
216-978-5341 / canderson@northcoastmedia.net

▶ Business

PUBLISHER
Brian Kanaba
216-706-3745 / Fax: 216-706-3711
bkanaba@northcoastmedia.net

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
Kelli Velasquez
216-706-3767 / Fax: 253-484-3080
kvelasquez@northcoastmedia.net

ACCOUNT MANAGER
Nick Hartman
216-675-6000 / Fax: 216-706-3711
nhartman@northcoastmedia.net

EXECUTIVE SALES ASSISTANT
Petra Turko
216-706-3768 / pturko@northcoastmedia.net

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & EVENTS
Michelle Mitchell
216-363-7922 / mmitchell@northcoastmedia.net



EVENT MANAGER
Allison Blong
216-363-7936 / ablong@northcoastmedia.net

MARKETING & SALES MANAGER, BUYERS GUIDE
Emily Adkins
216-675-6006 / eadkins@northcoastmedia.net

SR. AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
Antoinette Sanchez-Perkins
216-706-3750 / Fax: 702-586-2790
asanchez-perkins@northcoastmedia.net

MANAGER, DATA & WEB DEVELOPMENT
Jesse Malcmacher
216-363-7939 / jmalcmacher@northcoastmedia.net

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▶ Corporate

PRESIDENT AND CEO
Kevin Stoltman
216-706-3740 / kstoltman@northcoastmedia.net

VP FINANCE & OPERATIONS
Steve Galperin
216-706-3705 / sgalperin@northcoastmedia.net

VP GRAPHIC DESIGN & PRODUCTION
Pete Seltzer
216-706-3737 / pseltzer@northcoastmedia.net

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
Marty Whitford

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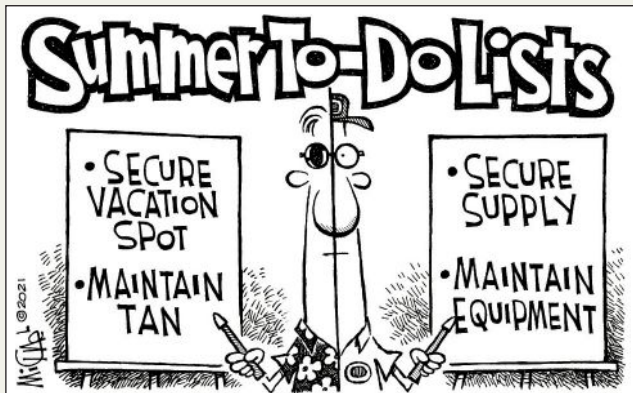
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BY LEO MICHAEL



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BRIAN RICHESSON // EDITOR IN CHIEF

Pressing issues

PROPANE INDUSTRY PLANS, PROJECTS AND CHANGES SET IN MOTION

If 2020 was the year of the pandemic, with impacts felt in our personal and professional lives, 2021 should be our bounce-back year, right?

Listening to propane industry leaders so far this year, there's reason to believe brighter days are ahead.

Here are four points of discussion from the Propane Education & Research Council's (PERC) virtual spring meeting that should focus our attention on new opportunities and other pressing issues for propane.

Propane's environmental message:

The wheels continue to turn toward an industrywide rollout of a unified environmental messaging plan.

PERC's environmental task force has been meeting for over a year to develop the concepts, messaging and accompanying material that will communicate propane's benefits to a variety of audiences and educate those advocating on the industry's behalf.

"We're repositioning ourselves as an energy source that accelerates decarbonization," says Blossman Gas President and CEO Stuart Weidie, chair of the task force.

Project leaders cite the end of June as the target rollout of the campaign, though Weidie makes it clear "June 30 is not the end of this process."

"I would consider it the beginning of the implementation of what has been created," he says, teasing to "a dramatic departure" from how the industry has

positioned itself in past years.

PERC is also working to unveil a new propane brand identity to coincide with the rollout. In the process, it's resetting the roles of its agency partners and moving away from the red, white and blue eagle image and "Propane: Clean American Energy" tagline.

Positioning propane in government:

The need for a fresh, provocative message by our industry about our product is evident when you hear Steve Kaminski, president and CEO of the National Propane Gas Association (NPGA), present about what's happening in the nation's capital.

Several pieces of proposed federal legislation related to climate and infrastructure are packed full of electrification projects and emissions goals.

"Every piece of legislation coming through the federal government has a massive climate component tied to it," Kaminski says.

The challenging environment still may offer opportunities for the industry, such as promoting the inclusion of propane in electrification programs, "but they are heavy lifts," he says.

Meanwhile, NPGA has pushed to protect the industry at the state level by supporting anti-gas-ban laws.

The Cummins contract: PERC leaders expected to sign a contract with Cummins soon after the April 22 council meeting. What does that mean? The industry is moving a step closer to having a 6.7-liter propane-fueled engine from an established U.S. manufacturer for on- and off-road applications.

"I expect it to be positive for the industry, to take bobtails off of diesel

and move them to propane," says Daniel Dixon of AmeriGas, the outgoing chairman of PERC. "It's great for the ESG (environmental, social and corporate governance) story, and it will be great for the industry."

PERC President and CEO Tucker Perkins believes the propane-fueled bobtail would be only the beginning for the versatile engine. A \$12 million funding request approved by the council late last year aims to commercialize the engine by 2024.

Growth opportunities: Autogas market growth is part of PERC's 2020-22 strategic plan, but so are commercialization efforts to create overall growth opportunities for the industry.

Councilors discussed a host of other areas ripe for development, such as agriculture, manufactured housing, material handling, power generation and water heating. Some projects are already in the works.

With all of the doubt created by COVID-19, the industry's goals seem certain due to one underlying factor that hasn't changed: U.S. propane supply remains abundant. Only 29 percent of the propane supplied in 2020 was used domestically, Bruce Leonard of Targa Resources shared during the meeting.

It's time to take advantage of these dynamics to create more domestic demand. With so many forces at work in today's energy environment, there's little time to waste. **LPG**

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EAB insights

LPG EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD Q&A

What are your biggest plans for the rest of this year?



Michelle Bimson Maggi

Vice President – Law,
AmeriGas Propane,
King of Prussia, PA

“On a personal note, my biggest plans include selling my winery and vineyard to reinvest my time in outdoor sports and travel, as COVID restrictions are lightened and lifted. Business plans include working with the propane industry to continue the development of a reliable supply chain for renewable propane and on other tactics to combat electrification.”



Dale Delay

President,
Cost Management Solutions,
Livingston, TX

“We are hopeful that every day will bring us back to ‘business as usual’ prior to COVID-19. We did not know how good things were until they were taken away by the pandemic.”



Patrick Hyland

Director of Industry
Communications,
PERC,
Cleveland, OH



Tom Jaenicke

VP of Propane
Marketing Services,
Warm Thoughts
Communications,
Charlevoix, MI



Greg Noll

Executive Vice President,
PMAK,
Topeka, KS

“Barring a spike in the COVID-19 numbers, we plan to reach out to the communities we serve with small group activities we can use to invite people into our demonstration kitchen.”



Larry Osgood

President, Consulting
Solutions LLC,
Monument, CO

“My plan is to continue Zooming as needed and blend in more travel where appropriate – this with the priority goal of demonstrating that, in most applications and areas, propane is a lower carbon dioxide- and pollutant-producing energy source than electricity.”



Jim Renaldo

President, Renaldo
Sales & Service Inc.,
North Collins, NY

“I had an expansion project that we had to put on hold. Now, the plan is to pick up the pieces and see if they still fit.”



Dan Richardson

President & CEO,
Conger LP Gas,
Tifton, GA



Mike Walters

Vice President,
Safety & Fleet,
Superior Energy Systems,
Columbia Station, OH

“Try to get back to some sense of normalcy, but do we really even know what that means yet?”



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Mark Wagus
Director of Acquisitions, Star Group, LP
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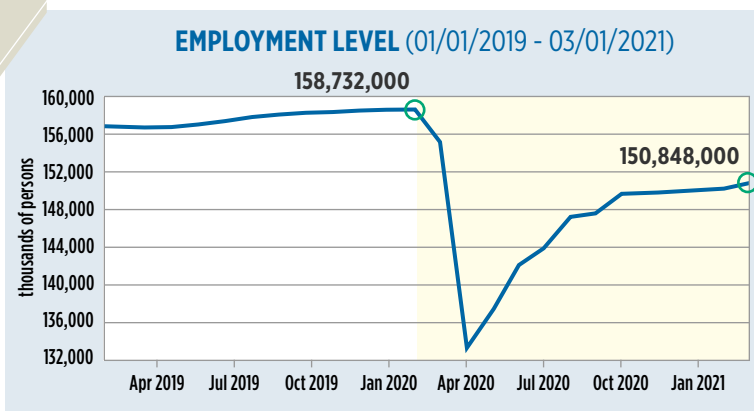
Q What tax laws impact the mergers and acquisitions field?

Over the past several years, sellers in the propane industry have had tremendous opportunity to take advantage of the market environment. Tax rules and interest rates have helped drive this environment.

With a new administration in place and the exponential growth of U.S. debt, retailers need to assess the ideas circulating in Congress.

The big-ticket item being discussed now is an increase in the capital gains tax. President Joe Biden's tax proposal includes hiking the capital gains tax for households making more than \$1 million. Currently, capital gains are taxed at 20 percent. The proposal aims to tax these gains at an individual's highest tax rate: 39.6 percent.

Take a company that sold for \$5 million. At the old tax rate, the business owner would net approximately \$4 million. With the new tax proposal, that same deal would net the



Note: U.S. recessions are shaded; the most recent end date is undecided.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, fred.stlouisfed.org

Employment levels have rebounded since the pandemic started in early 2020.

seller \$3.02 million, or 24.5 percent less.

Bonus depreciation, like Section 179 of the IRS tax code, allows immediate depreciation of 100 percent of certain assets. One major difference between Section 179 and bonus depreciation is the limit at which you can depreciate. Section 179 is limited to just over \$1 million, while bonus depreciation isn't capped. Bonus depreciation amounts were changed in 2017 from 50 percent as part of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. A buyer could purchase a company and write off nearly 100 percent of the purchase, reducing tax liability.

This tax incentive will begin to phase out. Only 80 percent can be depreciated in 2023, 60 percent in 2024, 40 percent in 2025 and 20 percent in 2026 before being fully phased out.

According to seasonally-adjusted employment levels provided by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, about 150.8 million people were employed in March 2021. Prior to the pandemic, in February 2020, employment levels were about 158.7 million. While major progress has been made, there is still a way to go.

As for inflation, Statista projects annual inflation of 0.62 percent in 2020 and 2.24 percent in 2021. The consumer price index (CPI) was 264.793 in the first quarter of 2021 versus 257.989 in the first quarter of 2020, an increase of 2.63 percent. Second-quarter 2021 should see a significant hike compared to the lowest CPI figure during the pandemic.

The Federal Reserve has stated rates will stay the same until employment is back to pre-pandemic levels and the U.S. experiences moderate inflation above 2 percent for a period of time.

Many sellers ask us if now is a good time to sell their business. It isn't a bad time, but it depends on your goals. Buyers have access to cheap capital because of low interest rates. Currently, tax rates remain low, and investors are seeking to acquire propane companies.

At some point, tax rates will go up. If not in 2021, there is a good chance it will happen in 2022 or 2023. **LPG**



Cooper Wilburn is a consultant at Propane Resources. He can be reached at cooper@propaneresources.com or 913-262-0196.



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A man with short, graying hair, wearing a dark brown suit jacket over a light blue button-down shirt, stands in front of a blurred cityscape. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background shows a building with many windows.

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Carlton Revere
*Former President & CEO
Revere Gas*

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industry

UPDATE

INDUSTRY NEWS & NUMBERS

Ferrellgas Partners completes financial restructuring

Ferrellgas Partners LP completed its previously announced restructuring transactions, which strengthen its balance sheet while allowing it to continue as an employee-owned enterprise, according to the company.

"I am pleased to announce that we have followed through, as promised, on our commitment to strengthen our balance sheet and remain an employee-owned business that will continue to provide exceptional service to our more than 700,000 nationwide customers well into the future," says James E. Ferrell, chairman of the Ferrellgas board of directors, and also the president and CEO, in a company statement. "This is a significant milestone for the company and its nearly 4,500 employees, and serves as irrefutable evidence that Ferrellgas, and its leading tank exchange brand, Blue Rhino, will continue as a leader in the U.S. propane industry."

Ferrellgas Partners had entered into a Transaction Support Agreement (TSA) with a majority of the holders of the unsecured notes that were due June 2020.

The TSA included a comprehensive restructuring plan – for both the parent master limited partnership to address the maturity of its notes and for Ferrellgas LP, its operating entity, to address over \$2 billion in debt obligations.

Based on the latest transactions, according to the partnership, Ferrellgas LP has successfully:

- Established a new \$350 million senior secured revolving credit facility.
- Issued \$1.475 billion in new senior unsecured notes due in 2026 and 2029.
- Sold \$700 million in senior preferred equity.

The proceeds of the transactions have been used to satisfy, in full, Ferrellgas LP's existing debt obligations, according to the company.

Ferrellgas Partners also says its plan of reorganization, by which the existing notes are to be exchanged for new limited partnership units, has gone effective, allowing it to successfully emerge from Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

The restructuring transactions enable the nearly 100-year-old propane retailer to continue to serve the propane needs of millions of Americans in all 50 states and Puerto Rico, during a pandemic year that was also heavily impacted by record-cold temperatures in many parts of the country. **LPG**



Ferrell

LEARN MORE

Jim Ferrell, the chairman, CEO and president of Ferrellgas, penned an op-ed after the company's financial restructuring. Read it online at lpgasmagazine.com/jim-ferrell.

ACQUISITIONS & SALES

1 OTODATA, WISE TELEMETRY JOIN FORCES

Otodata Technologies USA acquired Wise Telemetry, a Pittsburgh-based provider of remote monitoring devices and services for the industrial gas industry.

Founded in 2008, Otodata designs, develops and manufactures remote level monitoring products and technologies for a variety of industries, including propane.

Founded in 2014 by Eric Wise, Wise Telemetry is able to monitor every aspect of gas distribution – from tanker trucks and bulk tanks to dewars and cylinders.

2 SUPERIOR PLUS TO ACQUIRE FREEMAN GAS

Superior Plus Propane entered into an agreement to acquire the assets of Freeman Gas and Electric Co., a retail propane distribution company based in South Carolina, for an aggregate purchase price of about \$170 million (CA\$213 million) before adjustments for working capital.

The acquisition builds on Superior's footprint in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee.

Freeman is an independent, family-owned retail propane distributor servicing about 67,000 residential and commercial customers. It has 23 retail branch offices and 38 bulk plants, about 7 million gallons of storage capacity, a fleet of 224 vehicles and about 275 employees.

ACQUISITIONS & SALES TIMELINE



1 Otodata (Montreal) acquires Wise Telemetry (Pittsburgh)

2 Superior Plus Propane (Rochester, New York) agrees to acquire Freeman Gas and Electric Co. (Spartanburg, South Carolina)

The acquisitions listed here were made public and/or reported to LP Gas magazine. To report your company's acquisition, email: brichesson@northcoastmedia.net.

▶ 2021 deals reported: 13
2020 deals reported at this point: 11

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weather watch

TORNADO SAFETY

Tornado season got off to an unusually slow start in April. Cooler-than-normal temperatures in the southern and central U.S. limited the formation of storms. Nevertheless, May often brings intense tornadic activity. Propane marketers should remind customers of the following safety tips, courtesy of the Propane Education & Research Council, to employ after a tornado strikes:

- Use extreme caution to evaluate the condition of propane tanks, using a flashlight instead of a candle in the dark to avoid the risk of ignition. Immediately call the local utility or propane supplier if a tank is dislodged or if water or debris damage or a gas leak is suspected.
- Never use outdoor propane appliances indoors or in enclosed areas during power outages.
- Inspect propane appliances for water or other damage if safe to do so. Do not use or inspect appliances if standing in water to avoid electrocution.
- Call a qualified technician to perform a complete inspection of the propane system if damage is suspected or gas supply is turned off.
- Find more detailed tips and explanations at propane.com/tornadoes.

WINTER'S LAST GASP

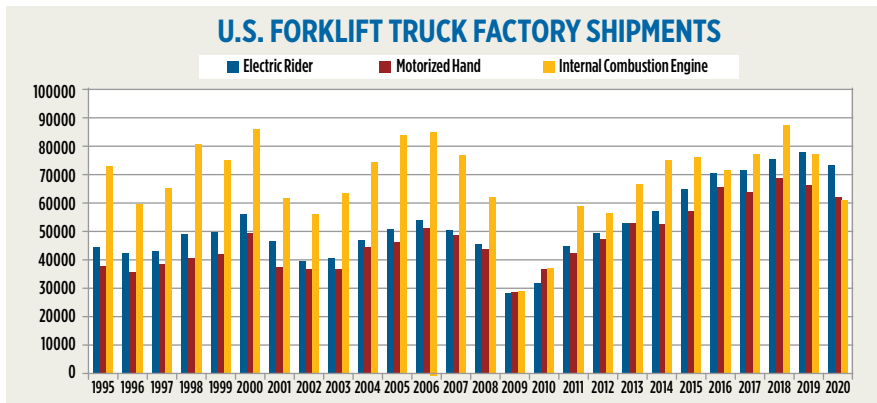
April felt more like February or March when late-season snow and record cold tracked east across the U.S. during the third week of the month, triggering frost and freeze alerts from southern New Mexico to northern Maine. Heavy snow blanketed the Rockies and northern Plains before moving into the Great Lakes region, where accumulations reached 6-8 in. Snow fell as far south as Fayetteville, Arkansas, and record low temperatures stretched as far south as the Gulf Coast in Texas.

HURRICANE SEASON FORECAST

WeatherBELL Analytics' 2021 hurricane season outlook calls for a high likelihood of multiple hurricane impacts along the U.S. coast. The meteorological consulting firm is expecting another active hurricane season. Its sea surface temperature forecast suggests that the storms will reach their strongest outside of the deep tropics. WeatherBELL is expecting four to eight storms to produce hurricane conditions along the U.S. coast, with three to six landfalling hurricanes and two to four storms with major impacts.

WeatherBELL Analytics
weatherbell.com

PROPANE MARKET METRICS



Data shows shipments in the U.S. for electric rider trucks (Class 1 and Class 2 combined), motorized hand trucks (Class 3) and internal combustion powered trucks (Class 4 and Class 5 combined). Propane makes up about 90 percent of the forklifts in Class 4-5. For more about propane's role in this market, as well as its emissions advantages, see page 20.

Source: Industrial Truck Association

STOCK WATCH

Company	12-month chart (as of April '21)	Price (4/23/21)	Price (4/30/21)	Current Yield	52-Week Low	52-Week High	YTD Price Performance
Ferrellgas – FGPR			\$12.85	N/A	10.00	20.00	(20.2)%
Suburban Propane – SPH		\$14.61		8.2%	12.08	18.18	(1.7)%

Source: Company data, FactSet and Wells Fargo Securities LLC (SPH); Yahoo Finance (FGPR) Note: Ferrellgas was relisted as FGPR, trading on OTC Markets, on 4/5/2021 due to corporate action.

Former propane industry VP joins Immediate

Doug MacMaster joined Immediate, a financial wellness company, as executive director of enterprise sales.

He spent 15 years with ThompsonGas as regional vice president and vice president of sales and business development.

During his time in the propane industry, which he entered in the late 1990s, MacMaster participated in the Propane Education & Research Council Advisory Committee and the National Propane Gas Association Benchmarking Council.

In his newest position with Immediate, MacMaster helps employers boost employee benefit packages through an option called earned wage access. The company says its ImmediatePay app offers a low-cost way for employees to receive on-demand access to their earned pay. Employers bear no out-of-pocket costs, and employees pay a typical ATM fee to access their earned pay before payday, the company adds.



MacMaster

EDP appoints region vice presidents, operational analyst

Jay Werner and Bill Cummings joined Energy Distribution Partners (EDP) as vice presidents of the company's Western and Northeast regions, respectively. They are responsible for leading operations management teams to achieve safety, service, quality and operational efficiency metrics in their regions.



Werner

Werner brings an extensive range of experiences in the propane industry and competitive markets, from the customer level to CEO.

Cummings began his career in the propane industry in the early 1980s, during which time he took on roles in the Propane Gas Association of New England, National Propane Gas Association and other associations, says EDP.



Cummings

As EDP's new operational analyst, Laura Hawkinson produces impactful management reporting. She has spent her entire career in the propane industry.



Hawkinson

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Matrix advances personnel in downstream energy group

Matrix Capital Markets Group hired David Corbett as a director in the Downstream Energy & Convenience Retail Investment Banking Group.

He has more than 15 years of experience advising companies in the downstream energy and multi-site retail sectors, including convenience retailing; petroleum marketing and distribution; propane, heating oil and lubricants distribution; petroleum logistics; terminals; and car washes.

In addition, the company promoted Kyle Tipping and John Mickelinc to associates.

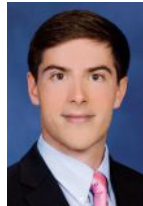
Tipping and Mickelinc have been members of the downstream energy group since 2017 and 2018, respectively. During that time, they have each assisted on eight successful engagements.

Matrix promoted Michael Tucker to senior analyst. Since joining the group in 2020, Tucker has assisted with nine sell-side, buy-side and valuation advisory engagements.

The company also hired James Mickelinc as an analyst in the group.



Corbett



Tipping



John Mickelinc



Tucker



James Mickelinc

BERGQUIST EXPANDS TELEMETRY UNIT

Bergquist Inc. expanded the Bergquist Telemetry Unit (BTU) by appointing Jim Schwartzfisher to the new role of telemetry unit manager.

Schwartzfisher began his career at Bergquist in 2019 as a technical support specialist.

As manager, Schwartzfisher is responsible for overseeing sales and customer services. His new duties include directing and coordinating sales activities, direction over hiring and training of new sales representatives, tracking and analyzing sales statistics based on key metrics, and resolving customer inquiries.



Schwartzfisher

The BTU improves marketer operations by using technology to monitor and report end-customer fuel usage and product inventory data to improve customer services, according to Bergquist.

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Deciding to sell your propane business is about more than numbers. It's about making sure your employees, customers, and legacy are taken care of as well. At Superior Plus Propane, we have your best interests in mind throughout the transition – and after the process is complete.

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PRODUCTS IN THE PIPELINE



1

1 // Delivery automation software

EZ-Link Office by **GAS EQUIPMENT CO. (GEC)** is a customer delivery and truck automation software solution. Functioning as middleware, EZ-Link Office integrates with off-the-shelf accounting software and with the delivery truck's mobile computing systems. Features like the daily route optimization functionality can optimize over 100 delivery stops per truck per day for more efficient deliveries, according to GEC. Features include professional data migration for easy start-up; a web-based system that ensures software stays current; compatibility with cloud-based and desktop accounting software; remote access to customer account information; delivery dispatch from any mobile device; tank inventory management; and integrated messaging to communicate with drivers.

ez-linkoffice.com

gasequipment.com

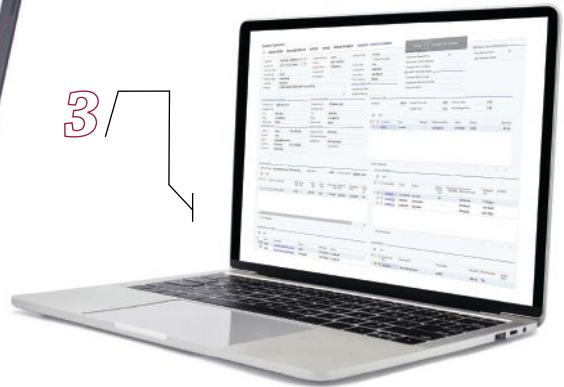


2

2 // Fire tube boilers

NAVIENT updated its fire tube lines with the NFC-H fire tube combi-boilers and NFB-H fire tube boilers. Both the NFC-H and NFB-H now offer turndown ratios up to 15:1, powered connections for three zone pumps or three zone valves, easy-to-use setup wizard for improved installation, 2-in. venting up to 65 ft. and 3-in. venting up to 150 ft., according to Navien. The NFC-H also includes increased domestic hot water (DHW) performance, with up to 210,000 Btu per hour for DHW, offering up to 5.4 gallons per minute at a 70-degree temperature rise.

navieninc.com



3

3 // Business management software

VERTRAX released its new enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, Vertrax Energy, a fully native Amazon Web Services cloud-based solution designed to streamline and automate core business operations. The ERP application combines financial management and back-office functionality. The financial management features include general ledger, accounts payable/receivable, cash management, inventory management, tax management, fixed assets, payroll and reporting/analytics. The back-office functions include sales orders, contracts, payments, inventory, customer management and field services. Additional features of the software include micro-climate, weather-based forecasting and full integration with Vertrax's Transportation Management Systems. The single-cloud database can be accessed anywhere and anytime from any device, according to the company.

vertrax.com/energy

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GEC; NERTHUIZ (COMPUTER); MILINDR (PHONE); JAMAKOSY (LAPTOP); ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS / GETTY IMAGES (1); NAVIEN (2); VERTRAX; SETHAPHAT DODCHAI / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS / GETTY IMAGES (COMPUTER) (3)

4



5



6



4 // Cabinet heater

ENERCO GROUP introduces the white HeatStar Cabinet Heater. The radiant heating system is ideal for use on a restaurant patio or at a backyard barbecue; point the heater under a table so all of the dining patrons keep warm, says Enerco. One 20-pound propane cylinder mounts inside the cabin. With optional heat settings of 18,000, 12,000 and 6,000 Btu, one tank lasts up to 72 hours, according to the company. The lockable caster system makes moving and using the heater lightweight, safe and simple, the company adds. Safety features include an oxygen-depletion sensor and a tip-over switch. Changing cylinders is as easy as changing one on a propane grill, says Enerco, and the heater is suitable for use outdoors or in tented areas.

heatstarbyenerco.com

5 // Mobile propane generator

The JuiceBox is a mobile propane generator developed by **EVERGREEN MOBILE POWER**. With the full effects of diesel engine emission regulations in play, the JuiceBox provides a reliable, clean-burning propane alternative to diesel that enables reduced maintenance costs and labor, easier operation and lower accessory cost, according to the company. The dual onboard fuel tanks can be refilled, or end users can add large external propane tanks to extend run time between refueling. The JuiceBox is designed and engineered for prime power support and can be outfitted with a highway trailer. Other options include GPS tracking, remote monitoring, four-point lifting, on-demand water heater and parallel equipment (electrically link up to 12 together). Applications include emergency services, telecommunications, construction, events and more.

evergreenmobilepower.com/product

6 // Delivery efficiency tool

Angus Analytics, a division of **ANGUS ENERGY**, developed ADEPT (Angus Delivery Efficiency Planning Tools). Synced directly to the back-office system, ADEPT analyzes delivery information, changes delivery sizes based upon the time of year and moves peak month deliveries into “shoulder months” to optimize delivery costs. The ADEPT Team monitors and ensures delivery data accuracy, which assures that the solution does not disrupt daily operations, nor change current procedures, according to Angus. ADEPT will reduce peak deliveries, peak trucks and overall delivery expense, according to the company. Angus also offers a “no-monitoring fee” for ADEPT participants who use Angus’ Gremlin tank monitors so clients can expand the number of tank monitors in use and thereby optimize results, says the company.

angusenergy.com/adept



retailer technology

CHRISTOPHER CAYWOOD

Setting a strategy

TECHNOLOGY: AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT OF STRATEGIC GOALS

What do strategy and the number 168 have in common? Let's begin with 168. You should know that it's the number of hours in a week. How you spend those 168 hours is up to you and reflects your values.

If, over the course of time, you consistently spend 168 hours working, sleeping and eating, you're going to be thought of as a workaholic, even if you claim to be dedicated to your family and talk about work-life balance. What you say and what you do aren't matching up. Too many of us don't even think about how we want to spend our 168 hours.

Strategy is like 168 for many businesses, especially small businesses. Many small businesses say they don't have a strategy: "It's for big businesses with lots of employees and lots of customers." Well, they have a strategy; they're just backing into it based on how they operate and spend their time. Businesses that do that often wind up with conflicting activities and, worse, conflicting goals.

Technology is a key component of strategy, and you ought to have a technology strategy that fits into your overall business strategy. We like to think that our technology choices reflect our strategy. We begin by observing that propane is a commodity. Getting it to the customer's tank is a service. Our strategic goal is to optimize the long-term, sustainable value of our business by providing reliable, transparent and

value-priced service. Here's how we use technology to achieve our strategic goal:

- **Reliable service:** We have tank monitors integrated into our back-office routing and customer management software, and they also are integrated into our customer-facing website. There's a monitor on every company-owned tank and every auto-fill tank, regardless of who owns the tank. We use the software to reach out to will-call customers when it's time for them to place an order, and they often use our website or app to respond and place an order. Our customer management software also enables us to efficiently

You ought to have a technology strategy that fits into your overall business strategy.

implement a budget program for customers to give them more predictable payments. The result is that we have very few runouts. And the phones? We answered 99.9 percent of our calls within eight seconds, put only 4.2 percent of customers on hold for an average of 45 seconds, and had zero customers on hold abandon the call by hanging up. We had time to answer our phones because over 73 percent of our deliveries last winter were either auto-fill or online will-call orders, which reduced our call volume by 39 percent compared to the prior winter.

- **Transparent service:** Our propane prices, contracts and standard terms

and conditions are all on our website. This April, we launched a new website that makes it easier for customers to navigate and find this information. We have a series of why and how-to videos available on both YouTube and our website that explain our value proposition to customers in plain language that they can understand. The website is mobile friendly and now loads in less than one second.

- **Value-priced:** Maintaining competitive prices and achieving an appropriate return on capital is a never-ending challenge because it's not easy to convince a customer that the product is a commodity, but the service is not. That's where operating efficiencies come into play. We have come up with a technology ecosystem that is interconnected, which, in turn, reduces the labor and equipment required to do something. Our operating expense as a percent of revenue has declined despite the addition of software licensing fees and monthly monitor expenses. These savings help us maintain an appropriate return on capital while remaining price competitive – all while delivering better service than the propane retailer next door.

- **Summer is on the horizon.** Maybe it's time to think about how you spend your 168 hours and what it says about your values. Then maybe spend some of that time thinking about how your business operates and the strategy it represents. **LPG**

Christopher Caywood is a co-owner of Caywood Propane Gas Inc. Contact him at chris@caywoodpropane.com.



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FORKLIFTS

ITA: North American forklift truck sales dip in 2020

North American forklift truck sales decreased 5.1 percent in 2020 compared to the previous year, according to the Industrial Truck Association (ITA), which partially attributes the decline to the impact of COVID-19.

“The industrial truck industry had its third-best year on record in 2019, and the sales decrease in 2020 with COVID-19 was not unexpected,” says Jay Gusler, chairman of the board of directors for the ITA and executive vice president of operations for Mitsubishi Logisnext Americas Group. “Our industry performed well throughout the pandemic thanks to the essential nature of our products and the dedicated associates in our industry.”

Year-end forklift truck sales of 230,134 included electric rider trucks (Class 1-2 combined), motorized hand trucks (Class 3) and internal combustion powered trucks



Forklift truck sales declined in 2020 due in part to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

(Class 4-5 combined). Class 2 and Class 3 trucks saw a small increase from 2019 at 2.0 percent and 1.1 percent, respectively. The remaining classes witnessed declines, with Class 5 seeing the largest decrease at 19.7 percent.

Propane makes up about 90 percent of the forklifts in Class 4-5, says Matt McDonald, director of off-road business development at the Propane Education & Research Council

(PERC), adding it's important to consider the recent sales history of forklifts before drawing any conclusions about the decline in 2020.

Only two years prior, the ITA reported record sales of more than 260,000 units for 2018 – then the fourth straight year of growth.

“In 2018, almost 90,000 forklifts were sold in Class 4-5. We've never seen those kinds of numbers,” McDonald says. “As the economy revs up, freight is going to be moved and people are going to buy forklifts.”

With their ability to move heavy freight without interruption, propane-fueled forklifts have a leg up in this class, which still accounted for more than a quarter of all unit sales in 2020, McDonald adds.

“I'm not ready to panic or get discouraged,” he says. “When you look at the numbers, I can see why 2020 was down a little bit. The story will be told in the next year or two.”

The ITA says first-quarter results for 2021 – which also marks its 70th anniversary – are healthy.

“ITA members have been instrumental in leading the way with enhanced safety, engineering practices and market intelligence that has guided the industry well over the past seven decades and will continue that leadership role into the future,” says Brian Feehan, president of ITA.

Emissions data showcases propane's edge over diesel, electric equipment

The Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) is reminding material handling professionals to download its forklift emissions fact sheet. The resource showcases findings from a study conducted by the Gas Technology Institute and the Nextig Group.

The study analyzed the comparative emissions of propane in key markets, including forklifts, examining full-fuel-cycle energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, hydrocarbons and criteria pollutant emissions, including nitrogen oxide (NOx) and sulfur oxide (SOx). Results from the study revealed the emissions advantages of propane forklifts compared with other energy sources, PERC says. Most notably:

- Propane reduces SOx emissions by up to 76 percent compared with electric forklifts.
- Propane produces 97 percent less NOx emissions compared with diesel forklifts.
- Propane produces 97 percent less hydrocarbon emissions compared with diesel forklifts.

“Professionals throughout the supply chain industry are working to decrease emissions and achieve a more sustainable operation,” says Matt McDonald, director of off-road business development at PERC, who shared the message on Earth Day in April. “For material handling professionals, this often means taking a closer look at the equipment and energy sources used to move products day in and day out.”

Propane's clean, low-emissions profile also means that propane forklifts are safe to operate in properly ventilated indoor environments, as well as outdoors, making them a compelling choice against diesel-powered engines, according to PERC.

Download the emissions fact sheet at propane.com/forklifts.



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Holden Oil began as a gas station in 1924 before it transitioned into the oil and propane businesses.

MERGER MINDSET

Retailers take us inside the acquisitions process, explain their reasons for selling

BY CHRIS LEWIS // CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Whenever propane retailers sell their businesses, they typically have a variety of reasons for doing so, from retirement and the pursuit of new interests, to receiving requests from their children (who would have otherwise owned the businesses) and, in recent months, COVID-19.

LP Gas spoke to four propane retailers, who each sold their businesses since the beginning of 2020, to learn the ins and outs of the acquisition process, including the ways in which buyers are chosen, the responses of employees, propane retailers' lives afterward and exactly how their former businesses may change after the sales are completed.

▶ ADVANTAGE PROPANE: A 10-YEAR PLAN TO SELL

In 2012, Douglas Tascarella and Steve Congiusta created Advantage Propane from the ground up – a true startup.

As they developed the Califon, New Jersey-based company, they had one specific goal in mind: to sell it in 10 years, as Congiusta knew he would want to retire by then.

However, they achieved their goals a bit sooner than they originally envisioned, as they were able to sell the company

in eight years instead. Growth was exceptional. In fact, the company was growing to the point that it was maxing out its capabilities.

This significant growth was due in part to Tascarella's and Congiusta's partnership, which Tascarella describes as "perfect."

"Steve oversaw the inside operations, and I oversaw the outside operations," Tascarella says. "It simply wasn't realistic to find a similar partner."

While the partners prepared to sell, they were very selective as they began to receive offers from various companies. First, they were interested in selling Advantage Propane to a company that was family-owned. And, second, they wanted the buyer to continue the traditions they had implemented during the past eight years. In the end, they were focused on the legacy of the purchaser rather than just the price.

For the past five years, Christina Armentano, executive vice president of Paraco Gas, shared an interest in purchasing Advantage Propane, as she spoke to the company's outside broker, Cetane Associates. She was also dedicated to the family aspect of her business, which caught Tascarella's and Congiusta's attention. So, after years of discussions, Advantage Propane and Paraco Gas began the acquisition process in August 2020

Continued on page 24 >>



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**MERGERS
& ACQUISITIONS**

Continued from page 22 >>

and finalized it in December of that year. Neither partner discussed the acquisition with employees until it was completed.

“Some were shocked, as they had been with us since day one. They kind of knew what our long-term goal was, though,” Tascarella says. “Others knew it was the right time.”

Since the acquisition was finalized, Congiusta has retired, while Tascarella still oversees the day-to-day operations of Advantage Propane as the area manager, a role he intends to continue for some time. Additionally, he’d like to become involved with the corporate structure of Paraco Gas and pass on the best practices that made Advantage Propane so successful.

“Paraco has exceeded our expectations so far, and they’ve done a very good job of maintaining the Advantage Propane

Continued on page 26 >>



After finalizing his company’s sale to Paraco Gas, Douglas Tascarella still oversees the day-to-day operations of Advantage Propane as area manager.

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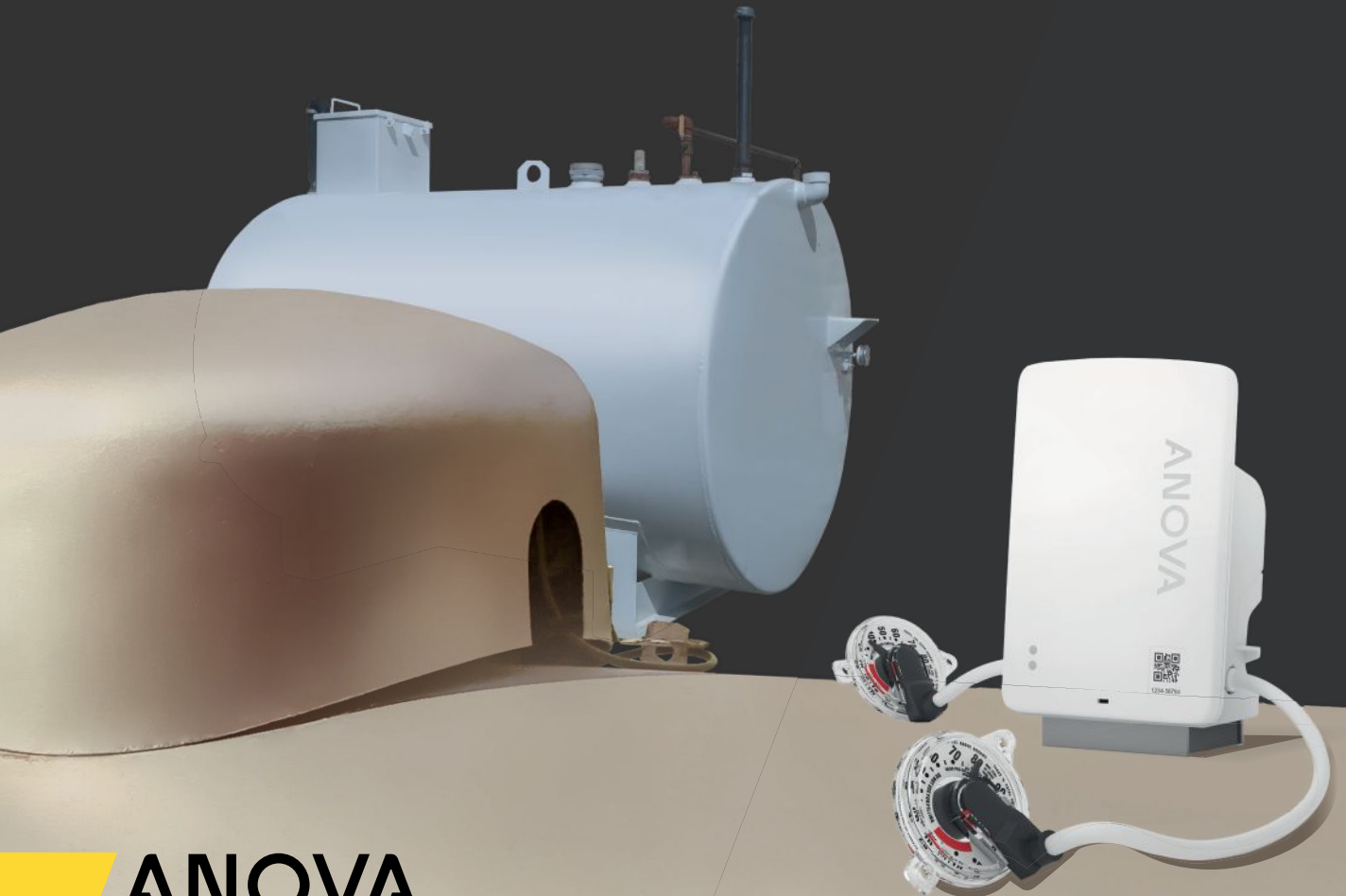
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Continued from page 24 >>

name,” Tascarella explains. “The first three months of the acquisition were record months for Advantage Propane, in fact.”

► **HOLDEN OIL: SELLING A FAMILY BUSINESS**

Holden Oil first began as a gas station, as part of a family farm, in 1924. In the 1930s, the Holden family became involved with the oil business, and, 30 years later, it began to focus on the propane industry.

Although the gas station and a convenience store are still owned by the family, Chuck Holden and his son, Tom, decided to sell the oil and propane business in 2019, a decision that was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. After all, Chuck was always motivated by the personal interaction of the business, which decreased substantially due to the virus.

With Gray, Gray & Gray’s merger and acquisition service, FuelExchange, as a broker, Holden Oil fielded offers from a variety of companies. Holden primarily was interested in selling his family-owned business to a company that would take great care of his employees, whom he views as family, too.

“It was extremely emotional and very challenging to sell Holden Oil, as the propane and oil industries have been part of my entire life,” Holden stresses. “I needed to be confident I was



Torey Filyaw of Palmetto Gas sought growth in South Carolina.

making the correct decision.”

Of all the companies that contacted the Peabody, Massachusetts-based oil and propane business, one stood out: Superior Plus Propane. Holden felt the company would treat his employees the same way he had. With that in mind, Holden signed a letter of intent in November 2020 and completed the sale in January 2021.

After the purchase and sale agreement was signed, Holden messaged his staff, most of whom were working remotely, and

Continued on page 28 >>

PHOTO BY KEVIN IRLAND

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Continued from page 26 >>

asked them to join a teleconference.

“Drivers pulled over, techs stepped out of jobs and everyone received the news together,” Holden says. “Superior Plus Propane had a team come in that day and immediately began the transition of employee records and provided great support.”

Since selling Holden Oil, Holden and his son, Tom, continue to operate the family’s gas station and convenience store, and are also involved with various real estate projects and nonprofit organizations. Although Holden misses the propane industry, he believes he made the correct decision, as he’s confident that Superior Plus Propane will be successful.

He also has nothing but fond memories of the propane industry.

“The amount of friends I have made and the support and encouragement I have received over the years – I simply don’t think you can find that in any other industry,” Holden explains. “I always felt that I could call or they could call me for anything, even if we were competing head-to-head.”

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▶ PALMETTO GAS: PREPARING FOR GREATNESS

After the passing of Scott Rumph Jr. – the founder and majority stockholder of Sumter, South Carolina-based Palmetto Gas – in 2017, board members and company leaders, including CEO Andy Smith and minority owner Torey Filyaw, began to discuss the company’s future.

They decided to operate the business as usual, unless they were approached to sell and the opportunity seemed to be a great fit for employees and stockholders.

For Filyaw, who began working at Palmetto Gas in 1998 as a service technician and continued to advance within the company over the next two decades, a key factor for selling was to provide employees more benefits, along with a better future in the propane industry. Most employees had worked for Palmetto Gas for more than 15 years and enabled the company to achieve greatness, thereby deserving greatness in return.

“We made sure they knew we cared about them, and we wanted the best for them,” Filyaw says. “We would do our best to ensure they had a great future with whichever company we decided upon.”

In addition to benefits, including insurance packages and retirement programs, Filyaw was also interested in selling to a company that was focused on growing in the Sumter area. With this in mind, one organization stood out: Energy Distribution Partners (EDP).

During conversations with employees at EDP, Smith learned that the organization had purchased two companies in South Carolina and was interested in growing in the Sumter area, too.

Continued on page 30 >>

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Continued from page 28 >>

Smith says upon speaking with companies that had been sold to EDP, their support of the organization, along with their acquisition processes as a whole, were overwhelmingly positive. Filyaw and Smith knew they found the organization for which they had been searching.

The acquisition process began quickly after the initial contact with EDP employees in November 2019, and the sale was finalized in January 2020.

Since completing the sale, Filyaw has maintained his association with EDP. He's now an operations manager at Palmetto Gas, which is celebrating its 59th year in business. As he looks ahead to the future, he's optimistic about the new ownership and the acquisition as a whole.

"I really have enjoyed working with all the staff members of EDP, and I feel this has been great for everyone involved,"

he adds. "Palmetto Gas has all of the resources it needs to continue growing and become an even better propane company down the road."

► PIRKL GAS: AN ACQUISITION BASED ON SHARED VALUES

Twenty-six years ago, Greg and Ann Pirkl bought a 500,000-gallon, family-owned propane company near Owatonna, Minnesota, marking the beginning of Pirkl Gas. Twenty-five years beforehand, Greg's father had purchased equipment and property from the Standard Oil Co., his employer for 11 years. In 1978, he hired Greg, who had just graduated from high school, to begin working at his business and ultimately sold to Greg and Ann in 1989.

When the Pirkl's began to think about selling their business in 2019, they knew it would be an emotional decision.

"We loved the propane company we

built and probably wouldn't have even thought about selling if we were 20 years younger," he says.

As the Pirkl's began to search for a buyer, they knew they wanted to sell to an honest, independent and trustworthy company that shared Pirkl Gas' values concerning customer and employee treatment. ThompsonGas, which had purchased Greg's friend's business within the past year, came to mind. That acquisition was successful, providing the Pirkl's the confidence they needed.

After beginning negotiations with ThompsonGas in April 2020, the entire process was completed within six months. ThompsonGas finalized the deal at the Pirkl's pace, enabling Greg to have a "soft landing." He remains involved with the company part time, particularly during the busy corn drying and home heating seasons.

The Pirkl's didn't mention anything

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to their employees about the acquisition until Sept. 1, 2020, one day before the closing occurred.

“When we told them, they were very supportive of our decision,” he says. “It was rewarding to sell to a great company like ThompsonGas, who is taking care of our customers and employees. In fact, their wage and benefit package slightly exceeds ours.”

As Pirkel looks back at his nearly 30-year career in the propane industry, he remembers how well his customers treated him, along with the various challenges and dynamics he enjoyed about the industry. He would do it all over again.

“It never really seemed like work to me because you could see the instant rewards as the business grew,” he says. “Our hope is that our son and daughter-in-law, who also work for ThompsonGas now, along with our loyal employees, enjoy their careers as much as we did.” **LPG**



Greg and Ann Pirkel of Minnesota-based Pirkel Gas say they “loved the propane company we built.” They sold it to ThompsonGas last year.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THOMPSONGAS

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MERGER & ACQUISITION ACTIVITY

Here's a look at the movement LP Gas kept tabs on over the past 12 months, with acquiring companies in bold. **Note:** Some companies chose not to disclose acquired companies.

Agview FS and Gold Star FS

- Manlius Oil – Manlius, Illinois

American Welding & Gas

- Axmen Propane – Frenchtown, Montana
- Bestway Welding Supply – Houston

Casey Energy

- Marandola Fuel Service – New Milford, Connecticut

Central Valley Ag

- Farmers Ranchers Cooperative – Ainsworth, Nebraska

Co-Alliance Cooperative Inc.

- Harvest Land Co-op Inc. – Richmond, Indiana

Crestwood Equity Partners

- Plains All American Pipeline, certain NGL storage and rail-to-truck LPG terminals – Houston

DCC Propane LLC

- Blue Flame Propane locations – Douglas,

Wyoming; Nunn, Colorado

- Enviro Gas – Brighton, Colorado
- NES Group – Brooklyn, Connecticut
- Spalding Gas – Griffin, Georgia
- United Propane Gas – Paducah, Kentucky

Dead River Co.

- Fortier & Son – Somersworth, New Hampshire
- Northern Essex Fuel Co. – Merrimac, Massachusetts

Energy Distribution Partners

- Campora Propane – Stockton, California

FEI

- Midwest Computer Register – Hampton, Iowa
- Midwest Meter – Hampton, Iowa

Ferrellgas

- Lee Propane – Pennington Gap, Virginia

Gault Family Companies

- Quinoco Energy Services – Bristol, Connecticut

Growmark

- Southern States Cooperative, wholesale agronomy and energy assets – Richmond, Virginia
- Star Energy FS – Manson, Iowa

Hiltz Propane Systems

- Chesmont Engineering – Exton, Pennsylvania

Long Gas Co.

- Yoder Gas Co. – Jet, Oklahoma

LT Corp.

- Buckeye Fabricating – Springboro, Ohio

McAdams Propane Co.

- 1 acquisition

Meritum Energy

- Forever Propane Sales & Service – Oakland Park, Florida
- Home Gas Corp. – Miami
- 3 undisclosed

MFA Oil

- Simmons Energy Solutions – Decatur, Arkansas; Jay, Oklahoma

Mike Hopsicker acquired full ownership of:

- Ray Murray Inc. – Lee, Massachusetts

Continued on page 34 >>

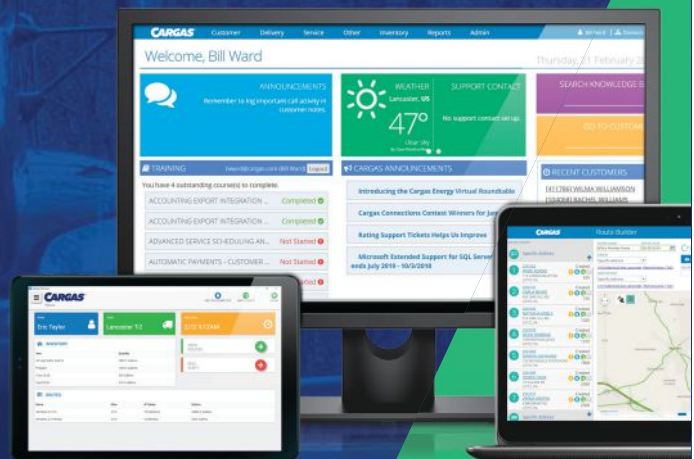
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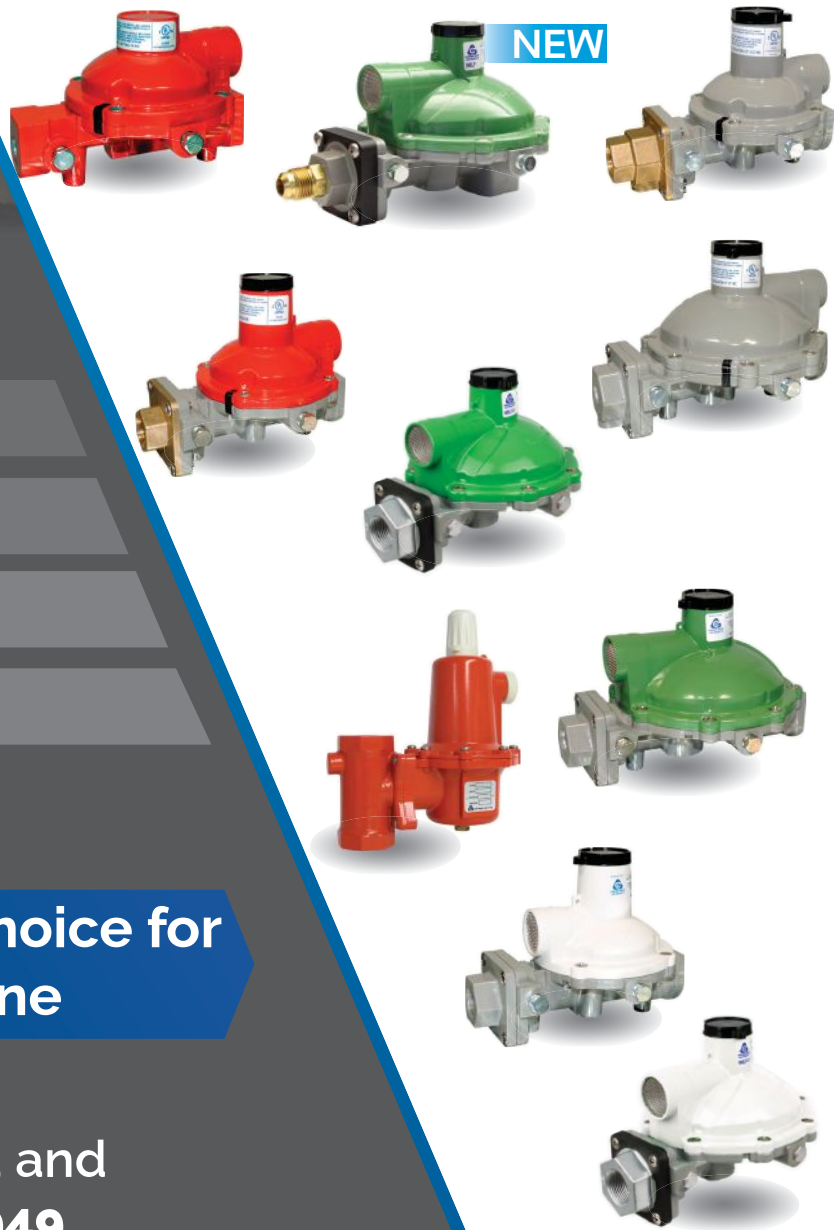
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Nesco Holdings

- Custom Truck One Source – Kansas City, Missouri

NW Ohio Propane

- Northwest Propane – Delta, Ohio

Offen Petroleum

- Ozark Mountain Energy – Mount Vernon, Missouri

Otodata

- Wise Telemetry – Pittsburgh

Paraco Gas

- Advantage Propane – Califon, New Jersey
- F M Popovich & Sons – Ashland, Massachusetts

Platform Fuels

- Dale's Propane – Clayton, Oklahoma
- Green's Propane – Wellston, Oklahoma
- Kiamichi LP Gas – Idabel, Oklahoma
- McCurtain County Propane – Broken Bow, Oklahoma
- Menz Propane – Union City, Oklahoma
- Ned Guest LP Gas OK – Valliant, Oklahoma

Quarles Petroleum

- Dixie Gas & Oil – Verona, Virginia

Reading Truck Group

- Rayside Truck & Trailer – West Palm Beach, Florida

Sharp Energy

- Western Natural Gas – Jacksonville, Florida

Square Deal Machining Inc.

- Kurtz Truck Equipment – Marathon, New York

Star Group

- Liberty Gas Service – Westhampton Beach, New York
- Malzahn Gas Service – Sparrow Bush, New York
- Sclafani Oil – Mahopac, New York

Suburban Propane Partners

- Eastern Propane – Bayboro, North Carolina
- Oberon Fuels, 39 percent stake – San Diego

Superior Plus Corp.

- Central Coast Propane – Paso Robles, California
- Champagne's Energy – Arundel, Maine
- Freeman Gas and Electric Co. – Spartanburg, South Carolina
- Highlands Propane – Fenelon Falls, Ontario
- Holden Oil – Peabody, Massachusetts
- Miller Propane – Mont-Tremblant, Quebec
- Petro SE Propane – North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee

- Rymes Propane and Oil – Concord, New Hampshire

Symank Energy

- Cuero-Yoakum Propane – Cuero, Texas

ThompsonGas

- Airgas USA bulk propane assets – Maryland, southeastern Pennsylvania, West Virginia
- All Service Propane – Anderson, California
- Associated Propane – Petaluma, California
- EnergyUnited Propane – Statesville, North Carolina
- Midwestern Propane Gas – Belleville, Illinois
- Pirkel Gas – Owatonna, Minnesota
- Redwood Coast Fuels – Ukiah, California
- Yongue's Propane – Ocala, Florida

TransTech Energy

- Bendel Tank and Heat Exchanger – Charlotte, North Carolina

Tri Gas & Oil/Comfort Plus Services

- Refined fuels distributor – Delmarva Peninsula

Sources: LP Gas research; Blue Peak Resources; Cetane Associates; Gray, Gray & Gray; Legacy Energy Consulting; Matrix Capital Markets Group; Propane Resources; The Oil & Gas Advisor

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The LP Gas Growth Summit staff is working closely with the resort, which has implemented stringent cleaning practices, to outline appropriate health and safety practices and event guidelines for a successful and safe event.



The autogas and cylinder-filling dispenser will be used for training, demonstrations and refueling.

‘SHOWCASE SYSTEM’

A new dual-use autogas and cylinder-filling dispenser will promote safety and training, market growth

BY CHRIS LEWIS // CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

In early 2020, the Minnesota Propane Association (MPA) and the Minnesota Propane Education Promotion and Safety Council (MNPEPSC) began to collaborate on a project that would not only help educate the propane industry but also the propane-using public.

That collaboration has now become a propane dispensing reality.

The project – a dual-use autogas and cylinder-filling dispenser – will help train cylinder-filling industry employees and the autogas-using public while also accommodating the public’s refueling of autogas vehicles.

To achieve these goals, the MPA, which moved last year into a new 11,000-sq.-ft. office and training facility on a 5-acre property along Highway 169 in Zimmerman, and the MNPEPSC partnered with industry members to plan the installation of the propane dispensing system. Highway 169 is a major north-south route from the metropolitan areas to central Minnesota.

“Due to its location, more than 30,000 vehicles drive by the new facility each day, on average,” says Dave Wager, executive

director of the MPA. “As a result, it’s provided us an opportunity to extensively promote autogas to thousands of people.”

▶ AUTOGAS PROMOTION

After conversations among the MPA, the MNPEPSC and industry members, project leaders determined the dispenser would be utilized primarily for promotional and training purposes.

Aside from promoting autogas to thousands of commuters every day, the dispenser, with a 1,000-gallon tank, will also provide a convenient refueling point for school buses that travel from the northern parts of Minnesota.

Serving as an example for marketers regarding the equipment that’s required to meet and exceed customers’ expectations, while also complying with applicable and appropriate requirements and standards, the dispenser will also be utilized to refuel any type of autogas vehicle, along with small cylinders that are used to fuel propane mowers.

The Gilbarco Encore 700 S dispenser will be utilized several times a week to fuel the MPA’s two autogas vehicles. Initially, the MPA will dispense about 2,500

gallons annually; however, its usage will continue to increase as more people try autogas. To ensure safety and security, the dispenser is installed on a concrete base with crash-protection bollards.

The MPA funded the project through the Propane Education & Research Council’s state rebate program. About 80 percent of the funding applied to the dispenser, its concrete base and crash-protection bollards, along with excavation, labor and transportation. Funding expenditures were also used for communications and electrical work.

“During October and November, we completed the site preparations, installed the crash-protection bollards, poured the concrete slab and roughed in the communications and electrical,” says Jeff Head, sales and marketing manager at LPG & NH₃ Supply Inc., the developer on the project.

“Simultaneously, the dispenser’s heavy-duty steel frame was fabricated, welded and painted with an automotive-grade urethane, which provides a long-lasting, durable finish.”

After a subcontractor returned the

Continued on page 38 >>

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Continued from page 36 >>

painted steel frame to LPG & NH₃ Supply, the company completed the remainder of the assembly – including cabinets, filtration system, pump, motor, piping, hoses, nozzles and tank.

LPG & NH₃ Supply transported the dispenser to the MPA's facility in late December.

"The dispenser is now operational," Wager explains. "We have some landscaping yet to do, but other than that, it is complete."

▶ TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE

With the dispensing system, the MPA and MNPEPSC will be able to train individuals within the propane industry on the procedures for the inspection and refilling of cylinders.

"Classroom and online training are good, especially when in-person training is almost nonexistent, as it's been the last few months. But hands-on training

is preferred by our members and by the staff taking the training," Wager stresses. "By being able to show people how to inspect and requalify a cylinder, along with proper filling techniques, they'll be better trained and more confident."

Additionally, public individuals who fill cylinders, particularly at campgrounds, lawn care companies and service stations, will now be able to receive quality, hands-on training with regard to safety and proper procedures. In fact, by being able to demonstrate how to properly inspect and fill cylinders in a safe, easy manner, the MPA and MNPEPSC will help ensure proper practices are being maintained.

"Along with the dispenser, we're also planning on providing lawn mower demonstrations," Wager adds. "Not to mention, we're also considering demonstrating exchange cabinets to equipment operators."

Continued on page 40 >>

Dispensing details

Here are several notable features of the Minnesota Propane Association's dual-use dispenser:

- ▶ Provides both autogas and cylinder-filling capability. Typically, customers purchase either a cylinder-filling dispenser or an autogas dispenser.
- ▶ Uses a variable frequency drive to essentially create three-phase power using single-phase power. It also conditions the power.
- ▶ Has an ATM-type user interface and is EMV-compliant, protecting personal information during credit card use. Available to the public 24/7/365.
- ▶ Incorporates a two-stage Donaldson filtration system. The carbon filter traps oily, waxy and heavy ends. The particulate filter limits particles from being passed to a vehicle. Both of these, together, reduce maintenance and extend the life expectancy of vehicle systems.

Source: LPG & NH₃ Supply Inc.

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Continued from page 38 >>

The MPA and MNPEPSC will also be able to advance propane safety, as the process of filling cylinders will be demonstrated properly. For example, propane users will learn how to utilize a pump. They'll also be able to inspect tanks for improper O-rings, overdue inspection dates and overall damage, as the practices they learn will not only enhance safety but also eliminate downtime.

▶ EFFECTIVE DEMONSTRATION

As bus companies and fleets continue to increase their usage of propane for engine fuel, the MPA and MNPEPSC are also striving to demonstrate – and provide – the best facility they can for autogas refueling.

“The goal is to have a system available for bus companies and fleets to use as they transition to autogas as well. It’s a chicken-and-egg thing,” Wager explains. “We want them to be able to start the



The facility promotes autogas refueling.

transition before they need their own infrastructure.”

He continues, “Our goal is to not compete with our members, but to grow load so they can install their own equipment for bus companies and fleets. We want to keep our usage to a beginner’s level and provide the increased gallons to our members.”

Of equal importance, the MPA’s dispensing facility will be certified for public refueling and available 24/7 via credit card access. By showing the public that

anyone with an autogas vehicle and a Euro nozzle can refuel at any time, the MPA will be able to demonstrate the ease and efficiency of refueling.

Any MPA member can also utilize the dispenser for demonstrations, as Wager believes it’s significant for the propane industry to showcase how easy the system is to install and use, as it can be placed virtually anywhere, all while requiring little outside infrastructure.

“The dispenser will show that an alternative fuel vehicle can be refueled in a matter of minutes,” Wager says. “And it will prove that a low cost, low carbon and American-produced energy source is available today.”

He adds, “The bottom line? This dispenser will bring the public – cars, fleet trucks, lawn mowers, pickups, school buses, you name it – to one location for demonstrations, education and training. It will be our industry’s showcase system.” **LPG**

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LPGas PROPANE FUELS AMERICA

An exclusive
state-by-state look
at how LPG helps to fuel
the U.S. economy

BY BRIAN RICHESSON, ELLEN KRIZ AND CARLY MCFADDEN

You could say California is the epicenter for much of the activity taking place today in the propane industry. The state, among five featured in this month's Propane Fuels America series, can be viewed as a microcosm of the opportunities and challenges for the industry at the state and national levels.

Wildfires and rolling blackouts in recent years have drawn national attention, exposing reliability issues with the electrical grid and highlighting propane's role as a reliable, portable energy source.

Despite these reliability issues with the state's electrical grid, California still poses a challenging, pro-electrification political climate, with regulators seeking to mandate electric-only energy and the state moving toward a future focused on renewable energy.

The Western Propane Gas Association (WPGA) works to protect propane's interests in California. The WPGA also continues to explore opportunities with renewable propane, which is derived from sustainable energy sources such as animal fat and vegetable oils. In fact, WPGA has set a goal to provide California with 100 percent renewable propane by 2030 to support the state's goals to

fight climate change.

New proposed state legislation, sponsored by the WPGA, would recognize that California requires a diverse package of renewable energy sources, including renewable propane, to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction goals.

"By incentivizing production of renewable propane, California will be able to ensure primarily rural communities have access to renewable energy and are able to participate in the state's carbon-reduction initiatives," says Joy Alafia, president and CEO of the WPGA, which estimates that about 600,000 households in the state are not connected to the electrical grid and rely instead on propane.

Colorado and New Mexico are also pushing to electrify everything, says Dan Binning, executive director of the state associations there, and Nevada has faced threats to the use of gas.

But the proponents of electrify-everything don't talk about how electric heat is inefficient and expensive, or the lack of resiliency in the electrical grid, says Binning.

"We're going to try to educate the general public about how gas is efficient and clean. Not just propane but natural gas, as well," he adds.

On the opposite end of the spectrum,

Propane Fuels America: Our state-by-state journey in 2021:

JANUARY: Alaska, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington

FEBRUARY: Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming

MARCH: New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania

APRIL: Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin

MAY: Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico

JUNE: Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas

JULY: Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma

AUGUST: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

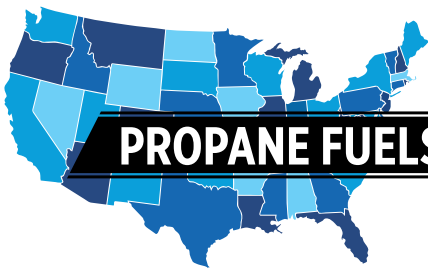
SEPTEMBER: Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina

OCTOBER: Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota

NOVEMBER: Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee

DECEMBER: Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia

Arizona was among the first states to pass anti-gas-ban legislation that gives consumers the right to choose their energy source. **LPG**



PROPANE FUELS AMERICA

Arizona

▶ MARKET POINTERS

- The number of total households using propane for their primary space heating fuel in 2019 (75,036) increased by over 8 percent from 2018 and by over 15 percent from the 65,065 households using propane for their primary space heating needs in 2014.



- The commercial market made up 32 percent of retail gallon sales in 2019, behind the nearly 45 percent of residential market sales. Commercial and transportation, the largest energy consumers in the state, provide opportunities for growth.

- U-Haul International, based in Phoenix, began selling propane in 1984. Today, it supplies propane to thousands of customers daily across the U.S. and Canada, including propane for backyard grills and autogas for fleet vehicles.

Total odorized propane demand (2019): 118 million gallons

U.S. rank for gallons sold: 31

Gallon sales trend: Arizona has been climbing for the past couple of years, selling 93 million gallons in 2017 and 102 million in 2018.

Census region/division gallons:
West: 1.71 billion
Mountain: 803 million

Propane autogas school buses/districts and contractors: 514/21

- Arizona was among the first states to pass “ban the gas ban” legislation, preventing local municipalities from banning natural gas use in new buildings. The National Propane Gas Association has hailed the 2020 legislation. “We want

FAST FACTS

State association affiliation: Arizona Propane Gas Association (APGA)/ propaneaz.org

Programs: The Arizona Propane Education & Research Foundation establishes and facilitates programs to enhance safety, training, research and development, and safety education. Its propane appliance rebate program provided about \$30,000 in rebates to consumers last year. “It’s extremely well received in rural Arizona,” says the APGA’s Barry Aarons. The state association is in the fourth year of a wood-burning fire pit replacement program with Maricopa County. The program encourages up to 1,000 homeowners, through \$75 vouchers, to help clean the air by replacing their wood-burning fire pits with propane-fueled options.

Marquee events in 2021: Arizona is among a group of states co-sponsoring the Western Propane Trade Show & Convention, scheduled this year for Aug. 11-13 in Reno, Nevada.

Before COVID-19: The propane industry in Arizona had contributed about \$297 million to the 2018 state economy. It’s too early to assess COVID-19’s impact on the state’s gross domestic product.

Phoenix-based U-Haul International supplies propane across the U.S. and Canada.



our citizens to have a choice on what kind of energy they want to use,” says Barry Aarons, who represents the Arizona Propane Gas Association. “We think that’s an important public policy for the state to take.”

- In 2020, Arizona ranked fourth in the nation in solar-powered electricity generation at utility-scale and small-scale installations.

WHAT’S THE WEATHER?

Average temperature (2020): 62.6 degrees F

Annual heating degree-days five-year average (2015-19): 1,999
U.S. average: 4,090



“We try to build coalitions with other like-minded organizations to promote good public policy that benefits all of us.”

BARRY AARONS, Arizona Propane Gas Association

Sources: Propane Education & Research Council’s U.S. National and State Propane Market Profiles; Annual Retail Propane Sales Report; propane.com; Arizona Propane Gas Association; U.S. Energy Information Administration’s State Energy Profiles



California

▶ MARKET POINTERS

• The Western Propane Gas Association (WPGA) is sponsoring Assembly Bill (AB) 1559 – the Innovative Renewable Energy for Buildings Act of 2021. The bill would require the California Energy Commission to establish and implement a program to provide financial incentives for renewable propane production that is used as an energy source for buildings in the state.

• 2020 was a record-breaking year for wildfires in California. Nearly 4.2 million acres burned, more than doubling the previous record from 2018 of 1.67 million acres. During the wildfire season, the state relied on propane to fuel pop-up fire command centers and camps for first responders and firefighters, providing hot water, shelter and cooked food, ac-

ording to Julie Johnson, vice chair of WPGA.

• The most imminent threat to California’s propane industry is the electrification movement, according to Johnson. California Gov. Gavin Newsom aims to have all trucks and vehicles to be electric-only by 2050 and all new homes to be electric-only as they are built.

• The residential market is California’s largest market sector for propane sales, making up 44 percent of the state’s total

California retailer Ted Johnson Propane offers on-site autogas service and refueling centers.

gallon sales in 2019, followed by commercial (26 percent), internal combustion engines (1.1 percent) and agriculture (9 percent).

• California saw an increased demand for propane-powered heaters for outdoor dining in 2020 due to the pandemic and social distancing requirements. In addition, propane played a role in fueling COVID-19 testing centers and hospitals, Johnson says.

FAST FACTS

State association affiliation: Western Propane Gas Association (WPGA)/ westernpga.org

Programs: In response to California’s wildfires, Rob Scott, safety consultant at WPGA, developed a program in which the association partners with local retailers to inspect all propane tanks in the areas that have been affected by the fires. Scott and the retailers find the tanks, inspect and red tag them – if applicable – and enter the tank location into a database.

Marquee events in 2021: The Western Propane Trade Show & Convention will take place Aug. 11-13 in Reno, Nevada. The event was originally set to take place in May, but was rescheduled to ensure a safe in-person gathering. The WPGA board meeting will precede the event on Aug. 10.

Before COVID-19: The propane industry in California had contributed more than \$1.3 billion to the 2018 state economy. It’s too early to assess COVID-19’s impact on the state’s gross domestic product.

WHAT’S THE WEATHER?

Average temperature (2020): 60.5 degrees F

Annual heating degree-days five-year average (2015-19): 2,158
U.S. average: 4,090



“This is our opportunity to get the bill passed in order to keep propane in the state, because the threat is that the government wants to electrify everything.”

JULIE JOHNSON, vice chair, WPGA, about AB 1559

Sources: Propane Education & Research Council’s U.S. National and State Propane Market Profiles; Annual Retail Propane Sales Report; propane.com; Western Propane Gas Association; U.S. Energy Information Administration’s State Energy Profiles

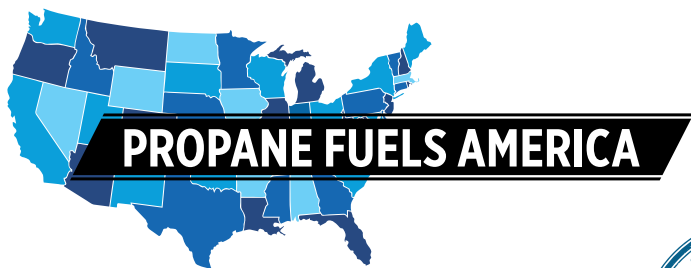
Total odorized propane demand (2019): 556 million gallons

U.S. rank for gallons sold: 3

Gallon sales trend: California sold 492 million gallons of propane in 2017 and 556 million gallons in 2019, an increase of 13 percent. The state’s gallon sales have remained consistent in its market segments over recent years, according to Julie Johnson, vice chair of the Western Propane Gas Association (WPGA).

Census region/division gallons: West: 1.71 billion/Pacific: 910 million

Propane autogas school buses/districts and contractors: 1,940/50



Colorado



▶ MARKET POINTERS

- Colorado's population growth has supported the residential market, which accounted for 62 percent of retail gallon sales in 2019. Propane powers mountain homes in the Rockies and farming communities in the plains. "The state is growing, and the sales for retail propane are growing with it as a lot of people move out of the cities and expand into more rural areas," explains Dan Binning, executive director of the Colorado Propane Gas Association (CPGA).
- The agriculture market presents growth opportunities in the state. Indoor and greenhouse agricultural cultivation that uses propane for heat has expanded in recent years, according to the Propane Education & Research Council.
- Despite a substantial push for electric

vehicles in the state, Binning sees auto-gas for school buses as a growth area for propane, particularly in rural areas where buses have to traverse long distances.

- The industry faces headwinds from growing support for electrification in the state legislature. Thus far, proposed legislation does not directly target the industry, but CPGA is keeping an eye on developments that may create an onerous environment for propane, says Binning.
- Colorado ranks among the Top 10 states for crude oil and natural gas production, so propane supply is abundant. Though

marketers may source propane from nearby states during cold, busy stretches, they can find enough product internally for most of the year, says Binning. "We export more propane than we use by a significant amount," he adds.

WHAT'S THE WEATHER?

Average temperature (2020): 47.2 degrees F

Annual heating degree-days five-year average (2015-19): 6,545
U.S. average: 4,090



FAST FACTS

State association affiliation: Colorado Propane Gas Association (CPGA)/copropane.com
Colorado Propane Education & Research Council (CPERC)

Programs: CPERC provides rebates for propane appliances and for new NFPA 54 and 58 code books. It also funds typically three to four fire training classes for rural fire departments per year. Employee training in the state encompasses the Certified Employee Training Program and classroom instruction.

Marquee events in 2021: The Colorado and New Mexico propane associations will host an in-person convention June 23-25 in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Before COVID-19: The propane industry in Colorado had contributed \$1.6 billion to the 2018 state economy. It's too early to assess COVID-19's impact on the state's gross domestic product.

"[My state representative] said she wanted to go all electric but that she couldn't afford it. ... How about the poor people out on the plains, the poor people in the mountain communities, the people who work at the ski resorts who get low wages? How are they going to afford this even with the subsidies that you're creating?"

DAN BINNING, executive director of the Colorado Propane Gas Association, on the electrify-everything movement

Sources: Propane Education & Research Council's U.S. National and State Propane Market Profiles; Annual Retail Propane Sales Report; propane.com; Colorado Propane Gas Association; U.S. Energy Information Administration's State Energy Profiles; leg.colorado.gov

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Total odorized propane demand (2019): 215 million gallons

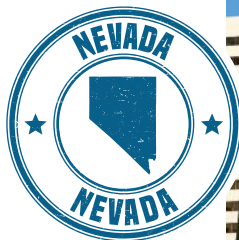
U.S. rank for gallons sold: 15

Gallon sales trend: Colorado's retail gallon sales have increased steadily from 173 million gallons in 2017 due in part to population growth and better data reporting, says Dan Binning, executive director of the Colorado Propane Gas Association.

Census region/division gallons:
West: 1.71 billion
Mountain: 803 million

Propane autogas school buses/districts and contractors: 383/23

Nevada



▶ MARKET POINTERS

- The residential sector – where only three in 100 Nevada households use petroleum products, mostly propane, for home heating – accounts for 1 percent of state petroleum consumption. Nevada’s warm climate reduces the opportunity for propane to displace other home heating fuels. In 2019, propane marketers sold about 36 percent of gallons for residential purposes.

- Much of Nevada has limited natural gas pipeline connectivity, increasing the attractiveness of alternative fuels. The commercial sector, already accounting for just over 30 percent of propane sales in 2019, is likely best positioned for further propane demand growth – buoyed by moderate economic growth and healthy median incomes. Nevada’s transportation sector is the largest energy consumer in the state, followed by industrial consumption.

- In order for Nevada to reach its goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, the state must reduce its use of natural gas, says Gov. Steve Sisolak. Natural gas is the primary source for electricity generation in the state. The Democratic governor is calling for further review by the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada. The National Propane Gas Association labels Nevada an “imminent threat,” referring to proposed anti-gas and/or pro-electrification policies.

- When it comes to natural gas, some propane marketers in the state face a “double-edged sword,” says Mike Eriksen, president of Wells Propane. Gas bans would likely impact propane marketers, but Eriksen says his company has also

felt the impacts of natural gas expansion into his “backyard” in recent years.

- In 2019, Nevada ranked second in the nation in electricity generation from geothermal energy and fourth in utility-scale generation from solar energy. Nevada leads the nation in solar power potential, the U.S. Energy Information Administration reports.

WHAT’S THE WEATHER?

Average temperature (2020): 52.4 degrees F

Annual heating degree-days five-year average (2015-19): 3,124
U.S. average: 4,090



FAST FACTS

State association affiliation: Nevada Propane Dealers Association/nvpropane.net

Programs: Safe appliance rebate program, which allows marketers to apply for rebates on behalf of their customers. ... The state will resume its CETP training calendar this summer under COVID-19 protocols.

Marquee events in 2021: Nevada is among a group of states co-sponsoring the Western Propane Trade Show & Convention, scheduled this year for Aug. 11-13 in Reno, Nevada. The state association’s Hall of Flame dinner and membership meeting will be held this year in conjunction with the Western show.

Before COVID-19: The propane industry in Nevada had contributed about \$196 million to the 2018 state economy. It’s too early to assess COVID-19’s impact on the state’s gross domestic product.

“The industry is very much looking forward to our in-person training provided by Eric Smith, director of education and code development and former chief inspector for the Nevada LP Gas Board, who is highly regarded in Nevada’s propane industry.”

LISA MENANTE, executive director, Nevada Propane Dealers Association

Sources: Propane Education & Research Council’s U.S. National and State Propane Market Profiles; Annual Retail Propane Sales Report; propane.com; Nevada Propane Dealers Association; U.S. Energy Information Administration’s State Energy Profiles

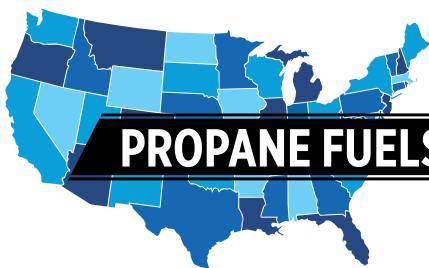
Total odorized propane demand (2019): 53 million gallons

U.S. rank for gallons sold: T-44

Gallon sales trend: Nevada has hovered around the 50-million-gallon mark for the past several years. It sold 50 million gallons in 2017 and 48 million in 2018.

Census region/division gallons:
West: 1.71 billion
Mountain: 803 million

Propane autogas school buses/districts and contractors: 70/2



PROPANE FUELS AMERICA

New Mexico

▶ MARKET POINTERS

• New Mexico's warm climate – particularly in the southern half of the state – and flat population growth limit the use of propane for space heating. The residential market accounts for more than 60 percent of a relatively small market for retail propane gallons.

• The Rocky Mountains extend south from Colorado across much of western New Mexico, generating demand for propane in mountain residences.

• Southeastern New Mexico is home to a portion of the oil-and-gas-rich Permian Basin. As such, it is the nation's third-largest oil-producing state and among the Top 10 natural gas-producing states, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

• A recent electrification bill didn't make

it out of committee but will likely be reintroduced next year, says Dan Binning, executive director of the New Mexico Propane Gas Association. It's a fairly liberal state, so the New Mexico Propane Gas

Association has to work hard to educate the public and customers about the drawbacks of electrification, he adds.

• Some of the state's first propane-powered school buses were purchased by Los Lunas Public Schools, Magdalena Municipal School District and Moriarty-Edgewood School District



FAST FACTS

State association affiliation: New Mexico Propane Gas Association (NMPGA)/
nmpga.com
New Mexico Propane Education & Research Foundation (NMPERF)

Programs: NMPERF funds typically one fire training class for a rural fire department per year, as well as the Certified Employee Training Program and classroom instruction.

Marquee events in 2021: The Colorado and New Mexico propane associations will host an in-person convention June 23-25 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. A marketer and service technician training has been moved from the spring to the fall.

Before COVID-19: The propane industry in New Mexico had contributed \$864 million to the 2018 state economy. It's too early to assess COVID-19's impact on the state's gross domestic product.



in early 2020. Although the COVID-19 pandemic delayed their use, the school districts are having a positive experience with the buses, according to Roush CleanTech, which provided the fuel systems. Rehoboth Christian School also invested in propane school buses in 2020.

WHAT'S THE WEATHER?

Average temperature (2020): 56 degrees F

Annual heating degree-days five-year average (2015-19): 4,131
U.S. average: 4,090



“We purchased six propane bus units in 2020, and we will not purchase anything else in the future. We are planning to add at least one more propane bus soon.”

JONATHON TERBORG, director of operations and transportation, Rehoboth Christian School

Sources: Propane Education & Research Council's U.S. National and State Propane Market Profiles; Annual Retail Propane Sales Report; propane.com; New Mexico Propane Gas Association; U.S. Energy Information Administration's State Energy Profiles

JJWITHERS/E+/GETTY IMAGES

Total odorized propane demand (2019): 78 million gallons

U.S. rank for gallons sold: 41

Gallon sales trend: Retail gallon sales increased from 70 million gallons in 2017 to 80 million in 2018 before leveling off in 2019.

Census region/division gallons:
West: 1.71 billion
Mountain: 803 million

Propane autogas school buses/districts and contractors: 24/5

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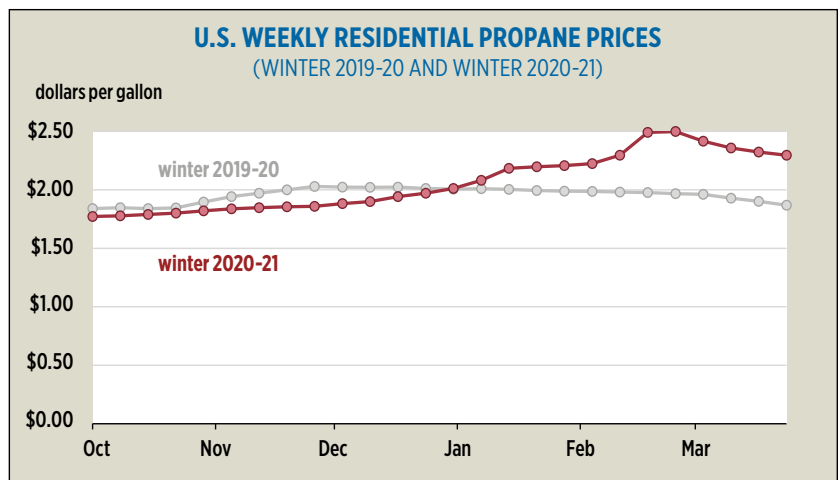
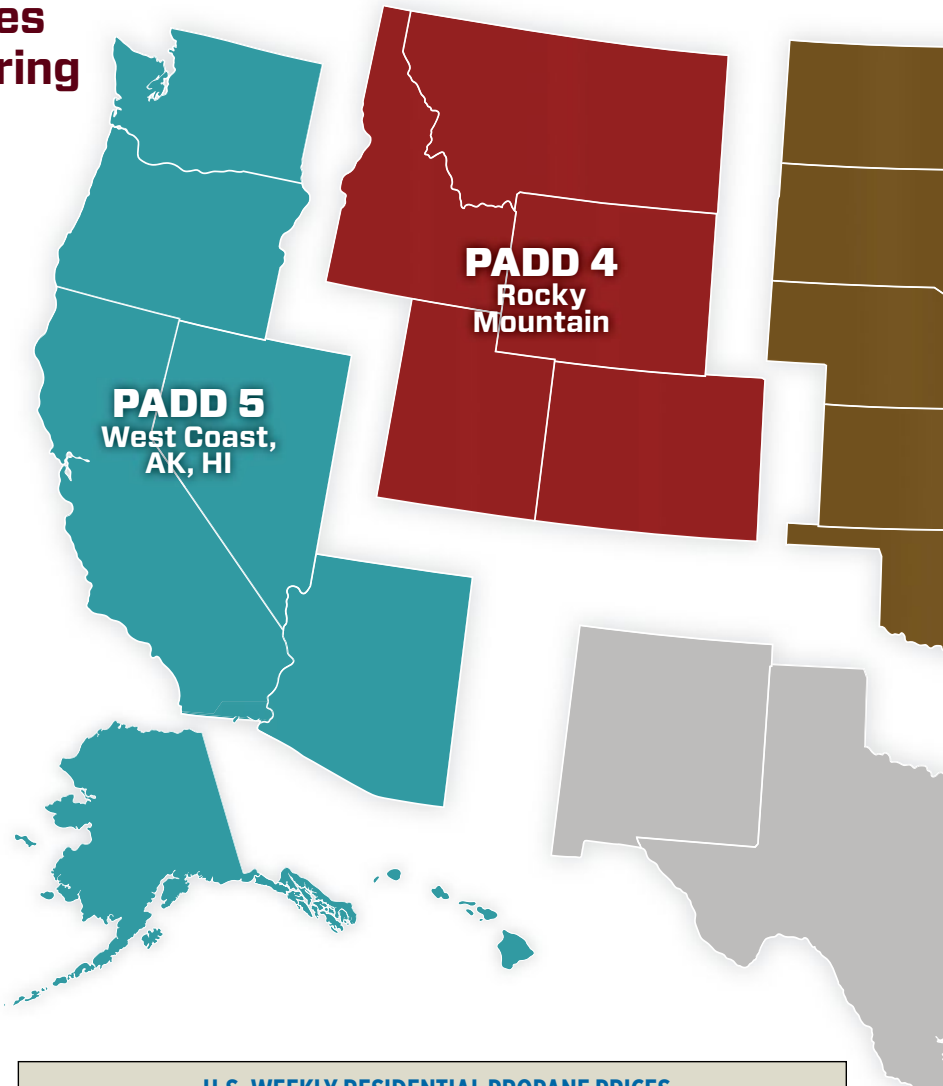
US residential prices rise 30 percent during heating season

The residential price of propane in the U.S. averaged \$2.30 per gallon as of March 29, which was nearly 43 cents a gallon higher than at the same time last year, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA).

U.S. average residential propane prices increased by more than 52 cents a gallon, or 30 percent, during the 2020-21 heating season, which began Oct. 1 and ended March 31. The increase in prices can be attributed primarily to higher crude oil prices, seasonal withdrawals from propane inventory and increased global demand for U.S. propane exports, the EIA says. The price change was the largest within-season increase in residential propane prices since the 2013-14 season when propane markets tightened because of a polar vortex and low inventories.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey, propane is the primary home heating fuel in 5 percent of U.S. homes and tends to be more common in the Northeast and Midwest. At least 14 percent of homes in Vermont, New Hampshire, South Dakota, North Dakota and Montana use propane as their primary heating fuel.

U.S. propane inventories declined more than they did last year during the 2020-21 winter heating season because of increases in seasonal U.S. propane exports to Asia. As of March 26, total U.S. propane inventory levels were 39.2 million barrels, or 34 percent, less than at the same time last year, while inventories in the Northeast (PADDs 1A and 1B) were 12 percent less and in the Midwest (PADD 2) were 14 percent less than at the same time last year. **LPG**



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, State Heating Oil and Propane Program

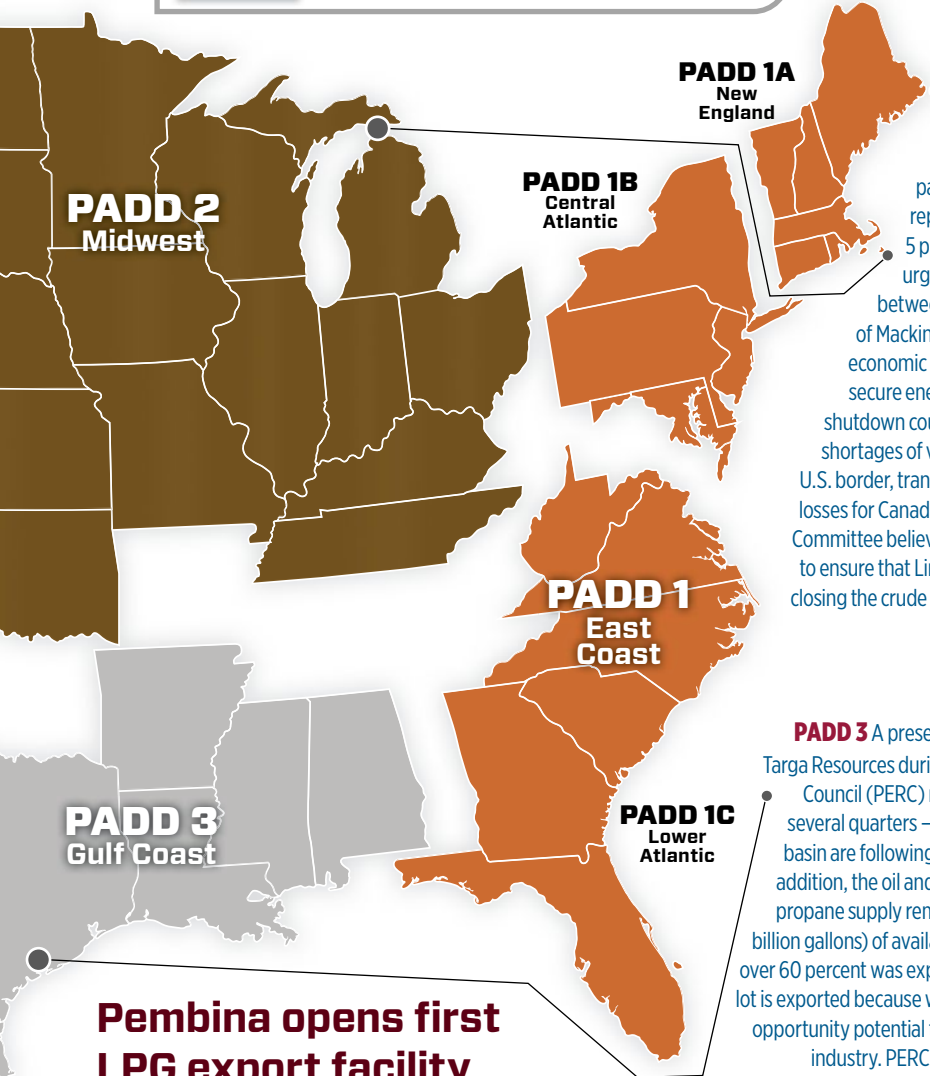
U.S. average residential propane prices increased by more than 52 cents a gallon, or 30 percent, during the 2020-21 heating season.

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LP GAS SUPPLIERS GUIDE: PUBLISHED IN MARCH

In our March issue, we presented our annual Propane Suppliers Guide, featuring listings of propane producers, wholesalers and resellers who market propane to the nation's LP gas retailers. To be included in a future Propane Suppliers Guide, which is also available at lpgasmagazine.com, email brichesson@northcoastmedia.net.



PADD FOCUS SUPPLY SOURCES

PADD 2 Enbridge released details from a multi-party Canadian House of Commons Special Committee report that affirms the economic importance of the Line 5 pipeline to both Canada and the U.S. and recommends urgent, binational executive action to resolve the dispute between the state of Michigan and Enbridge over the Straits of Mackinac crossing. "Line 5 is a significant aspect of Canada's economic relationship with the United States and contributes to secure energy supplies in both countries," the report states. "Its shutdown could have many implications, including reduced safety, shortages of various energy products on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border, transportation bottlenecks for Alberta's crude oil, and job losses for Canadian and American workers. In this context, the Special Committee believes that the government of Canada's efforts designed to ensure that Line 5 remains in operation are vital." The state has said closing the crude oil and NGL pipeline will help protect the Great Lakes.

PADD 3 A presentation by Bruce Leonard of Houston-based supplier Targa Resources during the April 22 virtual Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) meeting revealed a rise in U.S. rig counts over the last several quarters – to an April average of 434. Rig counts in the Permian basin are following the same trend – rising to an April average of 225. In addition, the oil and gas production forecast shows modest growth. U.S. propane supply remains abundant, as only about 29 percent (just over 9 billion gallons) of available supply went toward domestic use in 2020, while over 60 percent was exported, says Leonard, citing PERC and EIA sources. "A lot is exported because we don't have a use for it yet," he says, also noting the opportunity potential that abundant propane supply offers to the domestic industry. PERC's efforts are geared toward growing the U.S. market.

Pembina opens first LPG export facility

Pembina opened its first propane marine export facility, the Prince Rupert Terminal, located on Watson Island in the vicinity of Prince Rupert, British Columbia, Canada.

Dry commissioning was completed on March 19, and Pembina began loading propane from rail cars onto vessels destined for international markets on April 9.

"This project is important as it represents our first export facility and will provide customers with improved access to more international markets and attract higher pricing for their propane," the company says in its fourth quarter

and full-year 2020 financial statement.

The terminal is expected to operate at 20,000 barrels per day (bpd) with a capacity of 25,000 bpd. The project capital budget was \$250 million.

The propane is extracted off-site from natural gas supply in northern British Columbia and Alberta, the company says, and will be transported by rail from its Redwater Complex north-east of Edmonton to Prince Rupert. The propane will be offloaded and stored at the terminal.

Pembina is a transportation and midstream service provider in North America. It owns an integrated system



Pembina's new export facility is best viewed as a small-scale rail terminal, moving LPG from rail cars to vessels destined for international markets.

of pipelines that transport hydrocarbon liquids and natural gas products produced primarily in western Canada.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TERRAVEST INDUSTRIES (TOP); ASS29/ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS/GETTY IMAGES (HEADER) (TOP); AND BY AARON WHITFIELD/RED BIKE MEDIA (BOTTOM)



PERC

Council approves state environmental engagement partnership fund

The Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) approved the following funding requests during its virtual meeting in April.

- \$2.3 million for the state environmental engagement partnership fund. The project provides funding to state entities for local media buys – mainly on digital platforms – to support PERC’s environmental campaigns. The council says engaging its audiences about the environmental benefits of propane is critical to the expansion of users and uses of propane.

- \$525,000 for 2021 industry engagement, to support driving and maintaining propane growth by working with state associations and industry members across the country. PERC says a strong emphasis will be placed on environmental messaging and training initiatives.

- \$210,000 for 2021 workforce outreach support, to continue to create



awareness of the propane industry as a viable career choice through partnerships with states and marketers. The project will also work to create tools and resources to implement the program at a local level.

- \$97,185 for a project with Terzo Power Systems that aims to develop a propane-battery hybrid almond harvesting machine. A hybrid hydraulic drive system allows a propane engine to provide the power necessary for agriculture, off-road and industrial equipment.

The council is scheduled to meet July 20-21 in Beaver Creek, Colorado.

NPGA

CORPORATE PARTNERS CAMPAIGN TO BENEFIT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The National Propane Gas Foundation Scholarship Fund’s (NPGF/SF) 2021 Corporate Partners Campaign is in full swing, as it aims to help the children of National Propane Gas Association (NPGA) member company employees with their higher education goals.

The campaign, which continues through the summer, is the industry’s primary

means of generating financial support for the NPGF/SF this year. Without in-person meetings, the group was not able to hold its annual silent auction, which normally takes place at the winter board meeting.

In 2020, the fund provided 102 scholarships totaling \$135,000, and the group is hoping to meet the same level of support for education this year.

Scholarship fund leaders are asking the propane industry to consider making a tax-deductible donation in support of Corporate Partners. Contact Maril Olson, manager of the Scholarship Foundation, at molson@npga.org or 202-355-1328.

LP Gas tweets about PERC meeting

LP Gas Magazine @LPGas_Mag

The @PropaneCouncil approved the following officers for 2021-22: Stuart Weidie, chairman; Casey Cramton, vice chairman (marketers); Duncan McGinnis, vice chairman (producers); Jeff Kerns, treasurer; and Gary France, secretary.

The @PropaneCouncil’s Environmental Task Force is on schedule to roll out the #propane industry’s environmental messaging plan in June, says task force chairman @StuartWeidie. He calls the upcoming rollout “an ongoing effort that never ends.”

A lot of talk during today’s @PropaneCouncil meeting about the council’s partnership with @Cummins and their project to develop a 6.7-liter propane engine for on- and off-road applications. A propane-fueled bobtail could be one of the early beneficiaries.

A presentation by Bruce Leonard of Targa Resources during today’s @PropaneCouncil meeting revealed a rise in U.S. rig counts over the last several quarters – to an April average of 434. The oil and gas production forecast shows modest growth. U.S. propane supply remains abundant.

During today’s @PropaneCouncil meeting, Steve Kaminski of @NPGAPropane shared state-level successes when it comes to protecting the industry against gas bans. The federal side presents a challenging environment, he adds.

PORCORY/ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS/GETTY IMAGES (TOP); KANATE/ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS/ GETTY IMAGES (BIRD); LUKBAR/ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS/GETTY IMAGES (HEADER)



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“From the start, Chad laid out the process and made it easy and painless; he made sure my expectations were realistic from the start. Chad’s involvement, guidance and negotiating allowed me to continue to focus on running my business, knowing that the sale was in good hands. He was able to market us to far more buyers than I could have. I’m comfortable that Chad got me far better terms than I could. I would gladly go through the process again only if Chad was representing me!”

Brian Gillam
All Service Propane Inc.



Stay compliant with cathodic testing

Routine cathodic protection system testing is required for underground tanks in many states based on the 2011 edition and later versions of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Liquefied Petroleum Gas Code 58. Make sure your company is up to speed on best practices for cathodic testing.

A technology-driven system with input-error reduction can improve the accuracy of forms in real time.

▶ STEP 1: PREPARE FOR TESTING

Start with equipment. Do you have the proper testing equipment?

Get your forms in order. Make sure you have any previous testing records and new inspection forms ready to go.

Train your employees. Are your employees trained and qualified to perform proper cathodic testing methods? Testing requirements per NFPA 58 include:

- One of the most widely used testing methods is using a copper-copper sulfate half cell to achieve at least -.85 D.C. or more (meaning negative).
- Testing must be completed upon installation unless prohibited by climatic conditions, in which case testing shall be done within 180 days after installation of the system.
- Continued verification of the effectiveness of the system 12 to 18 months after the initial testing.
- Periodic follow-up testing shall be performed at intervals not to exceed 36 months.

• Systems failing a test shall be repaired as soon as practical unless climatic conditions prohibit this action, in which case the repair shall be made not more than 180 days thereafter. Testing schedule shall be restarted as required initially.

• Documentation of the results of the two most recent tests shall be retained.

▶ STEP 2: TEST

Dispatch your service technicians and/or drivers to complete cathodic protection inspections at customer locations. Due diligence beforehand will set them up for success in the field.

▶ STEP 3: REVIEW, REPORT AND COACH

It is critical to review the accuracy and completion of your documentation.

Remember, technicians do not love paperwork. A technology-driven system with input-error reduction can improve the accuracy of forms in real time. Then, when forms are sent electronically to your database, they can be reviewed quickly and flagged for corrective action if needed.

Establishing a process to review and report your cathodic testing documentation is also a great tool for training. You can track technician performance to identify skills with which your techs might need a little extra help. **LPG**

Eric Leskinen is the executive vice president of P3 Propane Safety. He can be reached at eric_leskinen@bostonenv.com.

NOTE: The opinions and viewpoints expressed herein are solely the author's and should in no way be interpreted as those of LP Gas magazine or any of its staff members.

RECALL NOTICE

100-POUND PROPANE CYLINDERS POSE RISK OF GAS LEAK

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) issued a recall notice for about 500 Hog 100-pound propane cylinders. The cylinders, manufactured with a handle below the weld on the side, could leak propane gas, posing a fire hazard.

The cylinders are white and have built-in wheels. The cylinders can be identified by serial numbers 000001 through 002800, stamped on the unit's collar. UPC 850015730016 and SKU YSN100HOG are printed on the box. There is a sticker on the cylinders with a warning not to fill unless the unit is standing up.



The Hog cylinders were sold online between January and October 2020.

The cylinders, manufactured in Thailand and imported by Flame King, were sold online at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), [wayfair.com](https://www.wayfair.com), [ebay.com](https://www.ebay.com), [homedepot.com](https://www.homedepot.com) and [walmart.com](https://www.walmart.com) from January 2020 through October 2020 for about \$250.

Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled propane cylinders and contact Flame King for a full refund or free replacement.

No incidents or injuries have been reported to the CPSC.



STUART FLATOW

Reducing workplace injuries

WAYS TO AVOID OVEREXERTION, SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

When you are focused on your work, you may miss issues that can pose hazards, potentially leading to a slip, trip, fall or overexertion and resulting in serious injury. By exercising precautions and staying aware of your environment and circumstances, you can greatly reduce the likelihood of such issues. Such awareness is part of a personal risk assessment that should be performed for every job.

▶ COMMON CAUSES OF SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

Obstacles in your path; slippery or wet surfaces; improper footwear; improper entry into or exit out of delivery vehicles; and jumping from heights such as from loading docks or the rear of trucks are common causes of slips, trips and falls, as are distractions such as texting while walking and talking with customers and conducting tasks.

▶ SLIPPERY SURFACES

Consider weather conditions, route and travel issues, and any special requirements of job sites.

To stay on your feet when walking on slippery surfaces:

- Take small steps.
- Avoid accelerating or changing directions quickly.
- Watch transitions from dry to slippery surfaces.
- Take extra caution when focused on work.

Also wear appropriate footwear, such as:

- Boots or shoes in good condition with slip-resistant soles.
- Wear ice cleats in winter conditions. Make sure they easily fit over shoes or boots and provide ample traction on snow and ice.

▶ PROPER LIFTING TECHNIQUES

Use a power lift, a technique that leverages body stability and strength, for heavy materials such as cylinders, and focus on upper-body support when picking up a lightweight tool or component. Take a staggered stance to give your body stability.

Here are a few more safe-lifting tips:

- Keep the load close to your body. Holding materials away from your body will make them seem heavier and cause as much as 10 times more stress to your back. Always hold materials such as hoses and cylinders close.
- If you are lifting from a pallet, work off of the corners of the pallet, and place one foot along each side.
- Be sure to keep the load between your knees.
- Bend at the hips and knees. This allows you to use your leg muscles, which will provide stability, support and strength.
- When you start lifting, tighten your core muscles to stabilize your upper body. Then, when you need to rotate your body, pivot your feet instead of twisting your body. When you twist, the weight of your upper body combines with the weight you are lifting and adds four times the amount of pressure on your back. When you pivot your feet, you help avoid all of that added pressure on your body.

- When you are at a residential, commercial or construction site, be cognizant of trash, scrap materials or uneven surfaces. Conduct a personal risk assessment; make sure your path is clear before you make the delivery; and discuss any hazards that need to be cleared with the customer.

▶ FINAL THOUGHTS

Working safely and avoiding injuries takes discipline. It's easy to get caught up in the moment and take shortcuts that can result in career-ending and costly injuries. It also requires management to understand that some working conditions may increase the time it takes to properly perform certain tasks.

And, while the propane industry is attracting younger professionals, it is still an aging industry. The average age of a bobtail driver is over 50 years old, resulting in long recovery times for those who get hurt. This not only increases costs and decreases profits for the business but also could lead to an inability to maintain family life such as seeing and hugging your spouse, kids or grandchildren. And that, my friends, would be tragic.

For more propane task-specific operations, I encourage everyone to get a copy of the Propane Education & Research Council's program: "Propane Personal Safety: Techniques for Injury Prevention in the Propane Industry." **LPG**

Stuart Flatow spent 18 years as the Propane Education & Research Council's vice president of safety and training before stepping down in February 2019. He can be reached at sflatow@aol.com.

NOTE: The opinions and viewpoints expressed herein are solely the author's and should in no way be interpreted as those of LP Gas magazine or any of its staff members.



real talk with randy

RANDY DOYLE // HOW PROPANE CAN ACHIEVE ITS TRUE POTENTIAL

Achieving energy reliability

WAYS TO ELIMINATE OUT-OF-GAS INCIDENTS

What percentage of your customers ran out of gas in the past three years? Even one is too many. At least, this should be the mindset of the propane marketer and an industry pursuing a reputation of reliability.

It should not come as a surprise that one of the customer's great fears is running out of gas. Whether it's the homeowner in the middle of cooking the family dinner or a restaurant owner boiling crawfish for a room full of hungry customers, out-of-gas situations create a crisis that mars the reputation of the propane marketer and the industry, even when the propane marketer is not at fault.

The energy crisis in Texas this past winter only added to customer sensitivity about being without energy. Propane's "off-grid" position has been a great selling point that proves itself during severe weather and other power disruptions. Propane's energy independence message now has a larger audience with those who will work from home in the post-COVID-19 world.

The increased demand for grid-independent energy bodes well for propane. We should strive to live up to our energy reliability message, but it is not easy for several reasons. For example, creating the supply and distribution infrastructure to handle peak load demands from severe cold or a bumper corn crop is challenging. Reliable supply means having the capital to build adequate bulk

storage and understanding complex contracting and hedging practices. Managing the dynamic demand of the thousands of different types of customers requires expertise, staff time and the tools to perform effectively. For many propane marketers, doing these tasks well requires management determination and prioritization.

Top-performing owners and operational managers make energy reliability a top priority.

► LEADERSHIP PRIORITIES

Nothing happens without leadership commitment. Top-performing owners and operational managers make energy reliability a top priority. There is zero tolerance for out-of-gas situations, even though achieving this goal is challenging. When there is an out-of-gas incident, the customer is put back into gas service with a sense of urgency and safety. Here are five practices of a company committed to energy reliability:

- **Manage by the numbers:** Top-performing marketers measure the number of out-of-gas incidents and close calls, watching for key trends. The cause of the out-of-gas incident is identified and remedied to prevent recurring incidents. They set performance goals.

- **Staff performance:** Responsibility and accountability are clearly assigned for ensuring energy reliability, whether to a central dispatcher, front-line manager or even the bobtail driver. The responsible staff member is equipped with today's tools – predictive demand

system, tank monitors and routing systems – all needed to manage the large volume of data. Teamwork among management, dispatchers and drivers is imperative. Everyone should have a voice when evaluating performance and offering ideas for improvement.

- **Propane supply:** Leading propane marketers have sufficient bulk storage, effectively manage their tertiary storage and responsibly contract for winter needs with reliable propane suppliers.

- **Bobtail operations:** Leading propane marketers manage will-call customers. They do not let the customer dictate their business. Where possible, they move demand away from peak periods. They have a reliable and sufficient fleet of bobtails. They invest in reliable information technology tools needed to know gas levels in the customer's tank, schedule and route bobtails.

- **Be tenacious:** The tenacious marketer is vigilant about achieving reliability and eliminating out-of-gas incidents. Preventing out-of-gas incidents is a dynamic challenge that demands ongoing improvement.

Are you among the propane marketers dissatisfied with their performance in providing reliable gas delivery? If your answer is yes, begin this summer by rethinking your approach, and implement the changes that will boost your performance next winter. Your business reputation, customers and employees will thank you. **LPG**

Randy Doyle is a 35-year, semi-retired veteran of the propane industry who consults with Holtzman Propane in Mt. Jackson, Virginia. He is a member of the NPGA board of directors and the PERC council, and is active in the Virginia Propane Gas Association. He can be reached at rrd1974@outlook.com.

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NEW YORK RETAILER LAUNCHES PROGRAM TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY'S MOST VULNERABLE

BY CARLY MCFADDEN //
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
cmcfadden@northcoastmedia.net

German philosopher Immanuel Kant once said, “We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals.” If that sentiment can be applied to businesses, then Kimlin Energy has a heart of gold.

The third-generation family-owned retailer, which operates out of New York and provides propane and heating oil to residential, agricultural and commercial customers in the Hudson Valley area, spends much of its time focused on man’s best friend.

In fact, one company policy that is popular among the animal-loving Kimlin Energy staff is that employees can bring their dogs into the office. President Max Kimlin – who can often be found alongside his corgi, Abe – adopted the policy to create a warm environment for both customers and staff, the company says.

Under Kimlin’s leadership, the company has donated propane to Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) shelters and clinics throughout the years. When shelters began to face

cutbacks during the onset of the pandemic last year, Kimlin Energy donated tens of thousands of dollars in fuel, tanks and line upgrades to local shelters, according to the company.

Kimlin also contributed as an underwriter to a local morning radio segment, “Miller’s Animal Rescue,” that promoted the adoption of homeless and shelter dogs and cats through the Hudson Valley Animal Rescue and Sanctuary organization.

In January, the company decided to more formally recognize its efforts by establishing the Community of Caring program. During each month of 2021, Kimlin Energy will sponsor and promote a local nonprofit through its program.

The Community of Caring program focuses on helping animals in the community, as well as promoting child welfare for local youth. To date, Kimlin Energy has focused on the Dutchess County SPCA, Wayward Ranch Animal Sanctuary and the Ulster County SPCA. This May, the retailer is spotlighting Lost Pets of the Hudson Valley.

Each month, Kimlin Energy spotlights the nonprofit of choice on social media and a local radio station with more than 30 radio spots and live interviews. The

company says the Community of Caring program’s mission is to raise awareness of the organizations and encourage members of the Hudson Valley community to get involved by donating or volunteering.

The community has responded enthusiastically to the program, Kimlin Energy says, and the organizations selected so far have seen more volunteers, donations and word-of-mouth awareness since being spotlighted. The program has also assisted dozens of rescued or abandoned animals find their “forever homes,” according to the company.

From a business perspective, Kimlin Energy says that focusing its support on one theme has helped the brand stand out in a competitive market. On a personal level, meanwhile, the program allows the company to reflect its values to the areas it serves and bring people together to uplift the community.

“Our Community of Caring initiative is really a natural extension of what we have been doing in the community for years,” Kimlin says. “However, as an avid dog lover, and a great staff who similarly shares my affection for animals, we really wanted to share our passion more widely to help where we can.” **LPG**



Kimlin Energy donated to the Dutchess County SPCA in February through its Community of Caring program.

KIMLIN ENERGY

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FOUNDER // Douglas Kimlin

OWNER & PRESIDENT // Max Kimlin

HEADQUARTERS // Gardiner, New York

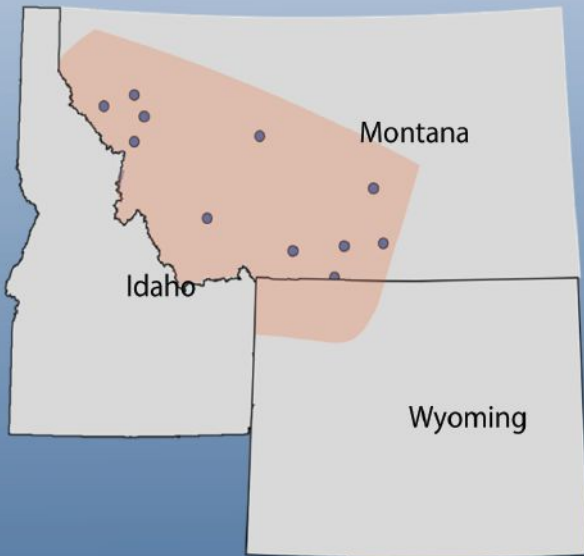
EMPLOYEES // 35

BOBTAILS // 8

ANNUAL GALLONS // 3-5 million



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March 28, 2012 | THIS WEEK'S TOPIC: PROpane Swaps

COVID-19 Update: Check for an update from our propane forecasting team.

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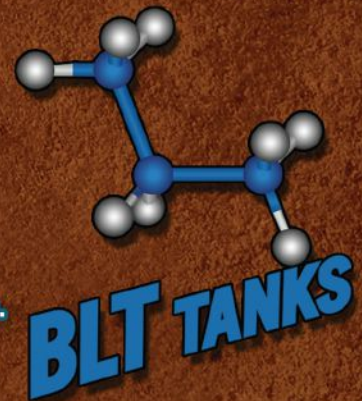
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EMILY WOOD,
Educational Content Development
Manager, PERC



EMILY WOOD

**EDUCATIONAL CONTENT
DEVELOPMENT MANAGER,
PROPANE EDUCATION
& RESEARCH COUNCIL (PERC)**

EDUCATION

**California State University –
Monterey Bay**
Master's degree in instructional design
and technology, Class of 2011

NYU Stern School of Business
Bachelor's degree in international
business and marketing,
minor in Spanish, Class of 2005

WORK EXPERIENCE

2019–Present
Propane Education & Research Council

- Educational Content Development Manager
- Educational Content Development Coordinator

2015–19
Oregon Child Development Coalition

- e-Learning Developer

2013–15
Monterey Bay Aquarium

- Web Project Manager, ScrumMaster

2011–13
OIC Moments

- Marketing Manager

2011
U.S. Department of Defense

- Assistant Professor, Project Manager

2006–11
National Geographic School Publishing

- Market Research Manager
- eProduct Specialist

Why did you join the propane industry, and why have you stayed?

"I'm a big believer in working for nonprofits, which is what drew me to PERC specifically. I believe in environmental justice and the fact that propane is a green energy source. I want to make sure that more people are aware of that. Before I came to the industry, I wasn't aware that [propane] autogas was a thing, so I've been doing a lot of viral marketing around that. Teslas are cool. Electric cars are great, but we get major power outages.

"My whole family is in California, and there were the big fires, and I had family get stuck in their houses – they couldn't get out because their cars were electric. With propane, you don't have that kind of situation. So, helping people be more self-sufficient, get off the grid and ensure that they can be warm and cook and all the things that we would want – I strongly support that on a personal level."

HOBBIES

"I love the water. I always want to be in or on the water or on anything that gets me out there: self-powered boats, big boats, under-the-water diving, all of that. I have a dog who is very high energy, so I hike extensively. He's a cattle dog, so we usually do three to 10 miles a day. I also like to play some bass."

What are you developing now for PERC's e-learning?

"We're coming out with a new curriculum for bobtail drivers and for cylinder truck drivers. It will probably be out at the end of the summer. With the February 2022 legislation that's going to require entry-level driver training, we're concerned as an industry about how we're going to be able to recruit and maintain people with the commercial driver's licenses. So, I think the big focus for the next year is going to be on people in a driving-type position.

"We've been talking a lot about doing something called 'flipped classroom,' which is where you would take the e-learning part of the course [first]. So you would learn all that base content such as: What's the boiling point of propane? Or, why do we wear PPE?

"Then, you would go into the classroom experience and have an expert in the industry who's able to answer your more detailed questions. Because once you have that base level of knowledge, you can have the practical applications of it. It can be a better use of time both for the instructor and for the students because they can fill in the gaps, but they need to have that adaptive curriculum to get to where they need to get."



When she's not working, Wood goes on frequent hikes with her dog, ranging from three to 10 miles a day.

BENEFITS OF E-LEARNING

"There are a couple of different ways that people can obtain education. The most common one is classroom training: You go to a place and there's a teacher there, and you're all taught together. With e-learning, you can sit in front of a computer – or a tablet or mobile device, whatever it is that you want to use – by yourself. Whatever time is convenient for you, you have the ability to go through the content. The nice thing about that is it's kind of like having a private tutor because it's going to adapt to your level of understanding. So as you're taking the course, you can say, 'Hey, I don't really get this,' and then get into that deeper level and additional practice opportunities."

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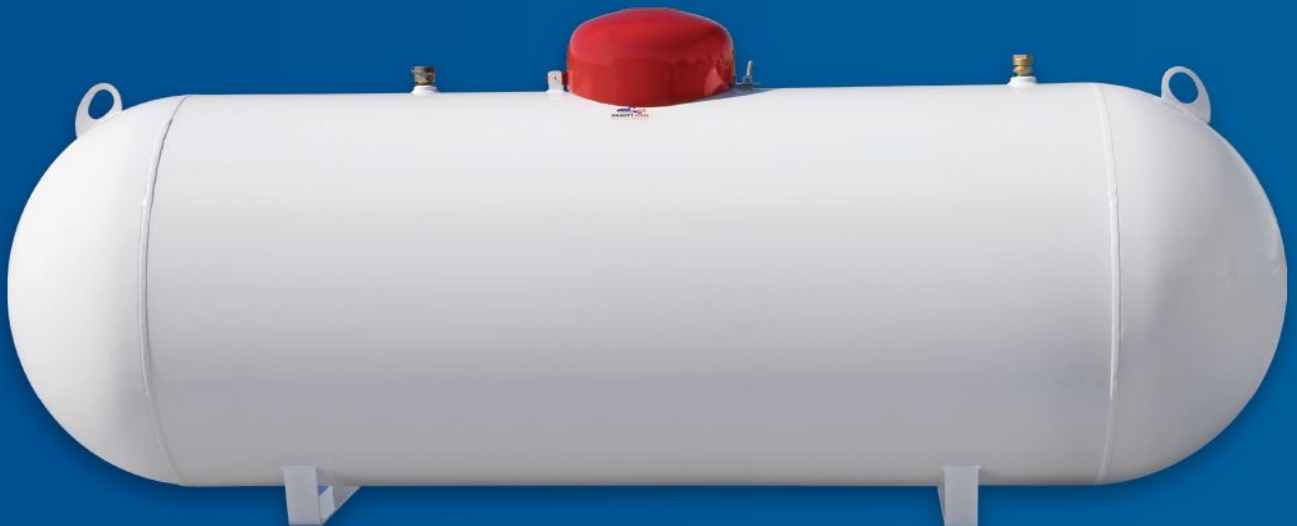
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