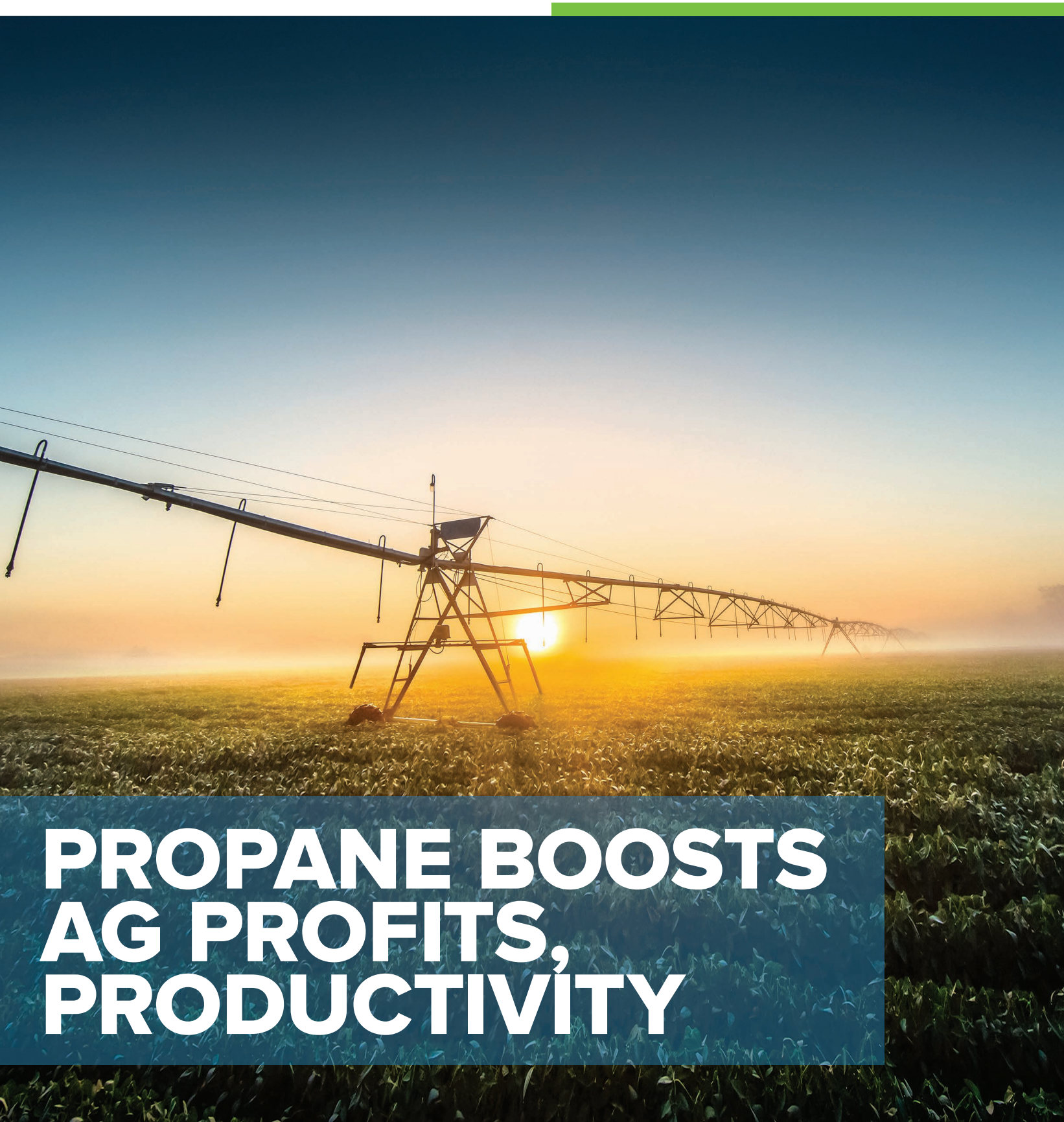
BUTANE-PROPANE NEWS

BPN

FEBRUARY | 2020



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TRAINING AS A DIFFERENTIATOR

STEVE RELYEA

Devaney Energy (Newton, Mass.) places such an emphasis on employee training, it has dubbed the classroom at its headquarters "Devaney University." At this comprehensive learning center, the family-owned and -operated provider of residential and commercial energy solutions provides training for all employees.

"We look for fresh and innovative ways to use the university to cover topics that go above and beyond 'traditional training' and will benefit our staff both physically and mentally," Justin Devaney, vice president at Devaney Energy, tells ***BPN***. "For instance, at our most recent annual Safety Day, we had a session on body mechanics and ergonomics. A representative from a local company came in to discuss healthy postures, body movements, and various ways to eliminate pain and help avoid unnecessary injury."

The training at Devaney University is supplied by staff as well as outside representatives from suppliers and manufacturers; state associations; and insurance companies. It covers all the topics needed by staff at a company that delivers fuels and installs and maintains heating and cooling equipment. A sample of the training includes health insurance and 401k meetings; service technician training; CETP and PE certification; DOT and OSHA refreshers; insurance company seminars; healthy workplace training; internal and external communication training; distracted driving; and updates and changes to state laws and regulations.

"Technological improvements in heating and cooling equipment happen at such a fast pace in today's world, we are constantly training our technicians and installers on what's new and relevant to help better serve our customers," Devaney says. "Safety of our employees and customers is our No. 1 priority, and here at Devaney University we use this space for everything from CETP training to distracted driving."

The company promotes this training and the skill level of its workers to customers. On a regular basis, the company refers to them in posts on Facebook and includes photos from the classroom and other training venues. It also devotes a page on its website to Devaney University; a link to this is prominently featured on the home page under the menu item, "The Devaney Difference."

"Constant training is vital to the relevance and longevity of our company," Devaney says. "Today's customer wants to see what we are doing to help make their lives and energy decisions easier; they rely on us as energy experts, and it is our responsibility to be up-to-date on the latest technologies available. There are several companies offering the same products as we do and, in an effort to differentiate ourselves, we make it a point to emphasize the things we do internally that go above and beyond what the typical oil and propane company may do."

■

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OUR COVER

Industrial-Irrigation Services, the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC), and Woodward Inc. partnered to develop the new Reliable Horsepower line of engines. Applications include irrigation, power generation, and oil and gas production. Photo courtesy Swanson Russell.

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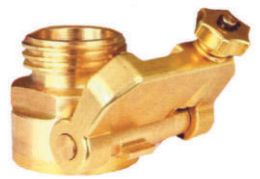

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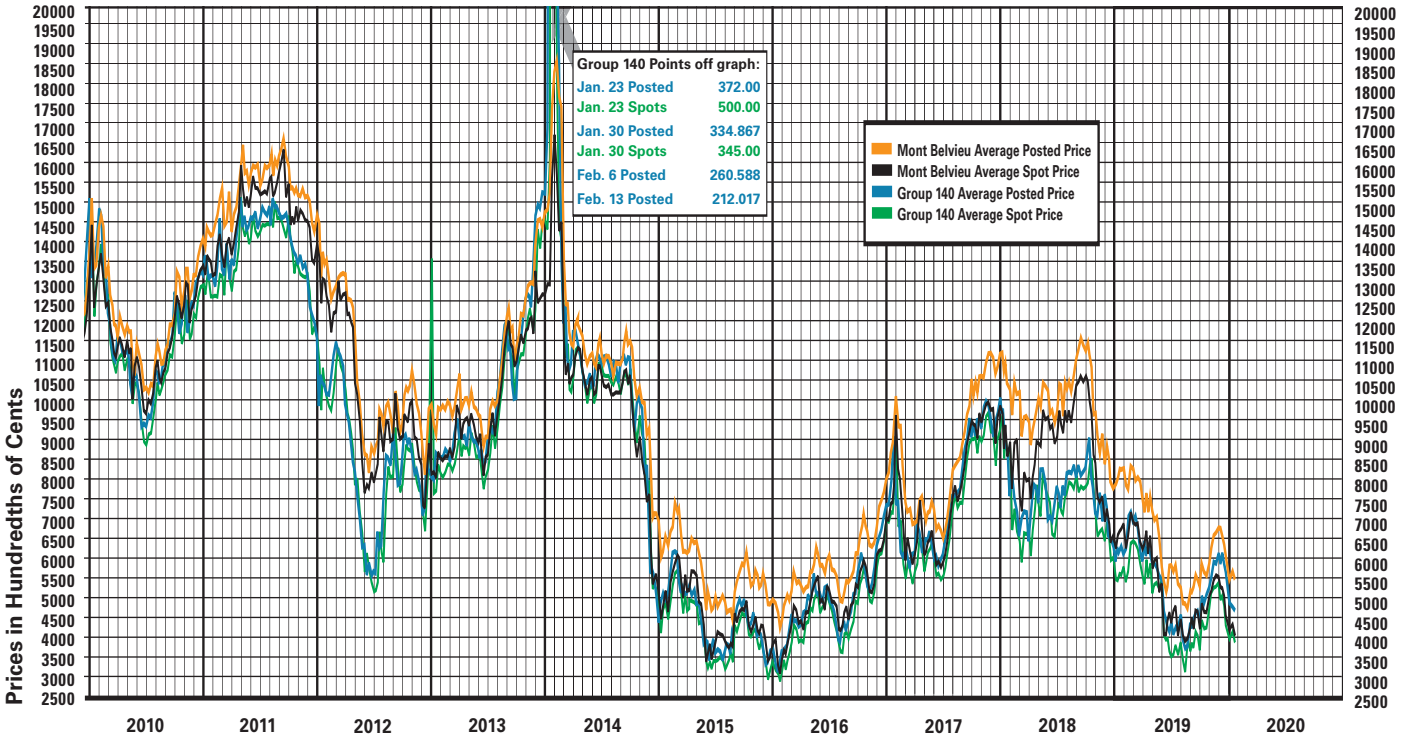


MONT BELVIEU & GROUP 140 AVERAGE THURSDAY PROPANE PRICES

MID-WEEK AVERAGE POSTED/ SPOT PROPANE PRICES

(Cents per Gallon)

Date	Mont Belvieu		Group 140	
	POSTED	SPOT	POSTED	SPOT
12-19-19	63.423	49.25-50.25	58.644	47.75-48.00
12-26-19	60.590	44.50-45.25	55.390	41.00-43.00
1-2-20	54.340	41.50-42.00	48.440	38.00-39.50
1-9-20	56.840	42.75-43.25	47.746	40.25-41.25
1-16-20	54.673	39.875-40.25	46.792	38.00-38.75

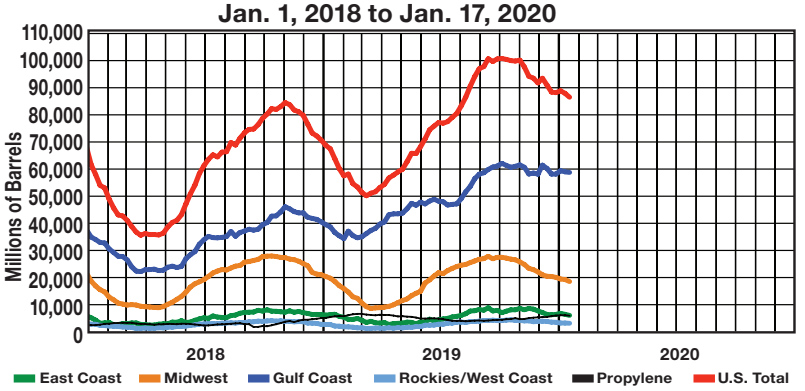
U.S. PROPANE INVENTORIES

Dec. 20, 2019 to Jan. 17, 2020 and One Year Ago

	12/20/19	12/27/19	1/3/19	1/10/20	1/17/20	1/18/19
East Coast	6,272	6,423	6,788	6,449	6,062	6,472
Midwest	20,411	20,083	19,477	19,264	18,537	18,574
Gulf Coast	58,144	58,160	59,382	58,989	58,767	36,626
Rockies/West	3,571	3,521	3,239	3,239	3,142	2,110
U.S. Total	88,398	88,186	88,885	87,938	86,508	63,782
Propylene	5,764	5,999	6,101	6,134	5,927	5,691

U.S. PROPANE INVENTORIES

Jan. 1, 2018 to Jan. 17, 2020



U.S. RESIDENTIAL PROPANE PRICES

(Mid-Month, Cents per Gallon)

Region	Date		
	1-20	12-19	1-19
East Coast (PADD I)	262.4	261.9	320.7
Midwest (PADD II)	163.3	167.8	181.7
Average U.S.	200.6	202.3	242.7

Source: "This Week in Petroleum," Energy Information Administration

CANADIAN INVENTORIES

(Jan. 1, 2020)

Thousand Cubic Meters

PROPANE

Region	1-20	12-19	Change	1-19
Propane—East	304.1	388.6	–21.7%	303.9
Propane–West	458.6	664.8	–31.0%	863.7
Total Propane	**762.8**	**1053.4**	**–27.6%**	**1167.5**

BUTANE

Butane—East	198.7	269.4	–26.2%	315.3
Butane—West	291.8	371.9	–21.5%	844.0
Total Butane	**490.5**	**641.2**	**–23.5%**	**1159.2**

Source: Canada Energy Regulator



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U.S. EXPORTS A MAJOR GROWTH DRIVER

Hellenic Shipping News writes that over the course of the past few years, many ship owners have invested in the once niche shipping market of LPG-carrying vessels. For many of them, this move turned out to be lucrative as demand rose and supply was kept relatively stable. And nowadays, U.S. LPG exports are a major force. In a recent report, shipbroker Banchero Costa (Genoa, Italy) said that "as crude oil [refining] and natural gas processing increased with the U.S. shale revolution, the United States has rapidly emerged as the world's largest producer and exporter of liquefied petroleum gas."

Having turned into a net exporter of LPG as recently as 2011, the U.S. now accounts for 28% of all exports by volume. During the whole of 2018, the U.S. exported 40.7 million tonnes, based on Refinitiv vessel-tracking data. This put the nation well ahead of the United Arab Emirates with 14.7 million tonnes, Qatar with 12.6 million, Saudi Arabia with 12.0 million, Algeria with 7.1 million, and Norway with 6.5 million.

According to Banchero Costa, the positive trend continued in 2019. In the first 11 months of last year, again based on Refinitiv data, the U.S. exported 43.9 million tonnes of LPG, excluding petrochemicals. This was an increase of 18.3% year on year, or 6.8 million tonnes more than in the same timeline a year earlier.

EXPORTS TO CHINA UNLIKELY TO RESUME

China is unlikely to receive any U.S. LPG imports in the near term despite the recent progress made in the U.S.-China trade talks, trade sources tell S&P Global Platts. They do not expect China's current 25% tariff on propane imports and 31% levy on butane to be repealed any time soon, regardless of broad market optimism surrounding the progress made with the two countries agreeing to sign a phase one trade deal, traders said.

China halted imports of U.S. LPG in August 2018 after the government imposed retaliatory tariffs. This followed the U.S. implementing 25% tariffs on an additional $16 billion worth of Chinese imports from Aug. 23 that year. China's tariff on U.S. butane was raised 5% to 31% in December 2018. Prior to the imposition of the assessments, China imported nearly 3.6 million metric tons (MT) of U.S. LPG in 2017, making the nation its second-largest supplier. One metric ton contains 521 gallons of propane, 453 gallons of normal butane, and 469 gallons of isobutane.

Despite the long absence of Chinese buying, U.S. propane spot cargo premiums hit four-year highs recently amid firm demand from other parts of Asia, as well as Europe. Market sources attribute this to wide-open arbitrages and falling freight rates, with the routes from Houston to Japan and Houston to Europe plummeting. U.S. propane prices have also weakened relative to crude oil.

However, despite the favorable arbitrage for U.S. propane to move to northeast Asia, traders in the region said they did not see an opportunity to ship spot cargos to China. One Chinese importer noted that the tariff on U.S. LPG imports was likely to remain in place for the time being. "We don't expect there will be any LPG exports from the U.S. to China for the foreseeable future," he said. A Singapore trader agreed. "Despite the open arbitrage, I don't think traders are lifting U.S. propane to supply China."

JOHOR PORT BOOSTS ROLE AS LPG HUB

Johor Port Berhad (JPB), a subsidiary of MMC Corp. Berhad (Kuala Lumpur), has marked another milestone as the first port in Malaysia to have three interlink pipelines at its liquefied petroleum gas terminal, reports the *Malaysian Reserve*. The pipelines were made possible through a joint operating agreement between JPB's biggest LPG customers, Petronas Dagangan Berhad, Boustead Petroleum Marketing, and NGC Energy.

Noted is that the joint operating agreement intensified a closer strategic partnership between the three main LPG players in the country in undertaking the project of aligning and connecting the three parties' import pipelines.

"We expect the terminal to operate faster and have a better vessel turnaround time," said Allam Shah Abdul Halim, CEO of Johor Port Berhad. "I commend the efforts and cooperation given by PDP, BHP, and NGC. In business, companies compete against each other. However, the three key players in the liquid petroleum gas business have come up with a solution for mutual benefit through the interlink pipelines, the first in the country."

As the premier southern gateway multipurpose port, Johor is also the LPG storage and distribution hub in the southern region of Malaysia.

PETREDEC EXITS LIQUIDS, PETCHEMS

The LPG trading firm Petredec Ltd. (Singapore) has exited the liquids and petrochemicals business to focus on its core strengths in LPG, reports the *Economic Times*, quoting senior management. "Petredec has recently, in an effort to focus on its core strengths, discontinued the trade of liquids and petrochemicals," senior management said in an email when asked about its naphtha and petrochemicals trading status in Asia. "The company remains fully dedicated to the trade, transport, and distribution of liquefied petroleum gas."

In 2016, Petredec expanded its trading operations beyond LPG to include naphtha by hiring a veteran trader to join its Singapore headquarters team.

Beginning in 2008, several trading firms began trading naphtha as a result of Asia being structurally short of the commodity. However, abundant naphtha and petrochemical supplies have since caused prices to fall steeply.



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EASTERN PROPANE & OIL ACQUIRES WOLFEBORO OIL

Eastern Propane & Oil (Rochester, N.H.) has acquired Wolfeboro Oil Co. of Wolfeboro, N.H. Details regarding the transaction were not released. Eastern Propane & Oil, a family-owned and -operated enterprise, was founded in 1932.

"Over the last six decades, the Bean family has built a successful business based on exceptional customer service," said Tom Manson, CEO of Eastern Propane. "We are honored they have chosen Eastern to continue to serve their customers. Like Eastern, Wolfeboro Oil is a company that values being a part of, and giving back to, the communities it serves. We look forward to continuing that commitment to community involvement. We are pleased to welcome the Wolfeboro Oil family to Eastern."

"For nearly 60 years, Wolfeboro Oil has been serving the local community, and with its support the business has grown steadily," added Howie Bean, owner and president of Wolfeboro Oil. "To meet the future needs of our customers, we feel that the resources of a company like Eastern are essential."

U.S. LPG EXPORTS SEEN POISED FOR MORE GROWTH

Argus Media reports that the U.S. propane arbitrage at Mont Belvieu, relative to delivered prices in Asia on the Far East Index (FEI), widened to $200 a metric ton (MT) on paper by the end of 2019. Strong U.S. production kept prices in the U.S. low. The steep decline for U.S. propane decoupled it from delivered prices in Asia in early December. Using spot freight, that initially left the calculated cost of U.S. product delivered into the region $35/MT below delivered prices on the FEI.

The wide arbitrage on paper further incentivizes strong export demand from the U.S., Argus comments. By mid-December, January-loading cargos on a spot, free onboard basis out of the Gulf Coast were discussed in double digits. A Jan. 8-9 spot cargo was sold at more than 11 cents/gal. the week of Dec. 6, with buying interest heard as high as 18 cents/gal. the following week as the physical FEI hit $593/MT Dec. 20, the highest level seen since Oct. 22, 2018.

Shippers are working to take advantage of the wider Asia arbitrage while it lasts, keeping the very large gas carrier fleet well utilized on a Houston-Chiba (Japan) basis. This resulted in tightened vessel availability.

In November, Enterprise Products opened its 175,000-bbld LPG export expansion on the Houston Ship Channel. In early December, Energy Information Administration (EIA) data showed U.S. propane and propylene exports hit an all-time high of 1.5 MMbbld, the highest level since December 2016, immediately following commissioning of the expanded capacity. Additional expansions to loading capacity are expected to come online by the third quarter of this year.

Primary U.S. propane inventories fell to 91 MMbbl in mid-December, according to EIA, but remained 24% above levels a year earlier. Higher U.S. propane production pushed LST propane prices at Mont Belvieu lower. In the first half of December, LST was 52.25 cents/gal., down from 71.25 cents/gal. year over year.

Moving forward, U.S. propane prices are poised to fall further based on the backwardation during the first quarter shown for FEI paper. In mid-December, the FEI curve showed the February-April period at a $43/MT backwardation. Based on the Asia curve, Mont Belvieu propane would need to fall even more in order for production to clear the over-supplied U.S. market. In the meantime, spot freight costs out of the U.S. have room to run higher, at least in the short term, as the wide arbitrage to Asia allows for higher shipping costs.

API ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS ENERGY PROGRESS

The American Petroleum Institute (API) has launched Energy for Progress, a nationwide television and digital advertising campaign highlighting the natural gas and oil industry's leadership in reducing emissions to record-low levels and supporting economic and environmental progress in communities.

The campaign was unveiled as more than 800 government, labor, and industry leaders gathered for API's annual State of American Energy event in Washington, D.C. Jan. 7. According to API analysis, the natural gas and oil industry now supports 10.9 million American jobs. Proposals to ban hydraulic fracturing would cost up to 7.3 million of those jobs, based on preliminary findings.

The campaign will go into rotation on broadcast and cable news, digital, radio, airports, and outdoor billboards in markets across the country. It will include reports and digital content spotlighting the industry's commitment to working together to solve America's greatest energy and environmental challenges. In addition to the campaign, API released a new report showcasing communities that have benefitted from the American energy revolution. The institute also called for policy solutions that support, rather than hinder, U.S. energy leadership.

"From Colorado to New Mexico to Ohio and Pennsylvania, natural gas and oil development is energizing economies and improving millions of lives," said API president and CEO Mike Sommers. "Wherever the future of energy is at stake, whenever people doubt the value of natural gas and oil in our daily lives, wherever our commitment to worker and environmental safety is questioned, you're going to see API making our case. We're ready to work together. We may not agree on every detail, but on the big issues we have far more in common than you may think."

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HOUSE DEMOCRATS PROPOSE HALT TO PRODUCTION ON PUBLIC LANDS

Positioning their climate agenda for 2020, House Democrats in December introduced sweeping climate legislation that calls for halting fossil fuel production on public lands for a minimum of a year. The bill is to prepare the U.S. for drastic cuts in output in order to meet so-called "warming pollution" goals.

As reported by *The Hill*, the legislation from the House Natural Resources Committee requires the Department of the Interior to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions on public lands by 2040. "The Trump administration is handing out drilling and coal mining leases like candy, and no thought is ever given by this administration to the climate change impacts," asserted Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.), a bill sponsor and chairman of the committee. "Our bill is about what's right for the whole country and not just for polluting industries."

He outlined that a yearlong moratorium on fossil fuel production would give the Interior Department time to assess how to meet the 2040 goal of net-zero emissions. The legislation also sets targets in five-year increments the department must meet. Interior would be barred from issuing new leases until target compliance is met.

In addition, the proposal would ratchet up the royalties paid by energy producers that drill and mine on more than 600 million acres of public land, raising fees from about 12% to 18%. The increased costs would be used to create a transition fund to assist communities largely dependent on the fossil fuel industry, for land reclamation, environmental cleanup, and retraining of workers.

The Hill recounts that barring oil and gas drilling on public lands isn't a new idea for Democrats. Party candidates in the presidential race have promised to halt new leases. The Democrat-led House of Representatives voted to bar drilling along nearly the entirety of the U.S. coastline in 2019, and Democrats on the House Energy and Commerce Committee are working on legislation that would push the U.S. to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. However, these efforts aren't likely to find favor in the Republican-led Senate.

NON-OPEC PRODUCTION GROWS AT RECORD SPEED

Oil production from non-OPEC countries is expected to grow at record speed in 2020, reports Norway's Rystad Energy, creating a headache for the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which met in Vienna in late 2019 to discuss extending oil production cuts.

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Rystad Energy predicts that total non-OPEC production—crude oil and condensate—will grow by about 2.26 MMbbld in 2020, creating a challenge for OPEC and Russia as they attempt to balance the global oil market this year. Meanwhile, the rise in non-OPEC output will eclipse the 40-year-old record by a wide margin.

"The record-high production growth from non-OPEC tight oil and offshore puts significant pressure on OPEC's ability to balance the oil market in 2020," says Espen Erlingsen, head of upstream research at Rystad Energy. "Rystad Energy believes that OPEC will need to extend and deepen production cuts if it has any hope of supporting the oil price in the near-term."

Tight oil is expected to be a key contributor to the non-OPEC oil output expansion, contributing around 1.35 MMbbld of the 2.26 MMbbld increase, according to Rystad Energy analysts. Offshore will balloon by 1.25 MMbbld, nearly 900,000 bbld of which will come from deep-water.

"In a unique turn of events, it is the offshore segment that will drive much of 2020's non-OPEC supply growth," Erlingsen says. "The record-high production growth this year comes almost exclusively from tight oil and offshore." The U.S. tops the list of non-OPEC countries that will see the quickest production growth in 2020, driven by tight oil output. Norway and Brazil, the world's two dominant offshore players, follow close behind.

Barring additional oil production cuts by OPEC in 2020, Rystad Energy forecasts a substantial build for global crude oil stocks and a corresponding drop in oil prices. A showdown took place in Vienna Dec. 5-6 as OPEC member countries, plus Russia, gathered in the Austrian capital to discuss oil output levels for this year.

"We have a clear message to the OPEC-plus countries: a roll-over of the current production agreement is not enough to preserve a balanced market and ensure a stable oil price environment in 2020," asserts Bjørnar Tonhaugen, head of oil market research at Rystad Energy. "The outlook will be bleak if OPEC-plus fails to agree on additional cuts."

According to the energy consultancy's estimates, the global oil market will be fundamentally oversupplied to the tune of 800,000 bbld in the first half of 2020. Empirical evidence has demonstrated that a 1-MMbbld surplus of oil can be expected to cause an oil price decline of around 5% per month, implying a potential drop of 30% over six months.

"If OPEC and Russia don't extend and deepen their cuts, we could see Brent Blend dip to the $40s this year for a shorter period," Tonhaugen says. "In order to ensure a balanced market, our research indicates that OPEC would need to reduce crude production to 28.9 MMbbld—a drop of 800,000 bbld from the levels seen in the fourth quarter of 2019—given our forecast for demand, non-OPEC supply, and the impact of new IMO 2020 regulations on global crude runs."



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NPGA LEADERS DISCUSS REGULATORY SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES

PAT THORNTON

Following the Midwest supply issues in the fall of 2019 that consumed most of their attention, the National Propane Gas Association's (NPGA) Jeff Petrash, vice president and general counsel, and deputy counsel regulatory affairs, Sarah Reboli, are looking toward new concerns for 2020 and the coming decade. ***BPN*** recently spoke with the members of NPGA's legal team about the successes and challenges the industry faces as it moves into 2020. "We still have a little unfinished business following up with FERC [Federal Energy Regulatory Commission] regarding the supply challenges," Petrash said. "Then we have plenty to work on in the new decade."

Petrash continues to stress that decarbonization will be a huge focus for many years to come. "Electrification will be a big issue for a number of years ahead for NPGA," Petrash said. "We had some in-depth discussions with NPGA's Executive Committee and got some direction from them in August. Further discussion is taking place now." He noted that the American Petroleum Institute (API) is starting to aggressively address the electrification challenge. "They are somewhat the 'big kid on the block' in the oil and natural gas industry," he added.

GOING BACK TO FERC

This summer, beginning in June, Petrash will once again address with FERC how index pricing is set for liquids shipped on pipelines. "Five years ago, we spent about $190,000 to $200,000 in legal and consulting fees and saved the propane industry at least $250 million," he said. "We worked in partnership with Valero Refining and Airlines for America then. Anyone who is a shipper of liquids or who consumes a fuel of any kind has an interest. All go through pipelines. We hope to work with more partners this time around to be more effective as well as to defray costs."

Petrash also noted a few natural gas expansion issues he is keeping an eye on in Utah and Iowa. In Iowa, Black Hills Energy is proposing a new pipeline in the Dubuque area. They contend that it will assist in providing security of supply to their existing customers, but it will also facilitate the addition of new customers. In Utah, Dominion (previously known as Questar) proposes to bring natural gas service to Eureka, Utah. This proposed service would be subsidized by current Dominion customers in accordance with Utah legislation previously enacted.

Reboli noted that January 6 was a deadline set by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) for employers of CDL drivers to perform queries for commercial drivers' alcohol and drug testing on the Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse. FMCSA designed the Clearinghouse to share information about commercial drivers' alcohol and drug violations among employers, state law enforcement, and state driver licensing agencies. The objective is to prevent some drivers from misrepresenting their violations to a new employer and/or in a new state. The information in the Clearinghouse would not be available to insurance providers or lawyers.

In addition, Reboli said that FMCSA proposed to amend the 2016 final rule, "Minimum Training Requirements for Entry-Level Commercial Motor Vehicle Operators" (entry-level driver training, or ELDT, final rule), by extending the compliance date for two provisions from the rule. The date for training providers to upload entry-level driver training certification information into the Training Provider Registry and for state driver licensing agencies to receive driver-specific ELDT information is extended from February 7, 2020, to February 7, 2022. This will provide FMCSA additional time to complete development of the electronic interface that will receive and store ELDT certification information from training providers and transmit that information to the state driver licensing agencies. Reboli shared that FMCSA may delay the entire regulation by two years, but that a final notice by FMCSA has not yet been published.

MORE HOS CHANGES?

FMCSA is also considering changes to the Hours of Service (HOS), but they were not finalized by the end of the year. The agency has been tight-lipped regarding changes that may expand and extend HOS requirements.

While the current White House is supportive of cutting red tape and regulation, Reboli noted that the process is often slow. "We continue to push for an expansion to the air-mile radius propane vehicles can drive before being required to maintain record of duty status (RODS) reports," Reboli said. "Infrastructure has improved and bobtail technology has advanced as well since the requirements were written 50 to 60 years ago. We would like to see an increase in the air-mile radius from 100 to 300 miles. This would amount to a savings of $11 million in industry paperwork per year." ■

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PROPANE AND INNOVATION KEEP THE PARTY OUTDOORS

PAT THORNTON

As propane grills have become commonly used for outdoor cooking, other new products have been added in recent years to make outdoor living a much easier and more enjoyable experience on the deck or patio. “Just like indoor gas fireplaces, people like the convenience of gas grills, gas fire tables, and conversation pits on the deck and in the backyard,” says Eric Hawkinson, vice president of operations with The Outdoor GreatRoom Co., based in Minneapolis. “They haven’t always enjoyed just hanging out around the gas grill, so we’ve come up with products that are more like an open fire to sit around and enjoy.”

EASE AND CONVENIENCE

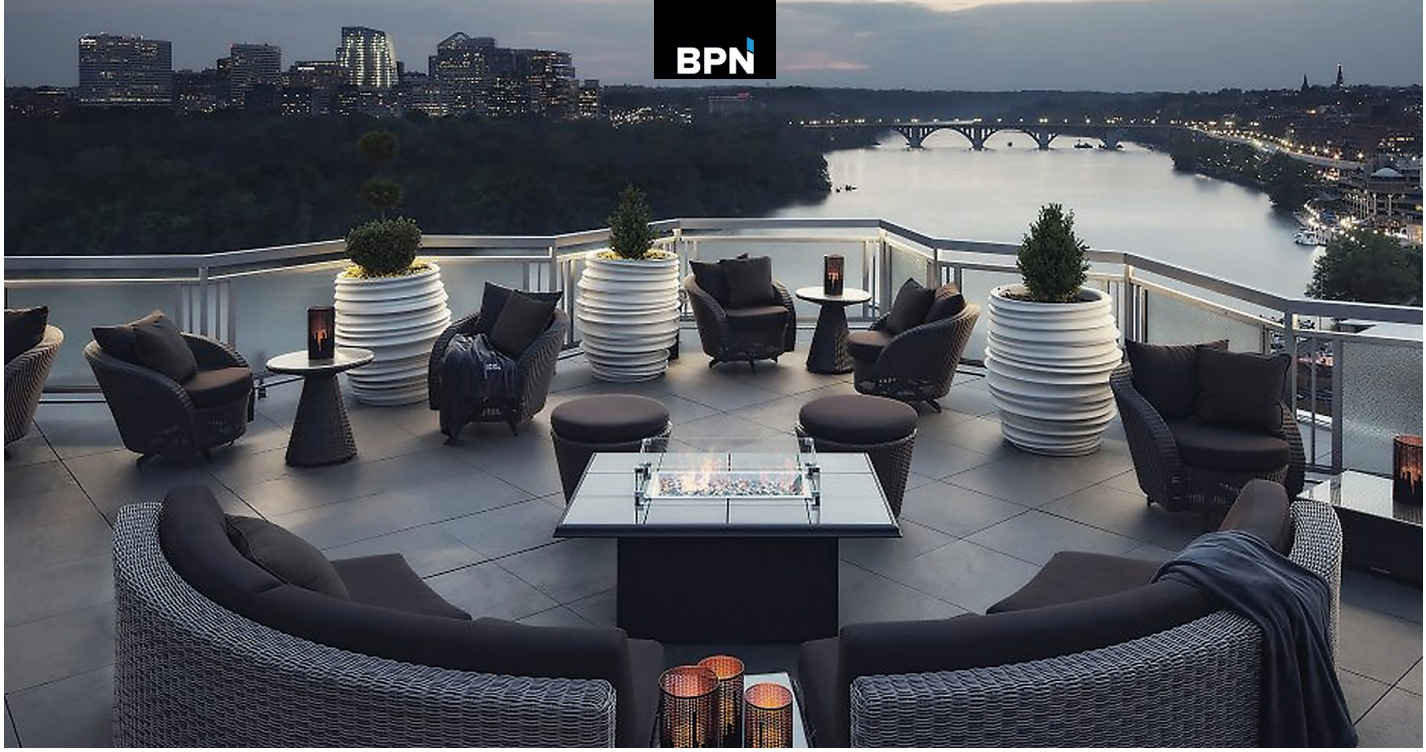
Hawkinson believes the ease, convenience, and safety of these products are what make them so popular. The unique, upscale units are designed with appeal for outdoor living and include gas fire pit tables, gas fire burners, pergolas, outdoor kitchen islands, outdoor gas fireplaces, outdoor patio furniture, and other custom products for residential and commercial applications. He notes that 85% of the products sold are designed to run on propane.

The company believes that homeowners gain further benefits from being able to take advantage of their ability to have an outdoor entertaining area. “It’s fun to have an outdoor area that attracts friends and neighbors,” Hawkinson said. “We are trying to lengthen the season with the warmth of fire.”

In 2010, Hawkinson left his job at Hearth and Home, doing $600 million in annual sales, to join The Outdoor GreatRoom Co., which was doing $3 million in annual sales. Hearth and Home was, and continues to be, focused on direct vent indoor fireplaces and stoves marketed through retail store channels. “[But] I believed in the trend of outdoor living products and the unlimited market share that could be added,” Hawkinson said. In the past 10 years, the firm has enjoyed tremendous growth, expanding to serve a worldwide market.

Hawkinson describes the market served by The Outdoor GreatRoom Co. as middle-of-the-road to upper end. “Our products run largely on 20-lb cylinders, but many use propane or natural gas directly from a hard-plumbed pipe.” He noted that running the outdoor living products on 20-lb cylinders works best at his home because his wife likes to rearrange the outdoor furniture and appliances quite often. “It’s a lot easier to use portable 20-lb cylinders than to replumb the pipes every time.”

While company products have always been safe, new Ameri-



can National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards are further raising the bar on safety regulation. Hawkinson's years as a leader in safety and standards makes him a highly sought speaker at industry events such as the March 2020 Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Expo in New Orleans where he will speak on new manufacturing standards. Hawkinson has served on several ANSI committees that design and review various product standards. "New ANSI standards are requiring new outdoor living products to pass more thorough tests," Hawkinson said. "There is a new rain test and a new wind test. Original standards required products to be able to properly light and start up after sustaining rain as well as 30 mph winds. Now products must be able to either shut off on their own or continue running properly while sustaining rain in one test and 30 mph winds in another test."

"While companies can no longer manufacture products that just meet the original standards, they can still sell inventory that they have," Hawkinson said. "This is like airbags being introduced to the automotive industry. The cars without airbags were not taken off the road. The products meeting the original standards are still considered very safe. This new standard just takes it up another notch."

SAFETY INNOVATIONS AND STANDARDS

With many outdoor living products being new to the marketplace, they did not have their own official ANSI standards until 2014 with the introduction of Z21.97 standards. "Previously, outdoor living products were only affected by segments of various standards in other categories," Hawkinson explained. "The newer standards involving more stringent rain and wind tests mark the first revision to standards Z21.97, which were introduced in 2017, but due to factors including time needed to conform, the production standards were not required to be in effect until January 2020." Hawkinson noted that ANSI standards for products outside the outdoor living category have sometimes been changed and taken effect immediately due to very urgent safety concerns.

One of the key topics Hawkinson plans to discuss regarding changes to ANSI Z21.97 is selling "listed" versus "unlisted" outdoor living products. The "listed" products are those that have been tested by a third-party reviewer such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL). Being listed simply means the product has been tested by an authorized third-party reviewer and passed the test. "There is no A, B, C, D, F grading by UL. You either pass or fail," he said. "To have our products listed, our company tests its products and then pays to have



UL test them once we feel certain they will pass the tests." Hawkinson explained that the concept of UL listing is designed to give regulators, resellers, and customers peace of mind.

"People will be more trusting of a product that they know has passed tests performed by a third party with the reputation of UL, which has been around for over 100 years," he said. "Not only are customers gaining peace of mind, local regulatory officials will be much more comfortable with permitting listed products than unlisted products. ANSI itself is made up of committees with a wide variety of people from different safety backgrounds that work together to provide the best possible standards. They do not perform third-party testing of the products, though. Organizations like UL, which is accredited by ANSI, can provide the unbiased third-party testing."

CONTINUED GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Retail propane companies that sell outdoor living products, or those considering doing so, are encouraged by Hawkinson to only sell listed products. "The dangers and liabilities with selling unlisted products are too great," Hawkinson said.

Hawkinson believes there remains tremendous potential for growth in the outdoor living market, which he feels will also continue to benefit those in the retail propane world. "Homebuilders are just now starting to really put an emphasis on their abilities to add outdoor living features onto the homes they build," he said. "They are starting to realize these features can set them apart from the many builders who do not promote such features." He noted that requests for custom products are also on the rise. "We recently designed and built custom tables for the Detroit Red Wings for use at their stadium," he said. "One is a 16-ft bar height table with fire pit built in and ready to go. The other two are round fire tables also at bar height. These are also designed to be portable and run on propane."

"The marketplace for outdoor living continues to feel like there is still tremendous room for further growth," Hawkinson said. "We continue to enjoy innovating to further meet customers' needs." He noted that many types of businesses are dealers and distributors for the company's product offerings, and retail propane marketers are among them. "For those who are in retail propane, this does offer one more way to add long-term propane sales. A showroom of hearth appliances may also include outdoor living products."

■



NEW IRRIGATION, POWER-GENERATION ENGINES DELIVER RELIABILITY, REMOTE CONTROL

DAVE EMANUEL



Industrial-Irrigation, PERC, and Woodward partner to develop Reliable Horsepower

Propane has long been the fuel of choice for a variety of agricultural applications including irrigation and power generation. For good reason. It is cleaner burning, does not harm water or soil because it's nontoxic, and produces a carbon footprint that's more of a tiptoe than a stomp.

Recently, propane-fueled engine technology took a major step forward with the introduction of Industrial-Irrigation Services' Reliable Horsepower line of engines. Available with displacements of 5.7-, 6.2-, 8.0-, 9.1-, and 10.3-liters, these engines cover the displacement ranges previously available, but are designed to not only provide more efficient operation, but to deliver never-before-available reliability, monitoring, and control options.

The Reliable Horsepower line is a result of a partnership between Industrial-Irrigation Services, the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC), and Woodward Inc., a manufacturer of (among other things) electronic engine control systems. In addition to improved reliability and engine control, the new engines are EPA certified, which eliminates concerns about exhaust emissions compliance.

Agricultural engines have been required to meet EPA certification requirements since 2008, so the issue isn't initial compliance, it's ongoing compliance. The new control systems address that consideration head-on with their enhanced monitoring and control capabilities.

PERC was deeply involved in the development of the new engine line. According to Michael Newland, PERC's director of agriculture business development, "Our overall mission is to promote safety, to look for additional business opportunities, and to help develop new uses and applications for propane. To that end, we often partner with manufacturers to assist with new product development and exposure."

While PERC obviously has a vested interest in expanding propane use, it also has serious concerns about safety and reliability. It's well documented that existing modes of power for agricultural applications (diesel and electric) often suffer from reliability problems, can be expensive, and may not be readily available.

According to Newland, "We're excited about these new engines not only because they help advance the propane industry, but their control systems can help improve productivity because they require less maintenance and deliver more reliable operation. That translates to less downtime, so for irrigation, they spend more time pumping and less time shut down for repairs or adjustment. They're also better for the environment. Propane is cleaner burning than diesel fuel or gasoline, and since these new engines meet the latest EPA certification requirements, they are especially clean running."

MULTI-FUEL CAPABILITY

Another advantage is that these engines can be switched from propane to natural gas with the flip of a switch. That means operators don't have to shut down operation or engage in a lengthy switch-over if they need to change fuel sources.

That is obviously not a consideration at installations where propane is the only fuel source used. However, according to Jay Canada, Industrial-Irrigation's vice president of sales and engineering, "There are quite a few farming operations that are located near natural gas pipelines, and that provides operators with a fueling option. Propane is the preferred fuel because it has a higher Btu content and that enables an engine to produce higher horsepower. However, multi-fuel capability is an advantage because it provides an option if propane is temporarily unavailable."

Another reason for multi-fuel capability is that these engines are intended for additional uses beyond irrigation. Oil and gas production and power generation are two other applications for which these engines are ideally suited. When used for oil and gas production, the ability to switch fuels is especially attractive. Typically, when engines are used for pumping, they are started and run for a few days or weeks on propane. They aren't switched over to wellhead gas until flow out of the ground is steady and reliable.

The Reliable Horsepower engines are based on existing GM architecture and, like their predecessors, incorporate components specifically designed for heavy-duty industrial use.

IMPRESSIVE TORQUE

Horsepower ratings, which are a function of engine speed, are unimpressive as the advertised rating is at either 2800 or 3000 rpm. Torque is an entirely different situation as all engines generate impressive numbers at or below 2000 rpm. As an example, the 5.7-liter (350 cid) engine generates 437 lb/ft at 2000 rpm while the 10.3-liter (632 cid) version generates 798 lb/ft at 1200 rpm.

For pumping operations (such as with water, oil, or gas) torque is the relevant consideration—just as it is with a tractor or any other piece of farm equipment. Torque is an engine's ability to overcome rotational resistance, such as that required by a pump. Horsepower is an engine's torque output multiplied by engine speed. Internal combustion engines produce maximum torque at much lower rpm levels than maximum horsepower. Above the peak rpm point, torque decreases, although horsepower continues to increase—to a point—because of the engine speed multiplication factor.

Consequently, industrial engines, which operate under relatively constant and heavy loads, are designed to produce maximum torque at lower engine speeds.

The torque figures quoted are for engines fueled by propane. Output when fueled by natural gas is somewhat lower. As an example, the 10.3-liter engine produces 798 lb/ft of torque at 1200 rpm on propane, but only 723 lb/ft at 1800 rpm on natural gas. Obviously, propane is the better fuel as natural gas requires that an engine operate at higher speed to produce less power.

In addition to the five displacements currently available, Industrial-Irrigation Services plans to add both larger and smaller versions. According to Industrial-Irrigation's Jay Canada, providing engines for irrigation system use is definitely not a one-size-fits-all proposition. "There are needs for a variety of

Photo courtesy Swanson Russell

engine sizes (power output levels), but, currently, there isn't a wide variety of choices, so we will be expanding the Reliable Horsepower line. We're looking at the needs of farms from sea level to 6000 to 8000 feet. The higher you go, the less power an engine will produce, so an engine that's perfect for operation at sea level won't produce sufficient power at high altitude. The distance you have to push water is another factor that affects power requirements, as is lift distance. Obviously, more power is required to pull water out of a 1000-foot well than to pump ground water. Once the variables involved are defined, we can specify an engine to meet a customer's requirements."

All Reliable Horsepower engines utilize the time-proven cast iron blocks and cylinder heads which are cast and machined in North America. Other components include aluminum intake manifolds, forged steel connecting rods, forged steel or nodular iron crankshafts, steel billet camshafts, and hydraulic roller valve lifters.

"Techies" might be surprised that all engines in the line incorporate cast iron blocks and heads and overhead valves, as opposed to aluminum castings and overhead cams. Reliability, cost, and application considerations are the major factors driving component selection. As noted, these engines are designed to operate at low speed, hence there is no advantage to an overhead cam configuration, which offers its advantages at high engine speeds. Additionally, overhead cam engines are much more expensive to repair or rebuild and failure of the cam drive system can result in significant engine damage.

UPDATED FUEL SYSTEM

The actual hard parts that comprise a Reliable Horsepower engine have proven their reliability. What was needed was an updated fuel system that was equally reliable—and offered options made possible by recent technological developments. The new fuel system is therefore designed to conquer the most commonly encountered types of engine problems—failure to start, rough operation, and unexpected engine shut-down—that are typically a result of issues with the fuel delivery system.

It's difficult to achieve reliable horsepower with an unreliable fuel system, and as the name implies, the new Reliable Horsepower engines are optimized to be reliable. For irrigation use, that means the engines run from the time they're started until they're turned off—with no stumbles.

To that end, Industrial-Irrigation Services partnered with Woodward Inc. to develop systems that offered both the required operational reliability and never-before-available control. These systems are also configurable to meet individual customer preferences, which include fuel type. All engines are bi-fuel capable, hence controls can be specified for propane-only, or multiple fuel types (propane, pipeline natural gas, wellhead gas).

The new fuel systems can be configured to allow the operator to flip a switch to change fuel type, or controls can be incorporated to enable the system to automatically switch fuel type if one runs out. Electronics also enable a number of other advantages.

All engines incorporate a throttle body-style of electronic fuel injection and include exhaust system oxygen sensors that monitor air/fuel ratio and pass it to the engine control module (ECM). In turn, the ECM makes whatever changes are necessary to maintain the desired air/fuel ratio. The ECM is programmable, thereby enabling operators to create custom calibrations to suit their particular operating environments.

That's difficult to do with one-size-fits mechanical or non-programmable control systems. Conversely, the Reliable Horsepower systems not only continually optimize fuel and ignition settings to achieve maximum fuel economy and minimal exhaust emissions, the system can also be remotely monitored and controlled and even incorporates an emergency "kill switch."

REMOTE CONTROL, MONITORING

If you use your smartphone to lock or unlock your vehicle, monitor security cameras, or turn lights or appliances on or off, you're already familiar with remote control and monitoring technology. Most commonly, that technology is implemented through use of the Internet of Things (IoT), which provides a means for "things" to communicate with each other. Remote monitoring and control provide a new level of safety and efficiency. All an operator has to do is pick up his or her cell phone to check engine speed, coolant temperature, oxygen sensor voltage, or a host of other sensors. The system can also store multiple calibrations so operation can be optimized for changes in operating environment (i.e high temperature/dry or cool temperature/wet). In spite of the sophistication of the control systems, they are designed to be user friendly.

Rather than having to stand right next to an engine, operators can use their cell phone from literally any part of the world with cell connectivity to monitor and control an engine. Remote control capability also opens new options for engine placement. The ability to remotely raise or lower engine speed, or to kill engine operation means that engine location can be optimized for operation rather than access.

In terms of in-the-field use, one of the greatest advantages of the Reliable Horsepower engine packages is summed up by a statement from Industrial-Irrigation Services: "All those trips to the north 40 to turn on or shut off the pumps can be a thing of the past with our fully electronic engine packages. We help you conserve both time and water with engine packages featuring remote start/stop and remote monitoring."

The bottom line is that reliability leads to more productivity and increased profits, and that's exactly what the Reliable Horsepower engine line is designed to deliver.

Dave Emanuel has written seven books and 2500 magazine articles covering a variety of topics ranging from automotive racing and performance modifications to political commentary. His automotive books and articles are informed by his hands-on background with engines and drivelines.



GREENHOUSES ARE A GROWING BUSINESS, MARKETERS SAY

STEVE RELYEA

Photos courtesy Sam Fox, McCraw Propane

When a customer is operating a greenhouse, the propane marketer's service is a key to success. Proper installation of the heaters and the system that fuels them, a steady supply of fuel, and the availability of service around the clock are needed for the customer to keep those plants alive.

"During the winter, the grower's business is in the propane marketer's hands," says Sam Fox, director of business development at McCraw Propane (Bonham, Texas). "If they lose heat, they can lose their crop. For the same reason, it is also very important to be available for emergency services after hours."

McCraw Propane offers a turnkey program for growers that includes site planning, permitting, system design, installation, and training.

"An improperly designed system can lead to poor combustion," Fox says. "Poor combustion can produce carbon monoxide, which is toxic to humans. It can also produce ethylene, which can damage and even kill plants. So it is very important to properly size each component to the Btu load that it will carry."

Once the greenhouse is up and running, McCraw Propane offers remote fuel monitoring.

"Tank monitors provide a high level of security for us and the customer," Fox notes. "Being able to check the percentage offsite and schedule deliveries efficiently makes taking care of greenhouse customers much easier than in previous years."

A NICHE MARKET

In Southern California, Ferrellgas works with greenhouse installers and contractors. The contractors install the heaters, while the propane marketer puts a propane tank on a concrete foundation or block, runs pipes underground, and places bollards around the tank.

"We don't install heaters; we work with the contractor to make sure it is done up to code," says Ted Olsen, account manager at Ferrellgas. "We do the pressure test, fire up the heater, and document that everything is working. We do a Gas Check. We don't just hook it up; we are there for the whole process."

"Greenhouses are a niche market for the propane industry," Olsen adds. "If you have good contractors or greenhouse installers you work with, you can be very successful."

Both of these propane marketers see greenhouses as a growing market.

"As the Texas population continues to grow, we see a lot of local nurseries expanding to meet the demand from the construction boom," Fox says. "As they add greenhouses to increase production capacity, they are also adding heaters, which increases propane demand. In this scenario, a marketer gets a better return for the investment in tanks and equipment that is already on site."



McCraw Propane currently has a handful of greenhouse accounts, he adds. Some are local operations serviced with bobtails, while one is a large operation set up to take transport deliveries.

In Southern California, Ferrellgas, similarly, has a dozen greenhouse accounts of different sizes. “Some are big, some are small. We have some who are huge and use a huge amount of propane,” Olsen reports.

“Some greenhouses use tens of thousands of gallons, but when it’s warm they use none. It depends on the weather,” he adds. “It’s hard to predict; it’s not like autogas.”

Overall, Olsen says, “It’s growing. We see a lot more contractors building greenhouses, so there is definite growth.”

THE BEST CHOICE

The marketers agree that propane is often the best choice for greenhouses, especially when they are located beyond the mains. Propane is both economical and efficient.

“In the south, the other choices are natural gas or electric,” Fox says. “Natural gas can make sense if it is available to a grower. I don’t know that electric heat really makes sense in Texas, but possibly out in California.”

“When greenhouses are outside the reach of the natural gas lines, propane is in my opinion the only economical choice for growers,” he adds. “They appreciate how quickly and efficiently propane heats the air. Some growers also use hydronic heat to warm the root systems by running warm water through pipes inside the beds; these systems are typically powered by propane as well.”

In Southern California, Olsen has some customers who heat for growth, and others who just want to keep the plants from freezing. In its pitch to growers, Ferrellgas notes that greenhouse gas heaters powered by propane can be installed or portable, allowing the grower to customize the set-up.

“Propane is the best choice for greenhouses that are beyond natural gas,” he says. “It is affordable, cost-effective, and easier to install. You just place a tank and run the pipes. The portability of propane is key, whether it’s in a cylinder or a bobtail.”

“Electricity is the other option, but it’s more expensive,” Olsen adds. “Plus, propane burns hot, so it is effective at producing heat.”

“My customers use propane for other applications too. They may have a house on the property or they may use a forklift. So, in a lot of cases, we serve other uses or add other applications. Many are farmers, so they are used to using propane.” ■

Then & Now



PROPANE VETERAN SHARES LESSONS FROM CAREER

STEVE RELYEA

At the age of 20, while still a student, Chris DeCarlo started his first business. In the 40 years since then, he launched a couple more, the principal business being Fairfax Propane (Fairfax, Va.). He also married and, with his wife, is raising five children.

Over the last year or so, he has also piloted a new project—writing, publishing, and now promoting a handbook for teenagers. In it, he shares his experiences in business and in life, and explains how today's teens can think strategically, prioritize the right things, and recognize opportunities to build a career and a meaningful life.

"What Now? The Teen Handbook" is primarily written for young people between the ages of 16 and 22, but DeCarlo says its buyers are likely to be concerned parents and grandparents who will then share it with their children or grandchildren.

"What I've learned in business is, you have to solve a problem," he tells ***BPN***. "What is a problem for parents? Teenagers—how to raise them and help them mature."

His 40 years as a small business owner have given DeCarlo a variety of stories to tell and knowledge to share. Raised by parents who worked for the federal government and in higher education, DeCarlo began preparing for adulthood by studying electrical engineering at Georgia Tech. He did not enjoy it, though, and he did not like the potential future he saw during a visit to the office of some working engineers. He left Georgia Tech after two years.

Returning home to Virginia, he enrolled in business classes. While still a student, he started his first business in 1979 by renting a gas station.

"I was always one to think outside the box and project into the future," DeCarlo says. "I enjoyed challenging myself and I saw that business owners seemed to have an improved quality of life and flexibility.

"I also saw that the owner of the gas station down the street was doing pretty well and he didn't have to take a lot of calculus to be successful. So I thought owning a business couldn't be that hard if one could just figure out the formula."

In addition to selling gasoline, DeCarlo began renting cars he had purchased used. Later, he also began renting trucks. Then, he noticed that people were stopping for directions to where they could buy propane. DeCarlo investigated that business and began selling propane in 1981.

"That was just when gas grills were becoming popular," he says. "There was limited competition and people would call desperate for someone who could help them with propane-related products and services. Our record for refills occurred on a Saturday of Memorial Day weekend when we filled 630 20-lb cylinders. I caught the industry's growth phase just right."

Then, when he started getting calls from construction sites needing temporary heat, he added 100-lb cylinders and a truck, growing to 3000 cylinders. He serendipitously found some industrial land for a propane storage tank and was able to begin installing tanks at homes and delivering propane



Quick photo shoot in front of the White House after filling a catering truck on a movie set for the shooting of "Suspect," 1987.



Chris and Kathleen DeCarlo in 1997 in front of Stamford High School (Stamford, Conn.), where Chris' parents met.

in 1986. Nearly 40 years later, he still runs Fairfax Propane, even though he stopped expanding it 20 years ago. He kept it small for many reasons, including all the inherent problems with the business model.

INNOVATING NEW PRODUCTS

In 2008, in an effort to offset the seasonality of propane demand, DeCarlo founded Easy Stone Center (Vienna, Va.) to provide custom natural stone cutting and carving using computer numeric controlled (CNC) machines.

The company fabricates both simple and complicated pieces and ships them nationwide. Its products range from simple 8-ft fireplace hearths to intricate custom fireplace surrounds. Pieces are also fabricated for restoration products for everything from row house steps, to sandstone crosses at Georgetown University, to marble pieces for the U.S. Capitol.

He now recognizes that stone fabrication is very challenging, difficult to scale, more complicated than he ever imagined, and probably not a good investment of time and resources.

Experience with CNC machines did play a part in DeCarlo's next enterprise. Having learned from a patent attorney that the success of many companies is anchored in intellectual property, in 2013, he turned his attention to inventing a new product. One day, while watching one of his sons shoot hoops, he got the idea to mount a backboard to a robotic arm that had been used for stone fabrication. The idea was to create a moving sports goal so a solo player could practice in a simulated dynamic game environment. With this and later additions, such as sensors that can measure how close to the center of the hoop the ball lands, DeCarlo has secured four patents, the most recent being to use two or more moving sports goals in a game.

One of his most recent applications is for a tunnel filled with thousands of horizontal and vertical laser beams, spaced as close as possible to each other, for the purpose of measuring the various deviations of a pitched baseball as it travels to a catcher's mitt. Pitch accuracy can also be measured with the use of the robotic sports goal for manipulating the target, which has been outfitted with impact sensors, for various possible positions a catcher might choose.

Another pending application is for a propane cylinder cabinet with doors on the front and back such that a forklift can lift the cabinet and move it to the bed of a truck stocked with prefilled cylinders for exchange, without having to lift the cabinet from the back. This simple invention will reduce the majority of the physical work related to cylinder handling.

"The biggest part of business I have learned is, you have to keep evolving while you have the money to do it," DeCarlo says. "You have to keep innovating even when you think you don't have to. As your markets mature, you need to have new products and services in development." He admits that being innovative is hard and risky.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE

When he wrote his handbook for teens, DeCarlo incorporated knowledge he had gained as a business owner and as an active member of the propane industry. "Being a business owner has provided me with a huge focus group for engaging with different people and learning every day," he says. He also credits its mentors and peers from other companies in the industry.

"My participation in the propane industry helped me write the book in many ways," DeCarlo says. "The open and welcoming camaraderie of the industry provided a solid foundation for my own personal growth and development, and the relationships I made provided me with a lot of knowledge about human behavior and life, as well as insight into how the real world works."

In addition to his own stories, he has weaved stories from the lives of others associated with the industry into his book. Among those whose stories are shared in the book are Marty Braithwaite, Woodgate Petroleum (Stephens City, Va.); Dean Haldeman, Blue Flame Inc. (Berkeley Springs, W.Va.); David Archer, ARCOSA Tank; and Steve Barton of Gas Equipment Co. Inc.

"Their personal stories and perspectives helped anchor the book in the realities of life," DeCarlo says.

Of course, DeCarlo's other life experiences have provided material for the book as well. He has been married for 25 years

and has five children, ages 13 to 21. When he launched "What Now?" last summer by distributing copies at the national convention of the American Library Association, he was asked about his credentials. He answered, "I have five teenagers!"

DeCarlo has also returned to school recently, taking undergraduate classes for the first time in 40 years. His personal classroom, homework, and testing experiences and the tales he has heard from teachers and students have been incorporated into the handbook as a warning. He explains, "Technology is having a negative effect on the students, teachers, and schools, and parents don't realize how much college has changed for the worse from when they were in school."

In one chapter of his book, DeCarlo asks readers to ask themselves, "Who are you?" He guides them in taking an inventory of their characteristics and their skills. He explains he is helping them assess themselves like an employer would—"Would you want to hire yourself?"

He tells ***BPN***, "As a business owner, I recognize the traits that are important."

In another chapter, DeCarlo outlines the "phases of life," with special focus on the education and career phases. "It is important to understand each phase and to understand what you should be accomplishing as you progress through each and why each is important to your future," he writes.

Other chapters in "What Now?" cover relationships; "pitfalls, risks, and dungeons"; and coming of age. Addenda include a reproduction of the death certificate of a friend who died only three weeks after they had both graduated from high school, and a eulogy for a next-door neighbor and auto mechanic who became a mentor when DeCarlo was in his teens.

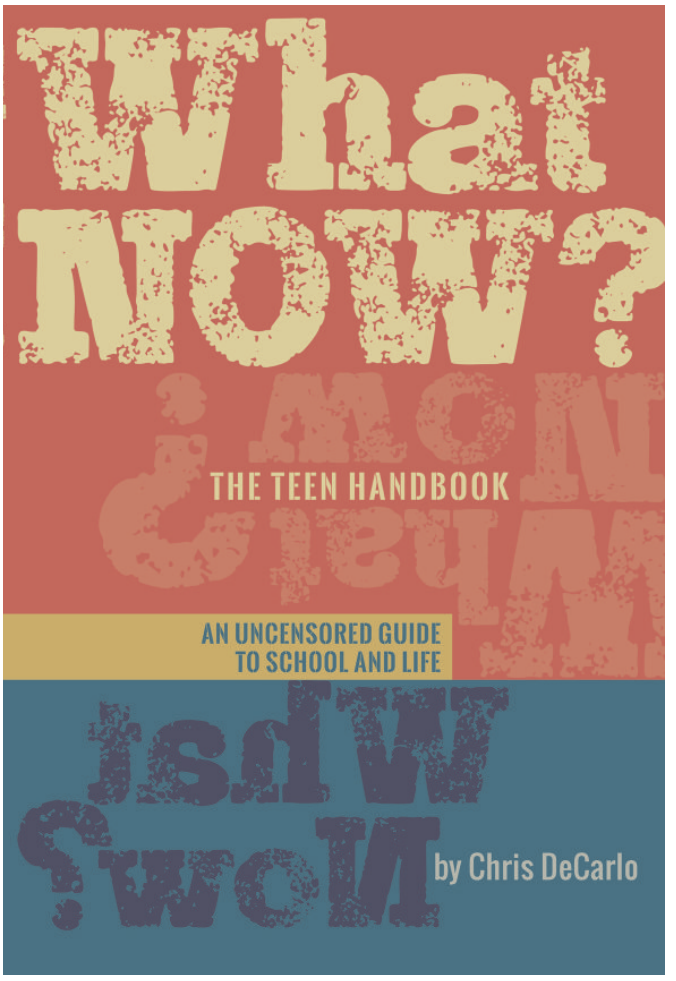
DEVELOPING SKILLS, FUNDRAISING

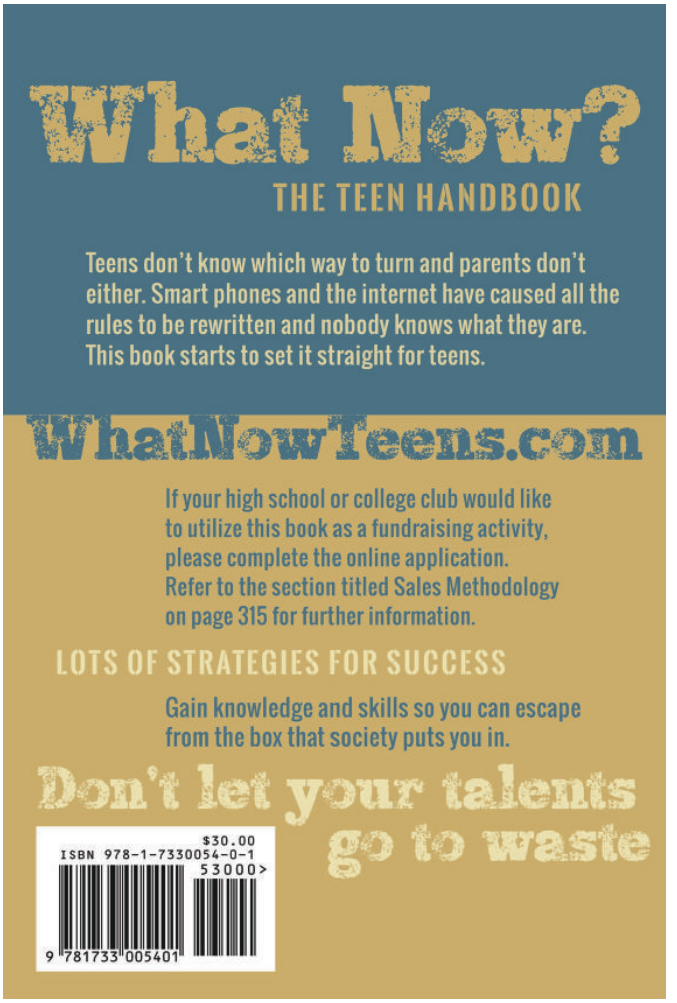
Summarizing for ***BPN*** the experiences in business that have influenced the advice he gives in the book, DeCarlo says, "As in business, the need for one to act maturely and think strategically are two of my important themes, and I caution readers about accepting the school version of how the world works versus reality."

He adds, "I also highlight my interpretation of the difference between being in school and being in business on page 271. I explain that, 'in school you are told what you need to know, given a test on the material, and it is graded for you. In business you have to figure out what you need to know, test yourself, and grade your test every day.'"

Along with sharing this advice, DeCarlo hopes his book can be used to help parents and teens learn about business principles firsthand. He has restricted the channels of distribution of the book, selling it priced at retail through his own online store but only offering it with wholesale pricing to PTAs and student clubs. He explains, "I want PTAs and student clubs to be the primary channel of distribution, without outside competition, so they can have a lucrative and efficient means of raising funds for their particular academic needs, interests, and activities."

DeCarlo invites readers of ***BPN*** to call or text him to request complimentary copies of "What Now? The Teen Handbook." He can be reached on his cell phone, (703) 973-8102. ■





EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS MUST BE WRITTEN, REVIEWED, DISTRIBUTED

STEVE RELYEA

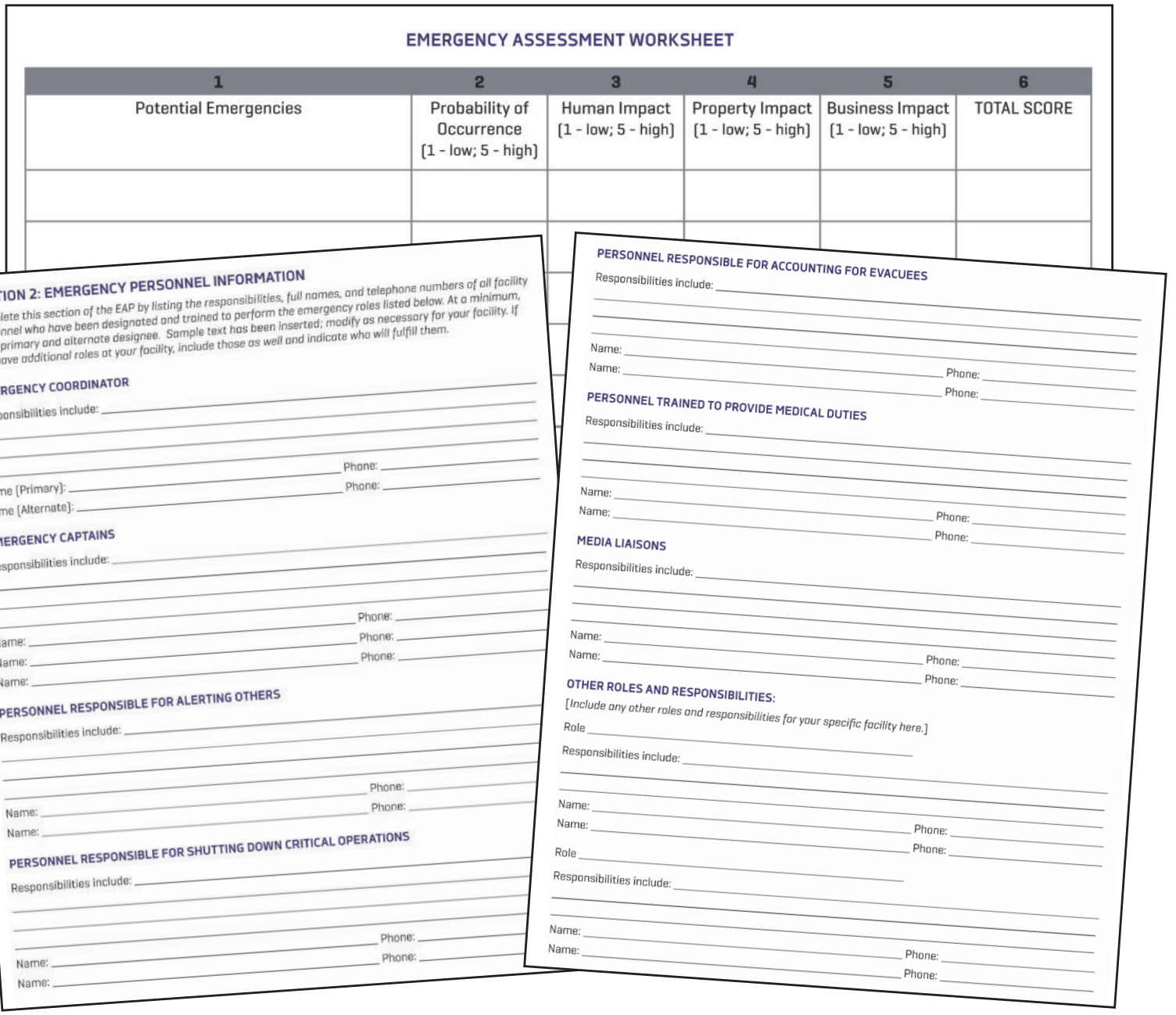
There's an emergency and your facility has been evacuated. Employees have gathered outside, but someone is missing. Is that person still in the building, or is he or she absent today?

That scenario is an example of why "accounting of employees" is one of the many required elements of an emergency action plan. At a recent meeting of the Western Propane Gas Association (WPGA), the association's safety consultant, Rob Scott, explained that propane marketers should know each day who has shown up to work and who hasn't.

An emergency action plan isn't something that's created once; it's something that must be reviewed on a regular basis. "There's always an accident waiting to happen," Scott said. "The question is: Are we ready for it?"

That, he noted, is what an emergency action plan is for. In his presentation, he focused on two questions: What's in your plan? Has it been reviewed?

An emergency action plan is a written document that facilitates and organizes employer and employee actions during



EMERGENCY ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

1	2	3	4	5	6
Potential Emergencies	Probability of Occurrence (1 - low; 5 - high)	Human Impact (1 - low; 5 - high)	Property Impact (1 - low; 5 - high)	Business Impact (1 - low; 5 - high)	TOTAL SCORE

SECTION 2: EMERGENCY PERSONNEL INFORMATION

Complete this section of the EAP by listing the responsibilities, full names, and telephone numbers of all facility personnel who have been designated and trained to perform the emergency roles listed below. At a minimum, list a primary and alternate designee. Sample text has been inserted; modify as necessary for your facility. If you have additional roles at your facility, include those as well and indicate who will fulfill them.

EMERGENCY COORDINATOR

Responsibilities include:

Name (Primary): Phone:

Name (Alternate): Phone:

EMERGENCY CAPTAINS

Responsibilities include:

Name: Phone:

Name: Phone:

Name: Phone:

PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR ALERTING OTHERS

Responsibilities include:

Name: Phone:

Name: Phone:

PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR SHUTTING DOWN CRITICAL OPERATIONS

Responsibilities include:

Name: Phone:

Name: Phone:

PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCOUNTING FOR EVACUEES

Responsibilities include:

Name: Phone:

Name: Phone:

PERSONNEL TRAINED TO PROVIDE MEDICAL DUTIES

Responsibilities include:

Name: Phone:

Name: Phone:

MEDIA LIAISONS

Responsibilities include:

Name: Phone:

Name: Phone:

OTHER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

[Include any other roles and responsibilities for your specific facility here.]

Role

Responsibilities include:

Name: Phone:

Name: Phone:

Role

Responsibilities include:

Name: Phone:

Name: Phone:

workplace emergencies. Its benefits are fewer and less severe injuries; less structural damage; and reduced confusion.

The required elements of an emergency action plan include a means of reporting; evacuation procedures and emergency escape routes; procedures for critical operations; accounting of employees; rescue and medical duties; and contact persons.

Scott listed different sorts of emergencies. They include natural incidents, such as floods or tornadoes; technological incidents, such as chemical release and vehicle accidents; and man-made incidents, such as civil disturbances or workplace violence.

He told of a recent incident in which customers were unhappy that they would not be paid for the propane left in a cylinder. One of them brought out a knife. Scott asked, "Would your driver know what to do?"

OTHER PROCEDURES

In addition to an emergency action plan, other emergency planning procedures include exit routes; fire prevention plans; hazardous waste operations and emergency response; permit-required confined spaces; fire brigades; portable fire extinguishers; fixed extinguishing systems; fire detection systems; and employee alarm systems.

Scott suggested developing habits to adhere to these requirements. For example, if your fire extinguishers are inspected annually, do fire extinguisher training at the same time. You can test employees while the inspector is onsite.

He then walked the audience through an emergency assessment process, using a worksheet that is available from the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC).

On the worksheet, you write down potential emergencies that could affect your plant. For each, you then estimate the probability of each emergency's occurrence and assess the potential human impact, property impact, and business impact. Each is assigned a number, representing high or low probability or impact.

"We want to see near zero if we can," Scott said. Those that do have higher totals, though, are those that should be given the highest priority and resources. But, he added, all emergencies should be planned for, and none should be ignored.

He then outlined a resource assessment. This includes assessing the personnel; the facility; and equipment and supplies. Among the questions to ask here are: Do we have first aid kits in trucks? Have we hired someone new? If so, have personnel records been updated? Is all necessary personal protective equipment available at the facility? Scott told of a driver who recently showed him his new leather gloves. The gloves were not the required gas gloves.

COMMUNICATION

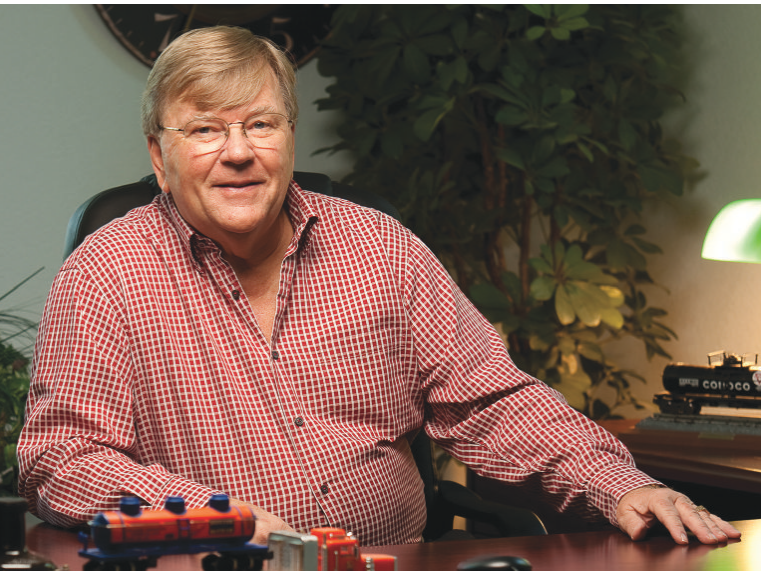
Communication is another element of an emergency action plan. Requirements here include a designee for alerting and assisting employees and others during an emergency; alarms that are distinctive and recognized by all employees; and post-emergency phone numbers. The plan should also include the details needed for notifying emer-

Continued on **Page 44**



HOW DOES YOUR INSURANCE PROGRAM STACK UP?

FRANK THOMPSON



The above question is asked many times by propane marketers who visit with us at the trade shows that we attend, or when we receive a call from a marketer who has just found out that a loss wasn't covered. So let's look at several scenarios showing how marketers chose their insurance agent and insurance company.

To begin with, there are over 1800 insurance companies doing business in the United States and over 1.2 million licensed insurance agents. The majority of the insurance companies and agents are personal lines agents (car insurance, home, and small Main Street business). What that means to the marketer who is required to insure his business is, he has choices. The choice is usually to deal with a local agent who stops by occasionally to fill his propane bottle and visits with the office staff when he pays for his propane.

DO NOT SOLICIT

The local agent goes to the insurance company he represents and asks for them to quote. Propane is considered a "do not solicit" by most insurance companies and so the local agent is forced to go to a third-party surplus lines broker to find a market to write the account. That decision is where the disconnect begins.

The surplus lines broker represents insurance companies that are usually non-admitted in most states and write accounts that are hard to place, normally at a higher price and with less coverage.

The surplus lines broker sends the local agent a supplemental application that needs to be completed and signed by both the agent and the marketer. The agent usually doesn't understand the questions, so a lot of guessing can occur or improper answers can be given. The result is an inaccurate or incomplete application that is rejected by the insurance company underwriter.

REJECTION

So begins a tedious, time-consuming game. The marketer needs the insurance and communicates that to the agent. The agent goes back to the surplus lines broker to find out why the submission was rejected. The surplus lines agent talks to the insurance company underwriter to find out why the account was declined. The surplus lines broker communicates the incorrect answers on the submission and the agent then has to go back to the marketer who has to explain what the question was asking.

The correct answers go back to the surplus lines broker who now has a job to get the underwriter to change his mind (good luck!) and provide a quote.

The agent presents the quote to the marketer, and because the marketer has the misconception that all insurance agents and insurance companies are equal and "the price is right" (low), he buys the policy. He is trusting the agent to know enough about the propane business so that his business is properly insured.

The agent may not know enough about the insurance company or the services they do or do not provide, to notice that the policy may have been issued differently from what he presented and the insured thought he bought. There may be exclusions that take away needed coverage.

Little errors on the policy can play a major role in a claim—for instance, the property policy was issued on an Actual Cash Value basis rather than Replacement Cost. The difference between the two can result in a huge settlement discrepancy, forcing both the insured and the agent to seek legal counsel.

COMMON MISTAKE

The most common mistake is buying insurance based on the lowest quote from an insurance company that is just starting to insure propane. Are the vehicles the same? Are the gallons the same? Are the payrolls the same? But that is not the whole story. Do they know enough about propane to handle any possible claim?

One major insurance company's advertising says it best: "Your Insurance Carrier Has To Really Know Your Industry To Actually Be There For You."

Let me give you two examples that show the difference between an insurance carrier that knew nothing about propane and had a large claim, and an insurance company that knows and understands propane

and how they handled a large claim.

In the first instance, I was presenting a quote to a propane marketer located in the Midwest. The marketer started the conversation by telling me that a propane explosion occurred as his transport was delivering propane to an asphalt plant. The truck and the asphalt plant were both total losses.

I asked about what his current insurance company was doing in handling the claim. The response—nothing. No claims adjustors, no cause-and-origin engineers, no attorneys assigned—nothing.

POLICY LIMITS

Several years later, after paying higher insurance premiums due to the huge open reserves on his loss runs, I found out the insurance company settled the

> *"The agent presents the quote to the marketer, and because the marketer has the misconception that all insurance agents and insurance companies are equal and "the price is right" (low), he buys the policy"*

claim for policy limits, without looking at the extenuating events that caused the loss, and without any discussion with the insured.

In the second example, the insurance agent had a 24-hour answering service to report after-hours emergencies. The insurance company had underwriting expertise and maintains 24-hour emergency claims service. The insurance company is fully staffed with claims, loss prevention, engineering, and attorneys who are knowledgeable about propane.

The propane marketer had a commercial customer who used a lot of propane. The customer's store caught fire in the middle of the night and the agent was notified of the potential claim that propane might be involved. The potential claim was turned in to the insurance company while the store was still burning.

Immediately, the insurance company assigned a claims adjuster, a cause-and-origin engineer, and an attorney. While the cause of the fire was found to be an arsonist and not propane-related, the insurance claims professionals did a full investigation with the state fire marshal. The reason—so that in the future, the insured would have a full defense if one of the other insurance companies that insured the customer's store wanted to pursue subrogation.

WHY SPECIALIZE

The above is a good example of what it means to specialize. Your agent and your insurance company both need to know all there is to know about the propane business, to be there for you.

Frank B. Thompson is a chartered property and casualty underwriter based in Phoenix. He is the owner of PT Risk Management, an independent insurance company specializing in writing propane and petroleum risk policies throughout the U.S.

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WAYS TO ENGAGE WITH YOUR PROPANE CUSTOMERS IN 2020

JENNIFER LECLERC

It's time to identify your goals for the coming year and how to focus your marketing efforts in order to achieve them. Whether you have your sights on improved customer retention, increased sales, building brand awareness, or a mixture of all three and then some, marketing experts agree that engagement is a pivotal tool for marketing success in 2020.

So, what do we mean by engagement and why does it matter for marketing in the propane industry? Traditionally, propane marketing has been primarily a one-way conversation. But that doesn't quite cut it anymore. More and more consumers want to interact with brands they are loyal to, and a percentage of that majority in the millennial demographic even expects interaction. Engagement is not only beneficial for the consumer, but it is extremely beneficial for propane marketers in order to strengthen existing customer loyalty and to attract new customers.

There are several ways that you can implement engagement tactics into your marketing strategy. We've gathered four examples of opportunities that will help you to engage your audience and get tangible results that support your marketing goals for the upcoming year.

1. Make Social Media Work for You

Social media is the place where consumers interact with each other and with brands. Social media engagement can be utilized in a variety of ways, but the most cost-effective and efficient opportunity is social media advertising. Social media advertising on platforms like Facebook and Instagram offers an affordable way to expand your audience reach. Once you create a social media advertising campaign, you can promote your ads on multiple social channels to a customized target audience, which will make





your already-affordable ad budget really go the distance.

Social media advertising requires minimal investment compared to other promotional techniques, with the added bonus of audience engagement and trackable results. While you are using social ads to interact with your audience you can quantify campaign results down to the dollar.

2. Recognize That Online Reviews Really Matter

Another engagement opportunity that every propane marketer should be actively taking advantage of is online customer reviews. Reports show that 95% of shoppers read online reviews before making a purchase. Consumers are looking at previous customer experiences to inform their purchasing decisions, and they are paying attention to which companies respond to reviews. Online reviews don't just contribute to customer engagement, but they also can positively affect your website's search ranking on Google. So, if you already have reviews, start responding to them. And if you don't, start actively asking for them.

3. Engage Even More on Google My Business

Did you know that 3.5 billion Google searches are made every day and the volume of Google searches grows by roughly 10% each year? It is critical that your propane company has a claimed Google My Business listing because it will be the first thing a consumer sees when they complete a Google search for propane services in your area. More and more consumers are using Google My Business to engage with companies instead of following through to their websites. Features like online reviews, messaging, and a customer Q&A forum are all great opportunities for customers to engage with you online.

4. Keep Your Audience Interested with Consistent Campaigns

Do something fun for your customers that will excite and entice engagement. Host frequent campaigns that encourage your audience to take action, such as filling out an online form, sharing a post on social media with their followers and tagging your business, or referring a friend to your propane services. Keep your campaigns consistent, such as a monthly raffle, but switch up the incentives (such as a tune-up discount or tickets to a community event) to keep them interested.

2020 is the year of the customer. Use engagement marketing tactics to set your propane company and service offerings apart, build customer loyalty, and attract new targets this year. As noted above, there are multiple ways to engage your audience in a strategic manner that best suits your propane company's unique goals and marketing budget.

Jennifer LeClerc is the creative director of Consumer Focus Marketing, a marketing agency in Portsmouth, N.H., that specializes in total marketing strategy services for the energy industry nationwide. Their services include digital marketing, online review management, search engine optimization, and website development. LeClerc can be reached by visiting consumerfocusmarketing.com *or by email at* Jennifer_LeClerc@bostonenv.com.

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Samuel E. McTier, a most influential member of the propane industry, passed away In Lake Forest, Ill., on Jan. 11. He was 93.

Growing up in El Paso, Texas, he was a child prodigy in playing the violin and viola and at age 10 played in the El Paso Symphony Orchestra. He loved music and to sing songs and play his guitar. After graduating from high school at 14, Sam went on to receive his degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Colorado–Boulder.

He served in the Navy during World War II and the Korean War, before settling in the Chicago area, beginning his career in the propane industry with Bastian Blessing in 1946. He later founded and owned McTier Supply Co., where he served as CEO and president for more than 40 years. Upon his retirement, Sam continued to work in the industry at Propane Technologies and McTier Consulting.

An active member of the National Propane Gas Association (NPGA), he was president (now chairman of the board) of the association from 1996-1997. In addition, Sam was chairman of the TS&S Committee, which gave him the opportunity to become a mentor to many on the standards development committees. He was a strong supporter of the NPGF Scholarship committee.

Sam McTier was one of the most honored members of the propane industry, having received the Distinguished Service award from the National Propane Gas Association and the World's Distinguished Service Award from the World LP Gas Association. In 2012, he was placed in the Inaugural Class of the Hall of Fame by *LP Gas* as one of the nine people who gave the most to the propane industry since its inception. Sam was also the only person to receive the Emeritus status on the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) Technical Committee on LP-Gas.



Butane-Propane News has lost a beloved member of our team. **Sheri Sinske**, ***BPN's*** circulation manager for 42 years, passed away Jan. 18. She was 72. Sheri enjoyed taking care of ***BPN's*** subscribers and making sure that everything was up to the high standards she held for her department. She was very proud of the BPA validated audits received under her careful watch. Sheri will be missed by all who have had the opportunity to work with her and enjoy her friendship, kindness, and infectious sense of humor.



KRISTINA HOWES
Jomar Valve



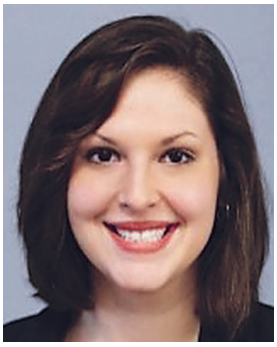
TERRY SMITH
MTankCo Supply

Kristina Howes has joined **Jomar Valve** (Warren, Mich.) as marketing manager, where she will be responsible for driving the marketing strategy for Jomar Valve. She brings with her marketing experience in B2B and B2C companies, ranging from brand management to strategy. Most recently, she was a global product marketing manager at HP, providing innovative solutions to product lines and growth opportunities.

Terry Smith of **MTankCo Supply** (Southaven, Miss.) retired Jan. 31. Smith has been part of the propane industry for more than 40 years, and shared his vast knowledge of LP-gas equipment throughout his tenure. He founded Smith's LP Supply (Walls, Miss.) in 1981, and later moved and expanded the business in Southaven. In 2013, Mississippi Tank Co. acquired the business. Smith has played a major role with the newly formed MTankCo Supply and has helped it grow the business.



SARAH McLALLEN



MORGAN DOGGETT
National Propane Gas Association



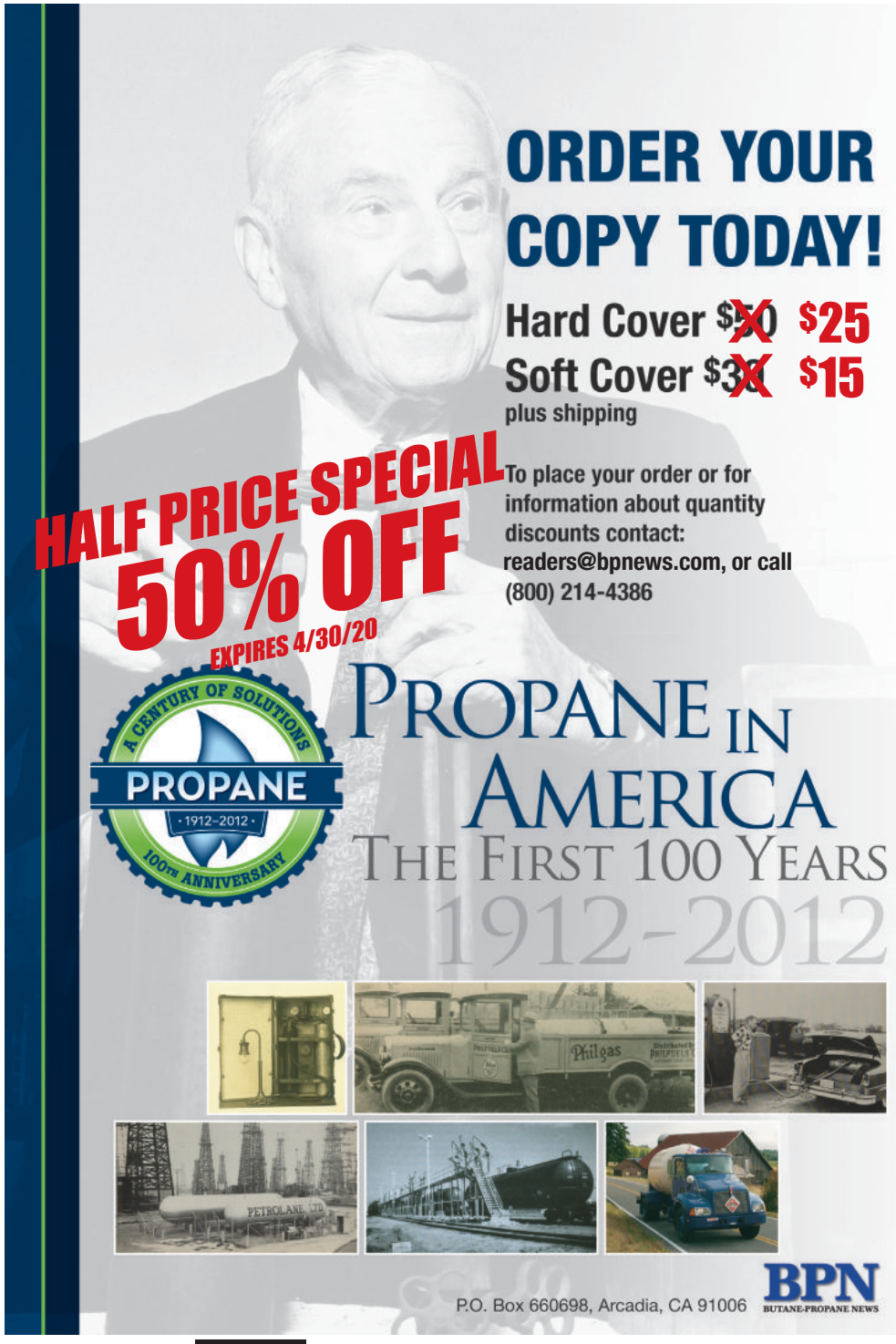
SAMANTHA SHAY

The **National Propane Gas Association** (NPGA; Washington, D.C.) has recently added several employees to its newly created Communications and Member Services Department. **Sarah McLallen** has joined NPGA as vice president of communications and member services, where she will head this new department. McLallen has spent the majority of her career at industry trade associations in Washington, D.C. She was most recently affiliated with the copper industry.

Morgan Doggett has been named manager of communications. She has previous professional experience at Partners of the Americas, U.S. House of Representatives, Illinois State Senate, USAID Soybean Innovation Lab, IllinoisVENTURES, Illinois Corn Growers Association, and Illinois Association FFA. In 2019, she relaunched marketing and brand of the international USAID Farmer-to-Farmer Program, and she led the creative development of the first fortified food grocery labels with USAID and the Haitian Government.

The new department also includes longtime NPGA professionals **Christine Hutcherson** and **Tara Falls.**

Samantha (Sam) Shay has joined NPGA as manager, conventions and meetings, and will work with **Kristen White**. Shay was previously involved with nonprofit organizations.



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INDUSTRY CALENDAR

2020

Feb. 9-11—National Propane Gas Association Winter Board of Directors Meeting, DoubleTree Resort by Hilton Paradise Valley, Scottsdale, Ariz. (202) 466-7200

Feb. 10-12—The ARA Show, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla. (800) 334-2177

Feb. 11-13—World Ag Expo, International Agri Center, Tulare, Calif. (800) 999-9186

Feb. 12—PERC Council Meeting Conference Call. (202) 452-8975

Feb. 13-14—6th World Congress & Expo on Oil, Gas & Petroleum Engineering, Holiday Inn, Lisbon, Portugal. *oil-gas-petroleum-2020@scientificfederation.info*

Feb. 15—Deadline for Submitting National Propane Gas Foundation Scholarship Applications.

Feb. 27-28—2020 PACEshow, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Mo. (785) 233-9655

Feb. 27-March 4—2020 NRECA Annual Meeting, Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, La. (703) 907-5500

March 3-6—The Work Truck Show 2020 including the Green Truck Summit, Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis. *info@ntea.com*

March 8-10—National Propane Gas Association Spring TS&S Committee Meeting, Hilton Palacio Del Rio, San Antonio, Texas (202) 466-7200

March 12-13—National Propane Gas Association Spring Benchmarking Council Meeting, Dallas/Ft Worth Airport Marriott, Irving, Texas. (202) 466-7200

March 12-14—Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Expo, Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, La. *vandermark@hpba.org*

March 17-18—Canadian School of Hydrocarbon Measurement, Calgary Telus Convention Center, Calgary, Alta. *info@cshm.ca*

March 23-24—West Virginia Propane Gas Association Spring Membership Meeting, Embassy Suites, Charleston. (703) 530-9772

March 24-26—M-Pact Show, Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis. (859) 219-3515

April 6-8—Manufactured Housing Institute 2020 Congress & Expo, MGM Grand, Las Vegas. *info@mfghome.org*

April 6-8—National Propane Gas Association Southeastern Convention & International Propane Expo, Music City Center, Nashville, Tenn. (202) 355-1334

April 6-9—NCI's High Performance HVAC Summit, We-Ko-Pa Resort & Conference Center, Fort McDowell, Ariz. (800) 633-7058

April 9—PERC Council Meeting, Hutton Hotel, Nashville, Tenn. (202) 452-8975

April 19-22—GPA Midstream Convention, New Orleans Riverside Hilton, New Orleans. (918) 493-3872

April 20-21—Energy, Utility, Environment Conference, San Diego Convention Center, San Diego, Calif. *info@euec.com*

May 5-7—Canadian Propane Association Leadership Summit, The Westin Edmonton, Edmonton, Alta. (613) 683-2270

May 11-14—Advanced Clean Transportation (ACT) Expo, Long Beach Convention Center, Long Beach, Calif. *events@gladstein.org*

May 12-14—International School of Hydrocarbon Measurement, Cox Convention Center, Oklahoma City. (405) 831-8609

May 13-15—Western Propane Gas Association Show & Convention, Reno Events Center, Reno, Nev. (916) 447-9742

May 19-20—2020 Eastern Energy Expo, Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, Conn. (973) 467-1400

May 20—Michigan Propane Gas Association Propane Safety Awareness Day, Michigan State Capitol Lawn, Lansing (517) 487-2021

May 27-28—European LPG Congress 2020, Fira Barcelona Montjuic- Hall 2, Barcelona, Spain. *info@europeanlpgcongress2020.com*

May 28-31—Mississippi Propane Gas Association Summer Convention, Hilton Sandestin Resort, Miramar Beach, Fla. *info@mspropane.com*

June 8-11—Mid-States Propane Expo and Tradeshow, Hilton Branson Convention Center, Branson, Mo. (800) 601-9332

June 9-11—Global Petroleum Show 2020, Stampede Park, Calgary, Alta. (403) 444-6523

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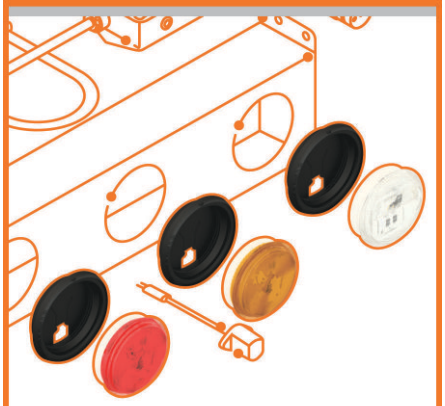

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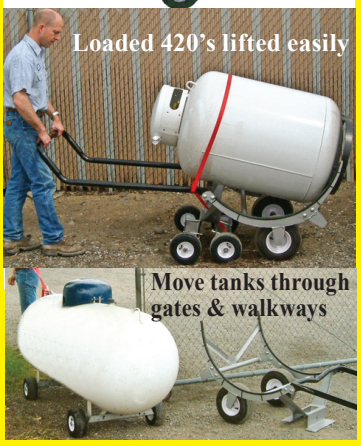

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EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

Continued from **Page 29**

gency responders, utility companies, the National Response Center (NRC), the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Scott suggesting taking into account the response time of not only the fire station closest to your plant, but also the second closest. He explained that the one that's closest might be out on a call when you need them.

Evacuation is another element of the emergency action plan. The plan should identify an emergency coordinator; evacuation captains; individuals responsible for shutting down critical operations; individuals responsible for accounting for evacuees; evacuation routes and exits; and evacuation maps and drawings.

"In an emergency, everyone's natural reaction is to run," Scott noted. "But someone needs to push the shutoff button."

Propane marketers also should collaborate with others before an emergency. Others who can help include employees; company officials and management; local emergency responders; local and state government; local emergency planning committees; and community and civic groups.

"It's all about building networks and alliances," Scott said. He suggested attending meetings of the local fire chiefs' association. "They will appreciate your participation."

Keeping employees current on the emergency action plan requires distributing the plan, maintaining the plan, and training on the plan. Training should include both classroom activities and practice drills. "We can never do enough training," Scott noted.

When all these elements of an emergency action plan are known and reviewed, everyone will be as ready as they can be when something unexpected happens—for instance, something that might lead to employees evacuating and gathering outside.

"It's about organizing," Scott noted. "Someone has to be accountable to do the head count." ■

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FORGING HER OWN PATH BACK INTO THE FAMILY PROPANE BUSINESS

KAREN MASSMAN VanASDALE

It would have been easy for Tori Barnett to go straight into the propane business her grandfather started in Sierra Vista, Ariz., 57 years ago and where her father, Troy Barnett, is now president. She grew up playing in the yard at Barnett's Propane with her sister. As a teen, she assisted customers with small cylinders and worked in the office. After graduating from high school, Barnett wanted to pave her own way and prove she could achieve her own goals.

She obtained a degree in business management from Grand Canyon University and a degree in dental hygiene from Phoenix College with scholarship funds from the National Propane Gas Foundation (NPGF).

As she settled into her new career as a dental hygienist, Barnett quickly discovered what often happens to others who grow up in the industry: propane can get into your DNA. Working as a full-time dental hygienist in Sierra Vista, she continued helping out at Barnett's Propane—coming to the office on her lunch hour and evenings. After about a year, she felt a need to spend more time in the family business.

Last year, she officially took over the human resources responsibilities for the propane company and Barnett's Towing, a sister company also started by her grandfather. She works at the family business three days a week while continuing as a dental hygienist two days a week. She shares an office with her sister, Sabreena, who is responsible for accounts payable.

"I do enjoy it—being a dental hygienist. I always knew, though, I would come back to my family business," she said, adding she anticipates someday being full-time at Barnett's Propane.

"My experience as a dental hygienist has helped me become a more professional people-person and able to handle the many varieties of human interaction. My degree in business management has helped me in terms of being a more effective leader and a self-starter," she explained.



"From a young age, being around my dad and grandfather and seeing them run this business reflects how I look at situations and run things in my role. They taught me more about business dynamics than all the schooling I have."

In addition to its Sierra Vista office, Barnett's Propane also has an office in Tucson and a propane island in Benson, Ariz. It offers residential, commercial, and small bottle fills, but primarily caters to residential customers—many of whom are winter visitors and live in RV parks. Of the companies' nearly 60 employees, about 25% are primarily dedicated to the propane operation; the others work for the towing company.

"The propane and towing companies are separate entities, but we run out of the same office. Everyone is cross-trained," she said. "I'm primarily in human resources, but in a family business, you wear a lot of hats."

Barnett's duties include maintaining all the employee records, providing onboarding and off-boarding, and handling the company's social media. "I like above all creating value—coordinating and creating systems and processes—anything where I can make a positive change."

"I want to work to provide more value for our customers and employees and keep organizing a focus for myself in the company. I'm working on developing a training module for my position and also bringing our technologies to more current times," she said.

Being involved in a family business is not an 8-5 schedule. "I will answer emails and solve issues at all hours of the day, even if I'm not physically at work or if I'm working at my dental hygiene job. I do try to limit my work activity on the weekends, but I truly enjoy what I do and I don't mind being active outside of office hours."

Outside of work, Tori and her husband, Daniel, enjoy spending time working on their fixer-upper house, traveling, and taking care of their three cats. ■

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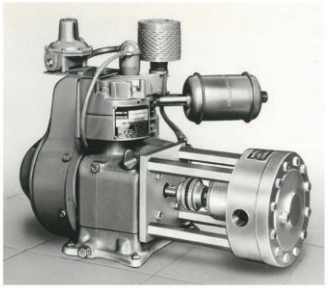
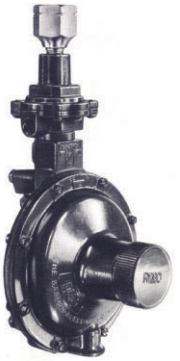

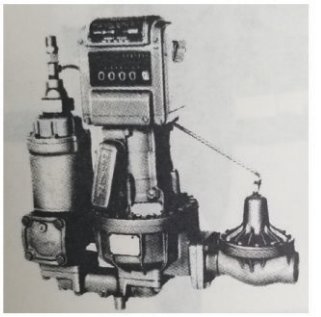

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