BUTANE-PROPANE NEWS

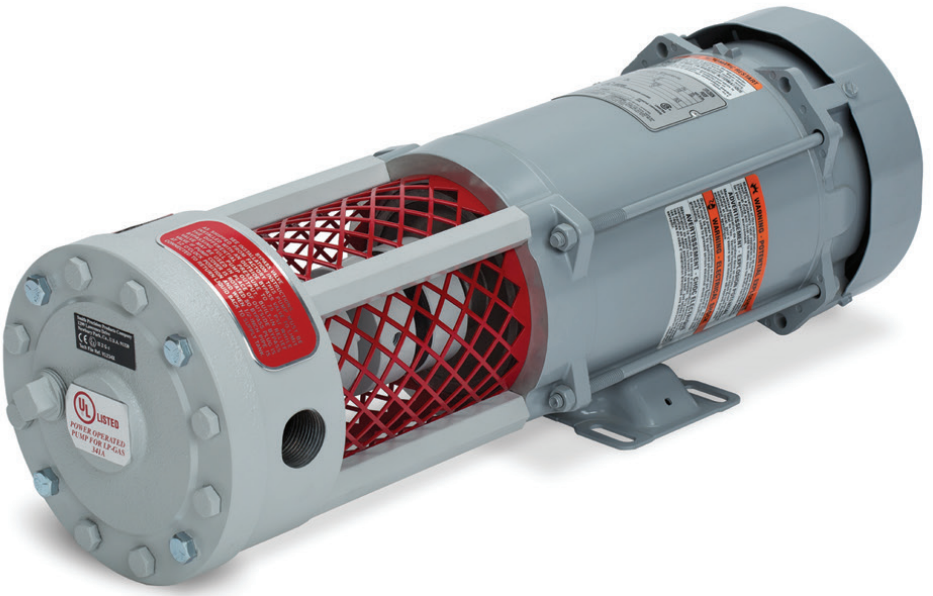
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PROPANE IN 2049

NATALIE PEAL

Thinking back on the lyrics of the anthem "The Times They Are A-Changin'," first recorded by Bob Dylan in 1963, it brings to mind the state of the propane industry in 2019, almost 60 years later. The third verse of this legendary song (below) is an apt warning why, as Propane Days approaches, it is so important that the propane message be heard loud and clear. Otherwise, in just another 30 years, in 2049, will there be a propane industry, and what will it look like? Or will the electrification of everything movement have swept across the country?

"Come senators, congressmen,
Please heed the call
Don't stand in the doorway,
Don't block the hall,
For he that gets hurt
Will be he who has stalled,
There's a battle
Outside and it's ragin'
It'll soon shake your windows
And rattle your walls
For the times they are a-changin'."

If our congressional leaders continue down the current path of the electrification of everything, the battle raging outside hopefully will be the challenge of this stance by the propane and natural gas industries. They need to convince Congress to keep an open mind to resources other than wind and solar farms; some forms of clean energy that have great potential are still in the experimental stage. The future holds many opportunities, but if the halls are blocked and our industry is stalled, the propane industry could likely be what is hurt.

In Atlanta, though, witnessing the new direction the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) is taking, and new objectives on the National Propane Gas Association's (NPGA) plate, times could be a-changin'. As a team, they are repositioning their strengths to educate legislators and consumers alike, who are being blindsided by the media's one-sided view of fossil fuels. Renewable propane is one of many resources that is clean, but off the radar of most.

Both PERC and NPGA are working to eliminate some of the redundancies that have plagued them in the past and to grow gallons sold. Isn't that what being in the propane business is all about?

HEARD AROUND ATLANTA

Talking with exhibitors and attendees in Atlanta offers a wealth of information. One distributor questioned why there weren't more exhibitors on the floor with items that would grow gallons.

If memory serves me right, many years ago the PERC booth featured a shell of a home with propane appliances in appropriate locations. Would something like this spur a dealer to promote such items and, thus, grow gallons?

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The electric forklift industry has taken advantage of its counterpart's complacency.

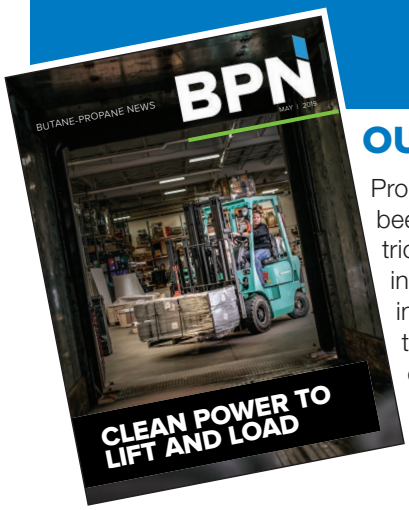
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OUR COVER

Propane-powered forklifts have been losing ground to electric in the material handling industry. Retailers can help increase propane's share of the market by talking with customers, learning their needs, and explaining the advantages of propane-powered forklifts.

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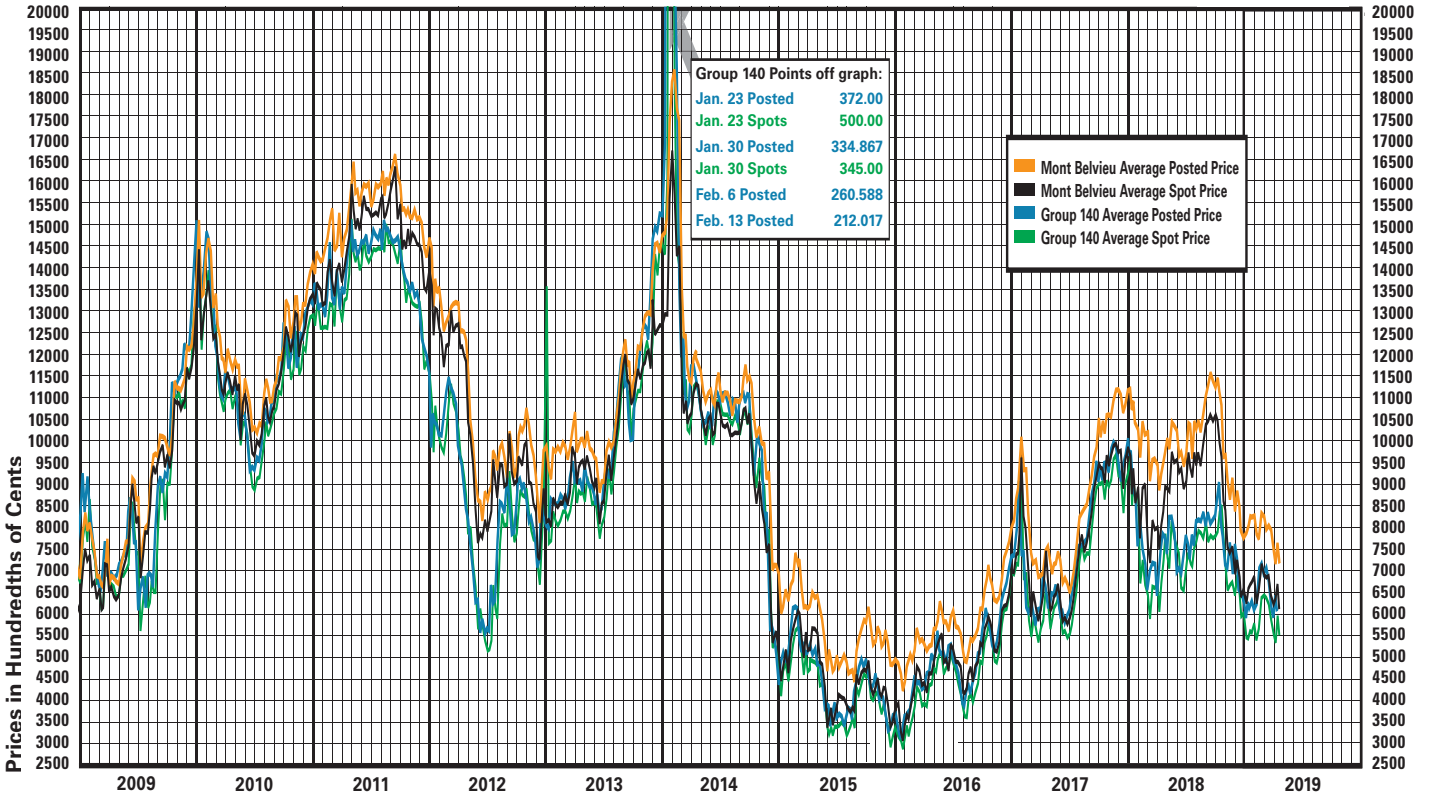


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MONT BELVIEU & GROUP 140 AVERAGE THURSDAY PROPANE PRICES

MID-WEEK AVERAGE POSTED/ SPOT PROPANE PRICES

(Cents per Gallon)

Date	Mont Belvieu		Group 140	
	POSTED	SPOT	POSTED	SPOT
3-14-19	80.257	68.50-68.875	70.730	62.00-62.50
3-21-19	79.423	63.75-64.375	66.630	58.125-58.50
3-28-19	74.590	62.00-62.375	61.480	54.00-55.25
4-4-19	71.757	60.00-63.75	59.180	53.25-53.50
4-11-19	76.340	66.50-67.00	64.630	59.00-59.75

CANADIAN INVENTORIES

(April 1, 2019)
Thousand Cubic Meters

PROPANE

Region	4-19	3-19	Change	4-18
Propane—East	59.0	94.1	–37.3%	93.5
Propane—West	350.2	467.4	–25.1%	380.7
Total Propane	**409.2**	**561.5**	**–27.1%**	**474.2**

BUTANE

Butane—East	168.5	230.0	–26.7%	110.7
Butane—West	607.8	685.0	–11.3%	418.8
Total Butane	**776.3**	**915.0**	**–15.2%**	**529.5**

Source: National Energy Board

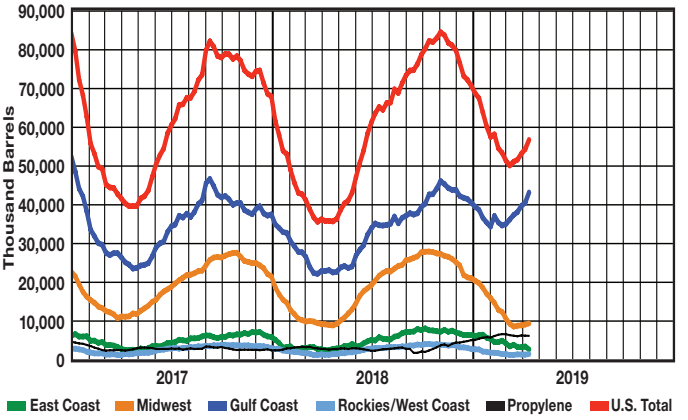
U.S. PROPANE INVENTORIES

(March 22, 2019 to April 12, 2019 and One Year Ago)
Thousand Barrels

	3/22/19	3/29	4/5	4/12	4/13/18
East Coast	3,298	3,221	3,419	2,700	2,493
Midwest	8,820	8,891	9,092	9,380	8,973
Gulf Coast	38,133	39,722	40,517	43,181	23,113
Rockies/West	1,386	1,362	1,333	1,476	1,293
U.S. Total	51,637	53,195	54,361	56,736	35,872
Propylene	6,074	6,289	6,227	6,182	2,612

U.S. PROPANE INVENTORIES

Jan. 1, 2017 to April 12, 2019



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SAUDIS THREATEN TO DITCH DOLLAR

It is reported that Saudi Arabia is threatening to sell its oil and petroleum products in currencies other than the U.S. dollar if Washington passes a bill exposing OPEC members to U.S. anti-trust lawsuits, three sources familiar with the kingdom's energy policy tell Reuters. The legislation is commonly known as NOPEC.

The sources said the option had been discussed internally by senior Saudi energy officials in recent months. Two of the sources tell Reuters the plan had been deliberated with OPEC members, and one source briefed on Saudi policy said Riyadh had also communicated the threat to senior U.S. energy officials.

The news agency comments that in the unlikely event Saudi Arabia were to ditch the dollar, the move would undermine its status as the world's main reserve currency, reduce U.S. clout in global trade, and weaken American ability to enforce sanctions on nation states. "The Saudis know they have the dollar as the nuclear option," one source said. "The Saudis say, 'let the Americans pass NOPEC and it would be the U.S. economy that would fall apart,'" said another.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's energy ministry did not respond to a Reuters request for comment. "As a general matter, we don't comment on pending legislation," said an unnamed U.S. State Department official. The U.S. Department of Energy did not respond to a request for comment, although energy secretary Rick Perry has said that NOPEC could lead to unintended consequences.

U.S. CARGOS SAIL TO INDIA

S&P Global Platts reports that U.S. LPG is being exported directly to India in a new twist in global trade flow, with four very large gas carriers laden with the fuel scheduled to reach India in April. Cargos have been set to be delivered in May and June as well. Meanwhile, with key LPG buyer China no longer sourcing U.S. LPG owing to ongoing trade tensions between the two countries, the Chinese have been exploring alternative sources.

"We have seen them [China] in the past exploring some uncommon routes, like deliveries from Argentina, Australia, and an increase from Africa and the Middle East," a U.S. market source said. India sources about 98% of its LPG from the Middle East, he added. At the same time, Chinese demand for Middle Eastern barrels has had an upward push on LPG prices from that region, prompting India to look for alternative sources as well.

"Middle East LPG cargos are getting very expensive, partly because of the [Chinese] tariffs on the U.S. cargos. So U.S. cargos can land into India with better netback than Middle East cargos," a Singapore-based LPG trader said. Supply has been tight in the East of Suez for LPG, as OPEC and non-OPEC coalition-led crude oil production cuts have reduced associated product production, as well as the two-tiered market due to the China-U.S. trade dispute and U.S. sanctions on Iran-origin cargos. The situation has been further exacerbated by delays in U.S. cargo arrivals owing to congestion in the Houston Ship Channel.

"India was, in general, quite concerned about the OPEC crude oil cuts and the ability of Middle Eastern countries, in particular Saudi Arabia, to keep up with increasing demand for LPG cargos from India, which I believe is another reason for them to look for alternative sources of supply," a U.S. market source said. This has kept the arbitrage window wide open since early February for U.S. cargos to head to north Asia. And while India commonly buys spot LPG from the Middle East, Chinese demand of Middle East barrels has pushed prices to high premiums, traders said.

Spot supply of Middle Eastern LPG has dried up and strength in the market can be seen from the wide backwardation in the Saudi propane contract price front-month time spread. The backwardation has remained at $30 a million metric tons or wider for the May/June period. Comparatively, this spread did not surpass $24.50 in 2018, but had reached a two-year high of $51 a metric ton in March due to the supply squeeze.

India imports split LPG cargos, typically comprised of about 45% propane and 55% butane, and will not accept more than 50% propane in a shipment, market sources from India and the U.S. said. Four very large gas carriers were expected to dock in different ports in India from mid-April to the end of the month. "Since this fact is not changing fundamentally anytime soon, and the OPEC cuts are expected to stay for at least several more months, I would indeed expect to see more shipments on this route," a U.S. market source said.

SOUTH KOREA ALLOWS LPG CARS FOR ALL

Under legislation passed recently, anyone in South Korea can now buy an LPG-fueled vehicle. Previously, only taxis and rental cars could use the fuel, reports the *Korea Herald*. The bill, proposed by Rep. Yoon Han-Hong of the main opposition Liberty Korea Party and calling for the complete deregulation of LPG vehicles, passed during the plenary session of the National Assembly's Industry Committee.

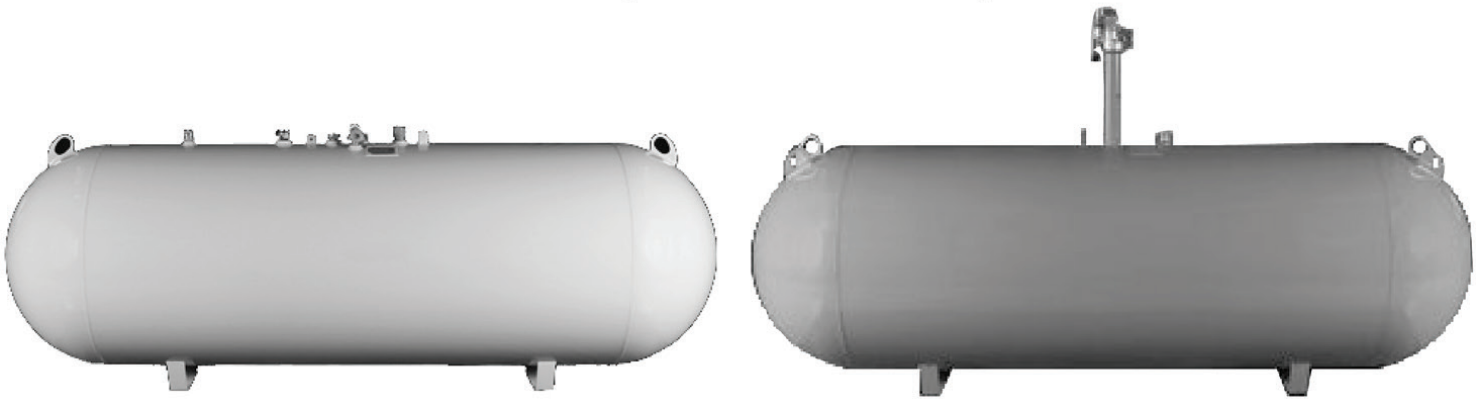
Yoon introduced the legislation in 2016, citing a growing need to expand consumer choices, supply more cars that pollute less, and promote technology development in the area of vehicle fuel systems. The deregulation step is expected to prompt automakers to introduce additional LPG vehicles.

Renault Samsung plans to launch the LPG-fueled QM6, a midsize sport utility vehicle, in the first half of this year. Hyundai plans to introduce more fuel-efficient LPG versions of its new Sonata models. Kia is currently producing three lightweight vehicles that use LPG fuel—the Picanto, and the K5 and K7. Last year, SsangYong Motor secured the technology needed to install a separate LPG fuel system on its gasoline-fueled Tivoli model.

The number of LPG vehicles in South Korea is expected to rise to 2.8 million

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by 2030, from two million in 2018. This could reduce airborne nitrogen oxide, a major contributor to air pollution, by as much as 7363 tons by 2030, according to the Industry Ministry.

GOVERNMENT READIES SUBSIDY PROGRAM

The problems surrounding Indonesia's subsidized LPG program seems to have no end, writes the *Jakarta Post*. Paramount is ensuring subsidized fuel ends up only in the hands of eligible beneficiaries—the poor. But currently even the wealthy can easily purchase 3-kg canisters of subsidized LPG at discounted prices through online marketplaces.

The government's solution is to replace the indirect subsidy with a direct allowance. However, beneficiaries must wait at least a year pending trials of the direct-subsidy scheme. Ruddy Gobel, head of communications and partnership at the National Team for Accelerated Poverty Reduction, said the direct subsidy of LPG would be tested in seven municipalities and regencies.

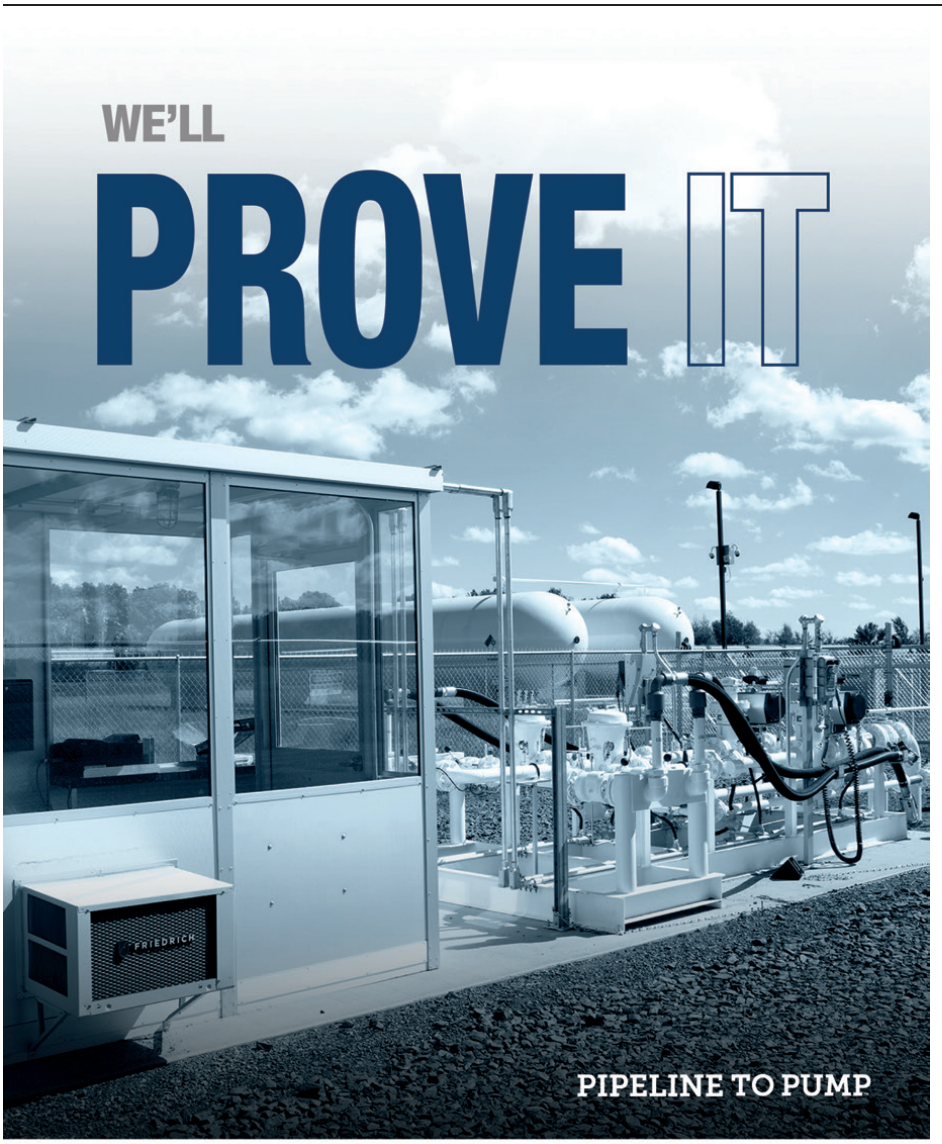
He outlines that after the trials regulations will be drafted and the final decision regarding whether to implement direct subsidies will be up to the energy and mineral resources minister, and likely the president himself. Ruddy said preparations for trials involving more than 14,000 households began in December 2018, with the first commencing in April and the second in May. The direct subsidy that will replace the indirect program will involve the use of biometric authentication such as facial and fingerprint recognition.

Indonesia's energy ministry estimates that 26 million households are eligible for direct subsidies, although the final figure could be higher since other beneficiaries such as micro businesses and fishermen may be included. Cutting off the misdirection of subsidized LPG is vital to the nation's aim of reducing costly imports of the fuel. The current national demand is 6.5 million metric tons a year, of which 70% is imported, with projections indicating steady growth of consumption.

NEW PDH PLANTS TO DRIVE DEMAND

New propane dehydrogenation (PDH) plants will drive China's appetite for LPG this year, but the rate of demand growth will be slower than previous years because of the U.S.-China trade dispute and the rising use of natural gas by the residential sector, reports S&P Global Platts. China's LPG apparent-demand is estimated to grow around 4% year on year in 2019, slowing from about 8% in 2018.

"Three new PDH plants have been scheduled to start up in 2019, which are estimated to add around one million metric tons (MT) of propane demand this year, assuming they all start as per schedule," said a source with China Gas. Prior to this year, China had eight PDH plants with a combined propylene production capacity of 4.6 million MT



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that can use up to 5.5 million MT a year of propane as feedstock when operating at 100% capacity. In 2018, China's eight PDH plants ran at relatively high rates of about 82%, supported by sustained and substantial processing margins. These plants are expected to keep their operation rates high in 2019.

However, the trade spat with the U.S. has led Chinese buyers to import LPG at relatively high costs over past months. This could partially curb the appetite for the fuel this year if the additional tariffs remain in place, market sources said. Some Chinese PDH plants holding term contracts for U.S. cargos have to pay an additional premium to swap them for non-U.S. barrels in an effort to avoid paying the 25% levy for U.S. cargos.

In turn, this inevitably pushes up the price of all non-U.S. parcels. Trade sources estimate that Chinese LPG importers have to pay about $10 to $20 a metric ton more to buy spot cargos from the Middle East, or for U.S. cargo swaps. The trade dispute hit China's LPG imports in 2018 despite efforts by China's importers to replace U.S. cargos with those from the Middle East. Total imports edged up only 3% year over year compared with annual growth of 14% in 2017.

In addition, LPG demand from China's residential sector is expected to be constrained by surging natural gas expansion, particularly in rural areas within the north coast and southwest regions, according to Platts Analytics. "We see that surging penetration of natural gas will continue to constrain LPG demand growth at around 72,000 bbld in 2019 from 118,000 bbld last year," said Wang Zhuwei, senior analyst at Platts Analytics. He noted that the residential sector accounts for nearly 60% of China's LPG demand.

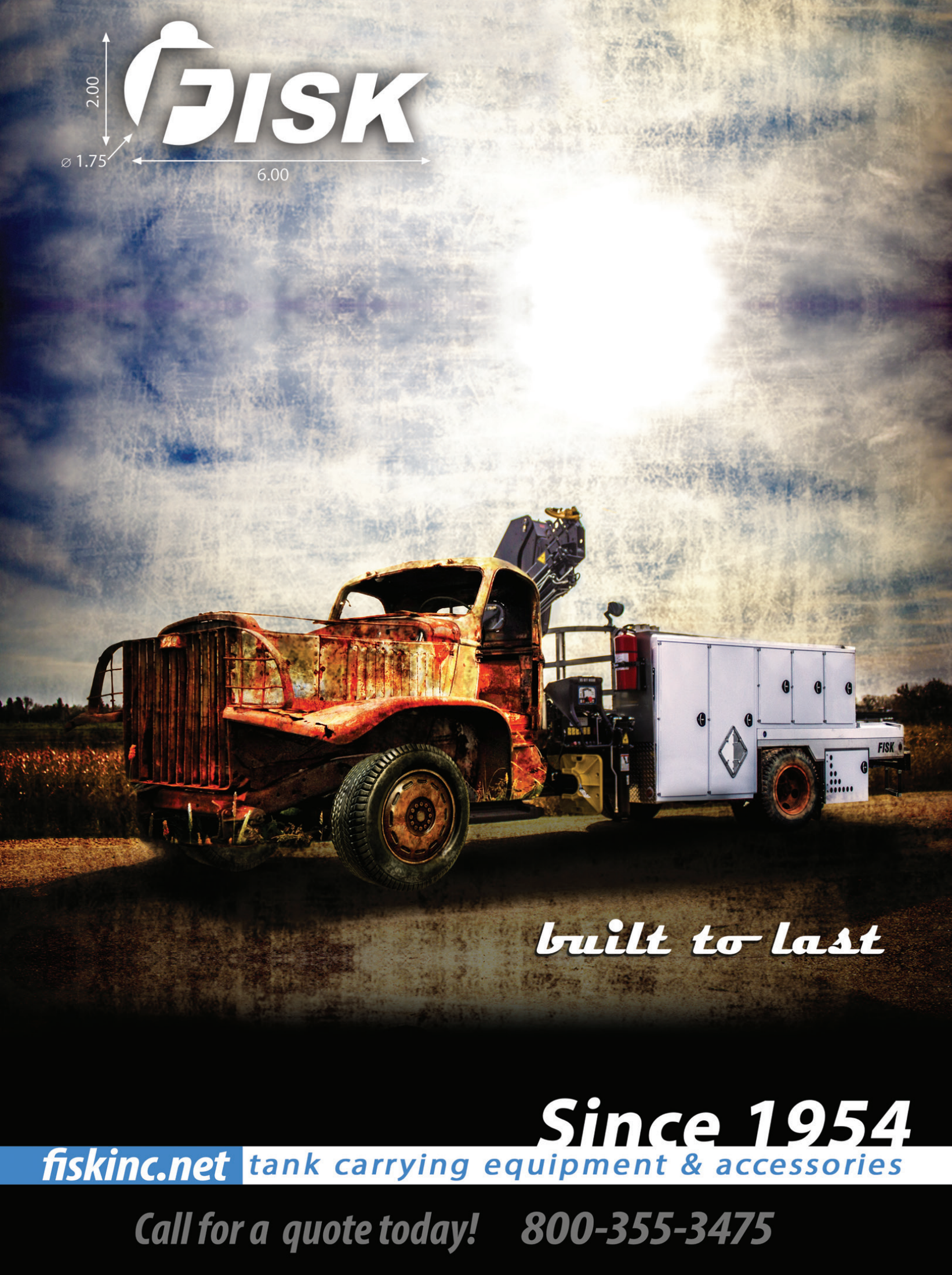


MITSUBISHI HOSTS VLGC CHRISTENING

Japan's Mitsubishi Shipbuilding Co. Ltd. (Yokohama) has held a christening ceremony for a new LPG carrier under construction for Yokohama-based JX Ocean Co. Ltd., reports Steel Guru. The vessel, *Future Ace*, will be the twelfth of Mitsubishi Shipbuilding's third-generation 83,000-cu.-meter very large gas carriers (VLGCs).

In addition to increased energy efficiency, the ship will have flexible systems to allow it to easily accommodate loading and unloading at major terminals worldwide. Further, its dimensions are compatible with the expanded Panama Canal locks. The christening ceremony was held at Mitsubishi's Nagasaki Shipyard & Machinery Works.

The *Future Ace* is the first of a new series of Mitsubishi VLGCs that will be part of the planned Future line. It is the 29th vessel built under contract at Nagasaki Shipyard & Machinery Works for JX Ocean and its predecessor company. Construction was managed by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Marine Structure Co. Ltd.


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SHARP ENERGY EXPANDS RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE IN DELAWARE

Sharp Energy, the propane distribution subsidiary of Chesapeake Utilities Corp. (Dover, Del.), has completed upgrades to its propane rail terminal in north Dover, reports *Delaware Business Now.* The expansion project tripled Sharp Energy's storage capacity. The company serves thousands of customers in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

"The north Dover rail facility is another example of Sharp Energy's unwavering commitment to serving our customers," said Andy Hesson, company vice president. "The facility is a creative, cost-effective solution that helps us meet the region's growing energy needs while continuing to provide reliable, clean, and affordable energy to the customers and communities we serve."

The upgrade initiative boosted the terminal's storage volume by 275,000 gallons, bringing the total capacity to 385,000 gallons. With this increase, Sharp Energy's total propane storage in the Mid-Atlantic region grows to more than 3.5 million gallons. Noted is that the north Dover rail facility enables propane delivery into the region via one of the most cost-effective transportation options and enhances the company's ability to expand service to additional large industrial customers, all while ensuring an additional layer of supply security and stability.

"The upgraded rail facility increases the reliability of our propane supply on a year-round basis, including the cold winter months when customers rely on propane to heat their homes and businesses," said Steve Farkas, director of operations at Sharp Energy. "Sharp Energy customers, as well as customers of other propane distribution companies throughout the region, will benefit from the additional supply that is now available here in Delaware." Along with using the rail terminal to better meet the needs of its own customers, Sharp Energy plans to wholesale more than 13 million gallons of propane to other marketers.

STUDY SHOWS HIGH FAVORABILITY FOR ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOMES

New research has found that a large majority of residential customers—who are driven by cost savings and environmental impact—are prioritizing energy efficiency in home projects and are willing to pay more to achieve energy-saving goals. The findings were part of a study commissioned by the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) and conducted by the third-party research firm Harris Insights & Analytics LLC.



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"We were thrilled to see that an overwhelming majority of homeowners are placing a priority on energy efficiency because propane can deliver so many solutions that homeowners are looking for," said Jesse Marcus, director of residential and commercial business development at PERC. "Builders and remodelers who are well-versed in how propane can enhance a home's energy efficiency will be at an advantage, especially as this trend continues to grow."

The survey, conducted in the fall of 2018, reached 2200 U.S. residents who were self-described as soon to be purchasing, remodeling, or building a home. Of the 2200 polled, 1000 expected to purchase a home in the next two years, another 1000 expected to remodel one or more rooms in the next two years, and 200 were likely to build a home in the next two years. In addition to the 2200 surveyed, 200 construction professionals also provided input.

Notable findings include: 78% of remodelers, 87% of buyers, and 89% of builders said it was a "very high or somewhat high priority" for their new home or remodel to be energy efficient; 81% of remodelers, 88% of buyers, and 96% of builders stated a willingness to pay more to make their building or remodeling project more energy efficient; roughly 90% of professional builders and remodelers reported that clients "always or sometimes" ask about energy-efficient construction methods; and two-thirds of construction professionals expect the demand for "green," sustainable, or energy-efficient homes will "significantly increase" over the next five to 20 years.

PANAMA CANAL EXPANSION INCREASES HGL TRANSITS

In the years since the Panama Canal was expanded, the only significant change in petroleum flows through the waterway has been an increase of hydrocarbon gas liquids (HGL) like propane and butane from the U.S. Gulf Coast to destinations in Asia, reports the Energy Information Administration (EIA). In June 2016, the Panama Canal Authority, the panel that operates the canal, opened a third set of locks that facilitated transit of larger ships, the first such expansion since the canal was completed in 1914.

Most of the petroleum transiting the Panama Canal travels southbound from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Flows of HGL are the largest single petroleum commodity, according to data from the Panama Canal Authority. In 2018, about 387,000 bbld transited southbound through the canal.

Before 2016, the main constraint for increasing U.S. exports of HGL to meet growing demand in Asia was export



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infrastructure on the U.S. Gulf Coast. By 2016, more infrastructure was added, with the size limitations of the original Panama Canal locks and the costs associated with alternative shipping routes as the remaining constraints for larger exports.

The most economical mode of transporting large volumes of HGLs by water is on very large gas carriers (VLGCs). The most economical route from the U.S. Gulf Coast, where most HGL export capacity is located, to Asia is through the Panama Canal. However, most VLGCs were too large to transit the original set of canal locks. This size constraint, combined with the costs of longer voyage times on alternative routes, resulted in ship-to-ship transfers in the waters around the canal for U.S. propane exports headed to Asia.

Following the canal's expansion, VLGCs could transit the larger set of locks and this resulted in an approximate 173%, or 293,000-bbld, increase in southbound transits of HGL cargos from 2016 to 2017. This growth coincided with a rise in HGL exports from the U.S. Gulf Coast, Petroleum Administration for Defense District (PADD) 3, to destinations mostly in Asia. These increased exports likely transited the Panama Canal. In 2018, four of the five largest destinations for Gulf Coast HGL exports were in Asia, with Japan heading the list at 280,000 bbld.

Although the Gulf Coast exports HGL to El Salvador, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile, the volumes, 71,000 bbld, accounted for just 18% of total southbound canal flows in 2018. Exports to the four countries combined accounted for only 6% of PADD 3 HGL exports, a small share of the Gulf Coast total.

Future petroleum flows through the Panama Canal are likely linked to expanding petrochemical demand for HGL in Asia; economic growth in El Salvador, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile; and continued growth in U.S. petroleum product exports.

U.S. EXPERIENCES COLDEST WINTER IN PAST 4 YEARS

The National Propane Gas Association (NPGA) writes it is likely that the 2018-2019 winter heating season will finish as the coldest seen recently. While nowhere near as cold as the historic 2013-2014 polar vortex season, by the third week of March this year there were 454 more heating degree days (HDD) than the average across 2015 through 2017 at the same point.

This winter season saw colder-than-normal weather to start the period. That cold lasted from the beginning of October through the beginning of December. The U.S. then experi-

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Indiana propane gas association

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enced a respite from the unusually cold weather from mid-December through mid-January. The cold returned at the end of January and remained elevated, but started to return to more seasonal levels in the last weeks of March.

Reported volumes of weekly propane product supplied, a measure of demand, largely followed a similar deviation from recent averages. In sum, total demand as reported by the Energy Information Administration's (EIA) weekly estimates of product supplied has been more than 20 MMbbl greater than the average seen at the same time over the previous three seasons.

Propane prices at Conway, Kan. largely responded as expected, notes NPGA. The Midwest hub started the this winter at a significant discount to Mont Belvieu owing to transportation and fractionation constraints at Belvieu, combined with growing waterborne export demand. As heating and agricultural demand picked up in October the spread began to close, then continued to narrow with the unusually cold weather. The spread started to widen with the mid-December to mid-January warming and closed again when winter reasserted itself at the end of January and beginning of February. As central U.S. demand drops off with the end of winter and HDDs return to seasonal averages, the spread between Mont Belvieu and Conway has recently been widening.

The association comments that despite the extra demand from the colder weather the U.S. saw this season, reported stocks across the entire country continued to remain elevated and above the seasonal lows seen in 2017 and 2018. This was due to greater increases in production. EIA reported the first nationwide stock build of the season the week ended March 15. However, late-winter cold strongly affected available inventories in the Midwest. The agency said PADD 2 stock levels have continued to fall rapidly and in late March were below levels seen during the same period in 2017 and 2018. While the return of more typical seasonal temperatures and the approach of the end of winter should ease concerns of a price spike due to limited availability, the low PADD 2 stock levels still merit attention, NPGA said.

TRI GAS & OIL TERMINAL COMPLETED BY SUPERIOR

Superior Energy Systems (Columbia Station, Ohio) has completed its most recent propane terminal build for Tri Gas & Oil Co. Inc. (Federalsburg, Md.), which will operate under its affiliate Mid-Atlantic Rail Services (MARS).

Family-owned Tri Gas & Oil offers energy solutions to both residential and commercial customers in Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. "Now we can provide an additional midstream source of propane to our growing community," said Keith McMahan, Tri Gas & Oil chairman and



Is Your Legacy Important to You?



After 75 years in business, Yolanda Mosbaugh and her family made the decision to transition Ebbetts Pass Gas Service to EDP. Yolanda, shown here with Ebbetts Pass GM Don Vicari, still comes to work every day!

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- Expo Propane - 1986
- Ludwig Propane - 1998
- Anderson Propane Services - 1999
- Quality Propane - 2000
- United Propane - 2003
- CC Propane - 2005
- Jefferson Propane - 2006
- Kitsap Propane - 2006

CEO. "Mid-Atlantic Rail Services will serve the region with a reliable source of propane by providing destination-delivered supply or railcar throughput arrangements,"

The new terminal, served by the Norfolk Southern and CSX railroads, will initially provide 120,000 gallons of propane storage, along with a four-position rail rack and two truck-loading racks. Double-acting compressors quickly unload and recover vapor from railcars. Turbine pumps allow for loading rates of 550 gpm, with the capability to load up to six trucks an hour at an average rate of 18 minutes a truck.

"Local daily switching service from the Canton Railroad provides up to three switches a day in the peak of winter," said Andy Ronald, NGL consultant with JAR Consulting LLC. "This translates to product delivered into as many as 36 trucks per day when it is needed most."

Located just north of Baltimore Harbor off Hwy 95, the terminal allows trucks access to bulk propane product. Since fuel transport trucks in Maryland are prohibited from entering the tunnel system, they typically travel over bridges instead. The location of the Mid-Atlantic Rail Services terminal allows for the use of the Francis Scott Key Bridge when traveling from south of Baltimore.

The Canton Railroad, a Class III switching and terminal railroad in Baltimore County, operates the terminal. Superior Energy led design efforts to extend the railway siding to create adequate space for the terminal. "The new MARS terminal is an example of how Superior strategically builds efficient, safe, and fully automated terminals that play a crucial role in delivering fuel to underserved markets," said Derek Rimko, vice president of operations at Superior Energy Systems.

ATA HIGHLIGHTS FLAWS IN DRIVER SHORTAGE ARTICLE

The American Trucking Associations (ATA) in March issued a critique of a Bureau of Labor Statistics article downplaying the industry's challenges in finding quality drivers. "Unfortunately in their article Mr. Burks and Ms. Monaco demonstrated some basic misunderstandings about the trucking industry generally and how we at ATA and in the industry discuss the driver shortage," Bob Costello, the association's chief economist, appraised.

"First, the trucking industry is large and diverse with many types of carriers, services, jobs, and career paths for drivers. ATA has long recognized this when we discuss the driver shortage, repeatedly emphasizing that the shortage is generally contained to one segment of our industry: the over-the-road or long-haul for-hire truckload segment. The authors go out of their way to say their data could not tell the difference between drivers in this segment and other drivers. This error is compounded by the fact that some of the data utilized in the analysis is nearly two decades old.

"Second, this work ignores ATA's longstanding contention that at the heart of the shortage is the need for qualified drivers. Unlike other 'blue collar' jobs the authors compare truck drivers to, motor carriers cannot simply hire anyone to do the job. There are many barriers to entry for new drivers: age requirements, CDL testing standards, strict drug and alcohol testing regimes and, perhaps most importantly for many fleets, safe and clean driving records.

"Carriers repeatedly say it isn't that they don't have enough applicants for their open positions, they do. What they do not have are enough applicants who meet the demanding qualifications to be hired. In some cases, carriers must reject 90% of applicants out of hand because they fail to meet at least one of the prerequisites to drive in interstate commerce.

"Finally, the authors ignore the most critical difference between driving a truck and other 'blue collar' jobs: unlike their blue-collar brethren, truck drivers are often away from home for long stretches as part of the job. Not adjusting their conclusions for something as important as work-life balance leads the authors to make some ill-found claims.

"In addition to the misunderstanding about trucking, the authors' own concession that wages are going up significantly, as motor carriers are unable to hire quality drivers, undercuts their own conclusions. This alone suggests there is a systemic issue with getting enough labor in the for-hire truckload driver market."

QUALITY STEEL PARENT BUYS ASSETS OF LP CYLINDER INC.

LT Corp. (Cleveland, Miss.), the parent company of Quality Steel Corp. (QSC), a service provider and manufacturer of propane, anhydrous ammonia, and dispenser tanks, has acquired substantially all the assets of LP Cylinder Service Inc. (Shohola, Pa.). Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

LP Cylinder Service, recognized as one of the nation's largest propane tank refurbishing companies, was founded in 1984, and operates two facilities in Shohola. With the acquisition, LT Corp. now has the opportunity to continue its expansion of product lines and service capabilities. "Our companies have grown by setting the industry standards for quality and customer service," said LT Corp. board chairman Jim Tims.

"We are looking forward to joining forces with the LP Cylinder family to offer our customers extended product lines and additional services while continuing our focus of being a full-service tank provider," commented Sean Wessel, president and CEO of Quality Steel Corp. With the added facilities in Pennsylvania, LT Corp. and Quality Steel will be able to expand their presence in the northeastern U.S. and eastern Canada.

Maurice Ryman, LP Cylinder president, added, "We are thrilled to be joining the Quality Steel family and look forward to leveraging the collective knowledge and resources of our teams as we continue to offer top quality solutions and services to our customers."

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WHY IT'S TIME TO START TALKING TO YOUR CUSTOMERS ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF PROPANE-FUELED FORKLIFTS



KAREN MASSMAN VanASDALE

At the age of 20, Gabriel Reding took a job in Toledo, Ohio as a maintenance tech at a steel factory. Over the years, he helped the company save money and maintained and repaired the material handling equipment (forklifts). He eventually went to work for a large multi-brand supplier of all things material handling.

"I had the opportunity to problem solve with massive Fortune 500 companies," he said. "I've worked with customers who have had up to 500 forklifts in their fleet (both electric- and propane-powered). There's pros and cons of both, but for me, 90% of the time, I want a propane forklift."

There are many advantages to propane-powered versus electric-powered forklifts including cleaner emissions, lower costs, less storage, and greater efficiency, said Reding, who now is a maintenance leader for Novation IQ, a manufacturer of materials such as innovative foams and fabrication in Lenexa, Kan. "Incorporating propane-powered forklifts into an equipment lineup can benefit both equipment distributors and their customers," said Jeremy Wishart, director of off-road business development for the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC). Yet with all the advances in the propane industry, the benefits of propane forklifts have not been fully touted by members within the propane industry.

"Over the past few years, the propane industry as a whole took the material handling industry for granted and had become a little complacent," he explained. At the same time, the manufacturing industry has been changing. Warehouse owners think differently about the footprint—expanding upward instead of outward. In addition, technology is also changing the manufacturing industry, requiring fewer people to do the same amount of work.

"From the propane industry's standpoint, we did not keep up with the industry development," Wishart said. "Over the past three to four years, propane forklift users have increased slightly, but the number of electric forklifts has increased exponentially. Our growth [in propane-powered material handling] has not kept up."

As a consequence, the electric industry has had the opportunity to sell without much resistance or competition for the past five to 10 years. "It's time to put information out there and make propane prominent again," Wishart said.

"We have to remain engaged with our customers. We have to understand the whole process of purchasing a new forklift, so we can't just sell the fuel. Most manufacturers don't necessarily talk about propane as part of their pitch, thus we have to be ready to augment their efforts with our own messaging. As an industry, we need to increase our brand presence."

By doing a little bit of research in your market, such as learning regional needs and operations and getting to know your customers, retailers can provide complete solutions rather than just one part of a solution. Knowing how to articulate the benefits of propane-powered forklifts is key.

BENEFITS OF PROPANE-POWERED FORKLIFTS

Full Power: Propane-powered forklifts can run 24/7, unlike many electric models. Propane tends to shine where it's heavy loads constantly moving because they can run almost non-stop. A simple cylinder swap can be done in three to five minutes versus up to eight hours it may take to recharge an electric battery-powered forklift.

Less Emissions: Propane forklifts produce 16% less greenhouse gas emissions than gasoline, and 76% less SO_x site-to-source emissions than electric. Because they operate so cleanly, they can work outside on loading docks and inside a properly ventilated warehouse.

Greater Productivity: With fast refueling, less maintenance, and indoor/outdoor use, they keep a business moving.

Safety: Propane helps forklift operators bypass many potential hazards. For example, operators can avoid electrical hazards from the daily use of recharging equipment for electric forklifts, hazardous spills from gasoline and diesel fuel equipment, and chemical spills from lead-acid battery-powered forklifts.

Less Costs: "Typically, upfront costs are $5000 to $10,000 lower with a propane-powered forklift than an electric-powered forklift," Wishart said.

"It costs 10% to 25% more to buy an electric forklift out the box," Reding said. In addition to the forklift, there is the cost of the charger and crane. "If you run a 24-hour shift, every eight hours need to charge. If you want to run 24 hours, multiply costs by three."

Less Storage Space: Propane-powered forklifts require less storage space because they don't need a charging or lifting station. "Storage for a standard propane forklift is about the size of a broom closet with room for about 30 cylinders," Reding said. ■

NEW RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO HELP GROW YOUR BUSINESS WITH PROPANE-POWERED FORKLIFTS

The Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) has released a new educational resource for equipment dealers and distributors outlining simple ways to grow your business with propane-powered forklifts.

"Our newest resource will help walk distributors through the process of selling propane forklifts to their customers looking for a forklift fuel that meets their needs," said PERC's Jeremy Wishart. "It's a road map of understanding the basics and knowing enough to discuss."

PERC's five-step path to propane guide is intended to help users:

1. Familiarize themselves with the advantages of propane.
2. Discover which brands manufacture propane forklifts.
3. Learn to build relationships with local propane suppliers.
4. Use PERC's tools and resources to their advantage.
5. Consider PERC their point of contact for propane forklift questions.

In addition to its resource guide, PERC has a new quarterly newsletter, *The Lift*, for propane retailers and material handlers. These resources and more information about about the benefits of propane forklifts can be found at *propane.com.*



CALCULATE THE BENEFITS OF PROPANE MOWERS

PAT THORNTON

Louisville, Ky., like many cities, has for a long time recommended that residents delay mowing with gasoline mowers during air pollution alerts. Three years ago, the local newspaper, the *Courier Journal*, reported that city mowing crews were ignoring the city's own recommendations by continuing to mow on those days. The next day, Mayor Greg Fischer and city officials discontinued mowing on the pollution alert days acknowledging the confusion continuing to mow on such days causes the public. But people also complain when grass grows too high.

A SOLUTION TO A DILEMMA

By April of 2018, the city had a solution to the mowing dilemma: propane mowers. With the purchase of 11 new mowers that run on propane, the city would retire some aging gasoline lawn mowers while 68 such mowers remained in the fleet. In a press release, city officials said the new mowers would allow some crews to keep cutting on pollution alert days "without unduly adding to the pollution problem." A study by the Louisville Metro Air Pollution Control District had compared emissions from gasoline-powered lawn mowers to similar propane-powered mowers and found a major decrease in emissions, including the chemicals that form smog.

The new lawn mowers have a distinctive-looking propane tank. "The new mowers will quickly pay for themselves in terms of reduced fuel cost," Mayor Fischer said. "And they're not just better for the bottom line. They're also better for our environment." He announced the new propane mowers would run cleaner, cheaper, and quieter than gasoline mowers and help achieve goals set in the mayor's Sustain Louisville plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality. Residents were told that the new propane mowers put out about 45% less carbon monoxide emissions, as well as fewer volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which contribute to summertime ozone. At $9500, the propane mowers cost less than 3% more than gasoline mowers, but cost 25% less to run based on March 2018 per-gallon fuel costs of $2.39 for gasoline and $1.76 for propane. "That will allow us to continue to make improvements in sustainability while also keeping our city looking good," Mayor Fischer said.



In October of 2018, the Louisville Metro Government was recognized as the 2018 Green Leadership City, a distinction awarded by the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC). Mayor Fischer accepted a $5000 donation from PERC at a celebration event at a local park with city officials and Parks & Recreation employees who operate the mowers regularly. “The Green Leadership City Award highlights public agencies demonstrating a commitment to environmentally-friendly and sustainable practices, which the city of Louisville has shown by adding propane mowers to its municipal equipment fleet,” said Jeremy Wishart, director of off-road business development for PERC. “Louisville has set an incredible example for the rest of the region of what a municipality can accomplish when it decides that its environmental impact matters and takes necessary steps to reduce its carbon footprint.”

In December, PERC called attention to a fuel price forecast published by the U.S. Energy Administration in November that expects gasoline prices to average more than $2.75 per gallon in 2019. “This estimate came before OPEC and Canada announced more production cuts for crude oil so that may further bump the price up in 2019,” Wishart said. “No contractor likes to think about all the money their business has to expend just to purchase fuel, and we certainly hear more complaints from contractors when gasoline prices start to approach that $3.00 per gallon mark when it turns from a nuisance to a cost that sometimes they financially can’t bear. But contractors don’t have to feel helpless against the fuel price posted at their local gasoline filling station if they switch to mowers powered by propane, which consistently costs between 30% and 50% less per gallon than gasoline. That price margin only widens when gasoline prices rise like they’re going to do again next season.”

COST SAVINGS

Wishart noted that contractors and municipalities can lock in a set fuel price with their local propane supplier to guarantee the same rate all year long. PERC has a propane mower cost calculator that details how much money can be saved with propane. The calculator allows contractors to input operational data specific to their fleet, so the results are unique to each equipment fleet. PERC’s Propane Mower Incentive Program is available all year long. It allows for $1000 for every qualifying commercial propane mower purchase (up to 20 units) or $500 for each EPA-certified conversion kit. For a limited time in December, PERC offered an additional $500 for each propane mower (a total of $1500) or conversion kit ($1000) purchase through Dec. 31, 2018. PERC also has an equipment dealer locator which helps contractors connect

with a local resource who can also help get them in touch with a propane retailer. Equipment dealers listed on the free online locator tool are pre-screened, so contractors know they are contacting a partner who not only sells propane mowers, but is knowledgeable about propane equipment, too.

In addition to cost savings and environmental benefits, a municipality that started converting to propane lawn mowers in 2008 will also attest to an increase in productivity. The Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department cares for 42 parks, 122 residential communities, and many sports fields. It also holds contracts to do maintenance for other departments within the county, such as the Port of Miami and the Miami Police Department. According to Gil Delgado, sports turf and landscape division chief for the department, a transition to propane increased productivity from the outset. “We’re spending a lot of time now maintaining flowers and landscaping instead of cutting so much grass,” Delgado said. “Part of that is because we don’t spend as much time refueling these units.”

POSITIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS

Delgado said that the transition to propane resulted in a positive public relations opportunity for the county because of propane’s clean emissions profile. “The propane mower was painted green with the department logo so that residents would identify the county with green energy,” Delgado said. “The mower was brought to as many events as possible to make the public aware of the county’s plans to operate propane mowers and to build public trust. It was like the county had brought a new toy–people were curious and excited about the machines.” As time went on, Delgado said the propane fleet grew as the fuel continued to show efficiencies in the field and improvements to the department budget. “We’re also spending a lot less on maintenance,” Delgado said. “The incremental savings just with fewer oil changes needed really add up. We only need one oil change with propane for every two to three required with gasoline. That’s a $40 savings per oil change plus employee time.”

There is a story to tell about potential savings not only with the expected 2019 spread between propane and gasoline, but also savings from a cut in loss due to spillage, evaporation, or even theft with gasoline. Wishart also emphasized it is important for retail propane marketers wanting to sell more propane to partner with a mower supplier to bring the proposed turnkey solution to the retailer. “The retail propane marketer should not just tell companies, contractors, or municipalities they should consider propane lawn mowers, they should organize a joint presentation with a lawn mower provider to really make a strong case and build relationships.” Wishart reminds retail marketers that there is a lot of information on propane lawn mowers at *propane.com*. ■



PROPANE 101

STEVE RELYEA



Teaching college students propane basics

Professionals from Ted Johnson Propane Co. (Baldwin Park, Calif.) recently introduced local college students to the propane industry and the career opportunities it offers. Owner Julie Johnson delivered a classroom presentation at their school and then, the next day, she and operations manager John Weigel led students on a tour of the company's bulk plant.

Johnson's presentation to the Operations Management Society and Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (Cal Poly Pomona) lasted 45 minutes. Her presentation began with a sort of "Propane 101"—what it is, how it is produced, and how it is distributed. For these particular student organizations, a slide from NPGA showing the propane supply chain was especially helpful. Johnson also covered propane's role as an emergency fuel, its clean-running qualities, and its role in tomorrow's energy. "We have to break it down so people outside the industry can understand it—even regulators," she told ***BPN*** after the event.

About 35 students attended the presentation. Johnson found that some students knew about propane's applications in barbecues, generators, and jewelry making. As far as a career, "energy wasn't on anyone's radar," she commented. "One student said he didn't realize there was a future in energy."

She also told the students about the ways propane is used on the campus of Cal Poly Pomona. The school has forklifts and shuttlebuses that are fueled by propane. The school's Rose Parade float, a project completed in conjunction with the school's Central California campus, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, also runs on propane.

The bulk plant tour was held the following day. Eight students from the previous day's event made the drive to the Ted





Julie Johnson and John Weigel taught the students about propane, how it is produced, and how it is distributed.

Johnson Propane facility in Baldwin Park. The tour began with a presentation by Weigel. He pointed out that the company picks up propane at one of a few local refineries, transports it to load the tanks at its own bulk plant, and then delivers it with its own smaller trucks. He explained that the company may fill customer tanks, fill forklift tanks, or exchange tanks. There are parts of Los Angeles where bobtails can't go, so there they can only do exchange tanks. The company also sells autogas and provides maintenance and repair for autogas-fueled vehicles.

APPLICATIONS IN L.A.

None of the students participating in the tour lived in homes with propane, so Weigel explained that there are communities in the mountains around Los Angeles that are beyond the mains and rely on propane. He added that electrical power in the area can be irregular, so many celebrities living in and around L.A. keep propane-fueled generators on hand so they don't have to go without power.

Weigel noted that the company has 150,000 gallons storage capacity at the bulk plant. He said company founder Ted Johnson put that in place in the 1970s and they were grandfathered in. A propane marketer in the area couldn't do that today; they would be lucky to have 30,000 gallons



A demonstration of the company's fire suppression system served as the tour's grand finale.

capacity because the local government now wants tanks farther out from town. There has never been a problem with the tanks, he noted, but that's the way it is.

Since these students were members of organizations focused on distribution, Weigel described that aspect of the business. He said the company has its own transport, bobtails, and cylinder exchange trucks. Each delivery vehicle drives about 100 miles per day. He also described the many licenses that a propane marketer must have and the importance of keeping them current.

SAFETY IS NO. 1

Safety is the company's No. 1 priority, he told the students. Hiring the right people is the most important contributor to that, so the company "hires slow and fires fast." By the time a new employee has been at work 90 days, the employer will know if they fit the company's culture. "If you just hire warm bodies," he said, "you're going to end up with an accident."

Weigel then described the 90-day onboarding process for new employees. "We prefer to hire someone who knows nothing about propane, so we can train them our way," he said. New employees start in the yard and become expert in all aspects of propane. They then accompany a driver making deliveries; the driver chosen for the first part of this process was selected because he has shown he has the patience, Weigel said. Later, the new hire may make deliveries with other drivers to see different areas and customers the company serves.

Following Weigel's presentation, he and the students went outside to tour the bulk plant. He first showed the students the drive-off protection and the emergency shut-off that can close one tank or all the tanks. He also explained relief valves that allow propane to safely vent, even in the case of the wildfires recently seen in California.

Students were invited to ask questions at any time. They asked: Do you take inventory of the tank levels from outside or inside the office? Outside, manually. What is the industry standard for product loss? One-half of one percent. Why are there chairs between the tanks? For the person who watches as the bobtails are filled.

They were then shown one of the bobtails. Weigel told the students that the company currently has five vehicles running on propane autogas and intends to add more and phase out diesel. "If we are going to sell autogas, we have to lead by example." He then started up an autogas-fueled bobtail, let it idle, and noted how quiet it is compared to diesel.

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY

Weigel asked the students if they would like to drive the bobtail. One hand quickly went up. After this first student had driven a short circle inside the plant, he exited the vehicle saying, "It's like riding a bike—a really big bike!" The other students had been a little hesitant, but grew more confident as they saw others drive the bobtail. One by one, they all got in the bobtail and drove the same short route. "That was fun! Are you hiring?" said one. Weigel later told ***BPN***, "Once one student does the drive, they all will—especially after you honk the horn!"

The tour closed with a demonstration of the company's fire suppression system. Weigel and Johnson explained that the system is renowned among first responders and they have demonstrated it for professionals who have visited the facility from around the world. As the hoses sprayed the tanks, Johnson told the students, "This is our grand finale!"

After the classroom presentation and the bulk plant tour, Johnson told ***BPN***, "It was a great opportunity to educate college students about propane, whether they go into the industry or not." ■

"BE COURAGEOUS" TO ACHIEVE CAREER GOALS, WINLPG WOMAN OF THE YEAR ADVISES

STEVE RELYEA



In her role as CEO of Origin Energy PNG, Lesieli Taviri is working to expand its distribution of propane to communities who are off grid. Only 12% of the Pacific Island's population has access to electricity and only 5% to 7% of households are using propane.

Early in her career, Lesieli Taviri walked into a meeting of business leaders and froze. She saw that she was the only woman in the room, she didn't recognize anybody, and, for the first time in her life, she felt intimidated. She walked to the back of the room, sat alone for the duration of the meeting, and then left without having said anything to anyone.

"I knew I had to make a choice of just avoiding such gatherings—which was an easy choice, but would not be beneficial from a business point—or make a courageous decision to try and belong," Taviri told ***BPN*** recently. "So I chose the latter and knew I needed to find a different strategy to help build my confidence. I joined a networking club of professionals and committed to every event, volunteered with everything that came my way—from coordinating events and seeking sponsorship to public speaking—and eventually became the first female president."

BUILDING A NETWORK

Today, Taviri is one of the most prominent business leaders in Papua New Guinea (PNG). She is CEO of Origin Energy PNG, one of the largest providers of propane in the Pacific region. She is a member of the board of directors of MiBank, a bank with 12 branches and many agents across PNG, and Nambawan Super Ltd., the trustee of a contributory pension fund that provides an income for PNG citizens who retire or become permanently disabled. She is also chair of the Business Coalition for Women (BCFW), a group of companies working to improve the equal economic contribution of women in the private sector in PNG.

"It was through the dealings of the club that I started to expose myself to other industries and influential people and built my network of advisors," she said. "Today, I still attend such meetings but it's now a different experience and as every woman walks through the door, I always remember that experience and I get a lift simply knowing that a simple act of courage can make it easier for other women to believe they belong."

In recognition of her accomplishments and her efforts to help others, Taviri was honored last fall with the inaugural Woman of the Year Award presented by the Women in LPG Global Network (WINLPG), an initiative of the World LPG Association

(WLPGA). The presenters explained that this award honors women who show a commitment to business beyond profit, show innovative thinking to achieving career goals, create a positive impact on their business by promoting diversity, and show innovation in company turnaround.

EXTENDING DISTRIBUTION OF ENERGY

In her role as CEO of Origin Energy PNG, Taviri is working to expand its distribution of propane to communities who are off grid. Distributing energy in PNG is a challenge. The Pacific Island nation is about the size of California and has a population of only about 7 million. The terrain is mostly mountainous.

Only 12% of the population has access to electricity, Taviri said, "so the vast majority of PNG is still in darkness with people using kerosene lamps, torches, batteries, candles, and even open fire."

"LPG reach is only about 5% to 7% of households, predominantly in the urban to semi populated district towns," she added. "The challenge is 80% of the population still live in rural areas where there is lack of reliable transportation infrastructure, which results in high cost of distribution. The density per kilometer is only 18 people per square kilometer [46 people per square mile] and people are spread out across the entire country in little pockets as cultural families move around to protect land (majority of land is traditionally owned). That in itself provides challenges with economies of scale."

"However, with improved infrastructure and services coming closer to these communities, we expect more accessibility to LPG using scalable models."

With the help of International Finance Corporation (IFC), Origin Energy PNG has developed a lease-to-own, pay-as-you-go (PAYG) system to extend the distribution of solar and propane. Currently in the pilot phase, the system uses a mobile payment platform provided by a bank and using the bank agent network. The PAYG package includes a solar panel with a light and a mobile charger, an LPG cylinder, and a two-burner cast iron stove with hose and regulator.

"Customers are provided a range of products depending on repayment affordability," Taviri explained. "The repayment is over 12 months and the solar is unlocked and ownership is transferred once the kit has been paid for. The product helps to migrate the unbanked to bank as PNG is predominantly a cash economy and promotes the use of mobile banking. The benefit to the medium business is multiple streams of revenue from the repeat gas sales, a margin on the PAYG package, and a cut in the bank transaction fee where cash is exchanged for e-payment by the agent."

ADVANCING PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

As chair of BCFW, Taviri is helping the organization provide tools and services for businesses to help them provide a more conducive working environment for women. These tools focus on four key areas that businesses in PNG feel are challenges to advancing the participation of women.

To support companies in addressing family and sexual violence (FSV), BCFW provides a suite of model policies,



With the help of International Finance Corporation (IFC), Origin Energy PNG has developed a lease-to-own, pay-as-you-go (PAYG) package that includes a solar panel with a light and a mobile charger, an LPG cylinder, and a two-burner cast iron stove with hose and regulator.

research, and awareness and training programs. "We provide training programs for businesses to help staff understand the economic and social impacts of FSV and work with other stakeholders to develop a support system to help victims of FSV," Taviri said.

To promote women in leadership, BCFW provides a program that is aimed at preparing women for leadership roles. "We have also launched a mentoring and coaching program to help support women graduates," she added.

To increase and retain female participation in the workforce, BCFW has created a suite of model policies and worked with businesses in the extractive sector to conduct audits and develop gender smart safety policies and practices.

And, to expand opportunities for women-owned businesses in supply chains, BCFW aims to encourage businesses through policy to allow participation of women-owned businesses in their supply chain, either as resellers, customers, or suppliers.

Asked about the greatest improvements she has seen businesses make during her time with BCFW, Taviri answered, "Simply the response of businesses—more CEOs have become attuned to the business case of why equal participation of women can improve a business's bottom line."

Continued on **Page 37**

WILL HOME AUTOMATION KILL RESIDENTIAL LPG?

KAREN MASSMAN VanASDALE



"The industry has for far too long been driven by the bottom line on initial installation cost and not the long-term user benefits. An investment needs to be made to keep gas as the fuel of choice, but also the fuel of the future."

—Bob Torbin

A smart refrigerator is a refrigerator that can be programmed to sense what kinds of products are being stored inside it and keep track of the stock. Isn't it time for a smart gas refrigerator?

Home automation is significantly changing homeowners' expectations and home builders are responding accordingly by offering homes that are smart and increasingly all-electric. Bob Torbin, director of codes and standards with OmegaFlex (Exton, Pa.), believes this is why now is a call-to-action time for the propane industry.

"The gas industry could become a minor energy player, if not obsolete. I'm not saying home automation is going to kill LPG, but it's going to be one of the contributing factors to a decline in sales," Torbin said.

One solution, according to Torbin, is for the propane industry to offer home-automation-ready piping infrastructure and provide the features now. "The home automation world is blossoming around us, but no one thinks of LPG and home automation. Manufacturers [of LPG appliances] are only thinking of making appliances safer and more reliable. Why not think 'Alexa, turn on my gas grill'? 'Alexa, cook my steak medium and call me when it's ready'?"

Although the LPG appliance manufacturers are not yet offering smart gas appliances, Torbin said the resources are available to give new and existing houses the capability of being "smart-ready" and to have the infrastructure for the LPG appliances of the future added to existing houses at any time.

He addressed the benefits and logistics of preparing the LPG home for automation and the associated load growth during his presentation of "Low Cost Residential Load Growth Strategies" at the recent NPGA Southeastern Convention & Expo.

The propane industry can increase gas load per customer using semirigid metallic tubing operated at elevated pressure to create a multifunctional gas distribution network in homes. Gas lines can be routed cost-effectively to every portion of the home (including outdoors) during both construction and remodeling including pre-piping of key battleground areas, such as kitchens and laundries. Gas convenience outlets will permit gas appliances to be "plugged in" just like their electric equivalents.

Use of elevated pressure reduces initial cost while providing future load growth, Torbin said. A gas load center will permit the integration of the gas system with appliance controls/sensors and home automation systems. Automatic shut-off valves can be triggered to operate based on methane sensors, high CO levels, and smoke and fire alarms, as well as be integrated into other home security and life-safety systems.

DESIGNING THE INFRASTRUCTURE

"My presentation is meant to inspire members of the LPG industry to get on board before they get left behind. You don't need an IT department," he said. "When we think about new gas loads, such as power generators, tankless water heaters, gas logs—how do you accommodate for this load growth in a cost-effective way without having to replumb the entire house when remodeling?"

Designing the infrastructure for LPG appliances in advance provides several benefits. It allows you to anticipate future usage so you can add gas appliances in the future when home automation catches up. It also allows you to be prepared for changes in consumer demand and awareness. Future load growth starts with building strategies into the infrastructure from the very start.

"No one is doing this now. It's not like a package you can buy at Home Depot, but the technology and know-how are already here," Torbin explained.

"This talk is meant to ignite fresh thinking and strategy to at least stay up with the market curve on home automation. We're not making smart gas appliances, but we can make smart gas piping systems."

"We're not doing enough to keep up with what's going on in the electrical community. We [the propane industry] are not even in on the ground floor. We're just trying to survive. We have to think beyond survival. We need to give people a better reason to have propane than just cost advantages."

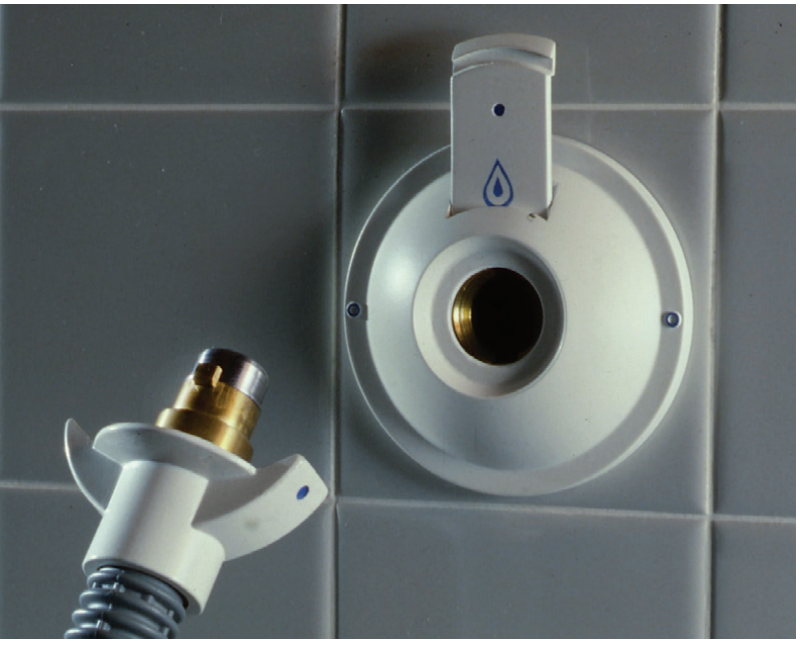
"The writing is on the wall. Your electrical competitors are already planning for our demise," Torbin said. "This presentation is a wake-up call."

California, for example, is soon to be the first state to mandate solar-energy installations for every new single-family home as well as multifamily residential buildings up to three stories, including condos and apartment complexes. Many new subdivisions are already building only all-electric houses.

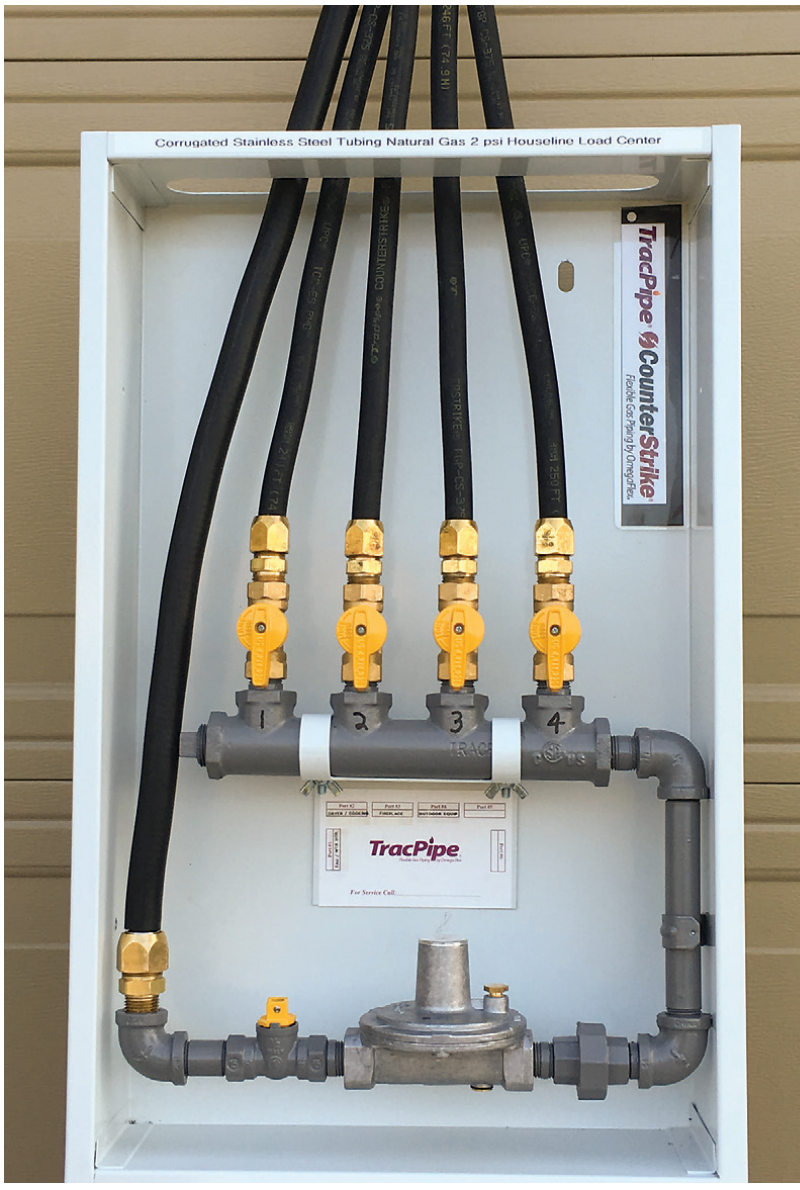
A CALL TO ACTION

There are challenges, Torbin admitted, to smart gas homes becoming reality:

1) The propane industry is not prepared to address the problem. Nothing is going on in research and development to help LPG suppliers offer smart products; and



The propane industry can increase gas load per customer using semirigid metallic tubing operated at elevated pressure to create a multifunctional gas distribution network in homes.



A gas load center can permit the integration of the gas system with appliance controls/sensors and home automation systems.

2) Manufacturers are not incentivized to make smart gas products. "They keep selling the same things year after year," Torbin said. "Why isn't my furnace telling me when the air filter needs to be replaced or maintaining optimum air-fuel mixture?"

"No one has said no, they don't want home automation in the LPG industry, but the problem is no one in the industry has risen to take charge or make the necessary technical commitment. I'm making the call to action. It's possible to move forward toward smart-ready right now."

Bob Torbin has spent more than 25 years pursuing a career-long effort in support of innovative piping systems and technologies. He has been involved with innovative, lightning-resistant corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST) technologies, including revisions to all appropriate model codes, updating of product standards, coordinating various company and industry research projects, and advocating for state and local code acceptance. His work has included participation on many industry committees and organizations promoting the safe use of fuel gas products including installation practices and installer training. ■



8 BUSINESS-BUILDING TIPS AND TOOLS FROM THE PERC CONFERENCE

STEVE RELYEA

Ideas and projects to increase the use of propane appeared throughout the agenda at the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) Meeting held April 12 in Atlanta. Speakers suggested a number of ways the council and all members of the industry can contribute to growing the use of propane.

Thought leadership: The industry's employees need to know how to explain the benefits of propane to customers and convey the fact that this is clean energy. In the chief executive officer's report, delivered from a remote location, PERC president and CEO Tucker Perkins said efforts in public relations and thought leadership are important. PERC has found that state energy executives don't know that propane has a role now and in the future. "You will see us push this story in social media and have others tell the story for us," Perkins said.

He later told ***BPN***, "The entire population of employees need to know what propane is: a clean fuel, a fuel of the future, and a fuel of today. We are going to provide them with messages that resonate with customers about the efficient, direct use of propane in modern appliances, and how that serves the environment and the customer with a low-carbon, sustainable solution. Those messages are for our entire industry, to be used where appropriate, whether that is the customer location, the Little League field, schools boards, or Rotary Club."

Regional meetings: Each PERC regional meeting has been better than the previous one, Perkins said. These meetings facilitate information exchange, he explained. "For example, we learn what PERC materials they are using and not using." He added that there is a culture shift going on at PERC. The organization will be bringing in new people and projects to meet the strategic plan, will completely change the safety and training programs, and will continue to improve its website and its marketing materials.

Disaster response: PERC has doubled incentives for reconstruction in disaster areas, Perkins said. The goal is to rebuild the propane infrastructure in areas that have been hit by disasters such as fires, hurricanes, and floods.

Product development: PERC's past investments in product development have contributed about 450 million gallons through this year, said Cinch Munson, senior vice president, business development. Those who receive funds must report unit sales of the resulting products, and then PERC calculates the number of gallons contributed from the products sold, he explained. In the business development update portion of the conference, Munson reported that PERC's current investments are made with an eye to "weatherproofing our portfolio" by developing products that create year-round demand. He added that in 2018, PERC business development had 318

different "points of engagement," promoting the industry at trade shows, sales channel meetings, and similar events.

VW settlement: Discussing the current status of the VW settlement, Munson said 47 states and the District of Columbia have plans in place for spending the settlement funds. Propane is not eligible in nine states and D.C. In those areas, he said, "Those states tend to be focused on electric vehicles." A member of the audience said clean diesel is winning the day and asked why that is. Munson answered, many state agency personnel don't understand the total cost of ownership. Propane has a higher upfront cost than diesel, but requires less maintenance and has a lower total cost of ownership, he explained. PERC's strategy regarding VW settlement funds is to educate program administrators and coordinate state associations, vehicle dealers, propane marketers, and others to improve participation. "We need to be engaged with this," Munson concluded. "At this point, it takes boots on the ground, getting applications in and materials in the hands of administrators."

"One-Stop Shop": The new PERC website (*propane.com*) drew nearly 400,000 visitors since its launch and the homeowner-focused YouTube video garnered 5.54 million views between January 14 and April 11 (the day before the conference), Tina Wilson, senior vice president, communications, reported. In the communications report, she noted that this new "one-stop shop for everything propane," is designed to deliver a distinct message for each market while sharing the common theme, "Propane Can Do That." One purpose of the site is to drive engagement and then adoption of propane. The new website also includes valuable resources to marketers including Propane Can Do That campaign materials and creative assets. "We invite everyone to visit *propane.com* and learn all of the many ways propane can work for you. You will learn how propane is cleaner, affordable, versatile, reliable, safe, and plays an important part of America's energy mix," concluded Wilson.

Growing gallons: There is an abundance of propane being produced in this country, but more is being exported than is being consumed domestically. "That's a shame," said Randy Thompson, founder and senior advisor at ThompsonGas LLC, and chairman elect of the National Propane Gas Association (NPGA). "We must find new ways to use our product and grow the industry by growing gallons." In the NPGA report segment of the conference, Thompson referred to his previously announced goal of growing the industry by four billion gallons in the next five years. "Opportunities abound," he said. Examples include replacing residential electric water heaters; supplying military bases; expanding the use of autogas, especially in school buses; and developing new technology to supply power generation off the grid that is primary power, not backup. "Our industry was built one appliance at a time, one customer at a time," he said. "This goal is ambitious but achievable. It's an exciting time to be part of this industry!"

Green and clean: The industry must also shore up the share of the energy market it already has by resisting electrification and the Green New Deal, Thompson explained. To do this, the industry must promote to a wider audience the fact that propane is green and clean. Many Americans are not aware of this, but, being pragmatic, they will respond to a message that is pragmatic. "This is a message of optimism and opportunity rather than gloom and doom," Thompson said. "We represent the bedrock of America—thousands of small businesses, vibrant in the community. We have compelling stories to tell; we just need the will to deliver the message." ■

WINLPG CONTINUED

Continued from **Page 33**

She pointed to the findings of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) report released by IFC in 2017, three years after the establishment of BCFW. It said BCFW had impacted more than 50,000 employees across 47 businesses with at least one substantive change to policies, practices, or standards. Over the same period, BCFW hosted more than 70 workshops, training events, seminars, and conferences, with more than 950 participants.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Asked for advice she would share with women who aspire to become senior executives, as she has done since attending that difficult meeting of business leaders early in her career, Taviri said: "Be comfortable in your skin, play to your strengths, and develop a circle of advisors (internally and externally) who are able to complement your weaknesses. Always have a compass to give direction and a set of guiding principles to help you make decisions every day—from the kitchen to the boardroom table. Balance visionary with pragmatism and be courageous." ■



Lesieli Taviri, CEO of Origin Energy PNG, is one of the most prominent business leaders in Papua New Guinea (PNG). Last fall, she was honored with the inaugural Woman of the Year Award presented by the Women in LPG Global Network (WINLPG).



ATLANTA 2019: IT WAS ALL ABOUT PROPANE

Beginning with Friday morning's Propane Education & Research Council's membership meeting and NPGA's Propane Cargo Tank & Inspection Workshop and continuing through Monday morning's closing bell, mid-April in Atlanta turned positively propane. Some 3100 attendees visited with 240 exhibitors to find out what's new in propane.
















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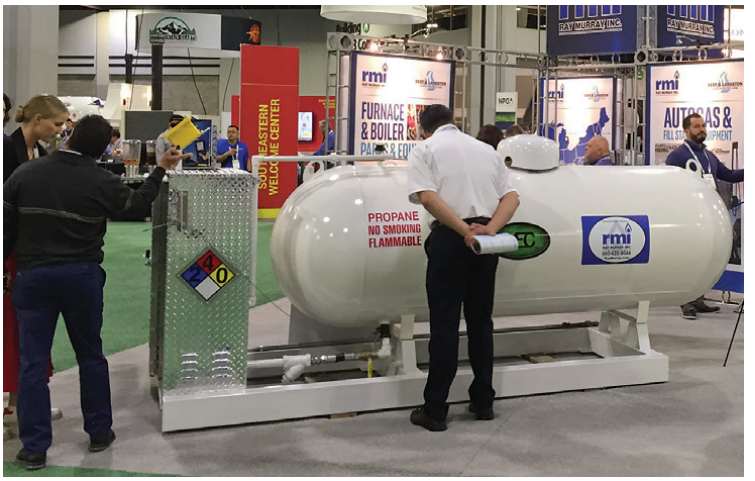



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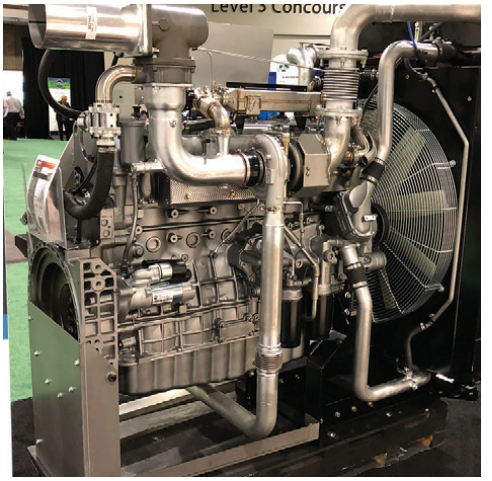

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PROPANE DAYS AGENDA: EDUCATE AND LOBBY A NEW CONGRESS

PAT THORNTON



With a new Congress that includes 100 freshman members, 91 of them in the House of Representatives, it seems that making progress is taking even longer than usual. "A lot of issues got kicked down the road as the new Congress took over and now things are moving slower as so many new Congress members are coming up to speed on all of the issues," said Michael Baker, director, legislative affairs for the National Propane Gas Association (NPGA). "We've been actively working on getting to know all of the new members of Congress and their staff. We've been to over 150 Congressional offices so far. At a certain point, there is only so much industry lobbyists can accomplish as these offices welcome input directly from their constituents. They are part of the propane industry in states and districts, and it is extremely valuable for them to visit these members of Congress and the staff who keep them up to date on all of the issues."

A key opportunity for this, of course, is NPGA's annual Propane Days event, which is set for June 2-5 in Washington, D.C. "Industry members are needed as much as ever," said Baker. "With so many new members of Congress, education is an important part of the process of lobbying." Baker believes that even if industry members do not feel current issues concern them greatly, it is still important for them to keep the lines of communication open. "Establishment of these relationships is critical when issues arise that require immediate action," Baker said.

ALTERNATIVE FUEL TAX CREDITS

One issue that is critical for the expansion of propane's use as a fuel for autogas and forklifts is the need for as many financial incentives as possible. "Many tax credits are still active, but 29 have expired since 2017," Baker said. "A 37 cent-per-gallon credit on propane as an auto fuel and a fuel for forklifts is under consideration. Support for this credit and a broader package of short-term tax provisions appears to be popular in both the House and Senate. We need Congress to get this on the agenda and take some much-needed action."

DRIVE-SAFE ACT

Seen by many as a win-win because it fills a critical need while providing a job for younger people in the job market, the DRIVE-Safe Act has bipartisan support in both the House and Senate. "Across all industries in America, there is a shortage of 50,000 commercial drivers," Baker said. The bills before the House and Senate call for a two-stage apprenticeship program that would allow qualified drivers aged 18-21 to participate in interstate commerce. Currently, Federal law requires drivers to be 21 to participate in interstate commerce. "We want to work with other industries to bring a safe path forward for these younger drivers," Baker said. "Too often the higher age requirements for truck driving jobs cause potential drivers to go in other directions, learn new skills, and then they are unavailable for driving jobs at the age of 21 because they've invested their time and value in other occupations."

WAIVER OF THE JONES ACT FOR PROPANE

The Jones Act is a century-old law requiring that only U.S.-built vessels may carry products from one U.S. port to another. In the case of propane, there are no U.S.-built vessels for shipping the fuel. While it must seem like common sense to allow non-U.S.-built vessels to move propane from one U.S. port to another, especially to prevent a shortage or avoid requiring propane to be bought from a foreign country, it is not that easy. The shipbuilders and

dockworkers have a strong lobby that doesn't like Congress to budge an inch on waivers of the Jones Act out of fear it will lead to more and more waivers. Meanwhile, cold winters have continued to impact the Northeast segment of the U.S., which has been prone to supply and logistics issues in recent years. The need for hundreds and hundreds of trucks moving to the Northeast could be alleviated by using just one ship to move millions of gallons to the region. "We always find some opposition, but we can't just assume we'll never get traction on this issue," Baker said. "We're not giving up on a plan to seek an industry exemption that gets propane exactly where it is needed when it is critically needed." Baker noted that there are some like Senator Lee of Utah who believe the entire Jones Act should be scrapped. "We'd love that, but there is likely a better chance of success in advocating for an exemption where it is needed."

CARBON LABELING

When energy customers understand each energy source's carbon footprint based on the full fuel cycle, propane looks pretty good. Currently, all consumer appliances are labeled with a yellow Energy Guide sticker that provides the average annual cost to utilize an appliance. NPGA is advocating before Congress that in addition to the average annual cost, Energy Guide labels should also include the carbon footprint associated with a consumer appliance. While there is no specific legislation on the table right now, many Congressional offices have expressed interest in this issue. "There was some progress here in 2009 when carbon labeling language was included in the Waxman-Markey Bill that passed the House, but the legislation died in the Senate. There is historical precedence for carbon labeling, and consumer appliances such as propane water heaters look very attractive when consumers understand its environmentally-friendly, and cost-effective attributes."

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS

While legislative activity has been slow so far in 2019, Baker noted that NPGA has submitted appropriation requests for funding opportunities through the Department of Energy for vehicle engine technology and combined heat and power, and is waiting to see if they are approved. For the industry members, he stresses that building relationships with and educating Congress members as well as staff is essential and can be done in the district as well as at Propane Days. "Often it is more common that we get time with the staff rather than the Congressperson during Propane Days. That is still important because staff have the Congressperson's ear and help to shape their approach to legislative policy that affects us," Baker said. "Industry members may have a better opportunity to get their member of Congress to attend an event to meet constituents on-site at their propane operation. This is often a great chance to show our industry in action and demonstrate firsthand new developments such as autogas, efficient appliances, and much more.

■





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AFTER CRANE RULE, INDUSTRY FOCUSES ON OTHER CONCERNS

PAT THORNTON

Jeff Petrash, National Propane Gas Association (NPGA) vice president and general counsel, said a quote from a Rolling Stones song that may summarize as well as anything the industry's results on years of fighting for an exemption from the OSHA Crane Rule. "You can't always get what you want," the lyrics say. "But if you try, sometimes, you might find you get what you need." While the total exemption was not agreed to, the rule limits the expensive certification to installing tanks at construction sites. "This was not as sweeping as we would have liked, but it narrowed the application of the rule to a small segment of propane tank setters, many of whom are in situations where they already have the certification," Petrash said.

"Nearly one dozen webinars conducted by NPGA after OSHA's November rulemaking of the Crane Rule reached one-third to one-half of the NPGA membership," Petrash said. "It was decided that the certification requirement was curtailed sufficiently that this was good enough. It was not worth the time or money to bring litigation or fight for a legislative rollback." For most, the process of setting tanks at homes just requires employees have sufficient training to do the task at hand; a certified crane operator can be hired as a contractor in rare instances when needed rather than have employees do the expensive third-party certification process.

NATURAL GAS EXPANSION

Natural gas expansion is always a big concern in the propane industry, especially where attempts are made to have existing natural gas customers subsidize the expansion. In addition to Petrash, Lesley Garland, vice president, state affairs, is engaged in monitoring natural gas expansion as are Jacob Peterson, manager, state engagement, and Eric Sears, manager, state association relations. Peterson and Sears recently joined NPGA as more efforts are being made to



engage and partner with states on issues like natural gas expansion. "The natural gas expansion activity has been lighter lately, but we know that can always change," Petrash said. "Jacob found an online system that tracks public service filings and alerts us to new filings. For now, the number of natural gas expansion filings is down."

Peterson and Petrash attend meetings of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) and the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO) so that the propane industry has a consistent presence in the discussions of these associations. "Jacob went with me in November and he represented us again in February," Petrash said. "Jacob has been attending the NASEO meetings. It is important for us to be there as we represent 10% of the energy portfolio of many states and sometimes experience supply challenges that garner state attention."

ENBRIDGE LINE 5

Many changes happened in Michigan after the November elections when new officials—most notably the governor and attorney general—who ran on a platform of shutting down Enbridge Line 5 were elected. "Governor Gretchen Whitmer had complained during the campaign that the previous governor, Rick Snyder, was binding the hands of the next governor. Governor Snyder had reached a tentative deal to put the pipeline into an underground tunnel," Petrash said. "The agreement by the attorney general was ruled to be not consistent with the Michigan constitution and Governor Whitmer ordered that all activity be stopped."

ELECTRIFY EVERYTHING

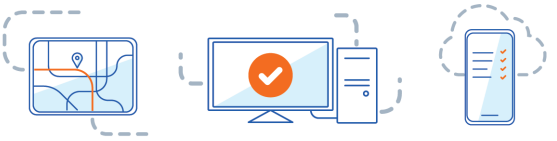
"This movement is gaining strength," Petrash said. "I think we will likely be dealing with the many powerful groups that represent electricity for years to come." While NPGA is currently aligned with the American Gas Association and many municipal gas utilities, all are continuing to look for additional groups to align with.

SEEKING GREATER TRANSPARENCY

Two initiatives seeking greater transparency continue to be on hold as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has been dealing with personnel changes. One petition seeks better reporting of data on the pipeline including products shipped, costs, and revenues. The other seeks a wall between the liquids pipeline and its affiliates engaged in market transactions such as selling propane. Among other changes last year, FERC chairman Kevin McIntyre had relinquished his role for health reasons and later passed away. Neil Chatterjee, a previous chairman and former energy policy advisor to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, was appointed to replace him last October.

"We continue to be engaged with FERC activity because in addition to the two initiatives, next year FERC will review methods to determine indexed rates," Petrash said. "They will also be determining how tax cuts are factored in and whether index rates will be reduced accordingly." ■

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CABINETS PROVIDE SAFETY, SECURITY, IMAGE OF QUALITY

STEVE RELYEA

Cylinder storage cabinets can provide not only safety and security, but also long-lasting good looks that help propane marketers create a good image and merchandise their products.

American Standard Mfg. (ASM; Central Bridge, N.Y.) has been manufacturing gas cylinder storage and merchandising cabinets since 1990. Today, in the propane category, the company offers in-stock availability and can custom configure cabinets to the customer's needs. Available from stock are 17 models of 20-lb cylinder exchange cabinets and 20 models of forklift cylinder cabinets. All forklift cylinder storage cabinets are designed to make compliance with NFPA simple and affordable.

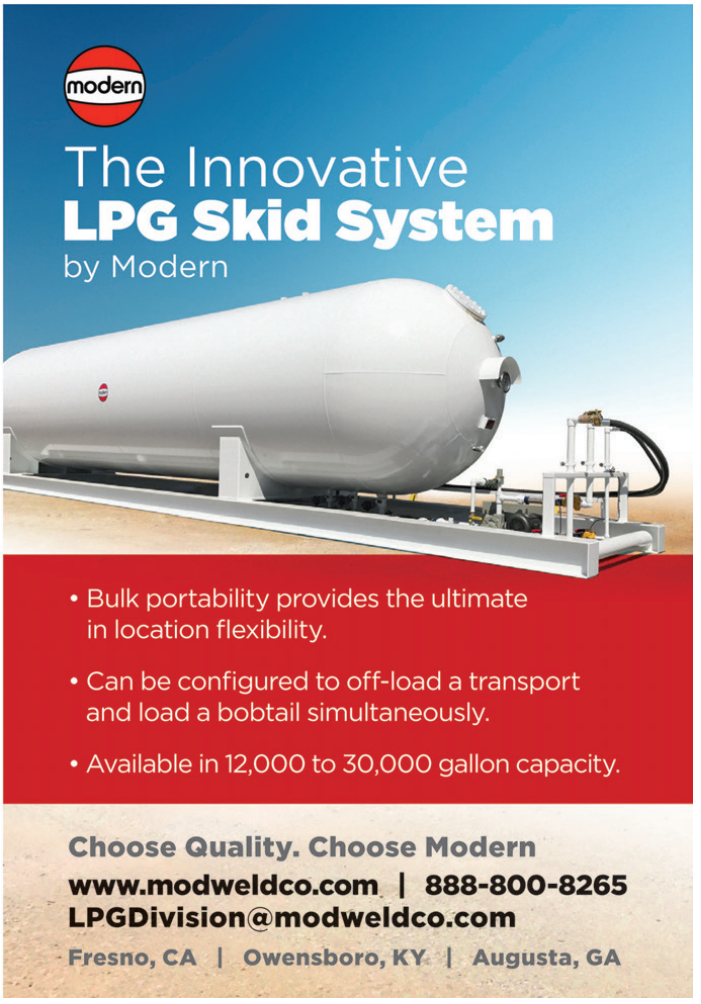
David Day, CEO of ASM, suggests that propane marketers and equipment distributors consider the following questions when choosing the cabinet that is right for them.

What kind of space is available for the cabinet? ASM offers different configurations for like capacities; the customer can specify a unit that is shorter and wider or taller and thinner. "It depends on the space they or their customers have available, or the ergonomics they require," Day said.

How much space will be available in front of it? Different door configurations are available. The standard configuration has swing-out doors; available options include double doors and zero clearance sliding doors. "For example, at a convenience store, the cabinet is generally placed on a sidewalk," Day explained. "Swing-out doors could contact the bumper of a car. Double doors have only half the swing, and zero clearance have no swing."

What level of security will be required? The company doesn't generally provide locks, but its cabinets are lockable and can be configured to accommodate different sorts of locks. If extra security is required, another option offered is a choice of lock shrouds. For even greater security, it offers a high-security unit that is constructed with additional solid steel strapping to prevent cutting of the flattened expanded metal.

Would you like aluminum or steel? ASM offers units in both materials, at the same price. "Aluminum is lighter, easier to



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handle, and doesn't rust," Day said.

Would you like the unit to arrive assembled? Its cylinder storage cabinets are offered in a choice of assembled or knockdown condition. "There was a time when there was a tremendous freight savings in shipping unassembled; now it is still less expensive, but not less expensive enough," Day explained. "Most ship assembled; in that case it is rapid deployment, with the cabinet ready to go to the site."

How will the cabinet look? A cabinet can help promote cylinder exchange to consumers and can help build a company's image with its commercial customers. To do that, the unit needs to look good when new and maintain that look over time. The units feature exterior grade powder coating and stainless steel hinges that resist corrosion, hold up over time, and maintain the appearance and durability of the unit. "All ASM units are designed, built, and handled with the idea of presentation quality," Day said. "They are produced for P.O.P. use in front of a convenience store and for representation of your company when the cabinet is in a commercial setting."

Do you want to enhance your efficiency? ASM now offers cabinet-monitoring software that relays real-time, system-wide information about what is happening at cages in the field. Called IONPropane, this Internet of Things (IoT) device creates a "Smart Cage" that will enhance a marketer's planning and delivery systems and prevent unnecessary roll-outs and empty cages. IONPropane can be installed at the factory or retrofitted to existing ASM cages with simple in-the-field installation.

■





MICHIGAN JURY AWARDS $2 MILLION IN PROPANE EXPLOSION SUIT

DAVID R. SCHLEE

Last fall a jury in Marquette, Mich. awarded $2 million to a man injured in a propane explosion at a medical marijuana growing facility. The plaintiff was found 20% negligent, which reduced the jury's $2.5-million damage assessment to $2 million. The case is *Parker v. U.P. Propane.*

Derek Parker was the owner of Freshwater Farms, a fully licensed medical marijuana business. Propane was used at the facility, and was supplied in 100-lb cylinders by U.P. Propane. On Friday, April 29, 2016, U.P. Propane supplied four 100-lb propane cylinders to Freshwater Farms. All had been requalified. However, one of the cylinders was 78 years old. The cylinders were placed in a storage room at the facility.

On Monday, May 2, Parker returned to the facility. Upon entering the building, he immediately smelled gas. He entered the storage room and saw that the 78-year-old cylinder was covered with frost. He moved it outside the building.

Parker then reentered the building. He set up a fan in the storage room to air it out. Sadly, several minutes later an explosion occurred. Parker was seriously injured. He sustained burn injuries over 45% of his body and spent a month in the University of Michigan Hospital Burn Center. His medical bills totaled about $500,000.

Subsequent investigation revealed that the bottom of the cylinder in question was corroded and that there was a pinhole leak (Parker later argued several leaks) that had allowed propane to escape into the storage room over the weekend. Parker filed suit against U.P. Propane, alleging that the cylinder had





not been properly inspected and that it had not been requalified according to standards.

Two days before the trial, the defense decided to admit negligence in the inspection of the cylinder. It decided to do this because even though the cylinder had gone through the requalification process, it was corroded and this should have been observed. The defense attorney for U.P. Propane stated: "We didn't want to argue whether or not we met that standard anymore. We were going to concede it, even though it was requalified, they should have caught that rust. Instead of focusing on that issue, we wanted to focus on what caused the explosion."

While the defense attorney believed that the negligence admission helped the defense in holding down damages, Parker's lawyer disagreed:

"They only barely admitted their guilt and they did nothing to make up for it. In fact, it literally added insult to injury. When the defendant admits liability begrudgingly but then argues causation and blames the plaintiff, they're really not admitting anything. I think the jury was really fed up with the defense."

> *"Parker had been buying propane from this company for years, and they certainly never told him to not bring the tank inside the building and never suggested any other alternative means of using the tanks."*

Despite the admission of negligence in inspecting the cylinder, the defense continued to argue that the real cause of the incident was the fact that Parker brought the cylinders inside. Parker's attorney said that at trial his client admitted some contributory negligence, but argued that the main factor in causing the incident was the leaking cylinder:

"The fact of the matter is that Parker had been buying propane from this company for years, and they certainly never told him to not bring the tank inside the building and never suggested any other alternative means of using the tanks."

"ANOTHER EXPLANATION"

Defense counsel indicated that his strategy was to argue that the pinhole leak in the cylinder was not found until months after the incident, and the leak was minimal:

"There had to be another explanation for why the gas was in that atmosphere and could ignite. That would require human intervention, and in this case, the plaintiff. It probably would have been accidental, but nonetheless that's what it would have been."

So the defense was arguing that the source of the gas for the explosion was not the pinhole leak in the cylinder, which arguably happened after the incident, but rather some other unspecified release from the cylinders



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SHOPPER'S MART



PROPANE AND THE LAW

that occurred over the weekend with Parker's witting or unwitting assistance. Parker's lawyer countered with expert testimony that there were multiple pinhole leaks in the bottom of the cylinder, all caused by corrosion, and that these leaks were in fact the cause of the explosion.

In the end, the jury found for Parker and assessed his damages at $2.5 million. However, the jury also assessed 20% fault to Parker, reducing his award to $2 million.

THE MARIJUANA FACTOR

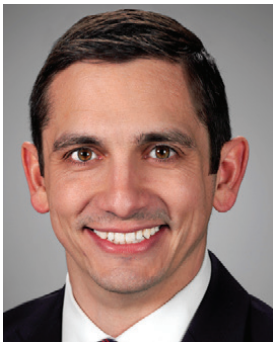
Was the jury biased against Parker because he ran a marijuana operation? Apparently not, although Parker's attorney was certainly concerned about this during the trial. The state police investigator who investigated the incident told the jury that he is a strong proponent of medical marijuana, and this seems to have helped. Parker's attorney stated:

"As it turned out, we were pleased to find there were very few people who had strong negative feelings about marijuana and, in particular, medical marijuana. Some of the jurors were highly favorable toward the appropriate use of medical marijuana."

The case was settled based on the jury verdict, and there was no appeal.

David Schlee is a shareholder in the Kansas City law firm of Schlee & McCarthy PC. Readers may contact him at drschlee@schleelaw.com.

PEOPLE



TRAVIS DUNHAM
Energy Distribution Partners



DAVE WAGER
Minnesota Propane Association

Travis Dunham has joined **Energy Distribution Partners** (EDP; Chicago) as director of supply and logistics, with responsibility for working closely with EDP's field executives to secure supply for its growing retail operations nationwide. Dunham was most recently director of wholesale at Ferrellgas. He began his career in the propane industry in 2005 as a wholesale representative for Ferrellgas, covering the Ohio Valley. Since, he served in positions of increasing responsibility, managing supply and procurement for Ferrell's retail operations as well as independent propane marketers.

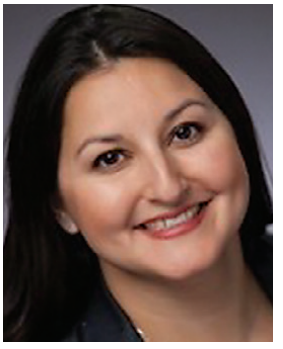
The **Minnesota Propane Association** (MPA) has named **Dave Wager** as its next executive director. He will work with the current director, **Roger Leider**, until Jan. 1, 2020, when he will assume full responsibility as executive director. Wager has been in the propane industry for the past 32 years, starting with Cannon Valley Cooperative in 1987, through its many mergers, to form Central Farm Service. He became active in the industry 20 years ago, working in the Hall of Flame building at the state fair, as well as other association activities. He has served on a number of MPA committees, most recently the successions committee that hired its new training company and trainer. Wager was a member of the executive committee, has been active on the board of directors since 2010 and served as association president in 2015.

David Dodd has joined **Otodata's** (Montreal) U.S. team as its new southern regional sales representative with responsibility for the southern portion of the country. He will be based in Florida. Dodd has more than 20 years of experience in B2B sales.

Leanne Mazoch has joined **Ray Energy** (Troy, N.Y.) as vice president of supply, based in Houston. Mazoch has been involved in the integrated oil and gas industry for more than 20 years. In her new position, she will assist in broadening markets by locating and purchasing fuel from multiple supply origination points to meet the growing demand of customers east of the Mississippi. Mazoch has held various positions within the energy sector, most recently as the Northeast NGL and olefins marketer for BP Energy Co., where she marketed third-party and equity propane supply for all eastern U.S. demand.



DAVID DODD
Otodata



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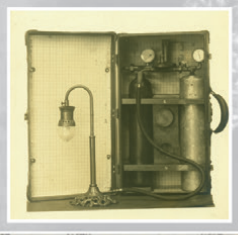
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INDUSTRY CALENDAR

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2019

May 2-3—National Propane Gas Association Benchmarking Council Meeting (Groups I-M), Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina, San Diego, Calif. (202) 466-7200 ext. 335

May 6-7—2019 Vermont Fuel Conference, Jackson Gore at the Okemo Mountain Resort, Ludlow. *steph@vermontfuel.com*

May 6-8—Manufactured Housing Institute 2019 Congress & Expo, Hyatt Regency New Orleans, New Orleans. (703) 558-0646

May 9-10—PERC Advisory Committee Meeting, San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter, San Antonio, Texas. (202) 452-8975

May 14-16—International School of Hydrocarbon Measurement Conference & Expo, Cox Business Services Convention Center, Oklahoma City, Okla. (405) 831-8609

May 15-17—Western Propane Trade Show & Convention, Reno Events Center, Reno, Nev. (916) 447-9742

May 19-22—Eastern Energy Expo, Hershey Lodge & Convention Center, Hershey, Pa. (973) 467-1400

May 21—Energy xPortCon, Hilton Americas Hotel, Houston, Texas. *xportcon@rbnenergy.com*

May 22—Michigan Propane Gas Association Propane Safety Awareness Day, State Capital Lawn, Lansing. (517) 487-2021

May 28-30—Canadian Propane Association Annual General Meeting, Seminar, and Golf Tournament, Scotiabank Convention Centre, Niagara Falls, Ont. (613) 683-2270

June 2-5—2019 National Propane Gas Association Presidential Forum, Annual Meeting & Propane Days, Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C. (202) 466-7200 ext. 335

June 3-6—2019 Oklahoma/Arkansas Propane Gas Associations Annual Conference, Shangri-La Resort, Monkey Island, Okla. (405) 424-1775

June 4-5—Mennta Energy Solutions Introduction to Derivatives Markets, Hedging and Risk Management, JW Marriott Houston Downtown, Houston. *info@mennta.com*

June 6-7—Mennta Energy Solutions Intermediate Derivatives Markets, Hedging and Risk Management, JW Marriott Houston Downtown, Houston. *info@mennta.com*

June 10-13—Mid-States Propane Expo and Tradeshow, Embassy Suites by Hilton & Olathe Conference Center, Olathe, Kan. (785) 354-1749

June 11-13—Global Petroleum Show, Stampede Park, Calgary, Alta. (888) 799-2545

June 16-18—Alabama Propane Gas Association & Louisiana Propane Gas Association Summer Convention, Hilton Hotel, Pensacola Beach, Fla. (225) 763-8922

June 17-20—NFPA Conference & Expo, Henry B Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas. (800) 344-3555

June 19-21—Pennsylvania Propane Gas Association Annual Membership Meeting, Frank J. Pasquerilla Conference Center, Johnstown. (717) 441-6040

June 25-27—New Mexico / Colorado Propane Gas Associations Convention, Sagebrush Inn, Taos, N.M. (303) 424-0870

June 25-27—North Dakota Propane Gas Association Meeting and Convention, Roughriders Hotel, Medora. (701) 223-3370

July 17-18—PERC Council Meeting, Resort at Squaw Creek, Olympic Valley, Calif. (202) 452-8975

July 19—Virginia Propane Gas Association Summer Meeting, Omni Homestead, Hot Springs. (804) 648-6299, ext. 1006

July 24-26—Michigan Propane Gas Association Summer Convention, Crystal Mountain Resort, Thompsonville. (517) 487-2021

July 25-27—Africa 2019 Oil and Gas International Trade Exhibition, KICC, Nairobi, Kenya. *feedback@expogr.com*

July 25-28—Florida Propane Gas Association Annual Convention, Hutchinson Island Marriott, Stuart. (850) 681-0496

July 31-Aug 2—Pacific Propane Gas Association Annual Conference & Membership Meeting, Skamania Lodge, Stevenson, Wash. (844) 585-4940

August 8-10—Crossroads Propane Expo & Conference, Omni Corpus Christi Hotel, Corpus Christi, Texas. (800) 325-7427

Aug. 11-14—SCPGA/GPGA Southern Connection Convention, The King and Prince Beach & Golf Resort, St. Simons Island, Ga. (803) 865-2284

Aug. 28-29—Arizona Propane Gas Association Annual Membership Summer/Fall Meeting, Hassayampa Hotel, Prescott. (602) 315-0155

Sept. 8-10—2019 Fall TS&S Committee Meeting, Hyatt Regency Inner Harbor, Baltimore. (202) 466-7200 ext. 335

Sept. 8-10—North Carolina Propane Gas Association Annual Convention, Myrtle Beach Spa & Resort, Grand Dunes, S.C. (919) 787-8485

Sept. 11-13—2019 Nevada Propane Dealers Association Annual Conference & Membership Meeting, Mont Bleu Resort & Casino, South Lake Tahoe. *nvpropane@gmail.com*

Sept. 12-13—National Propane Gas Association Benchmarking Council Meeting (Groups A-H), Four Seasons St Louis, St. Louis. (202) 466-7200 ext. 335

Sept. 15-18—New England Fuel Institute Heating & Energizing America Trade Show (HEAT), Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence, R.I. *events@nefi.com*

Sept. 17-18—South Dakota Petroleum & Propane Marketers Association Annual Convention & Petro Expo, The Lodge, Deadwood. (605) 224-8606

Sept. 17-19—Gastech Conference, NRG Center, Houston. *gastechevent.com*

Sept. 19-20—National Propane Gas Association Benchmarking Council Meeting (Groups I-M), Four Seasons St Louis, St. Louis. (202) 466-7200 ext. 335

Sept. 22-24—Manufactured Housing Institute Annual Meeting, The Westin Savannah, Savannah, Ga. *info@mfghome.org*

Sept. 24-25—West Virginia Propane Gas Association Fall Annual Meeting, The Resort at Glad Springs, Daniels, W. Va. (703) 530-9772

Sept. 24-26—32nd World LPG Forum & European Congress, RAI Amsterdam, Amsterdam. *info@worldlpgforum-aegpl2019.com*

Sept. 25-27—World Energy Conference & Expo, Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C. *connie@aeecenter.org*

Sept. 29-Oct. 1—NPGA 2019 Fall Board of Directors Meeting, Nemacolin Woodlands Resort, Farmington, Pa. *registration@npga.org*

Oct. 9-10—Propane Gas Association of New England Annual Meeting, Portsmouth Harbor Events, Portsmouth, N.H. (888) 445-1075

Oct. 15-17—Sunbelt Ag Expo, Spence Field, Moultrie, Ga. *info@sunbeltexpo.com*

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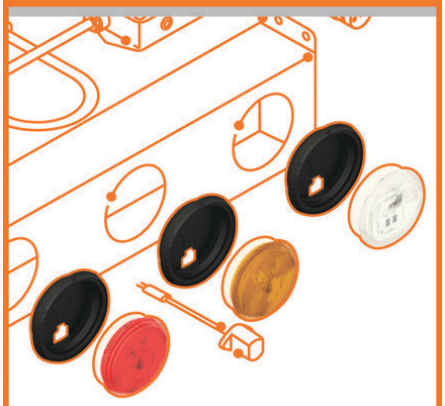
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FROM CPA TO PRESIDENT OF OIL AND PROPANE COMPANY

KAREN MASSMAN VanASDALE

Running Michael Oil and Propane, the company her grandparents started in 1948 in Big Rapids, Mich., was not Gail Bailey's original career path. "The goal was to go into accounting and get my license as a CPA. The closer I got to the end of the program, I realized that wasn't the direction I wanted to go," Bailey said.

But she decided to go ahead and finish her degree in accounting from Ferris State University and took a job in public accounting. On her way home from the accounting office, she would stop by Michael Oil and Propane and pick up some of the daily work.

As a working mother of three, she was juggling. "I was putting in a lot of hours, but it was a family business so you don't think about it. You just need to do what needs to be done," she said. "I always told my dad if he ever needed me to work for him full-time, to let me know. One day he let me know. I gave my notice and never looked back."

Originally, the company started as a Sunoco gas station with her grandfather also delivering fueloil and gasoline from his station wagon. As the business grew, the company bought fuel delivery trucks. In the mid '70s, Bailey's father, Harry Michael, took over the business and expanded the operations into propane.

"We started out with one propane truck and would drive it 30 miles one way to fill with gas. We would deliver that and go back to refill the truck. We soon bought our first bulk tank, and then it wasn't long before we got another bulk tank. We now have 48,000 gallons in storage," she said.

In 2005, Bailey took over management of the operation. "Over the years I just took on more and more of the things my dad did," she said. "Everything interested me, so I just jumped right in. My dad is a pretty good mentor and teacher. His management style is different than mine, but at the end of the day, he's very supportive. I can honestly say he's one of my best friends."



Today, Michael Oil and Propane has 3500 customers both residential and commercial located in five counties, and eight employees including Bailey's sister and father who, at 84 years old, still comes into the office several days a week. The company offers a wide selection of petroleum products and related parts, lubricants, HVAC parts and supplies, whole-home generators, and a service department. "We have a lot of hats to wear," Bailey said.

Although it has underground storage for gasoline, diesel, and kerosene, roughly 65% of the company's business is propane. "It took several years for the propane side to pass the liquid-fuel side of the business. Even I was surprised when we pulled numbers," she said referring to the growth in propane.

The growth has continued to be steady. "We're just about bursting at the seams. It's time to plan our next steps."

In addition to running the oil and propane company, Bailey, now a grandmother of 11, also has a real estate broker's license. Her husband, Gary, owns a real estate brokerage where both of their sons—also real estate brokers—work, and she does all the accounting for the brokerage. "All I talk about when I'm home is real estate," she said jokingly.

The couple and some friends recently bought a flip house that they are rehabbing themselves. "We're right down in the nitty-gritty. I have no idea why we did it. It's one of those things you do and then cross it off your bucket list.

"You never know what's going to happen, and that's half the fun of looking forward. You never know what opportunities you'll wake up to in the morning."

While she doesn't have a lot of downtime, Bailey said her personal hobby is reading. "I love to read, and I read a lot of different things. That's how I relax."

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