BUTANE-PROPANE NEWS

BPN

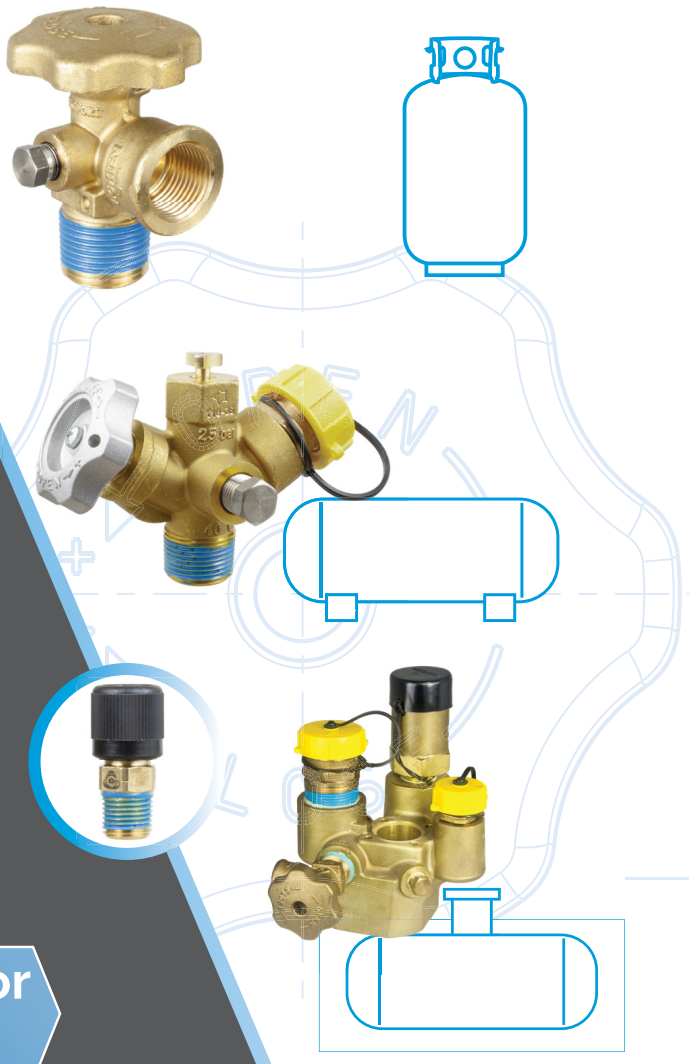
FEBRUARY | 2021



# SMART STRATEGIES TO COUNTER GROWING COSTS

www.cavagnana.com

# CAVAGNA
## Pressure Tap Series
## Tank and Cylinder Valves



### Why Cavagna is a great option

- Designed, engineered, and manufactured in Italy
- Family owned and operated
- Double O-ring seal eliminates stem leaks and the need for replacement stem kits.
- Available from all major tank and cylinder manufactures and refurbishers
- Pressure Tap Ready Valves and Pronto Fitting for immediate tank pressure leak testing

## Your Reliable Choice for all things Propane

Still family owned and operated since **1949**

cavagna group

Wherever gas is used, we are there

Cavagna North America Inc. 50 Napoleon Court, Somerset NJ 08873
Phone 732-469-2100, Fax 732 469 3344
Cavagna Noth America Distribution Center,
5910 W By Northwest Blvd.
Houston, TX 77040
**Info@cavagna.com - www.cavagnana.com**

# CONSUMERS DRIVE MOVE TO NEW TECH

STEVE RELYEA

Last year, fuel dealers began using a wider range of smaller digital tools that allow them to work remotely and provide contactless customer service during the pandemic.

This year, many fuel dealers are interested in investing in larger tools that will help them streamline operations, improve efficiency, meet customer expectations, and support future growth. These include sales and marketing tools; customer experience tools; and tank monitors.

Those are two findings reported in "Top Technology Trends in Fuel Delivery, 2021 Benchmarking Report," recently released by software provider Cargas Energy (Lancaster, Pa.). This second-annual "Tech Trends" survey includes data collected from more than 100 fuel dealers from September through November 2020.

"Fuel dealers are seeing a need to prioritize online and mobile customer-facing technologies," Brian Weit, manager of marketing, told ***BPN***. "Consumers want to purchase fuel the same way they purchase other products and services. Tools like e-commerce, text and email notifications, and customer portals can give fuel dealers a competitive advantage."

In the new year, fuel delivery companies are showing interest in major digital upgrades as well as consulting services.

"Last March, the whole world was figuring out how to do business during the pandemic," Weit said. "There was uncertainty, and it was a challenging time to start a major project. Now, in 2021, marketers may be ready to make bigger changes."

"There is more activity this year than normal," Dennis DiSabatino, Jr., vice president of the Cargas Energy business unit, added. "Companies are ready to make the investment now that things have settled a bit and, with the vaccine, there is light at the end of the tunnel."

In its previous "Tech Trends" report, released before the pandemic, Cargas predicted a move towards paperless offices and remote workforces. In the new report, the company says it believes the pandemic has accelerated that trend.

"Most companies were already moving in that direction," DiSabatino told ***BPN***. "Fuel dealers serve consumers and, whether you're a dentist, or Walmart, or Amazon, consumers have expectations. They want to receive a text or email when a delivery is made, they want to pay via a text link, and they don't want to have to call. They want to be able to go online at any time."

"The people who are running companies are consumers, too," Weit concluded. "They are using smartphones, Chromebooks, and iPads, and they see what their kids are using for school. They can look to their personal lives to understand what consumers expect, and then apply that to their businesses."

The full report can be downloaded from the Cargas Energy website at *https://cargasenergy.com/tech-trends-benchmarking-report/*.

# INSIDE THIS ISSUE

VOLUME 53 | NO. 2
FEBRUARY 2021

**24**
**DISTRIBUTORS OFFER MORE THAN PRODUCTS**
Distributors respond to customers' evolving needs, wants.

**31**
**COST-EFFECTIVE STORAGE STRATEGIES**
What is the best approach to buying tanks?

**34**
**EXPORTS: AN ADDED DIMENSION**
Exports add new challenges to U.S. propane market.

**39**
**PROPANE TANK MOVERS**
Choosing the right tool for the job.

## DEPARTMENTS

**3** Beyond the Mains
**6** LPG Marketplace
**8** Newsfronts
**16** Propane and the Law
**20** Verbatim
**23** Propane Safety
**43** People
**44** Calendar
**44** Shoppers Mart
**46** Classified Advertising
**52** Products
**53** Advertisers Index




## OUR COVER

The industry has been seeing a trend in larger tanks over the last several years. Pictured are tanks at Quality Steel's West Jordan, Utah, branch. Photo courtesy Quality Steel.

# The Propane Industry's Most Trusted Source For News and Information. Since 1939.




**Join in the conversation on Facebook and Twitter!**




**Nearly 50,000 propane business owners and professionals read *BPN* magazine each month to keep up-to-date on important propane news.**




**The first century of the propane industry is chronicled in "Propane in America: The First 100 Years 1912-2012."**




***Weekly Propane Newsletter* subscribers receive the latest posted and spot prices from major terminals and refineries around the U.S. delivered to in-boxes each week.**




**VIDEO**

BPN
BUTANE-PROPANE NEWS

## STAFF

**NATALIE PEAL** . . . . . Publisher
**STEVE RELYEA** . . . . . Editor
**PAT THORNTON** . . Editor/Special Projects
**TARA MOLINA-PARTIKA** Ad Sales Manager
**ANDREA YOUNG** . . . . Marketing Manager
**BRENDA LIESWALD** . . Circulation Manager
**JULIE DAVIS**. . . . . Office Manager

## PUBLISHED BY

Butane-Propane News, ISSN 0007-7259, is published monthly by:

**Butane-Propane News**
1900 28th Ave. South, Suite 200
P.O. Box 530067
Birmingham, Ala. 35253-0801

***bpnews.com***
(626) 357-2168, FAX (626) 303-2854
***subscriptions@bpnews.com***

**NATALIE PEAL** . . . . . President
**NANETTE DOUGALL** . . . . . Vice-President

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

**Subscription Prices:** United States, U.S. Possessions – one year, **$34**, two years, **$50**. Canada – one year, **$43**, two years, **$65**. All other countries – one year **$70**, two years **$108**. Air mail **$50** per year extra. Single copy price within the U.S., Possessions, and Canada, **$10**.

Available on microfilm from University Microfilm International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106.

## NEWSLETTER DEPT.

**STEVE RELYEA** . . . . . .Editor
**BRENDA LIESWALD** . . Circulation Manager

Newsletter editorial communications and subscriptions for the WEEKLY PROPANE NEWSLETTER should be directed to P.O. Box 530067, Birmingham, Ala. 35253-0801.

## AFFILIATIONS

BPA WORLDWIDE BUSINESS
NPGA NATIONAL PROPANE GAS ASSOCIATION

## MAILING INFORMATION

Periodical rate postage paid at Arcadia Post Office and additional mailing offices.
**USPS 457-950**

POSTMASTER send address changes to Butane-Propane News, P.O. Box 530067, Birmingham, Ala. 35253-0801

Send advertising materials to Advertising Sales *sales@bpnews.com*.

**CPM 40065056** **ISSN 0007-7259**

Canadian Return Address:
DP Global Mail, 4960-2 Walker Road, Windsor, Ont. N9A 6J3

# READY TO RETIRE?

## Trust the sale of your business to Propane Industry Veterans!

- Over 30 years of direct propane industry experience
- National reach, currently representing companies in multiple states coast to coast
- We understand your business and how to market it
- Trusted relationships with the most buyers nationally, regionally, & locally
- Deep understanding of what buyers are looking for and how to present it to them
- Complete project management from start to finish

"Throughout our time working with him, Chad has worked long hours and consistently exceeded our expectations. He was a trustworthy partner in negotiating and closing the deal at optimal value. In short, we always felt we were in capable and talented hands. We wholeheartedly recommend Chad without hesitation."

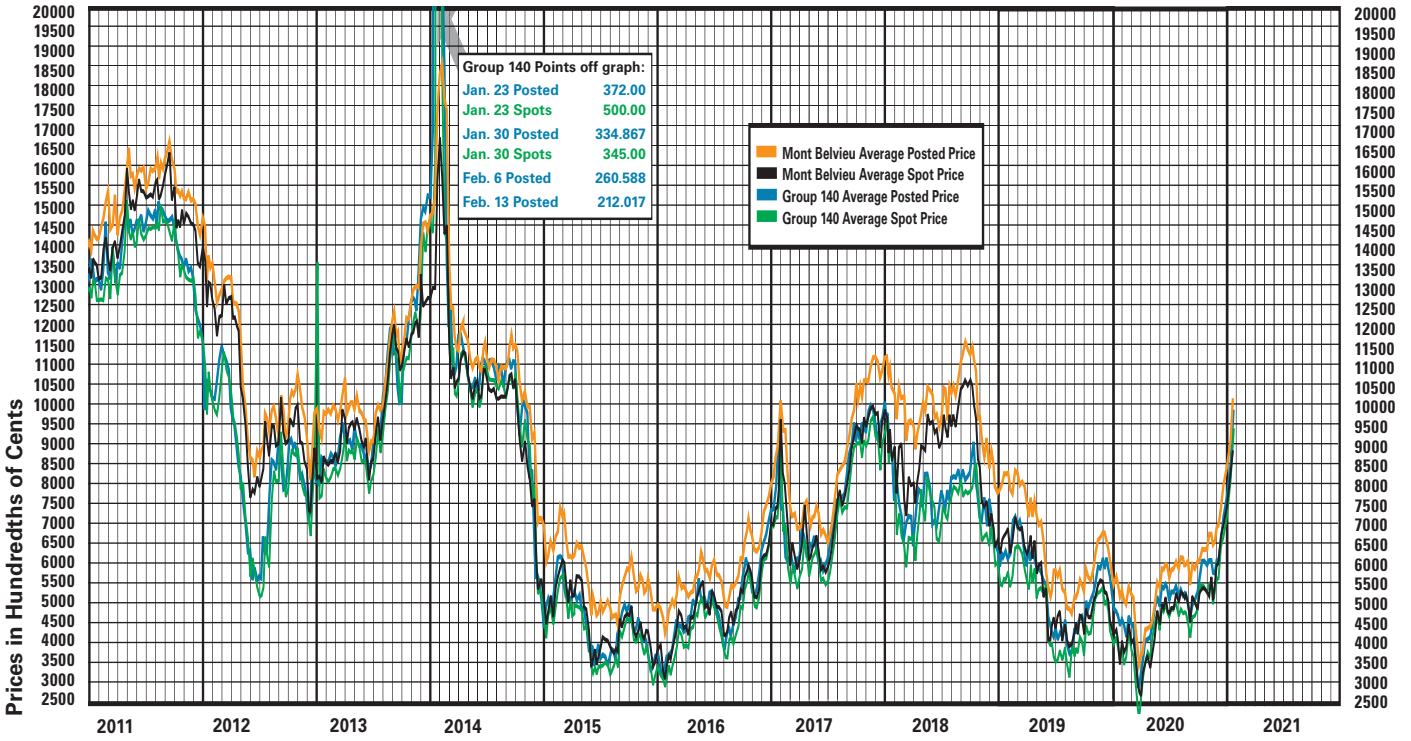
-Testimonial from Howard & Laura Gouz, Home Gas
Miami, FL

HOME GAS CORP.

info@legacyenergyconsulting.com 763-772-2834 www.legacyenergyconsulting.com

LEGACY ENERGY CONSULTING, LLC.






## 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 |
| 12-17-20 | 73.923 | 60.00-67.00 | 66.047 | 62.50-64.00 |
| 12-23-20 | 79.840 | 68.50-69.25 | 71.497 | 65.75-66.50 |
| 12-30-20 | 84.007 | 71.75-74.00 | 76.397 | 68.50-71.00 |
| 1-7-21 | 90.590 | 82.25-82.75 | 84.847 | 79.00-81.00 |
| 1-14-21 | 100.507 | 93.375-94.00 | 96.247 | 93.00-94.00 |

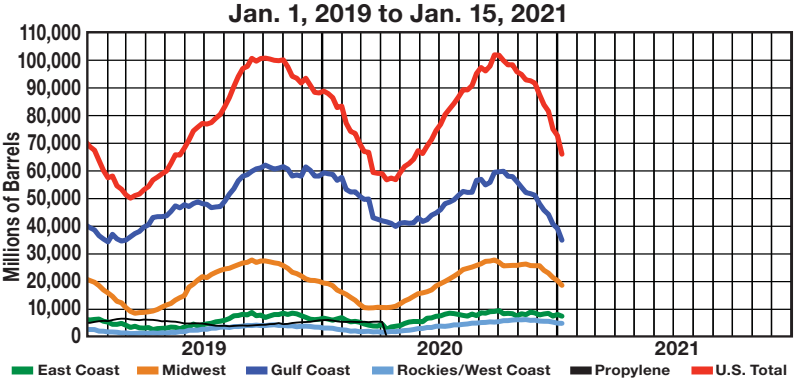
## U.S. PROPANE INVENTORIES

Dec. 18, 2020 to Jan. 15, 2021 and One Year Ago

| | 12/18/20 | 12/25/20 | 1/1/21 | 1/8/21 | 1/15/21 | 1/17/20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| East Coast | 8,538 | 7,529 | 8,141 | 7,508 | 6,329 | 6,062 |
| Midwest | 23,078 | 21,466 | 20,380 | 18,654 | 16,718 | 18,527 |
| Gulf Coast | 44,312 | 40,778 | 39,239 | 34,960 | 31,924 | 52,851 |
| Rockies/West | 5,667 | 5,373 | 5,017 | 4,926 | 4,847 | 3,142 |
| U.S. Total | 81,596 | 75,146 | 72,777 | 66,048 | 59,818 | 80,581 |

## U.S. PROPANE INVENTORIES

Jan. 1, 2019 to Jan. 15, 2021




## U.S. RESIDENTIAL PROPANE PRICES

(Mid-Month, Cents per Gallon)

| Region | Date | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1-21 | 12-20 | 1-20 |
| East Coast (PADD I) | 282.7 | 264.1 | 261.9 |
| Midwest (PADD II) | 168.0 | 149.8 | 164.0 |
| Average U.S. | 208.8 | 190.0 | 201.0 |

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

## CANADIAN INVENTORIES

(Jan. 1, 2021)

Thousand Cubic Meters

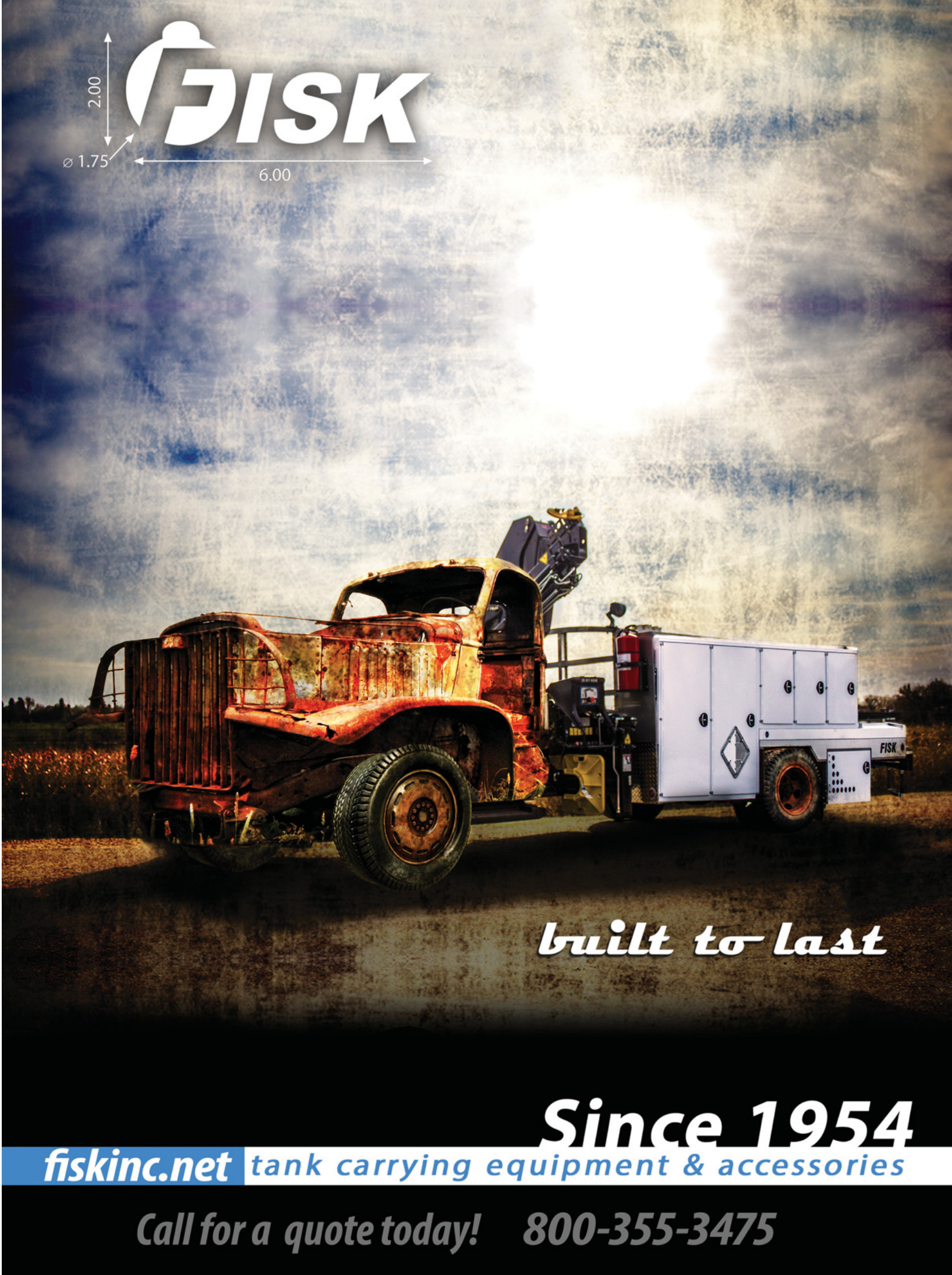
### PROPANE

| Region | 1-21 | 12-20 | Change | 1-20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Propane—East | 861.1 | 918.5 | –6.2% | 304.1 |
| Propane–West | 1183.6 | 1388.9 | –14.8% | 458.6 |
| **Total Propane** | **2044.8** | **2307.4** | **–11.4%** | **762.8** |

### BUTANE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Butane—East | 275.5 | 342.4 | –19.5% | 198.7 |
| Butane—West | 787.6 | 958.9 | –17.9% | 291.8 |
| **Total Butane** | **1063.1** | **1301.4** | **–18.3%** | **490.5** |

*Source: National Energy Board*


FISK
2.00
⌀ 1.75
6.00
FISK
built to last
Since 1954
fiskinc.net
tank carrying equipment & accessories
Call for a quote today!
800-355-3475

## EIA EXPLAINS DEVELOPMENTS IN GLOBAL OIL CONSUMPTION

In its January 2021 Short-Term Energy Outlook Supplement: Developments in Global Oil Consumption, EIA explained the effects on oil consumption, beyond an economic recession's implications alone, increased the challenges in estimating petroleum consumption. Looking back at 2020, even in May and June, the extent of consumption declines in April were unknown, and to some extent, are still unknown.

EIA initially forecast larger declines in oil consumption than actually occurred. In the May STEO, EIA estimated April 2020 world oil consumption declined to 76.3 MMbbld, which EIA subsequently revised to 80.6 MMbbld as OECD countries and some non-OECD countries released oil consumption data.

Looking to the future, in the forecast for 2021 and 2022, EIA forecasts that some mandatory and voluntary travel restrictions will still be in place in the first half of 2021 amid a resurgence in COVID-19 cases as of late-2020, although the level of restrictions and their duration remain highly uncertain. EIA forecasts that a return to more normal consumer behavior and a continued recovery in GDP will contribute to rising oil consumption in 2021 as the year progresses, with growth of 5.6 MMbbld, or 6%, in 2021.

EIA forecasts that the United States will account for 1.4 MMbbld of that growth and that the rest of the world will account for 4.1 MMbbld. Oil consumption will increase in 2021 because of both economic growth and a return to more normal travel patterns by the middle of the year, which will also have a small effect on oil consumption growth in 2022. Despite the forecast increases in global oil consumption in 2021, EIA still expects it to average 97.8 MMbbld, which is 3% below the 2019 level.

For 2022, EIA forecasts global consumption of petroleum and other liquids will grow by 3.3 MMbbld, or 3.4%. EIA forecasts that the U.S. will account for 1.0 MMbbld of that growth and the rest of the world will account for 2.3 MMbbld.

## 2020 CRUDE OIL PRICES WERE THE LOWEST IN MORE THAN 15 YEARS

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) reported Jan. 6 that response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the first half of 2020, led to steep declines in petroleum demand, highly volatile crude oil markets, and rising U.S. and global liquid fuels inventories. From January 2020, when the first case of COVID-19 in the United States was confirmed, and March 13, when the President declared a national emergency, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil futures prices fell to less than $0 during the day on April 20 and 21, the first time the price for the WTI futures contract fell lower than zero since trading began in 1983.

While Brent crude oil futures prices did not fall lower than zero, they declined to $19/bbl on April 21, the lowest nominal price since Feb. 7, 2002. In real terms, though, the price was much lower. The second half of 2020 was characterized by relatively stable prices as demand began to increase, global production declined, primarily because members of OPEC and partner countries (OPEC+) cut production, and inventories fell. Across all of 2020, the price for WTI averaged $39/bbl, the lowest in nominal terms since 2003, and the price for Brent averaged $43/bbl, the lowest in nominal terms since 2004.

Demand for petroleum products fell sharply in early 2020 as a result of the pandemic. In April, global demand for liquid fuels fell to 80.6 MMbbld, the lowest level since May 2004 and 20.3 MMbbld lower than April 2019 demand. In the U.S., the four-week rolling average gasoline demand (by product supplied) fell to 5.3 MMbbld on April 24, down 44% year on year. Jet fuel demand reached an annual low of 558,000 bbld on May 29, off 69% from the same period in 2019. Distillate demand did not fall as much as gasoline or jet fuel demand, declining 20% from the same period in 2019 to an annual low of 3.0 MMbbld on May 1.

Responding to the drop in demand in the first part of 2020, U.S. refiners curtailed operations, and between March 13 and May 8, four-week average gross refinery inputs fell 20% to 13.1 MMbbld, the lowest level since September 2008 when Hurricanes Gustav and Ike disrupted refineries along the U.S. Gulf Coast. Crude oil production in the U.S. did not decline as quickly as refinery runs. In April, U.S. crude oil production averaged 12.0 MMbbld, off just 0.7 MMbbld, or 6%, from March. From April to May, crude oil production fell 2.0 MMbbld (17%), the largest monthly decline in EIA data, which dates back to 1920. The steep decline in demand and refinery runs, combined with shallower declines in crude oil production, contributed to a significant increase in oil inventories. U.S. commercial crude oil inventories reached a record high of 540.7 MMbbl on June 19, up 87.0 MMbbl, or 19%, since the national emergency was declared on March 13. In the crude oil storage hub of Cushing, Okla., crude oil inventories rose by 27.0 MMbbl, or 70%, between March 13 and May 1, reaching an annual high of 65.4 MMbbl, 83% of the working storage capacity.

The first half of 2020, EIA estimates global liquid fuels stocks built at an average of 6.5 MMbbld and reached a high of 19.7 MMbbld in April, the largest stock build in EIA data, which dates back to 1993.

OPEC crude oil production averaged 24.3 MMbbld in the second half of 2020, down from 27.0 MMbbld in the first half of the year and 4.6 MMbld less than production in the second half of 2019. U.S. crude oil production was also relatively low in the second half of 2020. From July through the week ending Jan. 1, 2021, U.S. crude oil production averaged 10.8 MMbbld, down from 12.4 MMbbld in the first half of the year and 1.7 MMbbld lower than the second half of 2019.

In the second half of 2020, petroleum demand recovered while global crude oil production remained low, resulting in an

# Strong Allies.

At Bergquist, we take customer service seriously. We've attended trainings and webinars on the subject. We've listened to speakers and presentations that focus on it. And we talk a lot about putting ourselves in the customer's shoes. When we get right down to it, what we are trying to do is be hassle-free for our customers. It helps you, and that's great for us.

Everyone at Bergquist is responsible for the hassle-free service you receive. You expect that from the Area Sales Manager who stops by your office. And from the Inside Salesperson you call with your order. But we understand it has to go deeper than that. Our warehouse crews sweat the details to make sure your order ships quickly and accurately. Our accounting team puts in the work to make sure you never worry about inventory or billing issues. And we all work together to make sure doing business with Bergquist is easier than with any other vendor.

People don't always want the same things.

So we have to ask questions and listen. That helps us tailor our service to each customer. And we like it that way. We strive to provide every customer with the relationship and interactions they desire.

There is no cookie cutter approach to customer service at Bergquist.




Bergquist

Propane Equipment Distribution



bergquistinc.com

**Shipped fast.**
**Shipped right.**
**Hassle-free.**

| Toledo | Bowling Green | Indianapolis | Kansas City | Minneapolis |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 800 537 7518 | 800 448 9504 | 800 662 3252 | 800 821 3878 | 800 328 6291 |

estimated 2.8 MMbbld draw on global liquid fuels stocks, and contributing to OECD inventories falling to 3.0 Bbbl in December. In the U.S., commercial crude oil stocks fell to 485.5 MMbbl the week ending Jan. 1, 2021, down from the record high of 540.7 MMbbl reached on June 19, 2020.

Supported by increasing petroleum product demand and crude oil stock draws, crude oil prices rose in the second half of 2020. The price of WTI climbed to $40/bbl on July 1 and from July through August traded within a range of $4/bbl. In November 2020, crude oil prices rose as markets responded to the positive news of several potential vaccines for COVID-19, and WTI and Brent closed the year at $49/bbl and $52/bbl, respectively.

## NTEA ADOPTS CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

NTEA, the Association for the Work Truck Industry (NTEA; Farmington Hills, Mich.), said Jan. 5 that its board of directors adopted a climate change policy that continues the association's commitment to facilitating productive use of alternative fuels and advanced technologies for commercial vehicles. The policy explains the work truck industry represents a positive force in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Further, it provides NTEA the opportunity to educate the public, regulators, and legislators about how the industry is already putting in place solutions to society's environmental concerns.

"Climate change is a serious global challenge that requires long-term commitments—and every industry has a role to play," said Mike Kastner, NTEA's managing director, who leads legislative and regulatory lobbying efforts across the U.S. and Canada. "NTEA recognizes the work truck industry is well-positioned to make a significant difference through continued development of innovative new technologies to reduce fuel consumption and vehicle greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The industry will produce vocational trucks for the future that both increase overall vehicle efficiency and reduce GHGs on the path to zero emissions."

NTEA's principles include the following:

- We support evidence-based, scientifically grounded policy solutions that are fuel- and technology-agnostic. We believe there are multiple paths to a zero-emissions future.
- Solutions should be data-driven.
- Industry has an important role to play in driving new technological solutions, and government policy can help create the enabling environment for such innovation.

In the new policy, NTEA reiterates it's imperative that work trucks are included in the national discussion. Commercial vehicles play a vital role in our productive economy and represent an opportunity through which alternative fuels and advanced technologies can be effectively and rapidly deployed.

"NTEA is dedicated to building knowledge and acceptance of technologies that will reduce GHG emissions," said Steve Carey, NTEA president & CEO. "Further, we support and develop driver training and vehicle purchasing education to enhance vehicle efficiency."

To learn more or to read NTEA's full climate change policy, go to *ntea.com/climatechange.*

## MIKE HOPSICKER ACQUIRES 100% OF RAY MURRAY INC.

Ray Murray Inc. (RMI; Lee, Mass.) confirmed that effective Jan. 7, Mike Hopsicker has acquired 100% ownership of RMI. The partnership between Hopsicker and the Murray family began in 2005 when they began working together on a planned transition of ownership. Prior to RMI, Hopsicker was CEO of Agway Inc., and spent eight years as the CEO of Agway Energy Products, one of the largest retail marketers of propane and fuel oil in the U.S.

During the past few years, the company and its industries faced their share of challenges, but ultimately RMI was able to enjoy significant growth and expand its geographic reach through a combination of four acquisitions. It has grown to be one of the largest two-step distributors in both the propane and hearth and grill industries.

Ray Murray summarizes the milestone by stating, "This is a momentous occasion for our families, and the entire team at RMI. We have thoroughly enjoyed working with Mike on the transition. His family has become our family." Jim Murray adds, "Although it is a little bittersweet, our gratitude to Mike and the entire Ray Murray Inc. team for all that has been accomplished far outweighs those feelings. We are indeed a family."

Ray, Jim, and John will remain an important part of the RMI management team as advisors to the business, and will continue to assume their current management roles for several years to come.

## SSI ACQUIRES K&K MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

Software Solutions Integrated LLC (SSI; Shelbyville, Ill.) announced Jan. 7 the acquisition of K&K Management Solutions (Avon, Ind.), a move that brings together companies in the agricultural and energy retail software industries.

K&K's Energy-Force is a well-recognized solution for the management of propane and refined fuel delivery. The company is the exclusive marketer of OptimizerPlus, which it describes as the only fully automated route optimization tool.

Pam Rincker, SSI president, explained, the two companies share the same core values and commitment to outstanding service to their customers. "It's not just the product synergy

Made in the USA

QUALITY STEEL

*Because Quality Steel Means Quality Tanks*

LP CYLINDER SERVICE INC.

**Your Repair and Recertification Specialist**

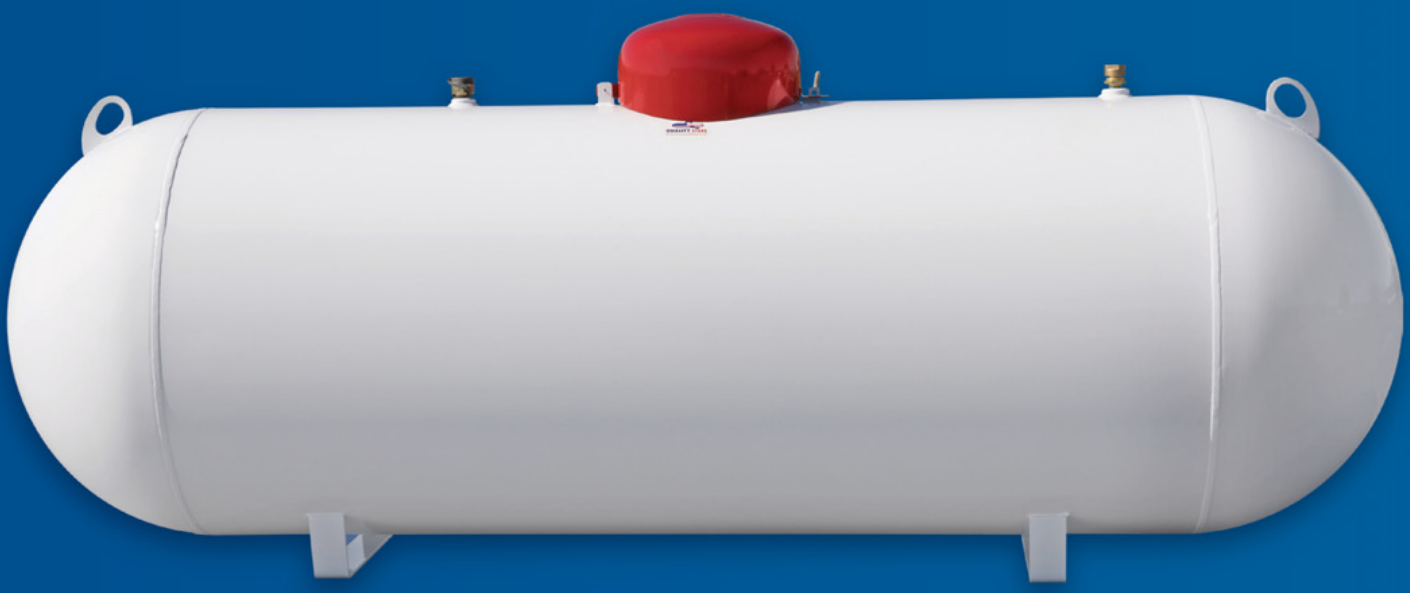
# STEEL ASSETS, WE'RE YOUR SOLUTION!

Quality Steel and LP Cylinder are your source for all tank life cycle needs, offering new tanks for sale AND all size cylinder and tank refurbishment.

We make it easier for you to do your tank business!

**Above Ground | Underground | Above/Underground | Anhydrous Ammonia | Dispenser**

**Recertification & Refurbishing for Tanks and Cylinders**



**LP CYLINDER SERVICE INC.** | LPCylinder.com | Shohola, PA, USA | 570.685.7924

**QUALITY STEEL** | propanetank.com | Home Office, Cleveland, MS USA | 800.345.2495

and length of time we've spent serving our respective industries that makes this a great fit, it's the way K&K has built their business on the same fundamental principles as SSI."

## DCC SIGNIFICANTLY EXPANDS PRESENCE IN U.S. LPG MARKETS

DCC plc (Dublin, Ireland) announced Jan. 5 that it has expanded its presence in the U.S. LPG market with its recently completed acquisition of United Propane Gas (UPG; Paducah, Ky.).

UPG is DCC LPG's largest acquisition since initially entering the U.S. market in April 2018 and follows the material bolt-on acquisitions of NES Group in September 2020 and Pacific Coast Energy in April 2019. It is a further significant step in the execution of the strategy to build a business of scale in the highly attractive and growing U.S. LPG market. The acquisition considerably expands DCC LPG's geographic presence from 14 to 21 states, nearly doubles its customer base to more than 230,000 customers, increases its number of employees to more than 800, and is said to create the sixth-largest business in the U.S. LPG market, based on volume.

UPG markets, sells, and delivers LPG and related products and services to residential, agricultural, and commercial customers in 13 Midwest and southern states, with a strong presence in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama.

Together with a recent smaller bolt-on acquisition completed in Colorado, the combined enterprise value of the transactions was $145 million. The consideration was paid in cash on completion.

## IEA'S ROADMAP TO NET-ZERO EMISSIONS BY 2050

The International Energy Agency (IEA) said Jan. 11 that it will produce the world's first comprehensive roadmap for the energy sector to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 as it further strengthens its leadership role in global clean energy transitions.

The new special report, *The World's Roadmap to Net Zero by 2050,* will detail what is needed from governments, companies, investors, and citizens to fully decarbonize the energy sector and put emissions on a path in line with a temperature rise of 1.5 degrees Celsius. It is part of a series of new IEA projects to support efforts to reach global energy and climate goals.

BETTER THINGS TO DO THAN WORRY ABOUT CYLINDER SAFETY:

Make a cool new friend.



ASM's superb product line and years of experience plus your cylinders equals the perfect friendship. We've set the standard for cylinder storage and handling equipment for over 30 years. We offer:

- *Super fast turnaround; many small orders ship the same day*
- *Industry leadership in safety and security*
- *Tamper-resistant hardware, hinges, & heavy-duty lock receiver*
- *A unique component design system*
- *Superior quality & durability*
- *Unbeatable customer service*




So chill out with your friends and let your cylinders chill out in our cabinets. Call us at 800-488-8816.

*Global Reach–Made in the USA.*

ASM BUILT ON SERVICE

800-488-8816
amrstd.com
*The Standard of Excellence*

PROPANE education & research COUNCIL









# WE'RE ALWAYS IMPROVING SO THAT YOU CAN, TOO.

## EXPLORE ALL THE NEW COURSES AND FEATURES IN THE LEARNING CENTER

We're constantly adding new safety and sales training courses to the Learning Center. Make sure you're checking regularly to see what's new. If you don't have an account, create one today (it's free) so you can access everything the Learning Center has to offer — including convenient new features like the ability to print certificates for completed courses directly from the site! Get started at **Training.Propane.com**.

### NEW & IMPROVED: DISPENSING PROPANE SAFELY COURSE

This popular course — covering how to safely dispense propane into small cylinders, motorhomes and ASME tanks, and autogas equipment — has a new look, new video content, and a whole new curriculum.

PROPANE.COM

ROCHESTER GAUGES, LLC

e-Dial™
Sensing the Future

Eliminate the guess work and calculation of actual tank volume with Rochester's first digital Gauge Indicator.

For Bobtails, Transports & Bulk Storage Tanks.




Bluetooth®

- Automatic Temperature Compensated Liquid Levels through wireless communication with e-Temp Sensor (Sold separately)
- Certifications: Class 1 Div 1 Groups C & D, ATEX (CE), IECEx
- Simple In-Field Installation and Set-up
- Two Programmable Alarms
- Retrofits Existing Magnetel® & Taylor Gauges
- Free Rochester e-Dial™ App




Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

Always Innovating, Never Imitating™

Dallas, Texas, USA +1-972-241-2161
Brussels, Belgium +32-10-24-1010
Mexico City, Mexico +52-55-3003-0970
Shanghai, China +6-21-50461110

https://rochestergauges.com/product/e-dial



This new roadmap will be released May 18 and build momentum ahead of the COP26 Summit in Glasgow in November, under the presidency of the U.K.

Dozens of countries, including most of the world's largest economies, and many leading companies have already announced plans to bring their emissions down to zero by around the middle of this century. But much work remains to be done to translate these ambitious targets into actual reductions in emissions.

"The energy that powers our daily lives and our economies also produces three-quarters of global emissions," said Dr. Fatih Birol, IEA's executive director. "This means our climate challenge is essentially an energy challenge. The IEA is determined to tackle that challenge and lead global clean energy transitions.

"Our roadmap to net zero can play a vital role in helping countries identify and implement the actions needed to achieve climate, energy security, and affordability goals. Nothing short of a total transformation of our energy infrastructure will be required. That calls for decisive action this year, next year, and indeed every year to 2050," Dr. Birol explained.

COP26 president, Alok Sharma, said, "The IEA's plan to produce a pathway to net-zero global emissions by 2050 is another important step for climate action. This will make clear the actions countries must take individually and collectively to meet that goal."

Driving a stronger global consensus on the pathway to net-zero will be a key priority for IEA over the coming years. The agency also intends to step up its work on global clean energy transitions in other major areas through 2021 and beyond. It will expand efforts to support its members and partners in meeting their climate ambitions, and play a greater role in tracking national commitments. This includes working with governments to develop stronger mechanisms that build confidence that they are not alone in taking the necessary steps to keep their climate promises.

IEA also announced that reinvigorating international energy cooperation will be a major theme of the 2nd IEA Clean Energy Transitions Summit, following the first event held last year. This year's summit will be co-hosted with the U.K. government on March 31, and will focus on how governments can work together more effectively to ensure long-term net-zero targets are translated into concrete action in the run up to COP26.

The new commission, *Our Inclusive Energy Future*, will consider the social and economic impacts on individuals and communities, as well as issues of affordability and fairness, with the aim of putting people at the heart of clean energy transitions. The commission's meetings will be chaired by Danish Energy, Climate, and Utilities Minister Dan Jørgensen and result in key recommendations in advance of COP26.

pro-par

FISCHER TANKS

# YOUR TANK OUR EXPERTISE

## DOMESTIC TANKS

- From 320 to 5,000 USWG
- All equipped with best in the industry valves and gauges



## STORAGE TANKS

- Up to 90 000 USWG
- Welded steel saddles available for installation on concrete pier



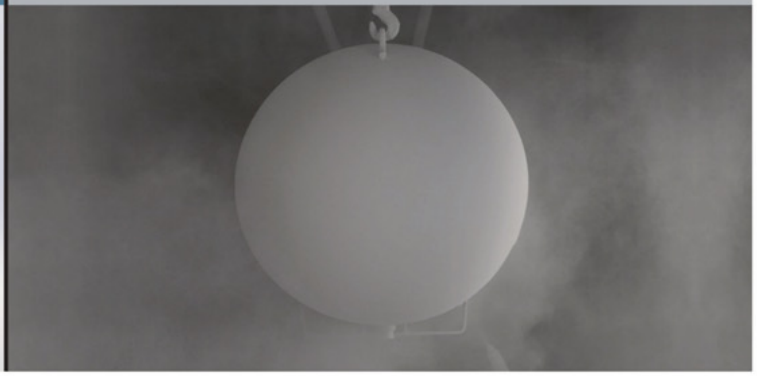
## UNDERGROUND TANKS

- From 320 to 2,000 USWG
- HDPE sump



## REFURBISHED TANKS

- Steel Shot blasted and hand grinded
- Powdered Coated
- New valves, gauges and dome




**Pro-Par**
**USA • Don Nichols** (207) 737-9704 | dnichols@proparinc.com
**Canada • Greg Gibson** (819) 566-8211 | ggibson@proparinc.com
**proparinc.com**

**Fischer Tanks**
**USA • David Edmondson**
(231) 362-8265 | dedmondson@fischertanks.com
**fischertanks.com**



# FERRELLGAS WINS FLORIDA GAS GRILL ARBITRATION

DAVID R. SCHLEE

*The following column originally appeared in the April 2007 edition of* **BPN**.

Ferrellgas was victorious in a recent binding arbitration that took place in Fort Myers, Fla. The matter involved a flash fire at a customer's home that occurred while the customer was attempting to put his outdoor patio grill in operation. The arbitrator ruled in favor of Ferrellgas based on his findings that there was no breach of duty by Ferrellgas, that the customer's claim was based on pure speculation, and, most importantly, that the customer assumed the risk.

## PATIO GRILL

In 1995, Ferrellgas installed a propane grill on James Atkins' patio. The installation was according to code and was not vented. In 2004, Atkins refinished his patio and bought another gas grill from Ferrellgas. Ferrellgas agreed to install the grill free of charge, and, in fact, gave Atkins a 10% discount on the grill.

Ferrellgas delivered the grill to Atkins' home in December 2004. However, Atkins was still in the process of installing the countertop for his patio and refused installation at that time. Atkins was supposed to call Ferrellgas to set up an installation appointment once his outdoor kitchen was ready for grill installation.

## DO-IT-YOURSELFER

Rather than calling Ferrellgas to install the grill, Atkins decided to do it himself. Compounding the problem, he failed to call Ferrellgas to inspect his installation. As a result, Ferrellgas had no knowledge that the grill had been put to use. When Atkins attempted to use his grill in January 2005, an explosion occurred, causing second-degree burns on his legs.

Atkins filed suit against Ferrellgas, claiming that Ferrellgas was liable for his burns because vents would have prevented the explosion, and because Ferrellgas "negligently" failed to provide ventilation for the grill enclosure in 1995.

Atkins argued that, because Ferrellgas did not install his current grill, he was "forced" to install it himself. As a result, it was not vented. If Ferrellgas had only installed the grill, reasoned Atkins, Ferrellgas would have (or should have) vented the grill according to the language of the installation manual.

*"Atkins was supposed to call Ferrellgas to set up an installation appointment once his outdoor kitchen was ready for grill installation. Rather than calling Ferrellgas to install the grill, Atkins decided to do it himself. Compounding the problem, he failed to call Ferrellgas to inspect his installation. As a result, Ferrellgas had no knowledge that the grill had been put to use."*

## ARBITRATION

The parties agreed, pursuant to a provision in the Master Agreement for Propane Sales and Equipment Rental between Ferrellgas and Atkins, to arbitrate the dispute. For this reason, the dispute was not submitted to a jury. Instead, it was referred to a private arbitrator. Pursuant to the Master Agreement, this arbitration was binding.

After a hearing, the arbitrator ruled in favor of Ferrellgas, stating that any evidence of the elements of negligence was speculative, and, in any case, nullified by Atkins' own actions. According to the arbitrator, a duty on the part of Ferrellgas possibly existed if it agreed to install Atkins' grill. However, even if Ferrellgas did agree to install the grill, according to the arbitrator, Atkins frustrated the agreement by delaying the installation of the grill when it was delivered. The arbitrator decided that, when Atkins installed the grill himself without notifying Ferrellgas before or after the installation, Ferrellgas was prevented from installing the grill correctly or inspecting the installation.

## CHAIN OF CAUSATION

Regarding the ventilation issue, the arbitrator found that the 1995 grill installation was done properly because neither the code nor industry practice required venting for grills connected to hard gas lines. Only grills connected to portable cylinders require venting, and because both the 1995 and 2004 grills were not attached to portable cylinders, venting was not required. Thus, Ferrellgas met any duty it had.

# STAY CONNECTED.






ProControl³

Fuel Delivery System

Find Out More

BASEng.com

In addition, even if venting was required, the arbitrator agreed with Ferrellgas that there was no evidence that a lack of venting caused or contributed to the accident. In order to side with Atkins, according to the arbitrator, one would have to speculate on a number of factors regarding links in the chain of causation. Determining that a lack of venting caused the accident required an assumption that there was a defect in the gas system, the defect caused an ignitable mixture to develop, and the ignitable mixture would not have developed if the grill was vented.

## ASSUMPTION OF RISK

According to the arbitrator's ruling, the evidence did not support these assumptions because no leak was found in the system before the accident. After the accident, a small leak was found, but it likely would not have developed into an ignitable mixture with or without vents. The only evidence was from a fire inspector who listed the cause of the fire as "undetermined," speculating that it could have been caused by leaving a burner on too long before ignition. If that was the case, a fire could result regardless of whether the grill enclosure was vented.

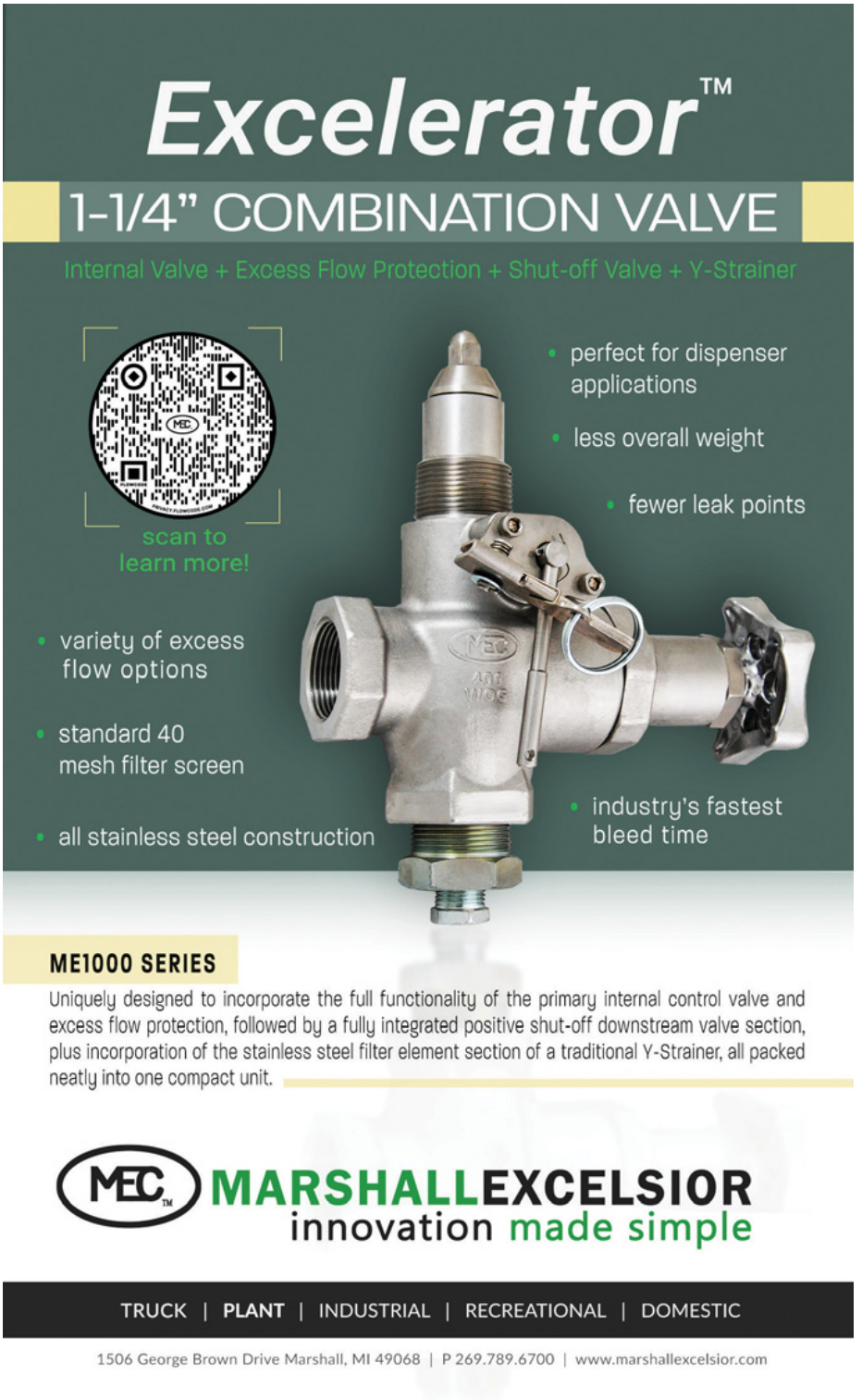
Significantly, the arbitrator found that Atkins assumed the risk of an explosion by installing the grill himself. The arbitrator found that Atkins made several decisions to increase the risk. Atkins did not heed the warnings on the installation manual to call a qualified technician, nor did he ascertain or follow the applicable codes. In addition, Atkins failed to notify Ferrellgas that he installed the grill himself. The arbitrator noted that Atkins made all of these decisions knowing the dangers of propane.

> *After a hearing, the arbitrator ruled in favor of Ferrellgas, stating that any evidence of the elements of negligence was speculative, and, in any case, nullified by Atkins' own actions.*

The arbitrator declared that if there was a defective installation, for lack of venting or otherwise, Atkins' assumption of risk was the cause of the accident. Thus, Atkins' obvious assumption of risk by installing the grill himself outweighed any debatable duty to personally install his grill in violation of code requirements.

---

*David Schlee is of counsel to the law firm of Baty Otto Coronado with offices in Kansas City, St. Louis, and Springfield, Mo. Readers who have questions or comments may contact him at* dschlee@batyotto.com.



# WHAT DO THESE THREE RESPECTED PROPANE MARKETERS HAVE IN COMMON?










**After more than 70-plus years as family-run businesses, they chose EDP to preserve their legacy.**

If you're thinking about selling your business, we invite you to consider Energy Distribution Partners. We will take good care of your employees, continue to provide exceptional service to your customers and remain active in the communities you serve, ensuring your legacy lives on.

**See what others have to say by visiting edplp.net/testimonials.**



For a confidential, no-obligation conversation about your quality propane operation, contact David Stroupe, (312)-254-5954 or dstroupe@edplp.net. Dave can work with you to achieve a positive outcome in transitioning your business.

ENERGY DISTRIBUTION PARTNERS
EDPLP.NET



# WHAT ONE THING MAKES YOU MOST PROUD?

NANCY J. COOP

This question holds promise to reveal a side of industry leaders that we may not know exists. Professional achievements are one respected measure of pride, and here we learn other aspects of their lives that help put life into perspective. These individuals offer their thoughts of what makes them most proud, either at or away from the office.

The VERBATIM column poses open-ended questions to a few of our colleagues. Adopted from a familiar "Heard on the Street" format, we offer our responders a chance to reply via email. Their personal thoughts below are in response to the question posed above. These are their replies reported verbatim.

## SOURCES OF PRIDE

My family makes me most proud. My family represents my whole life from the time Nancy and I met to our last grandchild. My family, and their families, is one of the accomplishments that will remain after my life on earth is finished. My family provides motivation to succeed in all my activities and to experience love, which really is the best guide in life.

*Gary France*
*France Propane Service*
*Schofield, Wis.*

Lumin® Advanced LPG Filtration Systems

ADVANCED FILTRATION TECHNOLOGY ▪ PREMIUM PERFORMANCE ▪ UL CERTIFIED

New! TECHNOLOGY




UL Certified Lumin® Advanced Technology LPG Filtration Systems deliver premium filtration performance removing up to 99.5% of impurities as small as 5 microns or less. This includes tank scale, particulates, heavy end oil and water.

When used in combination with Lumin® Premium LP with CH25X® Technology, Lumin® Filtration Systems will help boost LPG fuel economy, reduce downtime and maintenance costs, increase power and performance, reduce harmful emissions and extend equipment life. You can count on its quality construction and UL certification for maximum LP output, improved profitability and superior operating efficiency.

- Removes Tank Scale, Particulates & Heavy End Oils
- Improves LPG Fuel Economy
- Boosts Power & Performance
- Extends Equipment Life
- Reduces Harmful Emissions
- Plus UL Certification

Call 800-728-8258 or visit www.valvtect.com/Luminspecs.asp to learn more about Lumin® Advanced LPG Filtration System applications and specifications.

c UL us LISTED CE NPGA NATIONAL PROPANE GAS ASSOCIATION MEMBER MEMBER Canadian Propane Association Association canadienne du propane

Lumin® ADVANCED LPG FILTRATION SYSTEMS

© 2020. Lumin® is a trademark of ValvTect™ Petroleum Products, Hickory, NC 28602. CH25X® is a registered trademark of Guardian Protection Products, Inc.

*This is a tough one for me as I'm not very good at tooting my own horn. When I'm passionate about something, I'm not afraid of standing up for what's right, fair, and just, but I guess my answer would have to be this…" I'm still standing"! I know this has been a common lane for me in some of these answers but September 2010 changed and defined my life, my future. Jimmy, my late husband and the commander of this ship, passed away 10 years, three months, seven days, and 12 hours ago (not that I keep track) and I'm still here. Literally knowing nothing about the propane industry, or running a business for that matter, I'm still standing. It's been 10 years of learning all I can and putting an excellent support team in place. Going from just putting one foot in front of the other to being honored to serve on a couple of our industry boards. Moving from fear of running the business, wondering what will tomorrow bring, to a love for this industry and the people we serve. I'm proud of the person I have become, never thinking or believing I had this inner strength I have found.*

*Today, I will tell you, I have been Broken and Blessed.*

***Judy Taranovich***
***Proctor Gas***
***Proctor, Vt.***

Independent, happy, compassionate children.

***Laurie Irish-Jones***
***Irish Propane***
***Buffalo, N.Y.***

*The one thing I am most proud of is my involvement in the propane industry. Through the years, I have volunteered with the Ohio Propane Gas Association, the Midwest Convention, the NPGF [National Propane Gas Foundation] Scholarship Committee, and Propane Days. While the work for these various organizations has been very rewarding, I have received something even more valuable in return. We have made so many lifelong friendships with wonderful people all across the country in this industry. By taking the opportunity to get involved, I have gained far more than I have given.*

***Rosie Buschur***
***McMahan's Bottle Gas***
***Dayton, Ohio***

I am most proud of overcoming the adversity I faced in my young life. It was not easy to get over my childhood traumas, but I found the courage and tenacity to pursue my dreams. I studied hard, put myself through school, ran a marathon, started a business, and have a successful career and a loving family. It hasn't always been easy, but I pushed through and stayed committed to my goals year after year. I'm proud to be at this point in my life and




Westmor's **Blueline® QX Bobtail** allows you to stay ahead of your competition with equipment that is lighter, stronger, faster and safer. Our products are manufactured in the United States and backed by industry-leading service and support.

WESTMOR
westmor-ind.com

TERMINALS & PLANTS | STORAGE | **TRUCK & TRAILER** | C-STORES | FLEETS | AVIATION

I realize every struggle I overcame just helped me get to a better version of myself. There's no stopping now.

***Hayley Karicofe***
***AmeriGas***
***Churchville, Va.***

*As we start 2021, I am proud of our success in 2020. At work we survived, we adjusted, we maintained our company culture, and we learned how to do our jobs differently and, in some instances, better than before. At home we survived, we adjusted, we taught three different grades, and had a new baby, we made so many meals and did more dishes and laundry than I thought possible. Our kids started and stopped and started again and stopped again all the things they love most; they figured out new ways to participate in school and extracurricular activities. I am proudest of how everyone stuck together as a team and continued to adapt to the constant challenges we have and continue to face.*

***Lauren Clark***
***Bergquist Inc.***
***Toledo, Ohio***

I am extremely proud of my family. From my children, to my wife, to my parents, and to my extended family, everyone is loving, thoughtful, helpful, and responsible. We aren't perfect, but we love each other and that is what really matters.

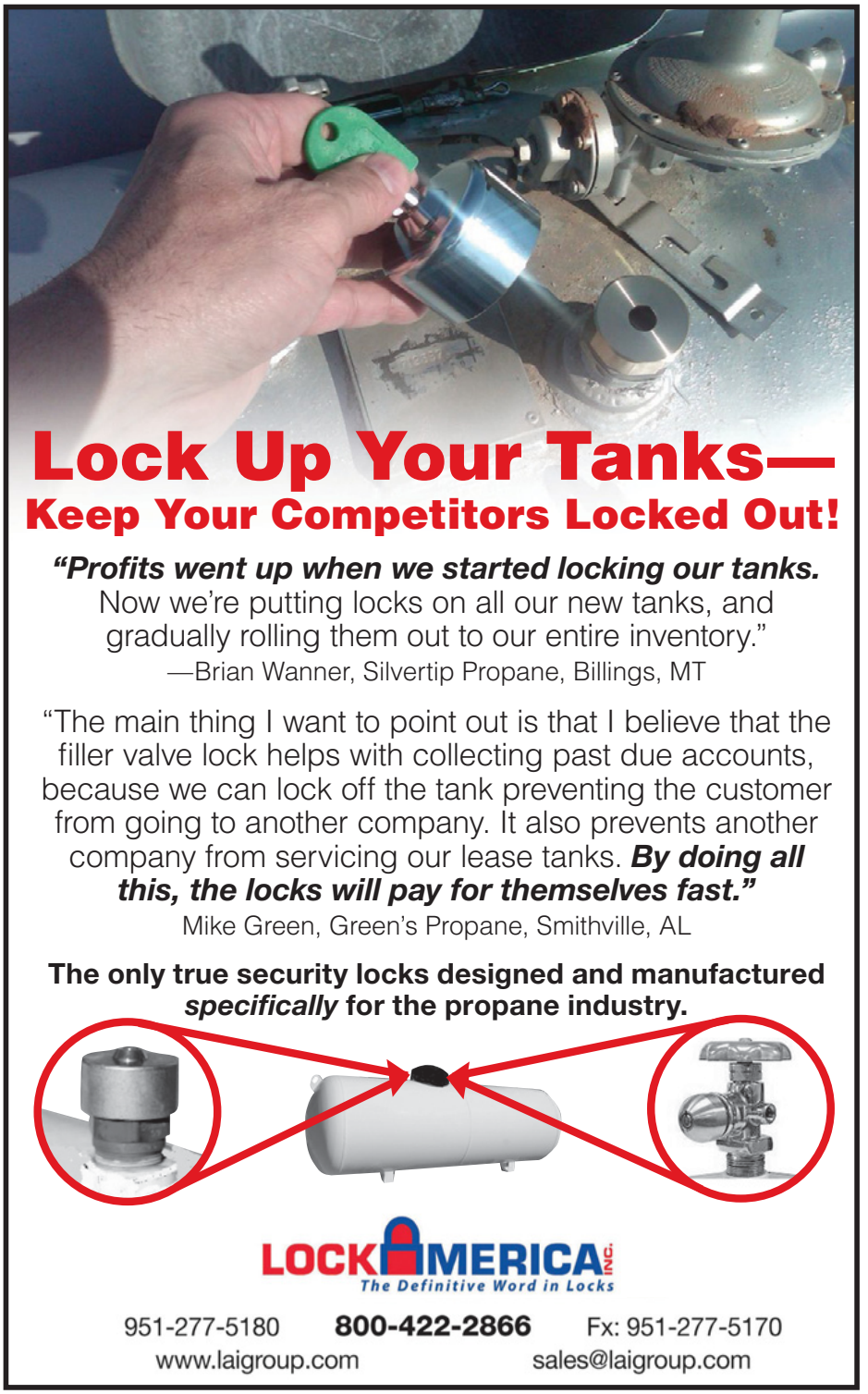
***Jason Soulon***
***Westmor Industries***
***Shawnee, Kan.***

## BE PROUD

We all have reasons to be proud of something in our lives—overcoming struggles, personal or professional achievements, areas of reflection that allow us to appreciate who we are as individuals. To underscore this subject, I offer this quote by Abraham Lincoln: "I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him."

---

*Nancy Coop is an industry advocate. She serves as a director at Cetane Associates. Readers may contact her at* ncoop@cetane.net.






NPGA
NATIONAL PROPANE GAS ASSOCIATION
AFFINITY PROGRAM PROVIDER



# PPE PROTOCOLS TO KEEP EMPLOYEES SAFE DURING WINTER WEATHER

BRENT CAMMETT

It's that time of year again. You can see your breath—and with cold temperatures come ice, snow, sleet, and all of the crazy ground conditions of winter. Delivery representatives and service technicians are in the thick of the busy season, working long hours to take care of increased customer needs like no-heat calls and fuel run-outs on top of their normal day-to-day responsibilities. How can we protect our employees, or help them protect themselves, from winter-related hazards in the field?

## TIPS TO ENFORCE PPE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policies and procedures are put in place as a guideline for employees to follow and learn from, but sometimes getting everyone on board can be tricky. Employees should view personal safety as an individual choice with significant consequences. It is imperative that employees understand that the consequences of not following personal protective equipment (PPE) and safety protocols do not only affect them individually, but also impact their loved ones. This perspective can be a helpful tool for management to reach employees with the importance of adhering to PPE rules and company policies and procedures.

When discussing PPE and policies and procedures with your field employees, shine a spotlight on the reasons why everybody needs to wear proper PPE to prevent injuries with a focus on how not doing so could negatively impact

Continued on **Page 42**



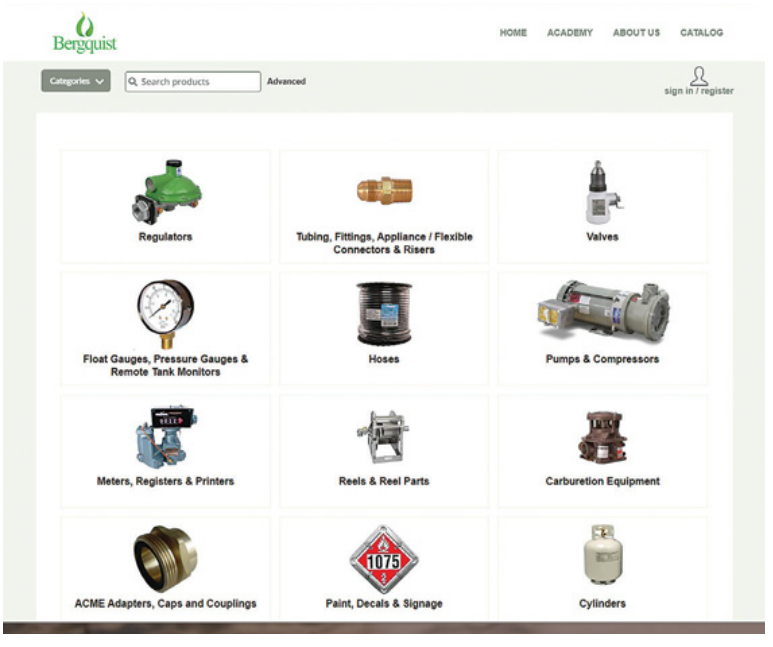
# DISTRIBUTORS RESPOND TO CUSTOMERS' NEEDS

**STEVE RELYEA**

Wholesale distributors have a unique perspective on the propane industry. They work with large numbers of both manufacturers, on the one side, and propane marketers and other retailers and installers of the products, on the other.

Over the past year, of course, they have had to deal with many changes. In the following pages, nine distributors that serve propane marketers describe how they've adapted and what products and services they've added in response to the pandemic and the constantly evolving needs and wants of their customers.

**Bergquist Inc.** (Toledo, Ohio) has seen a steep increase in customers' use of its e-commerce platform. "It has grown exponentially since March," reports Don Montroy, vice president of marketing. "People are using it to shop, not just to purchase. They are accessing information, imagery, availability, and pricing."




Bergquist Inc. has seen a steep increase in customers' use of its e-commerce platform.

Even those who do not use the e-commerce platform to order, use it to shop and gather information. They then call to ask any questions and to order. "We find that twice as many customers use it to shop as to buy online," Montroy tells ***BPN***.

Bergquist stocks more than 12,000 items related to propane, high-pressure gas valves, and anhydrous ammonia. The company handles parts, equipment, and supplies from dozens of manufacturers. It operates out of two area distribution centers and five regional sales centers.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Bergquist added a series of monthly training webinars. The webinars have been paused during the heating season, but will restart in April and will continue beyond the pandemic.

"As much as we'd like to get back to in-person training, we will follow the customers' lead and wait until they are comfortable meeting face to face," Montroy explains. "But the webinars will continue. They may be more convenient for customers, so we will produce webinars as long as customers attend them."

Another service launched by Bergquist in 2020 is inventory management. Accessed through the company's e-commerce storefront, this enables customers to manage their inventory of Bergquist purchased items using min and max quantities and item quantities on hand.

"Customer service is our philosophy—to be the most convenient propane equipment distributor," Montroy says. "We have the inventory, we ship same day, we make shopping convenient, we create invoices that are as convenient as possible to read, and we treat customers the way they want to be served."

He adds that, as a distributor, Bergquist provides value to manufacturers as well as customers. While serving as a sales arm for manufacturers, distributors learn about the needs of the customers and pass that information along to those who build the products. "Most of our salespeople have years of propane experience," Montroy concludes, "so they know what our customers are going through and they understand the products that offer a solution."

For more information about Bergquist, and to view the Store e-commerce platform and the Bergquist Academy training resources, visit *bergquistinc.com*.

**Gardner Marsh** (Raleigh, N.C.) is working on a new website and online catalog and expects to roll out both at the beginning of the second quarter. The new website will include more detailed links to product specs, so that when you click on a product, you will immediately be shown a spec sheet, brochure, and other resources. The online catalog will be updated and made more user-friendly.

"People are using these more because they are working from home or behind closed doors," Angi Harris reports. "So

the website will be a one-stop place with everything anyone needs to know."

Harris and her sister, Laura Kedzierzawski, purchased Gardner Marsh in January from their father, Dale Gardner. Harris, who started with the family business in 1994, is now CEO. Kedzierzawski, who joined in 1999, is chief financial officer.

Gardner Marsh is a wholesale distributor providing gas equipment, propane tanks, gas appliances, technical assistance, product specification, and training. The company serves its customers from a corporate office and warehouse in Raleigh, N.C., and an ancillary office and warehouse in Florence, S.C.

Training, Harris notes, is one of the key roles of distributors. They provide customers a single source of information and products from many manufacturers, while enabling the manufacturers to focus on making things rather than stocking and shipping them. "That allows everyone to do what they do best," she says.

"As distributors, we all sell the same kind of products, so what differentiates you is what you can do for your dealers," Harris says. "We pride ourselves on shipping every in-stock order the same day." Other examples




Gardner Marsh reports grills, gas logs, and fireplaces have been hard to keep in stock.

## IN-DEMAND PRODUCTS, SERVICES

Because wholesale distributors deal with a wide range of customers, serving many end-user segments and different regions of the country, they always have a good idea of what's in demand. Here are products and services highlighted by nine distributors who serve the propane industry and related industries.

**Agricultural heaters**: "Where cannabis cultivation is legal, everyone wants heaters for their greenhouses, so we've hopped on. There are a lot of manufacturers, but the one we sell the most is the L.B. White Therma Grow 120,000 Btu or 220,000 Btu heaters. They've been selling like hotcakes."—*Jay Stephens, Teeco Products.*

**Propane equipment**: "The propane business has been solid and good. People are putting money into their homes instead of traveling, they are working from home, there is new construction, and people are moving out of the cities and into their summer homes in rural areas. So, residential is up, but commercial is down primarily in the restaurant industry due to the shutdowns in dining. That is a Northeast phenomenon that impacts us as we all adapt to the pandemic."—*Mike Hopsicker, Ray Murray Inc.*

**Indoor air quality**: "Antimicrobial filters and ionizing air cleaners for rooms are in demand for not only residential use, but also commercial and industrial use. We've increased our portfolio in Honeywell and Aprilaire, making sure our offerings are readily stocked. For any company that deals with HVAC, indoor air quality has moved front and center."—*Ray Kazakewich, R.E. Michel Co.*

**Storage vessels**: "The storage vessel business is just going off the chart. Whether it's 250, 500, 1000, 1150, or 1999, if anybody has tanks, they can sell them. Not only storage tanks, but even small barbecue bottles are doing quite well right now."—*Arch Hudelson, Meeder Equipment Co.*

**Autogas**: "Over the last year, we've seen a lot more interest in autogas. More and more marketers are reaching the conclusion that they should integrate autogas into their fleets. The systems are reliable, they are EPA-certified, and they enable marketers to run their fleets on their own fuel."—*Jeff Head, LPG & NH3 Supply Inc.*

**Heaters and fireplaces**: "Because more people are spending time at home, they are adding or upgrading their appliances."—*Kim Godlewski, IPS Equipment*

**Online training**: "I think the industry as a whole looks at this as one change that will continue after the pandemic. COVID has pushed a large number of people in this industry forward much faster, and technology is stepping up to meet those needs."—*J. R. Anderson, Gas Equipment Co.*

**Appliances:** "Staying at home has definitely changed what people buy. They haven't been able to travel or go out to eat, so they are remodeling and adding new appliances. Grills, gas logs, and fireplaces have been hard to keep in stock. Usually, we would forecast by looking at what sold the previous year; this year has blown that right out the door."—*Angi Harris, Gardner Marsh*

**Tank monitors**: "Telemetry, or tank monitors, had been growing for the last few years, but it really took off in 2020. The real benefit is the analytics that help improve efficiency. It's not just monitoring the product level in the tank, but also using the analytics."—*Don Montroy, Bergquist Inc.*



Gas Equipment Co. has added the LTSGA, a liquid transfer sight glass adapter for use in propane liquid transfer operations.

include performing grill demonstrations and offering in-person training after hours, when drivers are back from their routes and can see the products.

During the pandemic, Harris adds, "The key word is 'flexibility.' This past year has been challenging, but also creative. We've had to think outside the box, learn new ways to do things, and find new ways to meet customer needs."

For more information about Gardner Marsh, and to view the current website and watch for the new one that is to be launched at the same address in the second quarter, visit *gardnermarsh.com*.

**Gas Equipment Co.** (GEC; Dallas, Texas) hired a software developer in 2020 and released automated solutions for terminals and for customer delivery and trucks.

The customer delivery and truck automation solution, EZ-Link Office, is middleware that links off-the-shelf accounting software with the delivery truck's mobile computing system. That means software such as Quickbooks, Sage, and others can be integrated with systems such as Liquid Controls, BASE Engineering, Midcom, EZ-Count, and others.

"This affordable, web-based solution allows small- to medium-sized marketers the ability to access customer account information remotely, dispatch deliveries from any mobile device to drivers/trucks, and communicate with their drivers with integrated text messaging—increasing productivity," J. R. Anderson, marketing manager, tells ***BPN***.

Kevin Pruitt, director of integrated systems, adds, "Users are happy with it because they don't have to spend tens of thousands of dollars on a tool to have live dispatching and integration, plus they can use their existing accounting package."

The terminal automation solution, similarly, integrates Toptech terminal products with the accounting system or reports used by propane marketers.

These are examples of the things that make GEC a "value-added distributor," Anderson says. GEC is a warehouse distributor that serves six market segments, one of which is LP-gas and $NH_3$. The company distributes products covering each phase of product transfer, including terminal loading, transportation, storage, and delivery to the ultimate consumer. It operates from 11 warehouse sales branches.

"We're always adding new parts and pieces," Anderson reports. Three recently developed products are UG-Anode-Test, an underground tank anode test decal for NFPA 58-required cathodic protection tests on buried anodes; LTSGA, a liquid transfer sight glass adapter for use in propane liquid transfer operations, and ParaSCALE Lite-SL, an automatic stop-fill retrofit kit that was developed for many Fairbanks model 1124 beam scales currently being used for filling propane cylinders. These and other products are featured on the company's dedicated Youtube Channel, which is at *youtube.com/user/GasEquipmentTV*.

For more information about Gas Equipment Co., visit *gasequipment.com*.

For more information about EZ-Link Office, visit the dedicated website at *ez-linkoffice.com/#/home*.

**IPS Equipment** (Byron, Mich.) has kept in contact with customers throughout the pandemic using emails, phone calls, webinars, and new digital tools. "We have just really been trying to keep information flowing to customers while also trying to stay in contact with them as much as possible," Kim Godlewski, vice president, tells ***BPN***.

The new digital tools include the new RegO app, the upgraded IPS online store for online ordering, and email blasts that deliver weekly and monthly specials. Through webinars offered in cooperation with RegO and other suppliers, IPS keeps customers informed by sharing new product information and training. Utilizing emails and phone calls, the company lets customers know about new items and company specials.

IPS Equipment is a full-line distributor of propane equipment and heating and hearth products. The company provides the equipment from three warehouses.

"IPS is one of very few companies that can handle just about any kind of propane need or issue," Godlewski says. "Our complete catalog has RegO products, heaters, plastic pipe, copper tubing, risers, and just about anything a propane retailer needs. IPS can also




IPS Equipment provides a full line of autogas dispensing systems, in addition to propane equipment; heating and hearth products; and other products and services.

service bobtails, from building new to upgrading existing that can include going to customers' locations for testing, meter inspection, and repairs. Our construction service department can upgrade and build new plants with added storage and/or bring existing installations up to code. In addition, we have a full line of autogas dispensing systems."

For more information about IPS Equipment, visit *whyips.com*.

## LPG & NH3 Supply Inc.

(Buffalo, Minn.) began selling, installing, and servicing autogas conversion systems last summer. Jeff Head, sales and marketing manager, tells ***BPN*** the PRINS systems the company handles are EPA-certified, designed for specific vehicle platforms, backed by a limited warranty period of as much as five years or 100,000 miles, and are bi-fuel, so the engine can operate using gasoline or propane.

"Propane is an option for everyone," Head says. Most of the company's sales of autogas conversions have gone to propane marketers who are using them to lower their operating expenses and further promote the fuel that they sell. It's also looking at other sorts of fleets.

Autogas conversion is the latest addition to LPG & NH3 Supply's offerings, which also include distributing a complete line of propane equipment; constructing bulk plants and terminals; and fabricating loading/unloading and measuring systems. Head explains, "We're always interested in how we can best serve the market. We listen to what our customers say. If we can solve a problem in a way that satisfies them and us, we'll do it. We have no preconceived notions of what we can or can't do."

LPG & NH3 Supply has been fabricating cylinder-filling dispensers and autogas dispensers for decades. Today it offers dispensers in those configurations as well as one that combines the two. The combination unit has an autogas dispenser at one end and a walk-in cabinet with a scale for cylinder filling at the opposite end. For autogas, the company offers the Gilbarco Atlas for fueling commercial fleets and the Encore 700 for retail customers. "The Encore 700 has an intuitive user interface; if you can operate an ATM at a bank, you can use this," Head says. "A quick-connect nozzle, together with a K15-type fill valve, make refueling with autogas as easy as pumping gasoline into a vehicle."



LPG & NH3 Supply Inc. began selling, installing, and servicing autogas conversion systems last summer.

Over the last year, LPG & NH3 Supply has also seen an increase in its customers' use of the virtual training and the online ordering it offers. Head expects both to keep going strong after the pandemic. "Virtual training is more convenient and it requires less travel and time away from the job. I think that's something that's going to stay with us a long time. As people do more things online, they also become more comfortable ordering online. The majority of people still call us, but a growing number have an interest in ordering online."

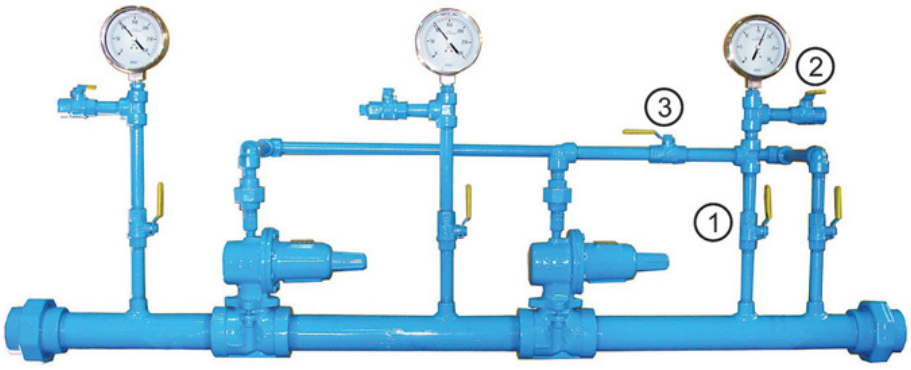
For more information about the products and services offered by LPG & NH3 Supply, visit *lpgandnh3.com*.

## Meeder Equipment Co.

(Fresno, Calif.) has seen sales increase in a number of product categories in recent months. The company is a distributor of propane equipment with offices and warehouses in six locations in five states.

One fast-growing category is propane tanks. Arch Hudelson, special projects director, western region, at Ransome Mfg., explains, "There's a lot of new home construction, so that's part of it. And, people have been building bigger square footage houses and installing more equipment, so people want larger tanks. Also, you can only refurbish a tank so many times, so people are buying new ones."

Similarly, regulators are moving fast. In this category, Meeder Equipment offers a solution from Ransome Mfg. that is specific for jurisdictional systems as well as an alternative where multiple relief valves would be required. It's called the 627 Monitoring Regulator Train. "If




Meeder Equipment Co. offers the 627 Monitoring Regulator Train from Ransome Mfg.

we use the monitoring regulators, we no longer have to install relief valves downstream for over-pressure protection," Hudelson explains. "We pre-build these Monitoring Regulator Trains and put them in the Meeder catalog. We put gauges before, between, and after the regulators to see if they are working properly. They are pre-plumbed, simple, and easy to use. We even mount them on a base assembly, so they are plug-and-play, like a Lego setup."

Another product category that's popular is high-efficiency heaters. "With higher energy costs, people are very cognizant of the efficiency," Hudelson says. "They don't want their money going up the chimney."

Generators have been selling well, largely due to the rolling blackouts and power outages that have been experienced in the west. "Generator manufacturers are selling those things like hotcakes," Hudelson reports. "We get a lot of calls from people who don't work with generators often, and we help them with sizing regulators and determining vaporization rates."

That kind of training is part of the service offered by Meeder. Before the pandemic, Hudelson went around putting on schools for Ransome distributors, mostly about vaporizers, regulators, and engineering for pipe sizing. Now, of course, he's having to deliver that help via phone and email.

"We try to be of service, not just sell parts," he says. "The dollars our customers spend with us also give them access to all the education and tips we can offer."

For more information about Meeder Equipment Co., visit *meeder.com*.

**R.E. Michel Co.** (Glen Burnie, Md.) launched several new initiatives to support its customers over the past year. Ray Kazakewich, national propane manager, tells ***BPN*** that these value-adds include the following.

Prerecorded virtual training is offered in 11 modules that focus on areas of study such as cathodic protection and proper gas line sizing. "Customers can go in and do the training at their leisure," he reports. When individuals complete a training module, they receive a certificate from R.E. Michel.

Marketing resources, too, are available to help the company's customers sell products and grow their business. "Our customers purchase gas logs, furnaces, and other appliances from us to resell to their customers. So, we help them do that," Kazakewich says. "Our service doesn't end when we sell the appliance to the gas company; instead, we help them sell it."



R.E. Michel's fleet of crane trucks that deliver propane tanks is growing.

Collaborative inventory management and order fulfillment is another new and growing service. R.E. Michel will manage customers' inventory not only in their storeroom, but also in their trucks. For example, when technicians remove a regulator from their truck, they can report that through an app in their phone, or just scan a bar code, and R.E. Michel will replenish the inventory automatically.

R.E. Michel's new mobile warehouse concept vehicle visits customer offices and jobsites and displays, demonstrates, and sells products on the spot. "The prototype has been a great success and we've just bought another one. It allows our customers to see the stuff in person, instead of on a catalog page, and compare products side by side."

The company's fleet of crane trucks that deliver propane tanks is growing. "We want to deliver more tanks to our customers or their customers," Kazakewich says. "We can deliver directly to a jobsite if the gas company wants that."

R.E. Michel Co. has more than 300 locations from coast to coast. The company is a distributor of air conditioning, heating, propane, and refrigeration equipment, parts, and supplies. It also has an affiliate, Dealers LP Equipment (DLPE), that is dedicated solely to the wholesale distribution of propane equipment. DLPE serves its customers from warehouses in Louisville, Ky.; Hickory, N.C.; Memphis, Tenn.; Dothan, Ala.; Jackson, Miss.; Pomona, Calif., and Davenport, Iowa.

"We consistently roll new initiatives into the marketplace," Kazakewich says. "The pandemic seems to have accelerated the requests for value-adds, which we have responded to."

For more information about R.E. Michel Co., visit *remichel.com*. For more information about DLPE, visit *dealerslp.com*.

**Ray Murray Inc.** (RMI; Lee, Mass.) launched a new website at the beginning of 2020. At the new site, anyone can view all of RMI's catalogs as well as its training schedule, technical services, product manuals, and product application and reference guides. Customers who log into the website can also view price and availability, and the MyRMI section allows access to their past orders.

"The new website has taken off significantly because it is easy to use and allows you to order simply with the click of a button," Mike Hopsicker tells ***BPN***. "But it's not just a point-and-click catalog; it's a resource for the industry. There is a lot of information on the products, including purchasing information and product specifications." Hopsicker recently acquired 100% ownership of RMI, completing a transition of ownership that began in 2005. He has been the majority owner since 2014.

Soon after the pandemic began forcing the postponement of in-person events, the company also expanded its other digital communications. In April 2020, RMI kicked off its Coffee Talk live online training sessions. The company also stepped up its social media content, posting videos that are between one minute and three minutes long and offer product training. Then, during the summer, the company hosted a virtual trade show series covering hearth products.

"We hope to resume our in-person, hands-on, tear-apart-equipment training in 2021, but we will have to plan and adapt," Hopsicker noted. "Our virtual training will continue. One reason it will continue to be used is, it's a tool to enhance the number of trainings we can have. It costs a lot of money for a propane company to send people to in-person training. In-person training is valuable, but we can expand the virtual training too."

RMI covers two segments: gas equipment and heating, hearth, and outdoor living products. The company recently expanded its offering of parts and pieces HVAC and oil servicemen need. These include valves, fittings, and other furnace and boiler parts. Another recent addition, available only in the company's Southeast and Midwest territories, is Warming Trends products. These include burners that produce twice the flames and are constructed of solid brass for corrosion resistance.

RMI serves the Eastern U.S., primarily, and ships products from four warehouses. "We have four convenient locations close to our customers, so they will get their orders faster," Hopsicker says.

For more information about Ray Murray Inc., and to see the resources offered on its new website, visit *raymurray.com*.




Ray Murray Inc. launched a new website at the beginning of 2020.

**Teeco Products** (Irvine, Calif.) has seen a spike in demand for products related to heating outdoor spaces during the pandemic. These include propane heaters as well as all the equipment used to deliver fuel to those heaters, Jay Stephens, president and CEO, tells ***BPN***.

The demand is coming from customers who want to heat patios for outdoor dining, and tents for celebrations or for COVID testing. For the same reason, there has been demand for 20-lb. cylinders. Cylinder manufacturers have been rationing those because consumers are hoarding them and because there's been a shortage of rolled steel and, therefore, the cylinders that are made from it. "We tell the manufacturers, 'We'll take every one you've got,'" Stephens says.

There's been a run on cylinder dispensers, too. "Every corner gas station wants one now," he reports. "We used to ship dispensers same day; now we need four weeks. We're fabricating them as fast as we can." Similarly, cylinder cabinets have been in demand. "We build them too. Our sales have probably tripled since 2019. It's a good business."

Teeco Products is a wholesale distributor and fabricator of gas equipment. The company operates out of a corporate headquarters in Irvine, Calif., and three locations: Sacramento, Calif.; Auburn, Wash.; and Rapid City, S.D.




Teeco Products has seen a spike in demand for 20-lb cylinders, cylinder dispensers, and cylinder cabinets.

Established in 1946, the company is marking its 75th anniversary this year. Teeco hopes to hold a celebration at its own open house or at the Western Propane Trade Show. But, of course, that is predicated on whether those events can be held this year. The company also marked the occasion with a recently released 75th anniversary edition print catalog.

Online training, too, has taken off during the pandemic. "Our salesmen used to take training to the customer's front door, but since those doors are closed during the pandemic, we have partnered with our manufacturers to do virtual training," Stephens reports. The training has covered "everything you can think of" related to propane, he adds. "Our customers have probably done more training this year than ever before," Stephens says, "because virtual training is easier to access and they don't have to travel."

For more information about Teeco Products, visit *teecoproducts.com*. ■

# NPGA SCORES VICTORIES AS 2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION ENDS

**PAT THORNTON**

As Congress debated two bills toward the end of 2020, money to various propane industry initiatives was in play. These bills were an omnibus package, which included the COVID-19 relief provisions, and the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Congress passed H.R. 133, the omnibus package that included COVID-19 relief and Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations legislation, on Dec. 21, 2020. "We were pleased to achieve several goals for the propane industry with the passage of the $1.4-trillion legislative package," Michael Baker, the National Propane Gas Association's (NPGA) senior director of legislative affairs, told ***BPN***. "Congress wrapped several beneficial provisions for the propane industry into the large package."

"The propane industry is a clear winner in Congress' year-end legislation," said NPGA president and CEO Stephen Kaminski. "NPGA worked tirelessly with its member companies and allies in Washington, D.C., to secure the inclusion of several policy priorities in the final legislative package of the 116th Congress."

The year-end legislative package contained research and development funding opportunities through the Department of Energy, including $5 million for vehicle engine technology and the use of dimethyl ether (DME), within available funds (WAF) for micro combined heat and power (CHP) in combination with other renewables, and WAF for CHP micro-grids. "These funding opportunities represent the low-carbon future for propane applications," Baker explained. "We were also pleased that Congress extended the Alternative Fuel Tax Credit and the Alternative Fuel Refueling Infrastructure Credit through the end of 2021. These provisions are worth nearly $200 million annually to the propane industry and were set to expire at the end of 2020. They extend a 50 cent per gasoline gallon excise tax credit, which calculates to 37 cents per gallon for propane. The infrastructure credit allows for a 30% credit on installing new refueling infrastructure capped at $30,000 per location. Therefore, projects of $100,000 or more can receive a maximum of $30,000 at each location."



Michael Baker

COVID-19 restrictions mandated a shift in lobbying techniques and strategies in 2020. "We're not lobbying in person anymore, but there have been other effective ways to communicate our wishes to Congress," Baker said. "NPGA's focus has been on transitioning to virtual meetings with legislators and their staff and continuing to work closely with industry coalitions. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, NPGA was still able to accomplish its goals. During the last several weeks of the year, NPGA helped lead a small industry collation to meet with tax-writing committee legislators and sent a letter to Congress with signatures from over 400 organizations, a majority of which are propane associations and companies. These efforts helped secure much-needed extensions for the alternative fuel credits. These tax provisions provide certainty to the propane industry and its customers and help transition more Americans to autogas vehicles."

Congress enacted the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 after the House and the Senate passed a presidential veto override of the bill, H.R. 6395. This Act authorizes annual appropriations and policies for the Department of Defense (DoD). "Among the many provisions in H.R. 6395 is a pilot program that requires DoD facilities to purchase new alternative fuel vehicles," Baker explained. "Section 321 instructs at least two DoD facilities with the largest number of non-combat vehicles and within 20 miles of public and private refueling stations to purchase new alternative fuel vehicles in place of traditional gasoline or diesel vehicles when there is less than a 10% cost difference. In addition to propane, natural gas and renewable biomass are also eligible for the program."

"NPGA worked closely with the provision's sponsor, Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.), and Senate armed services chairman, Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.), to conduct outreach to House and Senate offices advocating for the program," Baker said. "We believe the pilot program will help expand efforts to increase the use of

Continued on **Page 41**



Photo courtesy METSA

# TANK MANUFACTURERS, REFURBISHERS, INSTALLERS DISCUSS COST-EFFECTIVE STORAGE

**PAT THORNTON**

What is the best strategy for purchasing storage tanks, both large and small? Retailers are caught in a conundrum as the cost of steel drives tank prices higher and wholesale propane in the U.S. is now seen as a seller's market because of international buyers.

## LARGER TANK STRATEGIES...

"One thing that we can count on these days is uncertainty, and fluctuating steel prices are part of that conversation," said Tim Schweppe, general manager—Arrow Tank & Engineering, propane division (Minneapolis). "Not so long ago, we experienced something similar with the tariff announcements in March of 2018. Back then, steel prices sharply rose almost overnight and we were faced with making quick purchasing decisions to hopefully get ahead of the curve and soften the blow." His company builds bobtail trucks, cargo tanks, transport trailer tanks, and large storage tanks up to 90,000 gallons.

"Since 2018, and particularly over the past year or so, prices from the mill became more 'reasonable,' whereas our cost averages were once again 'normal,' or whatever we perceive to be normal these days," Schweppe told ***BPN***. "As a matter of fact, we began seeing a downward movement below 'pre-tariff' prices and potential opportunities for a favorable 2021 material supply plan."

Schweppe added he just wants stability for his customers and his own company. "Do you know anyone comfortable making a big-ticket purchase commitment with an open-ended contractual price?" he asked. "With the products we sell, each transaction is like buying a house. Would you be comfortable making a commitment to buy and not know the final price until you started moving the family and all your belongings into the new homestead? Of course not."

"In early January we are seeing a steady rise of steel prices marching upward, putting them approximately 26% higher than October. However, many manufacturers have once again taken measures to stabilize prices by capitalizing on the earlier market opportunities, stocking up on inventory. My point being, do not scratch your plans based on what you are hearing regarding current market conditions. Instead, be sure to check with your supplier as many good deals are still out there to be made. Likewise, the same opportunities are available for bobtails and transport trailers," Schweppe added.

"A combination of factors including COVID-19, political instability, supply chain insecurity, and low fuel prices have led to the installation of bulk storage at a level unprecedented in my 11 years at LPG Ventures," said Ian Baanders, sales manager at LPG Ventures (Kearney, Mo.), which installs large propane storage tanks.

Brandon Ihm, owner of Energys USA Inc. (Waupaca, Wis.), agrees demand is strong. "The U.S. has gone from a net importer to a net exporter of propane over the past 10 years and Canada has also increased exports significantly," he said. "Retail propane marketers throughout the Midwest, where we do most of our work, are feeling the effects of both U.S. and Canadian propane going to the highest bidder internationally." Ihm said retail marketers are focused on adding storage to be more confident they will have two weeks of supply, which is the storage rule of thumb, on hand as product is not always as readily available as it used to be. "I'm seeing more retail marketers take a closer look at the return on investment for adding storage and consider the fewer miles and less wear and tear on vehicles this can provide. Larger storage tanks spread out across a market territory can achieve ROI quickly."

In addition to increasing their own storage, Ihm said, many retail marketers are partnering with agricultural/commercial customers to share large storage tanks. "They may have an agreement with a grain dryer that the retailer gets to utilize the tank during the rest of the year when propane is not needed for grain drying," he explained. "The retailer may decide to furnish the storage tank as part of an agreement over 10 to 15 years to be the exclusive propane supplier to the grain dryer account. Not only does this guarantee business for the agreed upon amount of time, but reduces the upfront cost of adding storage."

## THOUGHTS ON LARGE AND SMALL TANKS...

Superior Energy Systems (Columbus Station, Ohio) has been installing propane storage facilities as well as autogas refueling sites from many years. "We mainly deal with the large wholesale storage tanks, but do put 1000- and 1900-gal. tanks at our autogas sites," said Derek Rimko, vice president operations. "Prices do certainly fluctuate and that is why we encourage making decisions fast when getting a quote on a project. Often, if much more than a week goes by after bidding on a project, we have to go back and confirm pricing on all of the materials that will be needed for the project." Rimko also sees more retail marketers adding storage than ever before. "They are being very strategic. They are wanting to increase their footprint, but also be efficient as they deliver to a wider region." Rimko also notes that he has observed retail marketers are not hanging on to extra tanks as much as they used to. "I see them as being much quicker about selling off 500- and 1000-gal. tanks," he said. "In many cases, they lose a customer and just don't want the excess tanks and sell them. They end up buying more as they need them later."

"Since August, steel costs have significantly impacted the cylinder and tank market," said Bobby Weinberg, product director of industrial products for Worthington Industries (Worthington, Ohio), U.S.-based manufacturer of pressure cylinder and tanks. "We don't foresee that changing in the near term. Indications are we may see some softening in the second half of the calendar year, but there is still a lot of uncertainty. Near term, availability is as much of a concern as price. There simply isn't much material available due to strong demand from the automotive industry, delays related to COVID-19, and consolidation."

Weinberg noted it is equally important to keep in mind that manufacturers are facing the same challenges as folks in the industry to operate their production facilities in a safe and responsible manner. "The biggest key for anyone in the propane market (retailer, distributor, or otherwise) is planning," he said. "Our supply chain is strained. All the cylinder and tank manufacturers are seeing unprecedented demand. This has been the case since March of 2020. Understanding your needs for the next 12-18 months can help secure supply and potentially provide cost savings. We have seen the retail marketers, distributors, and exchangers with inventory have been winning in this market."

TerraVest Industries has a portfolio of propane-dedicated companies including Pro-Par inc., Fischer Tanks, Signature Truck Systems, Countryside Tanks, and Maxfield. TerraVest Industries' propane division offers equipment for storage, distribution, and transportation. Glenn Buck, general manager at Pro-Par, offered several tips for tank buyers.

"Faced with growing manufacturing costs since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis," he said, "it has become more important than ever to have in place smart strategies to counter the effects of growing costs affecting your business. Steel pricing is very volatile presently and subject to change at an unprecedented pace. This is when you need to rely on trusted suppliers that will be frank with you and help get you through this crisis. A frank discussion with your go-to suppliers is often the first strategy to initiate when things get tough. Rethink your supplier list and keep the suppliers that will go the extra mile for you—suppliers that offer a diversified product line that is focused on the propane industry, and that are there with you helping you grow by offering products that are key to your success.



Photo courtesy METSA

"Basic values that you should expect from your suppliers are price, delivery, quality, and service in the order that matters to your business. You will do better by narrowing your supplier list and working with those that have similar values as you. Keep the suppliers that will go the extra mile for you. Your prime suppliers should be




Photo courtesy Superior Energy Systems

those that will be there with you offering excellent service, on-time delivery, advantageous terms, and a quality product.

"Work with trusted suppliers," Buck suggested. "When things get tough, there is a need to work with trusted and reliable suppliers that will make every effort to meet your company's procurement requirements. An honest conversation is required with your suppliers to ensure you understand.

"Optimize your supplier list. In the long game, you will do better to work with one or two key suppliers that you can trust. Keep the suppliers that will go the extra mile for you, that offer a diversified product line that is focused on the propane industry, and that are there with you helping you grow by offering multiple products that are key to your success.

"Bigger is not necessarily better," Buck added. "Larger companies tend to focus on monthly sales instead of focusing on what is obviously more important, you, the customer. Smaller companies tend to be more responsive and flexible. Typically, these companies can make changes quickly to accommodate your needs. While it is difficult to put a cost on benefits of working with a company that has these qualities, it can be very beneficial to the growth of your business. The key is to find a business partner that has good pricing and delivers the goods that are important to you when you need them."

## MOSTLY SMALLER TANK CONCERNS...

D.D. Hardy, national sales manager for Quality Steel Corp. (Cleveland, Miss.), sells numerous residential tanks that are 500 gallons and 1000 gallons in capacity, both above and underground. "Rising steel prices are nothing new to this industry," he said. "We went through this a few years ago and came through it wiser, but this year the rise in steel came faster and hit historic highs. It's important, prior to any year, that dealers work with their tank suppliers to review anticipated demand for the coming year, keep communications open as markets shift, plus take time to plan out any changes in tank sizes or quantities needed and where lead times are headed. Having three strategically located manufacturing facilities across the U.S. allows us to be closer to our customers and provide solid lead times and customer service long after your tanks arrive. As busy as things get, you cannot sacrifice safety, quality, and customer service."

Hardy noted he is seeing a trend in larger tanks over the last several years. "Some of that is a result of propane marketers using the larger tanks for tertiary storage and some of it is a result of our tanks being used not only to heat a customer's home, but being used in the agriculture industry, which is good for the propane industry," he explained. "Examples are grain drying and poultry."

At Metsa Tanks (Monterrey, Mexico), Robert Kenney, managing director, said his company focuses on residential tank sales as well as autogas filling stations. "Customers sometimes buy smaller quantities when they perceive prices may move back down," he said. "I don't expect prices to decline significantly anytime soon. We will typically offer customers a better price if they make a larger commitment to take deliveries over the course of a year." Kenney said his company sells new tanks, but do offer contract refurbishing evaluated on a case-by-case basis. "Manufacturing in Mexico has some price advantages," he said. "Also, we sometimes work with multiple companies working together to consolidate their orders into one big order if the companies are close in proximity."

Chuck Kinnie, president of Shasta Tanks (Anderson, Calif.), built a business refurbishing domestic propane tanks in addition to his retail propane business. "We serve companies in California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, and Nevada," he said. "We apply two-part poly aspartic paint, which is very durable, and only install RegO valves." Kinnie learned the process of refurbishing tanks while in the retail propane business and began providing his services to other retail propane companies in the Western United States. "Customers often can't tell the difference between a new and refurbished tank as long as valves are installed properly and the paint job is meticulous. We can often save them $200 to $300 versus a brand new tank. This adds up over time and a large quantity of tank purchases." ■

# EXPORTS ADD NEW DIMENSION AND CHALLENGES TO U.S. PROPANE MARKET

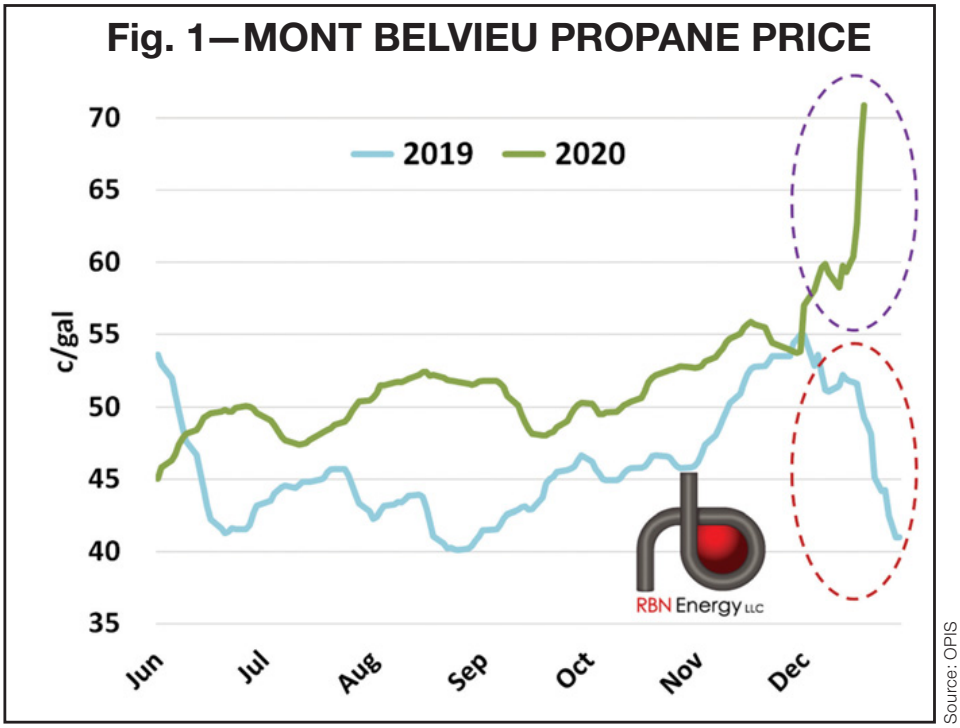
**PAT THORNTON**

If you checked out ***BPN***'s inaugural "BPN Brief" video, you learned a lot from Rusty Braziel, founder and CEO of RBN Energy, about the U.S. propane market and the prospects for the combination of cold weather and ever-increasing propane exports to move prices up during the 2020-2021 winter. Recorded on Dec. 3, 2020, when Belvieu propane was at 58 cents/gal., the "NOW YOU SEE IT" video contained information based on "NOW YOU SEE IT" Part 1 and Part 2 on RBN Energy's popular blog regarding a variety of energy sources. By late December 2020, shortly after Braziel's video was placed on the ***BPN*** website, Belvieu propane was at 72 cents/gal. and a third part of "NOW YOU SEE IT" was published on RBN Energy's blog. At that time, subscribers needed to look no further than daily postings to see that Braziel's forecast that there could still be some "Gotchas" out there were spot on. The factors he talked about that could drive up propane prices were playing out. As propane prices continued to strengthen into January, the Jan. 13 blog "BIG PANAMA WITH A PURPLE HAT BAND—PROPANE PRICE SQUEEZE, PANAMA CANAL RULES FLUSTER MARKET" further explained the spike to almost a dollar a gallon at Belvieu and subsequent decline in price—moves that were playing out as this issue of ***BPN*** was headed to press.

FROM RBN ENERGY'S "NOW YOU SEE IT" PART 3 (Dec. 21, 2020):

*It's been a wild and woolly December in the U.S. propane market. The Mont Belvieu propane price is up by almost 40%, blasting past 70 [cents/gal.] on Friday—a level not seen since February 2019, when WTI at Cushing was trading at $57/bbl, $8/bbl above where that price sits today. Is it simply cold weather goosing demand? Sure, that's one factor. But it's really all about exports. Just as 2020 cold weather finally arrived in U.S. propane country, exports hit the highest levels ever recorded. December Gulf Coast export volumes—92% of the U.S. total—are up 21% over last month, and 39% above December 2019. So both international and domestic demand are pulling hard on supplies at the same time. No wonder propane prices are soaring. We started this series on winter 2020-21 supply/demand in late November by suggesting that there could be a few gotchas still out there that were not being reflected in the forward propane market. Well, we've now seen one of those gotchas. But there's a lot of winter left to go—in fact, the official start of winter is this morning! In this blog we'll review what's happened so far and what could be coming next to propane markets.*

**Fig. 1—MONT BELVIEU PROPANE PRICE**

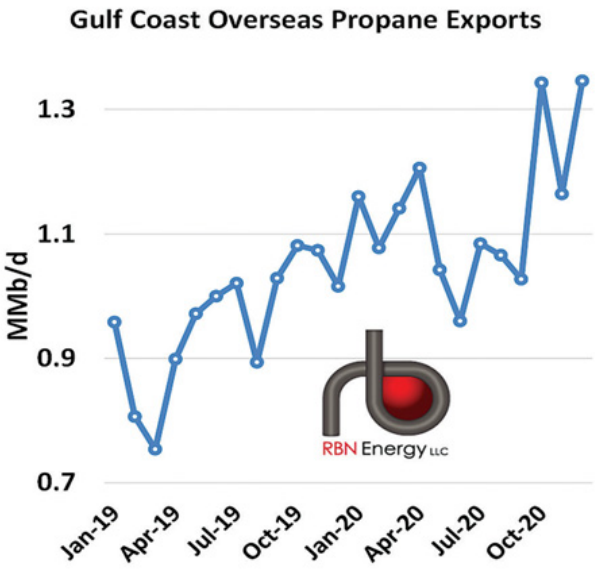


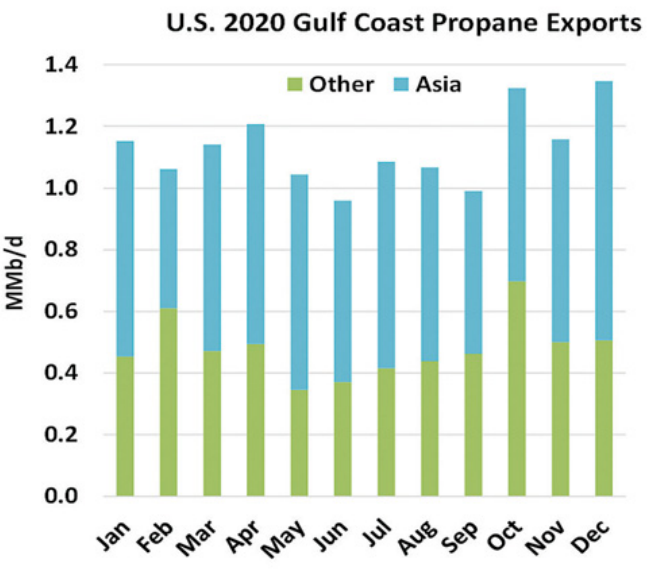

Source: OPIS

*In Part 1 of this series, we started by showing how strong propane prices have been this year on a relative basis, meaning in comparison to crude oil. Focusing on the period between June and November, in 2019 the price of propane was only 34% of crude, while this year it has averaged a much higher 53%. (As a general rule, propane is considered to be expensive relative to crude when that ratio is above 50%, and cheaper when the ratio is below 50%.) Which begged the question, why would propane prices be so strong in 2020 when in 2019 prices were weak relative to crude?*

*We answered that question in Part 2. The primary culprit is exports, which as of November were up to 1.3 MMbbld from only 0.6 MMbbldd in 2015. Actually, propane exports now exceed average U.S. domestic demand, even in the*

## Fig. 2—GULF COAST OVERSEAS PROPANE EXPORTS AND U.S. 2020 GULF COAST PROPANE EXPORTS




Source: RBN NGL Voyager

*winter season—an extraordinary thing, when you think about it. We then explored the relationship between total demand (domestic plus exports), inventories, and prices. Bottom line: with exports so high, it just takes more inventory in the ground to keep the system running smoothly during the winter. That level of inventory can be measured by calculating average days-supply (i.e., inventories divided by demand) and including both domestic and export demand in the equation. In our calculation of that statistic, it showed that average days-supply has been skating along the bottom of the five-year range for the past few weeks. And when the market perceives that stocks might be getting tight, prices increase.*

"That is exactly what happened in December. Mont Belvieu propane prices (non-TET), spiked from the low 50s cents/gal. range in late November to 70.9 cents/gal. on the Friday before Christmas," Braziel told ***BPN***. "This was a gain of almost 40% in less than a month." He noted that half of the increase had just happened in the previous week. Sharing *Fig. 1*, Braziel showed the price of propane this year after the market meltdown this spring (green line) held relatively steady until this month, when he said the price took off like an Elon Musk rocket (dashed purple oval). "Of course, it *is* winter, so that always happens with propane, right? Wrong," Braziel said. "As shown by the blue line, just last year the price of propane was in the mid-40s-cents/gal. range for most of the summer and fall, moved into the 50-cents/gal. range only briefly, then dropped like a rock in December (dashed red oval)."

"The moral to this story is that propane prices rarely match seasonal expectations," Braziel said. "Instead, they respond to good, old-fashioned supply/demand fundamentals. And in 2020, one aspect of the fundamentals equation has seen a major shift: exports."

Braziel shared the left graph in *Fig. 2* showing overseas propane exports from the Gulf Coast; it excludes truck and rail exports to Mexico. "As we've noted, over 90% of U.S. exports move out of terminals along the Gulf Coast, and volumes have been growing steadily since 2012, when exports were a paltry 100,000 bbld," he said. "By midyear 2019, Gulf Coast exports were up to 1.0 MMbbld and they kept on increasing into 2020 until the market meltdown, when exports backed off for a few months. But since October (coincidentally when the domestic propane winter contract season kicks in), propane exports have roared back with a vengeance."

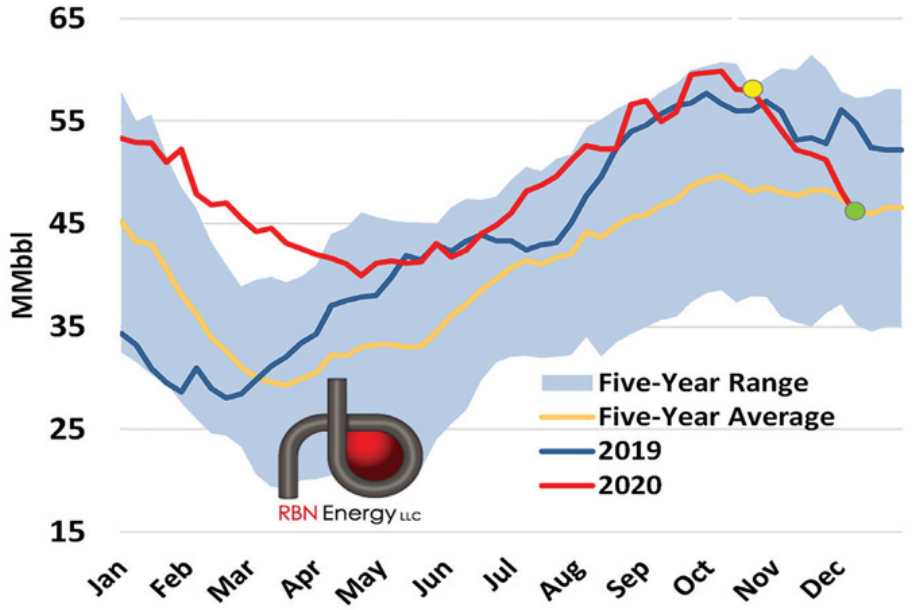
Gulf Coast exports have hit an all-time high. RBN's NGL Voyager Report and companion LPG Vessel Data Excel file show propane exports jumped from less than 1.1 MMb/d in June through September, up to an astronomical 1.4 MMbbld in the first half of December (right graph). The graph shows the volumes moving out of each of the Gulf Coast terminals, with Enterprise Products Partners still in the lead with 41%, but Energy Transfer, Phillips 66, and Targa Resources all moving more cargoes, with 18%, 15%, and 24% of total volumes, respectively.

"*Fig. 3* shows what all those exports have done to Gulf Coast (PADD 3) propane inventories. Back in late October, PADD 3 stocks were sitting at a healthy 58 MMbbl (yellow dot)," Braziel said. "That was higher than in October 2019 (blue line) and essentially equal to the five-year high (top of blue-shaded area). Fast forward to mid-December and PADD 3 inventories (green dot) are down to only 46 MMbbl, about 20% below where they stood this time last December, right on the five-year average (orange line), and from our vantage point today, headed south on a relatively steep decline. Clearly it is exports that have sucked those barrels out of storage and into ships bound mostly to Asia."

PADD I (East Coast) and PADD II (Midwest/Mid-Continent) represent 60% of U.S. propane consumer demand. Milder weather prevented a price spike which did not materialize until December.

"In mid December, we saw propane reach 61% of crude," Braziel said. "That's the expensive zone, a high ratio of Mont Belvieu propane to WTI Cushing crude oil." As petrochemi-

## Fig. 3—PADD 3 PROPANE INVENTORIES




Source: EIA Weekly Petroleum Status Report

cal demand and prices shot up as well, propane days supply (based on both domestic demand and export in the equation) were down in mid-December from 37 days to only 27 days. "We typically see days-supply decline further as winter draws to a close. The historic five year low for March is 16 days."

—

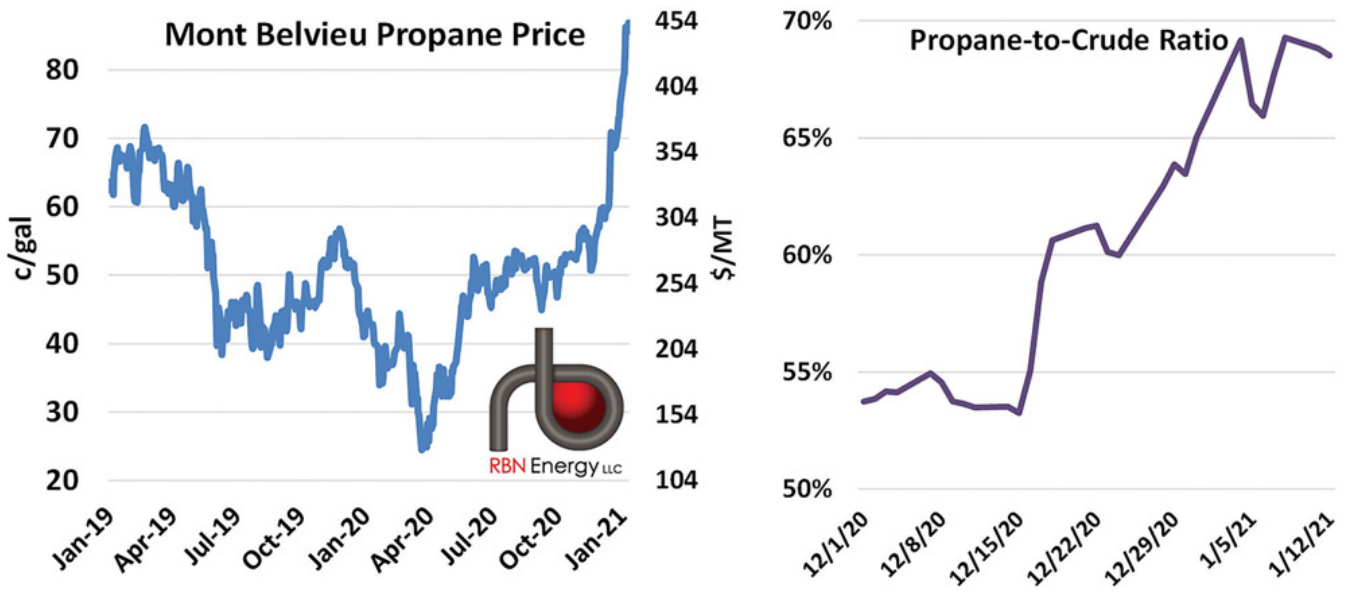
FROM RBN ENERGY'S "BIG PANAMA WITH A PURPLE HAT BAND—PROPANE PRICE SQUEEZE, PANAMA CANAL RULES FLUSTER MARKET" (Jan. 13):

*It's been a chaotic start to the new year for propane. In the past twelve days, the Mont Belvieu price is up over 15%, closing on [Jan. 12] at 87 cents/gallon—the highest since October 2018. The usual culprit of winter weather has something to do with it, but not just in North America. Over the past couple of weeks, frigid temperatures in Asia, along with supply cutbacks from the Saudis, have supported U.S. propane exports to those markets, further tightening the U.S. supply/demand balance. But as is often the case these days, the market has another complicating factor. Delays transiting the Panama Canal have stacked up VLGCs—the vessels carrying U.S. propane to Asia—on both the Atlantic and Pacific sides of the waterway, pushing up charter rates to levels not seen in years. And on top of that, new transit-scheduling rules from the Panama Canal Authority will shove VLGCs to the back of the line, potentially making it even more difficult to get through the canal without significant delays. Today, we'll explore these developments and what they may portend for the remaining weeks of winter.*

*As we blogged about in November and December (Now You See It), the possibility for a propane price squeeze has been coming at us for several weeks. Even though the U.S. entered the propane winter season with healthy inventories, exports have been running at all-time highs and stocks have been declining rapidly. We were concerned that average days-supply, when calculated using both domestic demand and exports, had dropped to a five-year low, and that the market could get very tight, warning that "the wild ride for propane prices seen in the fourth quarter could get wilder still."*

*And it did. In Mont Belvieu, the price of propane blasted into the stratosphere during the first few days of the New Year, reflecting not only cold weather in the U.S., but skyrocketing prices in Asia due not only to record- or near-record-low temperatures*

## Fig. 4—MONT BELVIEU PROPANE PRICE & PROPANE-TO-CRUDE RATIO




Source: OPIS, CME

*in Japan, South Korea, and northeastern China. But first, let's consider how propane prices have behaved so far in 2021.*

*As shown in the left graph in Fig. 4, the price of Mont Belvieu non-TET propane on Tuesday was 87 cents/gal., up almost 12 cents/gal. since New Year's Eve. Way back in mid-November, propane was only 51 cents/gal., so the price since then is up a whopping 70%. Note that cents/gal. prices are on the left scale. We've also included prices in dollars per metric ton ($/MT) on the right scale, since that's the way prices are quoted in the global market. In those terms, Mont Belvieu propane is up from $265/MT in mid-November to $452/MT [Jan. 12]. The right graph in Fig. 4 puts those prices in the context of crude oil, which is the best way to assess just how expensive propane really is. And the answer: expensive. Propane is now almost 70% of crude oil, the highest it's been since 2017 if you carve out the 12 days of crude price insanity in April 2020. Anything over 50% is on the high side.*

"Even though Mont Belvieu propane prices are expensive, propane exports have continued to sail from Gulf Coast ports to international destinations at record rates," Braziel told ***BPN***. The left graph in *Fig. 2* shows overseas propane exports from the Gulf Coast; it excludes trucked and railed volumes to Mexico. As described in Now You See It, over 90% of U.S. exports move out of terminals along the Gulf Coast. Since mid-year 2019, Gulf Coast propane exports are up from about 1.0 MMbbld to about 1.35 MMbbld in December. The right graphic shows where those barrels have gone: 60% to Asia (blue bar segments), with the balance mostly to Europe and Latin America. "And those exports to Asia have held up even though the price of transporting U.S. propane has also hit the roof, due primarily to congestion at the Panama Canal," Braziel said.

"Transit delays at the Panama Canal have been worsening for months," Braziel said. "In December we were starting to see delays of a week or more for Canal transits. This forced many carriers to go around Africa's Cape of Good Hope. They do avoid Canal tolls, but travel 10 to 12 days longer. COVID effects on tugboat staffing, other operational issues, fog, and lower water levels in Gaton Lake were also factors. In addition, there were shipment delays from earlier hurricanes causing more ships to arrive at the same time."

Lately, with exports soaring, LPG has represented nearly 25% of all VLGCs moving through the Neopanamax Locks. Only container ships had more at 43%. And, to further add to challenges for LPG shippers, new rules taking effect in 2021 put shippers of LPG in a less desirable booking period, 81-365 days out, behind ships carrying passengers and container ships. This is only adding more challenges for shippers.

"Considering the steep climb in shipping costs in recent weeks from $25,000/day to $110,000/day, propane prices would have likely seen a significantly steeper climb if shipping costs had not skyrocketed, curtailing some shipments," Braziel said.

## WHERE DO PRICES GO FROM HERE?

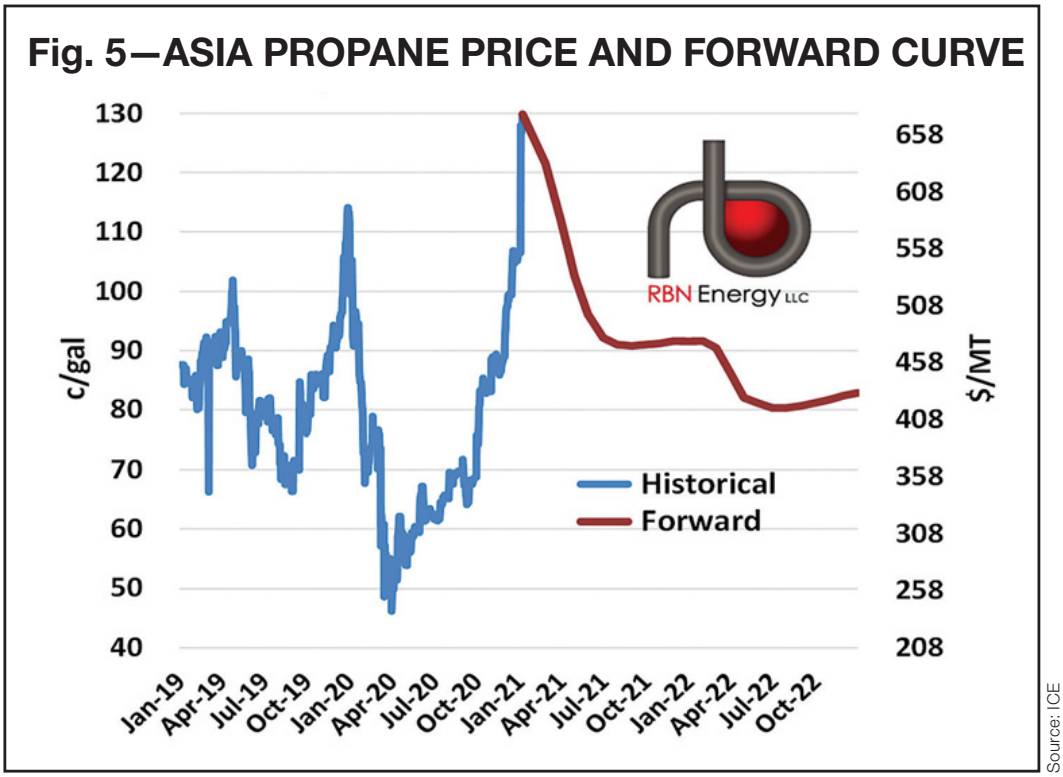
"As always with the propane market, a lot depends on the weather," Braziel said. "But propane is also a slave to the calendar, and therein lies what likely will be the next turn in this market. It may not feel it outside, but spring is just around the corner, especially for propane exporters. Leaving the Gulf Coast in February, it's going to be March before the ship gets to Asia—or even into April, depending on the loading date and any potential delays."

Check out what that means in *Fig. 5*. "The blue line is propane's historical price in Asia for the past two years, showing the astronomical price increase that Asia propane has experienced since April, up to $675/MT, or about 130 cents/gal.," Braziel said. "The forward curve for Asia propane (red line) is steeply backwardated, however. By March the forward price is lower by 18 cents/gal., and by April, another 10 cents/gal. Which means loading a cargo in February and not getting it to market until April could be a very expensive proposition."

"The big run-up in propane prices has probably run its course for this season," Braziel said. "This is despite exports still running at all-time record levels. Season demand in Asia is coming off, and the market looks to be regaining some kind of equilibrium, so exports should be settling down in the coming weeks. Of course, a spell of cold weather here in the U.S. could run prices up one more time. But otherwise, the spike to almost $1/gal. in Mont Belvieu is probably behind us."

*To check out **BPN**'s inaugural "BPN Brief" video, see* bpnews.com *and click on the BPN Brief icon in the upper right-hand corner of the website homepage.* ■

**Fig. 5—ASIA PROPANE PRICE AND FORWARD CURVE**




Source: ICE

# OTHER *BPN* CONTRIBUTORS WEIGH IN ON THE PROPANE MARKET

In mid-January, we asked other frequent contributors to ***BPN*** to comment on issues affecting the propane market.

**CRESTWOOD'S JOHN POWELL…** "The biggest challenge we see is managing any fixed price commodity exposure," said John Powell, senior vice president of Crestwood's marketing, supply, and logistics (MSL) group (Kansas City, Mo.) "Right now, with the mild winter we are having—the field inventory balances along with pipeline, rail, and truck transportation capacity—we are not seeing any issues getting product to the consumer in the field."

Powell encourages retail marketers to keep people in the field full to avoid any disruptions that may come in the future. "The market has been very efficient in managing inventory levels this year, as is evident by the lack of disruptions across the country," Powell explained. Looking forward to next winter, "While I cannot comment on pricing, I would suggest to really start looking at next year's programs, as the forward months for next year are much lower than the current spot values. So, something to consider might be looking at your marketing plans for next year."

**TWIN FEATHERS CONSULTING'S J.D. BUSS…** "Where are prices going in the Far East? That is not a question U.S. retail propane marketers have traditionally had any interest in, but it is becoming a big question now," J.D. Buss, trading and risk management advisor at Twin Feathers Consulting (Overland Park, Kan.), pointed out. "If retail marketers are not tuning in now to the international propane market, they are missing out on huge factors that will affect prices here in the U.S."

"In addition, paying attention to future estimates on inventory builds is important. Listen to the experts on expected builds as that will have a significant impact on pricing and availability going forward."

**PROPANE RESOURCES' JEFF THOMPSON…** "We are especially watching PADD II, which many associate with Conway, Kan., but it includes the territory up through the upper Midwest," Jeff Thompson, supply consultant with Propane Resources (Mission, Kan.), noted. "With more exports going from both the U.S. and Canada, excess propane that has landed in this region in the past has other plans now for waterborne travel."

He feels the potential in the future for Conway propane trading much higher than Belvieu is real if propane inventories get squeezed as they have a few times in the past decade. "It all depends on if Conway gets drained. Everyone needs to remain aware PADD II is more than Conway. "

**MIDSTREAM ENERGY GROUP'S ANNE KELLER…** "Propane's success in growing global demand for lower carbon fuels and modern materials has balanced the market," said Anne Keller, managing director and founder of Midstream Energy Group (Sugar Land, Texas). "The era for 'cheap' supply is coming to an end as growth rates for domestic supply slow and plateau."

Keller sees several things to watch going forward. "U.S.–China relations will be the primary driver of what happens with energy transition initiatives," she said. "Also, LPG as a replacement for diesel in the heavy freight market is gaining momentum."

**UGI CORPORATION'S STEVE KOSSUTH…** Kossuth, who is vice president of global LPG supply at UGI Corp. (AmeriGas' parent company), also serves as chairman of the NPGA Supply and Logistics Committee. "We were pleased with participation in NPGA supply webinars last year and will provide more programs in the coming year," Kossuth said. "Mother Nature is in control right now. As we've shared with marketers, the propane industry's distribution system isn't built for optimization during the coldest weeks of the year and we've all got to work together to be prepared and get product to our consumers as efficiently as we can during the cold periods. We tout key propane benefits as 'safe, reliable, and affordable' and we can't afford to fall short of the benefits for our industry's customers; our industry learned valuable lessons during the Polar Vortex in the winter of 2013-14."

"We have indeed become an international market with exports to Asia and everywhere else ramping up," he said. "While recently this drove prices up, it is important to keep in mind that the United States has some of the most affordable LPG values in the world; exports have enabled production increases over the last decade. At times, in sharp contrast, there are local U.S. markets where there may be some excess molecules at a discount to their historical norm. Looking at the futures market, there is steep backwardation going forward. Watch exports and inventory in weekly EIA data for signs of what may happen. My biggest hope is that propane marketers take a balanced view regarding risk, recognizing that mitigating risk often requires paying a premium for assurances of supply."




The EZ-HD can lift, transport, and set above ground and underground tanks ranging from 120 gallons to 1000 gallons. With the add-on DOT exemption bumper system, it can transport up to a full 500-gal. tank back to the marketer's bulk plant. It is manufactured by Fisk Tank Carrier. "The HD is a little more sturdy than the EZ-Hauler and it's the only one you can get the DOT bumper on so you can transport a full tank," Nathan Roberts explained.

# PROPANE TANK MOVERS: CHOOSING THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB

**STEVE RELYEA**

When setting or removing a tank, there are situations where a general-use dolly or hand truck is not enough and a crane truck is too much. For those times, what the propane marketer needs is a tool that's somewhere in between, such as a purpose-built tank mover.

Three manufacturers who provide tank dollies, trailers, and other movers to the propane industry shared with ***BPN*** some circumstances where one of these units may be the best tool for the job.




The EZ-Hauler can lift, transport, and set above ground and underground tanks ranging from 120 gallons to 1000 gallons. It is manufactured by Fisk Tank Carrier. "This was the company's first product; it's how the company got its name," said Nathan Roberts. "It was designed in 1954; it's a remarkable design that is viable still."

**The challenge**: It's the busy season for tank setting and all your boom trucks have a full schedule. There are more tanks to set than the fleet can handle, but you don't want to invest in another boom truck.

**The solution**: A tank trailer is pulled behind a pickup truck and can move tanks ranging from 120-gal. to 1000-gal. in size. Best of all, it costs less than $13,000. "What's nice about a tank trailer is, you don't have the overhead cost of a boom truck," said Nathan Roberts, president of Fisk Tank Carrier (Columbus, Wis.). "You need only a single operator with a pickup and the trailer. You can add another tank setter for under $13,000. The marketer won't mind that sitting around in the off season, whereas you need to use a boom truck year-round to get the return on investment. A tank trailer is a niche item for economy."

**The challenge**: The customer wants a tank placed out of sight, far away from a paved road or driveway. Or, you need



The YankAnUpright can transport an empty or loaded 420-lb upright tank. It is manufactured by Moveit Inc. “A customer asked us for a unit that would work like a YankATank, but would just move upright cylinders and would be lighter,” Ben Casper explained. “The YankAnUpright weighs less than 70 pounds. It also folds up, so it is easy to throw on the back of a truck.”



The YankATank tank mover can be attached and moved in a matter of seconds. It can handle a 420-lb upright or a 120-gal., 250-gal, or 330-gal. horizontal. It is manufactured by Moveit Inc. “You pull it up to the tank, it ‘nests’ around the tank, you put on the ‘quick strap’, and in 20 or 30 seconds you’re moving the tank,” Ben Casper reported. “It has a lifting ratio of 10:1, so to lift a 500-lb, tank (250-gal.), the user only has to exert 50 pounds of pressure. And you don’t lift, you just pull down. It also has a couple of dollies that allow horizontal tanks to be moved in narrow walkways or through gates.”

to remove a tank that has been in sitting in a customer’s yard for 20 years and is now surrounded by a fence, a pool, shrubs, or other obstacles that make the tank hard to get to. In either case, a crane truck may not be able to get there, and using a winch to drag the tank will tear up the customer’s lawn and may damage the tank, equipment, or paint.

**The solution**: Purpose-built propane tank dollies are available in a choice of manual or motorized and in different configurations for horizontal or vertical tanks in sizes ranging from 100-gal. to 1000-gal. “In situations like these, using a crane truck could cost as much as the value of the tank, and manhandling the tank into position takes multiple guys,” said Jim Renaldo, president of Renaldo Sales & Service (North Collins, N.Y.). “With a dolly, one guy can put a tank where the customer wants it or take a tank out.”

**The challenge**: The propane industry’s workforce is aging; hiring and retaining



The YankA500 includes two dollies and can handle a 500-gal. or smaller horizontal tank. With it, the user can attach and start moving the tank within 30 seconds. It is manufactured by Moveit Inc. “With the optional hitch mount, you can carry the YankA500 on the hitch if you don’t have room for it in the truck bed,” said Ben Casper.

skilled employees is a challenge; the costs of trucks and employees are rising; and the cost of workers’ comp is going up too.

**The solution**: Using one of these purpose-built tank movers can make the job of setting, removing, or transporting tanks easier, faster, and safer. “A lot of propane managers tell me their workman’s comp claims are reduced because people aren’t pinching their fingers or straining their back,” Ben Casper, president of Moveit Inc. (Mesa, Wash.), reported. “Plus, these tools allow one guy to do the work of three or four guys. Marketers used to have to send a team to set a tank somewhere a truck can’t get to.”

These are just three of the circumstances in which a tank mover is the best tool for the job. Several different units are available with different capabilities and in a range of prices.

“I’ve never had to spend a minute educating propane marketers about this equipment,” Casper said. “Once they see a picture of it, they understand it. They either buy it or just keep doing what they’re doing.”



The EZTC717 motorized tank dolly can move any size ASME tank up to 1,000 gallons. It features 100% hydraulic drive. It is manufactured by Renaldo Sales & Service. "We've got thousands of these dollies out there," said Jim Renaldo. "We build them to last. After 15 or 20 years, they are still going strong."



The RTC420NG3 motorized cylinder cart is designed to handle full 420-lb (100-gal.) DOT type cylinder. It features three forward gears, one reverse gear, and a neutral position. It is manufactured by Renaldo Sales & Service.

"Save time, energy, and expense," Renaldo suggested. "Get yourself a dolly, even if it's manual, as long as it's specific to tanks. Don't send a guy with just a two-wheel cart from a big-box store. We're dealing with hazardous materials, your customers' yards, and your employees' backs. Get the right tool for the job."

"Each of these tools has its own place in the market," Roberts concluded. "Also, they don't have a shelf life; they last and last. A lot of people look at a tank trailer as a thing of the past, but there are lot of modern reasons to have one." ■

## NPGA VICTORIES

Continued from **Page 30**

propane autogas in government fleets. Additionally, NPGA will look to encourage the adoption of other emissions-reducing propane applications in future NDAA bills."

NPGA will look to build on the momentum from these significant legislative wins in the 117th Congress. "The year-end victories scored by the propane industry affirm the association's legislative strategy in educating members on both sides of the aisle on the environmental and economic benefits of propane technologies. We look forward to working with new members of Congress as well as our proven champions to advance propane policy priorities in 2021," concludes Baker. ■



U.S. Senate Photographic Studio

Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.)



U.S. Senate Photographic Studio

Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.)

Continued from **Page 23**

their loved ones. We stand a much better chance of getting through to them with this personal message.

Then, follow up with related policies and procedures and equipment. Encourage the use of the PPE and remind your team that equipment is abundantly available. During the dangerous winter season, management can have quick meetings at the beginning of each workday to make sure weather-specific equipment such as ice cleats, proper footwear, raincoats, and other cold-weather gear are stocked and ready to go. This is also a good time to promote and inspect normal everyday PPE such as safety glasses, appropriate gloves, hard hats, footwear, etc., and review the importance of using these items in the field, even when nobody is watching.

## EASY WAYS TO KEEP EMPLOYEES ON TRACK

**Provide each employee with a specific PPE bag.** This will protect their gear and be very helpful for field employees who are always on the go. Whether they are switching trucks or heading out to answer a service call, they can easily grab their bag and have what they need.

**Encourage employees to inspect before entering.** Make proactive inspection of driveways and walkways a regular part of field employee procedure during the winter. Checking the driveway and pathways for conditions like black ice or items hidden by snow *before* entering with a delivery truck will prevent unexpected incidents and/or injuries.

**Inspect vehicles regularly.** Conduct thorough vehicle inspections routinely to ensure they have proper tires for snow and ice conditions and that truck steps are free of ice and snow to prevent slipping.

Your employees are your most valuable asset. Any downtime due to injuries during the busy season can be very costly. Not only is it critical to make sure that you do your part to keep them safe, it is even more important to make sure they know that you have their back and appreciate the challenges they face every day, even in the middle of the night or over the weekend on emergency visits. Let's not forget or devalue the importance of keeping employees safe and both physically and mentally healthy. Sometimes the simple things, like a good morning cup of coffee, small gift card, or slow cooker of chicken noodle soup, can make all the difference in their week. And in turn, maintaining employee morale and a culture of safety can make all the difference in yours. Stay safe out there!

---

*Brent Cammett is the safety and compliance director at P3 Propane Safety. He has 20 years of experience in the industry, has led multi-state safety programs, conducted and instructed safety training, completed safety audits, and has experience as the owner and operator of a fuel company. You can reach Brent at* Brent_Cammett@bostonenv.com *or by visiting* P3Propane.com.





**DALE GARDNER**



**ANGI HARRIS**
Gardner Marsh Gas Equipment Co.



**LAURA KEDZIERZAWSKI**



**PAUL HARRIS**
Propane Trucks & Tanks

**Gardner Marsh Gas Equipment Co. Inc.** (Raleigh, N.C./Florence, S.C.) and **Propane Trucks & Tanks** (PT & T; Apex, N.C.) has announced the retirement of **Dale Gardner**. He has been with Gardner Marsh for 50 years, 33 years as owner; PT & T was purchased in 1992. Upon his retirement, he sold his businesses. His daughters, **Angi Harris** and **Laura Kedzierzawski**, have purchased Gardner Marsh. Harris, who has been with the company for 27 years, has been named CEO, and Kedzierzawski, who has been there for 22 years, will be CFO. **Paul Harris** (Dale's son-in-law) and Laura Kedzierzawski have purchased Propane Trucks & Tanks. He has been with PT & T for 27 years and will continue managing day-to-day operations as CEO, and Kedzierzawski will serve as CFO.

**Martin D. Kirshner**, CPA, MSA, has been elected a partner at **Gray, Gray & Gray LLP** (Canton, Mass.), a business advisory and accounting firm. He leads the firm's Energy Practice Group and is a key member of the Consulting and Audit & Assurance practices. Kirshner joined Gray, Gray & Gray in 2008. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Energy & Fuels Institute (NEFI), where he serves as the organization's treasurer.

**Ray Murray Inc**. RMI; Lee, Mass.) has added two new vice presidents to the leadership team at RMI. **Casey Harvey** has been promoted to vice president of sales, and **Scott Porter** has assumed the role of vice president of operations at RMI.

Casey Harvey joined RMI as a regional sales manager in 2008. Following four years of successfully growing RMI's Mid-Atlantic territory, he was promoted to director of sales in 2013. Now, as vice president of sales, he will be responsible for leading RMI's 14 sales representatives as well as overseeing all of the company's sales activities, and providing primary leadership to RMI's marketing efforts. Prior to RMI he spent 10 years with Carroll Independent Fuel Co. (Baltimore), where he was manager of sales and marketing after quickly rising through the ranks in various positions of increasing responsibility.

Scott Porter has a long career working in operations, including leadership roles in product and asset management, purchasing, and quality assurance. He joined RMI in May 2016 to help optimize its use of the ERP system, assist with acquisitions, and improve the company's operations. Since that time he has spearheaded many operational improvement projects including helping RMI assimilate two acquisitions and the reorganization and improvement of its Goldsboro warehouse. Porter was the director of purchasing and operations with Wes-Garde Components in Hartford, Conn. immediately prior to joining RMI.

The **Missouri Propane Council** recently installed its new directors and officers of the Missouri Propane Education and Research Council (MOPERC) at the group's winter meeting. The slate includes representatives from across the state.

Officers elected include **Mark Porth** of CHS (Lawson), chair; **James Greer**, MFA Oil (Columbia), vice chair; and

Continued on **Page 52**



**MARTIN KIRSHNER**
Gray, Gray & Gray LLC



**CASEY HARVEY**



**SCOTT PORTER**
Ray Murray Inc.




# INDUSTRY CALENDAR

***All events are subject to cancellation. Before making plans to attend an event, please contact the organizer.***

## 2021

**February 2021-June 2022—NFPA Conference Series**, *https://go.nfpa.org/l/14662/2020-12-14/8h5287*

**Feb. 1-3—National Propane Gas Association 2021 Winter Board of Directors/ Committee & Section Meetings, Virtual Event,** *npga.org/event/2021-winter-board-of-directors-meeting/*

**Feb. 4-5—2021 PACEshow, Kansas City Convention Center**, Kansas City, Mo. *info@paceshow.com; paceshow.com*

**Feb. 8-19—Energy, Utility & Environment Conference**, Virtual & Live Stream. *info@euec.com, euec.com*

**Feb. 9-12—NAHB International Builders' Show, Virtual**.
Register at *buildersshow.com*

**Feb. 10—Propane Education & Research Council Virtual Meeting**,
(202) 452-8975; *propane.com*

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

**Feb. 24 & March 2-4—NRECA PowerXchange Annual Meeting, Virtual.**
(703) 907-5500.
*cooperative.com/conferences-education/meetings/*

**March 4-5—National Propane Gas Association Spring Benchmarking Council Meeting**, Sheraton Charlotte Hotel, Charlotte, N.C. (202) 466-7200; *npga.org/organization/npga-events/*

**March 7-9—National Propane Gas Association Spring TS&S Committee Meeting**, The Fontaine, Kansas City, Mo. (202) 466-7200; *npga.org/organization/npga-events/*

**March 8-12—The Work Truck Week 2021, Virtual.** *info@ntea.com*

**March 8-Dec. 14—Energy Utility & Environment Conference 2021 Series**.
Check *info@euec.com* for schedule

**April 22—Propane Education & Research Council Virtual Meeting**,
(202) 452-8975; *propane.com*

For additional calendar items visit ***bpnews.com***

## SHOPPER'S MART







1951-2021
70 Years Strong

WHY RISK YOUR FIRST-CLASS IMAGE WITH SECOND-RATE EQUIPMENT?

Our custom truck bodies and cylinder delivery trucks are designed with field work in mind. We build them one at a time from the most rugged, high-quality materials and components available. No corners cut, no details overlooked.

As a result, an H&H truck body won't let you down on the job. You get efficient, affordable, dependable performance, year after year, so your customers get the prompt, effective service they expect — every time.

Call: 800-551-9341
E-mail: info@hhsalescompany.com

H&H SALES COMPANY, INC.
CUSTOM TRUCK BODIES AND MANUFACTURING
16339 Lima Rd., P.O. Box 686 • Huntertown, IN 46748-0686
Phone: 260-637-3177 • 800-551-9341 • FAX: 260-637-6880
E-mail: info@hhsalescompany.com • Web: www.hhsalescompany.com



# BLT Tanks LLC

800-753-5467

BLTTanks.com





## Selling & Refurbishing Propane Tanks Since 1994

100 % Family Owned, Operated, and Funded in the USA



## Rebuilt Tanks

250 gal $355-$445

330 gal $375-$475

500 gal $690-$855

1000 gal $1495-$1695

*All prices are plus freight.
Other sizes and conditions available.
Warranty on all rebuilt tanks.
Storage tank inventory updated frequently at BLTTanks.com
Prices are subject to change

Ready to Go Valves
Save Time
Save Money
Reduce Emissions
REGO
MULTI-BONNET
PRESTO-TAP

BLT TANKS

## WE PURCHASE GOOD & JUNK TANKS IN LOAD LOTS NATIONWIDE

# CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

**Closing Dates...**Insertion orders or deletions must be in the Arcadia office 8th of month preceding issue date. Send all materials to *classified@bpnews.com* or fax to (626) 303-2854. Remittance must accompany order.

**Display Classified...**$125 per col. inch, 1 time; $110 per col. inch, 6 times; $85 per col. inch, 12 times, $70 per col. inch, 24 times. Display type will be used for heading. Ads will be set with 1 pt. border. Publisher will set for maximum effect in space purchased.

**Undisplayed Classified...**$1.40 per word; $1.75 per word for boldface type or all capitals, $65.00 minimum charge per insertion. Ads will be set in 7 pt. type without border in magazine style unless otherwise specified.

**Blind Box Replies...**If a blind box care of Butane-Propane News is used, add $35 to regular ad rates. All replies to blind box number ads should be addressed to *classified@bpnews.com* or *BUTANE-PROPANE NEWS*, P.O. Box 530067, Birmingham, AL 35253-0801.

*Be sure to show department number of ad on envelope.*

VISA MasterCard

## COMPUTER SOFTWARE

Full-featured and affordable Windows-based software

Lynx Propane Software

Call us for a live demonstration or referral.

Columbus Systems
(360) 943-4165
www.LynxPropaneSoftware.com



Our Tablet is NTEP Certified

Certificate of Conformance 17-126

PMS
Propane Management Systems

Best software designed for the Propane industry

Best truck delivery system

Unmatched customer service

Most user-friendly system available

Routing, POS, Inventory, Tank monitors, Degree Days

UNLIMITED SUPPORT!

Email: sales@propanemanagementsystems.com
**(855) 354-1717**
*Contact Us Today—You'll Be Glad You Did!*

FOR FUEL PEOPLE, BY FUEL PEOPLE

Rural Computer Consultants, Inc.

RCC is a leader in software and support specialized for the fuel and propane industry.

800-722-6659 | rccbi.com

Taurus-Plus
Fuel & Propane Software



Because you need more!
Great Software
Great Support

207-666-3167 www.Taurus-Plus.com
TAURUS SYSTEMS INC.

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

When Your Tickets Don't Work, You're Not Making Deliveries...

WHY TAKE THE RISK?




WEHOF FORMS
"Committed to Quality & Service"

800-221-1209 · FormsPro.net

ORDER YOUR COPIES OF "PROPANE IN AMERICA."

(626) 357-2168 or
*readers@bpnews.com*

Visit bpnews.com

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES




## FOR SALE: TRUCKS




NEW AND USED BOBTAILS. Best prices in U.S.A. Long-term financing. Several types of chassis available. We take trade-ins. White River Distributors Inc., Box 2037, Batesville, Ark. 72503 (800) 548-7219.

**Felker Truck & Equipment, Inc., Dale, WI**
***New Propane Bobtails in Production***
**2020 Freightliner M2 Tandem w/5000 LP Tank**
**2021 Freightliner M2 w/3400 LP Tank**
**2 - 2021 IH MV607 SBA 4X2 w/3400 LP Tank**
**(877) 396-9826—www.felkertruck.com**

**FIND THE NEWS YOU NEED AT *BPNews.com***



# WORLD CLASS PERFORMANCE

## FROM AMERICA'S INDUSTRY LEADER







**PRODUCTS:**
- New TRANSPORT TRAILERS
- New BOBTAILS
- New BULK STORAGE TANKS

Ask about availability of used or refurbished transport trailers and bobtails.

**SERVICES:**
- Refurbishing & Repairs
- Blasting & Painting
- 5-Year Inspections
- Annual Inspections
- Stress Relieving
- Parts

*Proudly Manufactured & Assembled in the USA.*

MISSISSIPPI TANK COMPANY

**HEADQUARTERS**
P O Drawer 1391
Hattiesburg, MS 39403-1391
PH: 800-331-8265 ext. 224
FAX: 601-264-0769
EMAIL: sales@mstank.com

**INDIANA DIVISION**
1301 East Elkhorn Road
Vincennes, IN 47591-8004
PH: 812-886-8265
FAX: 812-886-8979
EMAIL: salesid@mstank.com

www.mstank.com


## FOR SALE: TRUCKS


FELKER
TRUCK AND EQUIPMENT, INC.

*Full Service Propane and Refined Fuel Truck Sales & Service Center*



Specializing In...
Propane and Fuel Oil Truck Sales
Truck Testing, Maintenance & Repair
Chassis Switches
On-Site Meter Calibration
& Repairs in WI, IL, MN & MI
Bulk Storage Plant Installation

877-396-9826 ~ info@felkertruck.com
www.felkertruck.com







Jorge | at age 9
bone cancer

Because of you, families never receive a bill from St. Jude Children's Research Hospital® for treatment, travel, housing or food. Because all a family should worry about is helping their child live.

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

**Because of you, there is St. Jude.** Visit **stjude.org** to join our mission.



PROPANE BOBTAILS | REFINED FUEL TANK WAGONS | OIL/WATER SEPARATORS *Financing available



New, used and refurbished propane bobtails, change-overs, and repairs

WHITE RIVER DISTRIBUTORS, INC.



Over 75 years of tank truck fabrication

lpgbobtails.com P.O. Box 2037 | Batesville, AR 72503 1-800-548-7219
Southwest Sales Center 1-800-483-9971

40 years of expertise behind every delivery truck

PACIFIC TRUCK TANK 40th ANNIVERSARY



Propane bobtails, Stellar LPG service trucks

- New trucks
- Refurbished trucks
- Repairs
- Switchovers

Solutions
Experts
Quality
Support

- DOT registered, ASME 'R' stamp facility
- Trucks, tanks and components ALWAYS in stock
- Parts
- Financing



VISIT OUR PARTNER COMPANIES:
PACIFICMETER.COM
TANKMAXNW.COM

Pacific Truck Tank inc.
PETROLEUM AND PROPANE TRUCKS

Call for a FREE quote
(800) 350-9030
7029 Florin-Perkins Road
Sacramento, California USA

PREVIEW OUR ONLINE TRUCK GALLERY: PACIFICTRUCKTANK.COM



Arrow TANK AND ENGINEERING CO.

HIGHEST QUALITY • EXPERT ADVICE
COMPETITIVE PRICING • FAMILY OWNED



DISCOVER WHAT MAKES OUR TRANSPORTS THE BEST!

SALES, SERVICE & PARTS: 888-892-7769






Thanks for choosing BPN as your #1 source for news and information


## FOR SALE: MISCELLANEOUS


DAVIS AIRTECH

REMANUFACTURED REGISTERS

NEPTUNE 833
$610
Exchange





NEPTUNE 600
$360
Exchange

VEEDER-ROOT 7890
$450
Exchange



*One year/one million gallons warranty*

Call toll-free
(800) 257-7545
www.davisairtech.com

*Davis Airtech is interested in purchasing your surplus register cores*



FAST PUMP!



*Conveniently pump methanol into live tanks fast and safe!*

Comes ready to use with:
- Large 1-gallon reservoir
- Pump lever & 12-ft hose holsters
- Lightweight aluminum base

NORTHLAND GAS EQUIPMENT INC.

Call 877-755-3065 for more info
*info@northlandgas.com*

## FOR SALE: MISCELLANEOUS








**FOR SALE:** KNUCKLEBOOM CRANES—MOUNTED OR UNMOUNTED. HIAB, IMT, PALFINGER, ETC…10 OR MORE IN STOCK! UNMOUNTED CRANES AS LOW AS $4500! 20 STRAIGHT STICK CRANES IN STOCK! 30 BUCKET TRUCKS IN STOCK! 20 FUELOIL DELIVERY TRUCKS IN STOCK! SEVERAL PROPANE DELIVERY TRUCKS IN STOCK! **150+ SPECIALIZED TRUCKS IN STOCK! VISIT US ON THE WEB AT *WWW.OPDYKESTRUCKS.COM* TO VIEW OUR ENTIRE INVENTORY, OR CALL US FOR A FREE INVENTORY LISTING.** We also buy surplus trucks. **OPDYKE INC.**, **Truck & Equipment Sales**, 3123 Bethlehem Pike, Hatfield, Pa. 19440. We're near Philadelphia! **CALL US TOLL-FREE AT: (877) 633-8445.**






YankATank
• Lift a 250 with one hand!
• Attach strap & Moveit in 10 seconds

Loaded 420's lifted easily

Move tanks through gates & walkways

YankABIGTank
500's and 1,000s
For those times when you can't get a boom truck to the tank.
Rolling dollies, steerable & complete with jack

TankRoller 120's-1,000's
Paint tanks-Evacuate LPG
Flipping tanks in the field to evacuate gas without a TankRoller?
Sooner or later, Big Trouble

Poly Minder
Cart
Hitch Mount

*After we ship, we often hear...*
*"I should have bought this 10 years ago!"*

MOVEIT inc.
moveitinc.com
509-269-4632


## FOR SALE: MISCELLANEOUS


World's Best Pier
DESIGNED BY A PROFESSIONAL STRUCTURAL ENGINEER
We have many others just like it
Built with a single concrete pour
TANK FOUNDATIONS INC.
www.tankfoundationsinc2012.com
1-800-626-1069
Shipping from Stanton, AL; Chandler, OK; Leipsic, OH



ARROW TANK AND ENGINEERING CO.
STORAGE VESSELS
LPG/NH3/NGL
Stocking sizes and limited production slots available.
30K, 45K, 60K, 90K, 120K and Larger.
HIGHEST QUALITY • EXPERT ADVICE
COMPETITIVE PRICING • FAMILY OWNED
Visit us at www.arrowbobtails.com or call 800-333-5532


## HELP WANTED


PROULX OIL & PROPANE

***Operations Manager***
***Epping, NH***

*The Operations Manager is a process and efficiency expert who leads and directs Delivery, Service, Warehouse and Facility functions. Primary responsibilities are to oversee the teams that process customer orders, schedule, and execute delivery, service, and installation work. Review of job detail and job performance for the purpose of assessing and improving workflow processes is a key function of this role. Oversight of fleet management and fleet maintenance is an integral function of this role as well.*

*This position is a critical link to improve the efficiencies within the organization to better serve customers. This position drives delivery timeliness, staff development, enhancing operations effectiveness and creating a culture of job/work pride and satisfaction. This role focuses on team building to ensure all operations are the best they can be.*

*Bachelor's Degree preferred or equivalent/relevant work experience. Minimum of 5 years of related experience. Understanding of distribution, fuel industry concepts, practices, and procedures preferred. Ability to motivate employees in a challenging and dynamic business environment.*

*For more information or to apply please forward resume and cover letter to Maribeth Girard at* mgirard@proulxoilandpropane.com




BPN's Weekly Propane Newsletter

KEEP UPDATED ON PROPANE PRICES THIS WINTER
SUBSCRIBE AT BPNEWS.COM

Yulia Glam/Shutterstock.com

Visit bpnews.com

## HELP WANTED


Installation company needed for large scale deployment!

Thousands of fuel tank monitors to be installed across the United States.

Must be experienced in installing and efficiently deploying technology solutions for large scale project implementation.

Quality of work - a priority.

-Training provided
-Easy installation




Contact us for more information
shughes@otodatatankmonitors.com

otodatatankmonitors.com


## WANTED TO BUY


WANT TO BUY:
Good used bobtails and service trucks

120-gal. tanks or 420# tanks

Please contact Lee Connell at
(706) 433-1287

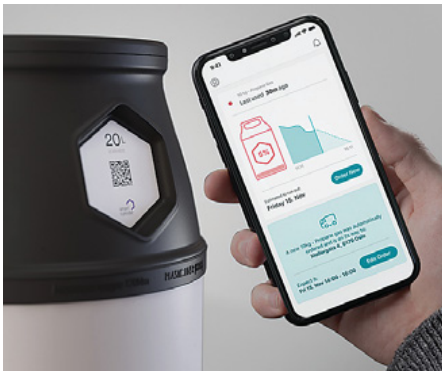
Piedmont Propane


## HELP WANTED


GENERAL MANAGER

Since 1960, Becks Propane, a family-owned business, has been a trusted provider for residential, commercial, and agricultural customers. We are seeking a General Manager for the Retail Propane Store to build and establish new relationships to grow the business. A successful candidate would have strong previous sales experience with a full understanding of the industry to effectively sell products and services. The General Manager is responsible for leading the Service Technicians and Truck Drivers on the Becks Propane team and would back up these capacities as needed. Using software applications, the General Manager would complete internal documentation including DOT record keeping. For more information, contact Jamie Compton at *jcompton@legendmfginc.com* or 989-227-0800.


## PRODUCTS



**LPG SmartCylinder. Hexagon Ragasco** has introduced a next-generation LPG smart cylinder that communicates with both users and LPG distributors. The new cylinder takes the LPG cylinder into the digital age, developing an "Internet of Things" (IoT) offer that enables the connection of Hexagon Ragasco's LPG composite cylinders to consumers' mobile phones, as well as to the IT systems of LPG distributors. The Hexagon Ragasco smart composite cylinder is based on battery-less sensors powered by energy harvesting technology. The smart cylinder collects data via IoT sensors and transmits the data to consumers' phones and central cloud database. The technology allows a user to have full control of the remaining gas level of the cylinder to prevent usage disruptions while cooking, heating, or barbequing. This next-generation smart cylinder speaks to the consumer to let them know exactly how many minutes of cooking time is left and when they will need to order a refill. It also enables LPG distributors to tailor their stocks and supply logistics based on real-time data. Hexagon Ragasco will be conducting Smart Cylinder onboarding pilots throughout 2021. The commercial launch of the product is scheduled for 2022. *www.hexagonragasco.com*

**Boiler and Water Heater. Navien Inc.** is holding virtual water heater and boiler launch events. On Feb. 16, Navien will host a live virtual launch event for its new line of boiler and combi-boiler products. Another live event will be held on March 16, to introduce the company's latest water heater innovations. Each event will offer insight on the new products and allow attendees to interact and ask questions live with the Navien team.

Registration for both events is up now at *navieninc.com/live*.

## PEOPLE

Continued from **Page 43**

**John Baucom**, Prairieland FS (La Belle), treasurer.

The **World LPG Association** (Paris) has appointed two key new board members. The board has an overall governance role for the association as defined under French law.

**Shrikant Madhav Vaidya**, chairman of Indian Oil Corp., is WLPGA's first vice president, replacing **Sanjiv Singh**, who has retired from his position of chairman of Indian Oil Corp. The second appointment is **Molly Morris**, senior vice president for crude, products, and liquids in Equinor's marketing, midstream, and processing business area, Norway, to WLPGA board member.

Visit bpnews.com

# READER'S SERVICE PAGE

# ADVERTISERS INDEX FOR FEBRUARY 2021




| ADVERTISER | PAGE | WEBSITE/EMAIL | PHONE |
|---|---|---|---|
| American Standard Mfg. | 12 | amrstd.com | (800) 488-8816 |
| BASE Engineering | 17 | baseng.com | (800) 924-1010 |
| Bergquist Inc. | 9 | sales@bergquistinc.com | (800) 537-7518 |
| BLT Tanks LLC | 45 | blttanks.com | (800) 753-5467 |
| Cavagna | 2 | cavagnagroup.com | (732) 469-2100 |
| Energy Distribution Partners | 19 | edplp.net | (312) 254-5954 |
| Fisk LP Tank Carrier Inc. | 7 | fiskinc.net | (800) 355-3475 |
| H&H Sales Co. | 44 | hhsalescompany.com | (800) 551-9341 |
| Legacy Energy Consulting LLC. | 5 | legacyenergyconsulting.com. | (763) 772-2834 |
| Lock America | 22 | laigroup.com | (800) 422-2866 |
| LPG&NH3 Supply Inc. | 23 | lpgandnh3.com | (800) 328-0314 |
| LPG Ventures | 44 | lpgventures.com | (888) 739-8764 |
| Marshall Excelsior | 18 | marshallexcelsior.com | (269) 789-6700 |
| Propane Education & Research Council | 13 | propanecouncil.org | (202) 452-8975 |
| Pro-Par Inc. | 15 | proparinc.com | (207) 737-9704 |
| Quality Steel Corp. | 11 | propanetank.com | (800) 345-2495 |
| RegO Products/ECII | 56 | regoproducts.com | (336) 449-7707 |
| Renaldo Sales & Service | 44 | renaldo.org. | (800) 424-5564 |
| Rochester Gauges LLC | 14 | rochestergauges.com. | (972) 241-2161 |
| Rural Computer Consultants. | 42 | rccbi.com | (800) 772-6659 |
| Teeco Products Inc. | 55 | teecoproducts.com | (800) 854-3463 |
| ValvTect Petroleum Products. | 20 | valvtect.com. | (800) 728-8258 |
| Westmor Industries LLC | 21 | westmor-ind.com | (800) 992-8981 |

# ALICIA STAVITZSKI BRINGS NEW IDEAS TO REGIONAL GAS COMPANY

KAREN MASSMAN VanASDALE

At age 26, Alicia Stavitzski, marketing coordinator for Heller's Gas headquartered in Pennsylvania, has set her sights on the propane industry after starting her career in professional services.

With no prior knowledge of propane, Stavitzski stepped into a new position in 2019 at Heller's Gas where she was tasked with not only developing her role, but also learning the industry. Heller's Gas provides her with the tools and resources to help her succeed, including being open to new ideas. In addition, several women in leadership at Heller's Gas are great role models.

"I'm someone who likes to expand the boundaries of their career. I previously worked in insurance, law, and then politics and thought propane would be an industry that came with new opportunities to learn and expand my skill set," Stavitzski said.

"Little did I know how much I would come to love this industry. A lot like other industries that I have marketed, propane offered the opportunity to evolve marketing into the 21st century, which is something I believe that I, as a young professional, can bring to the table at Heller's Gas."

As marketing coordinator, Stavitzski oversees the marketing, branding, and community outreach efforts for all Heller's Gas locations. Heller's Gas supplies propane products and custom fireplaces to residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural customers throughout the Mid-Atlantic region and beyond.

"My opinions are valued, no one speaks over me in meetings, and I'm given the authority and respect to make decisions for the direction of marketing operations," she said.

Heller's Gas also values the role of women in leadership. "There are no obstacles to being a woman in my role or any leadership role within this company. There are countless examples of women who have worked for Heller's Gas longer than myself who have worked their way up the ladder."

While Stavitzski lives in Lake Harmony in the Poconos, she works in Heller's Gas' Berwick location, not far from where she grew up and where her parents and sister still live. With a business degree focusing on marketing and communications from Misericordia University, she headed off to work in Philadelphia. A desire to be closer to home and the appeal of working for a family-owned company brought Stavitzski to Heller's Gas.

"My course load in college prepared me to wear multiple hats for one job," she said. "Most importantly, my involvement with sports teams in college prepared me to find my role within a team, whether it be a leader or a team player, to achieve our team's final goal."

When she joined Heller's Gas, Stavitzski said she did her best to travel to all the offices and meet her team members. "One of my team members, Bradley Breisch, has been with Heller's Gas for 34 years. He delivered propane to some of our longtime customers, and, to me that is just remarkable. Hearing his stories about how life in propane was back then makes me appreciate his time in the industry and the industry as a whole. He helped me come to the realization that I love this company, what they stand for, and where they are headed in the future."

Working at Heller's Gas also allows for Stavitzski to have a good work-life balance. She enjoys hiking, kayaking, and going on long walks with her boyfriend and her dog, Manny. A time-management pro, she is a volunteer with several organizations: volunteer firefighter and secretary for Lake Harmony Fire Company, member of the Miles Cancer Foundation, member of the Wilkes University Upward Bound Alumni Association, and member of the Wilkes-Barre Area Career and Technical Center Craft Advisory Committee.

Receiving her certification as a volunteer firefighter this year after about 240 hours of PA Essentials of Fire Fighting and Firefighter I Training, is one of her greatest accomplishments.



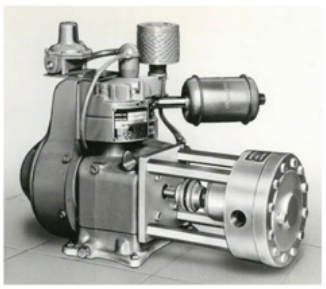
"I have never had more joy from being a member of an organization. Even if we aren't putting out a fire, we might have a call come in for an accident on the interstate, or a search and rescue at a nearby state park. It gives me great joy to know that I am there to help during a time of panic in someone's life," she said.

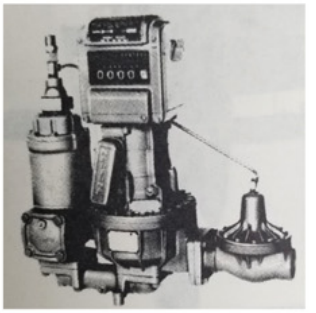
"Being a firefighter is never something I set out to do in my life, or ever something I've contemplated doing, but it's something that brought me great joy in a dark year that was 2020." ■

TEECO PRODUCTS, INC.

PROUDLY SERVING 1946 2021 75 YEARS THE PROPANE INDUSTRY

# Celebrating 75 Years of Providing Quality Propane Equipment and Services



**A lot has changed since 1946, when Teeco's founder, Ben Tilden, began selling propane equipment out of the trunk of his 1941 Pontiac. But Teeco's commitment to quality products and services has remained.**








**You can count on Teeco for the best equipment, knowledgeable associates and professional services. Call today to find out how we can help you.**

Teeco Products, Inc.
7471 Reese Road
Sacramento, CA 95828
800-225-6621

Teeco Products, Inc.
1601 Pike Street NW
Auburn, WA 98001
800-426-9456

Teeco Products, Inc.
414 E Blvd N
Rapid City, SD 57701
800-843-8660

Teeco Products, Inc.
16881 Armstrong Avenue
Irvine, CA 92606
800-854-3463

**www.teecoproducts.com**

**Teeco is a Proud Member of Our Local and National Propane Industry Associations**

NPGA National Propane Gas Association · WPGA Western Propane Gas Association Member · PPGA Pacific Propane Gas Association · Rocky Mountain Propane Association · CPGA Colorado Propane Gas Association · Arizona Propane Gas Association · NDPGA · NMPGA · Nevada Propane Dealers Assn. · WIP · South Dakota Petroleum & Propane Marketers Association

A red, white, & blue logo
doesn't make your LPG regulator
American made.

# Making it 100% in America does.



## RegO® LPG regulators. Made in America and made to last.

"Designed" or "Tested" in America is just not the same as Made in America. At RegO, 100% of our regulators are manufactured in North Carolina by U.S. workers. When your customers demand American quality, it pays to learn the facts.

**regoproducts.com/usa | 336-226-3244**

REGO®



REGO OFFERS A COMPLETE LINE OF AMERICAN MADE LPG REGULATORS

REGO 100% TESTED ★

REGO 10 YEAR WARRANTY

REGO 25 YEAR SERVICE LIFE