BUTANE-PROPANE NEWS
BPN
JUNE 2025

Feature: The Patio & Outdoor Market Continues to Fuel Propane Growth

Important Updates on the Line 5 Tunnel Project



Customized transport and logistic services for your business



We provide the dependable transport and delivery services businesses like yours rely on

To schedule a load email c3papiano@cthreelogistic.com

Three Logistics, LLC



MEET BARRETT CONWAY
THE 2025 YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR





C Three Logistics, LLC

22 Gorgo Lane Newfield NJ 08344
856-265-0704 | 856-364-4181
Cthreelogistics.com

ABOUT US

C Three Logistics LLC is an authorized carrier of Hazardous Materials in the Mid-Atlantic region. Our family company was built on the core values of safety first and customer service. We can handle a variety of different products, and pride ourselves on time delivery and communicating real time information. With our GPS tracking through Carrier Web and our partnership with our software program McLeod Software, we are able to not only deliver your products safely, but we can also provide real time information and have invoicing done within 24 hours of delivery.

SERVICES

- Propane, Butane, Propylene
- Separate Anhydrous Ammonia fleet
- Van Division
- Gasoline tanker division
- Chemicals
- Flatbed Division



Henry Papiano
President

SERVICING THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES 24/7

To schedule a load email c3papiano@cthreelogistics.com

BUTANE-PROPANE NEWS
BPN
JUNE 2025

Feature: The Patio & Outdoor Market Continues to Fuel Propane Growth

Important Updates on the Line 5 Tunnel Project



The Road to Persistent Success in Propane Transport & Delivery

Companies in the transportation & bobtail sectors discuss challenges navigated & opportunities seized



MEET BARRETT CONWAY
THE 2025 YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

View Inventory

Inventory Online Now!

terravestlpg.com



CRANE SERVICE TRUCKS



BOBTAILS



CYLINDER TRUCKS



TRANSPORTS



BULK STORAGE



DOMESTIC TANKS

See Us at These Upcoming Shows!

Explore our compressed gas storage and transport equipment options in person and see the quality for yourself. Our experienced territory managers will be on-site to answer any questions you may have. Want to plan ahead? You can browse our available inventory online before the show. We look forward to seeing you soon!

NDPGA Convention	**Mid-States Convention**	**TPGA Crossroads Propane Expo**
6/17 - 6/18	6/29 - 7/2	8/7 - 8/9
Medora, ND	Osage Beach, MO	Galveston, TX

Contact us today at **855-477-9828** or visit us at **terravestlpg.com**.

TerraVest COMPRESSED GAS | TerraVest TANKS | Signature TRUCK SYSTEMS | Mississippi Tank Company | Maxfield | pro-par

From Will-Call to Automatic—Boost ROI and Customer Loyalty with Otodata



Automate drops, eliminate run-outs, and acquire and retain clients with Otodata's award-winning monitor, intuitive online portal, and customer-facing branded mobile app.

Centralize all your tanks and optimize tank drops with Otodata's online portal.

Let customers see tank levels anytime, anywhere with the Nee-Vo App.

Encourage customers to go automatic with our customizable, advertisement bundles.

Accurate and affordable tank monitoring starting at just $1.50 a month

go.otodata.com +1 (844) 763-3344 info@otodata.com



Dear Readers,
With their heavy emphasis on keeping people safe, warm and happy, propane companies never pass up an opportunity to improve the lives of their customers. One such opportunity that isn't new but has seen a growing share of the market over the past several years is the patio and outdoor space. More and more, people are moving beyond their back doors to cozy — and often luxurious — patios and outdoor kitchens, and propane has been meeting the demand for those appliances and, of course, the fuel to keep them running.

In a BPN article from February 2020 titled "Keep the Party Outdoors With Propane & Innovation," Pat Thornton, contributing editor for BPN, tapped into what was becoming increasingly clear: Customers were looking for outdoor options that gave them a more enjoyable experience than standing around a gas grill. Companies capitalized on this trend by increasing inventory on things like gas firepit tables, outdoor kitchen islands, outdoor gas fireplaces and more. With customers' outdoor spaces focusing on community and relaxation, it was time to place priority on this portion of the market, as there was "tremendous potential for growth in the outdoor living market."

The timing of a February 2020 article isn't lost on me. Just a month later, everything turned upside down with the COVID-19 pandemic and the social distancing that came with it. Though consumers were already considering how to elevate their outdoor spaces, the pandemic and the ways it changed our social and leisure time sent this market into a boom. In another BPN article from July 2021 titled "New Opportunities & Challenges in Hearth & Heating," Steve Relyea, former editor at BPN, demonstrated how propane companies could respond to the situation with great service and innovation. As Relyea pointed out, "When people were ordered to stay at home, they made their patios more comfortable with grills, fire tables and other outdoor-living appliances. When restaurants were restricted to serving meals outdoors, they made those spaces more inviting and extended their hours by installing outdoor heaters."

Mike Dodd, CEO of Propane Ninja, is quoted in the article, saying, "This has been one of our biggest years. Outside patios at restaurants have been busy. We have rented more outside and temporary heat than we ever had." Retail cylinder exchange for residential consumers also saw an increase in demand as people took advantage of being outdoors during stay-at-home mandates.

"Retail cylinder exchange is where we've seen the most impact during COVID," Dodd said at the time. "It's up 25% to 30% month to month because people are staying home."

Now, here we are, a little over five years out from the start of the pandemic. Though the world will likely never be the same, we've largely shifted back to normalcy. But outdoor patios with propane appliances and heating needs remain an important part of the propane industry's market. That's why I encourage you to check out our feature section on Patio & Outdoor to see how things are going years later in regards to demand in residential spaces and the hospitality industry. You can find the start of the section on page 26.

Of course, you don't want to miss our Propane Transport & Delivery special section on page 34, either. This year, we've combined the bobtail and transportation sectors into one special section, where you'll hear from company leaders on what trends, opportunities and challenges they're seeing right now.

And last but not least, we have an additional special section where you can meet (or learn more about) Barrett Conway, managing director of Cetane Associates and the first-ever Young Professional of the Year award recipient (see page 22). Conway and his four fellow finalists shared with BPN what they envision for the future of propane and the young professionals who will take up the mantle of leading the industry — and have already started.

Until next time,



JESSICA GRAHAM PHILLIPS
Editor-in-Chief

BPN
BUTANE-PROPANE NEWS

STAFF
Editor-in-Chief
Jessica Graham Phillips
jphillips@cahabamedia.com
205-961-3389

Managing Editor
Johnny Nickel
jnickel@cahabamedia.com
205-273-3152

Associate Editor
Christina Miller
cmiller@cahabamedia.com
207-413-2486

Art Director
Melanie Magee
mmagee@cahabamedia.com

Account Executive
Landen Franklin
lfranklin@cahabamedia.com
205-278-2875

Client Services — Team Lead
Sonya Crocker
scrocker@cahabamedia.com
205-863-9521

Client Services Coordinator
Holly Strickland
hstrickland@cahabamedia.com

Digital Production Designer
Shelby Dempsey

PUBLISHER

Matthew G. Conroy	President & CEO
Matt Lyons	Chairman
Greg Meineke	VP of Sales
Brandon Whittemore	VP of Finance
Laurie Tisdale	Director of Operations
Elizabeth Manning	Director of Content
Stacy Marshall	Director of Sales

Newsletter editorial communications and subscriptions for BPN Pricing & Supply should be directed to
P.O. Box 530067, Birmingham, AL 35253.
Phone: 205-212-9402

For circulation and customer service questions, please email bpnews@omeda.com.

AFFILIATION
NPGA

SUBSCRIPTION PRICES
U.S. – 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.**

ID STATEMENT
CAHABA MEDIA GROUP

Butane-Propane News (ISSN 0007-7259), is published monthly by
Cahaba Media Group,
PO Box 530067
Birmingham, AL 35223

Periodicals postage paid at Birmingham, AL and additional mailing offices (USPS 457-950)
For Customer Service, email bpnews@omeda.com.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to BPN, PO Box 271, Lincolnshire, IL 60069-9835.

VOLUME 57 ISSUE 6

June 2025



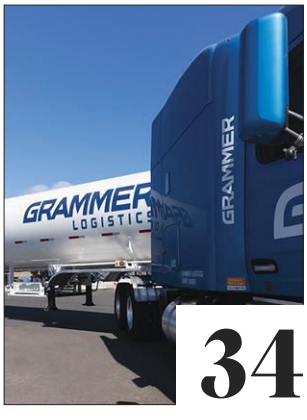
8



26



18



34

Feature Series:
PATIO & OUTDOOR

26 Backyards Across Borders: How Propane Fuels Outdoor Living in the US & Canada
From patio heaters to pool comfort, propane powers outdoor lifestyles shaped by geography, culture & climate

30 Going Premium: An Innovative Approach to Patio Heaters in Hospitality
Why a high-end propane service works for high-end industries

Special Sections

22 Young Professional of the Year
Learn more about the winner & the finalists for the inaugural award

34 Propane Transport & Delivery
The transportation & bobtail sectors are navigating turns in the road & in business operations



On the Cover
Bobtails and service trucks reliably meet the needs of the propane industry, despite ongoing market challenges. *(Image courtesy of Grammer Logistics)*

4 Marketplace

6 News & Events

8 Verbatim
What is the best book you've read that helped you in life & business?

12 Propane & the Law
Home improvement company sued in Ohio propane explosion

14 Beyond the Mains
Reckoning with the complicated legacy of the Line 5 pipeline

18 Event Coverage
The 2025 NPGA SE Expo showcased resilience & industry unity

38 Public Policy
Trump's executive orders could boost propane growth — but raise tariff concerns

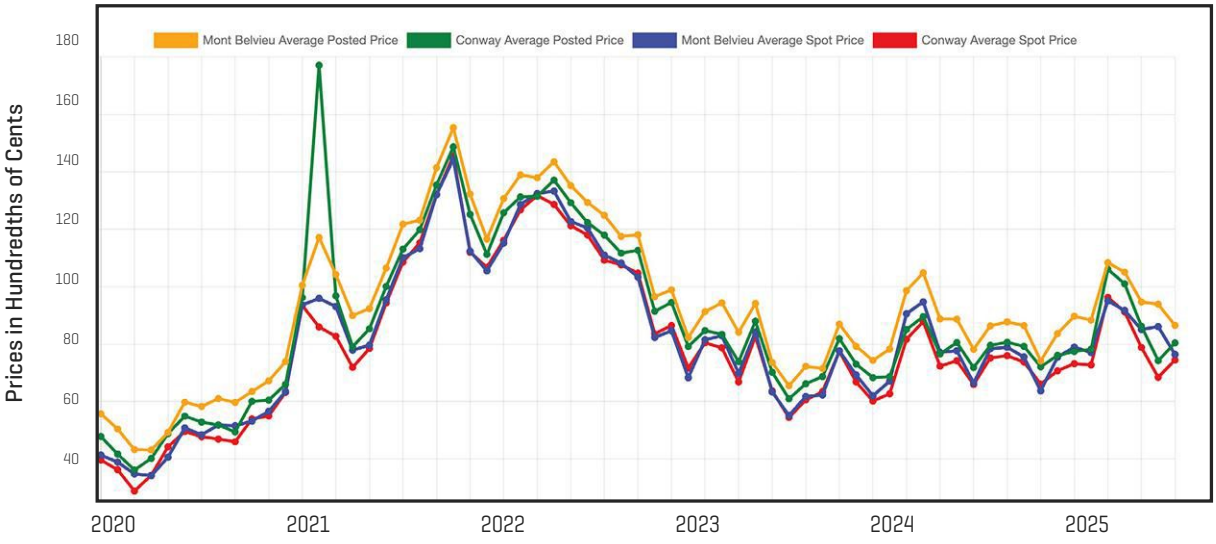
40 Strategy
How to avoid the high cost of bad hires in the propane industry

42 Marketing
Your toolkit to ensure you get the most value possible out of your campaign

47 Advertiser Index

48 Industry Insider

MONT BELVIEU & CONWAY AVERAGE THURSDAY PROPANE PRICES



at a glance During the latest mid-month period, prices at Mont Belvieu, Texas, decreased. The posted prices decreased 7.333 cents/gal, from April mid-month to May mid-month, and spot prices decreased 9.875 cents. Conway, Kansas, postings increased 6.184 cents/gal and spots increased 6 cents over the month.

MID-WEEK AVERAGE POSTED/SPOT PROPANE PRICES (Cents per Gallon)

	4/17/25	4/24/25	5/1/25	5/8/25	5/15/25
Mont Belvieu					
posted	93.897	95.980	103.064	78.314	86.564
spot	85.875 – 86.375	86.750 – 87.250	70.500 – 72.250	70.125 – 70.750	76.00 – 76.875
Conway					
posted	74.276	74.976	75.127	73.543	80.460
spot	68.000 – 69.000	69.750 – 69.875	66.000 – 68.000	69.000 – 69.250	74.000 – 75.000

at a glance

Canada's primary underground propane inventories decreased by 2.1% in April, according to the Canada Energy Regulator (CER). The total represented a month-to-month decrease of 8.4 Mcm. Compared to a year earlier, stocks were lower, with 319.8 Mcm, or 44.5%, less product on hand.

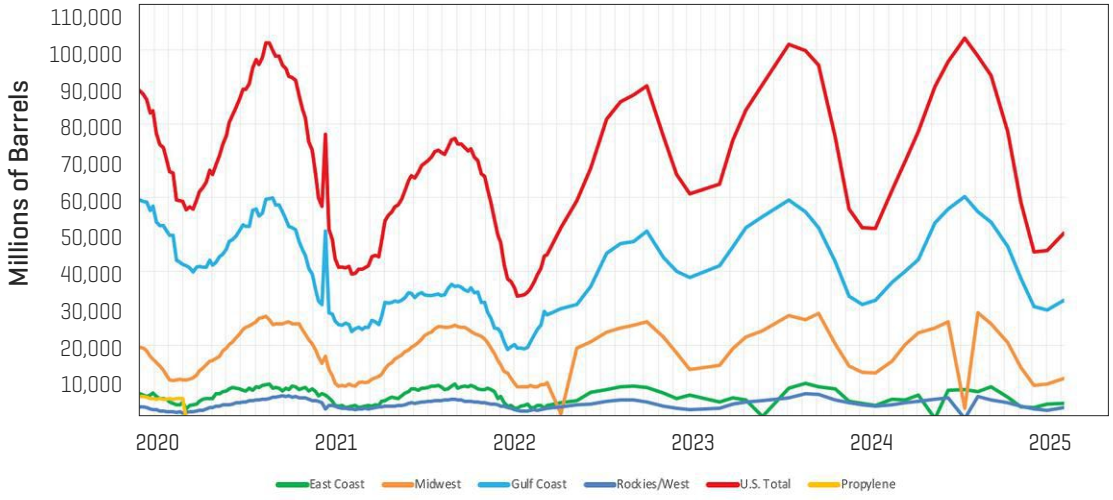
*(**Editor's Note:** Due to BPN's publishing schedule, April inventory data is the latest available from the CER.)*

CANADIAN INVENTORIES (Thousand Cubic Meters)

PROPANE	Apr 2025	Mar 2025	Change	Apr 2024
Propane-East	107	125.4	-14.7%	171.2
Propane-West	291.6	281.6	3.6%	547.3
Total Propane	398.6	407	-2.1%	718.4
BUTANE				
Butane-East	148.5	187.4	-20.8%	112
Butane-West	283.4	221.9	27.7%	308.3
Total Butane	431.9	409.3	5.5%	420.3

Source: Canada Energy Regulator

U.S. PROPANE INVENTORIES



at a glance

United States propane stocks experienced a 6.057 MMbbl increase from April to May. East Coast stocks increased 528,000 bbl, the Midwest increased 1.212 MMbbl, the Gulf Coast increased 3.838 MMbbl, and the Rocky Mountain/ West Coast increased 479,000 bbl. Compared to the same time in May 2024, the May 2025 stocks were 11.543 MMbbl lower.

U.S. PROPANE INVENTORIES

April 11 – May 9, 2025, and One Year Ago (Thousand Barrels)

	4/11/25	4/18/25	4/25/25	5/2/25	5/9/25	5/10/24
East Coast	3.687	4.092	4.011	4.102	4.215	5.350
Midwest	9.764	9.773	10.035	10.231	10.976	15.682
Gulf Coast	28.354	30.529	30.522	31.035	32.192	36.993
Rocky Mtn & West Coast	2.562	2.236	2.637	2.808	3.041	3.943
U.S.	44.367	46.630	47.206	48.176	50.424	61.967

U.S. RESIDENTIAL PROPANE PRICES

(Mid-Month, Cents per Gallon)

	Apr 2025	May 2025	May 2024
East Coast (PADD 1)	358.6	352.4	342.9
Midwest (PADD 2)	218.4	210.3	207
Average U.S.	269	261.6	256.7

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

Editor's Note: The Energy Information Administration releases its U.S. residential propane prices once a month from April to October. The data listed here reflects the information available at the time of publication.

Find out more:
For commentary on mid-month prices and Canadian inventories, visit bpnews.com/news.

ALLIANCE ENERGY SERVICES ACQUIRES 18 PROPANE TERMINALS FROM NGL ENERGY PARTNERS LP

Alliance Energy Services, a provider of propane supply and logistics solutions, announced the acquisition of 18 propane terminals from NGL Energy Partners. This acquisition expands Alliance Energy Services' infrastructure, strengthening its ability to serve customers across key markets nationwide. The newly acquired propane terminals, located across multiple regions, will enhance Alliance Energy Services' capacity to meet the growing demand for reliable propane supply. By integrating these facilities into its existing network, the company aims to optimize distribution, improve logistics efficiency and provide more value to its customers.

AULTRA TANK & EQUIPMENT NAMES NEW CEO

Aultra Tank & Equipment, a propane tank refurbishing company based in Portage, Wisconsin, announced the appointment of Travis Mashak as its new chief executive officer. Mashak brings extensive experience in operations, strategic leadership and business development to the company, positioning Aultra Tank & Equipment for continued growth in the propane industry. Mashak's background includes 30 years in the propane industry. He is also a former owner of a startup propane company and has a proven track record in driving efficiency and innovation in the private and co-operative propane industry. In his new role, Mashak will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of Aultra Tank & Equipment's operations, driving strategic initiatives and fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. His focus will be on strengthening customer relationships, optimizing operational efficiency and expanding the company's reach within the propane industry.

SUPERIOR FUEL COMPANY ACQUIRES KOTACO FUELS — PARK RAPIDS

Superior Fuel Company, a provider of energy solutions throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin, announced the acquisition of Kotaco Fuels' Park Rapids, Minnesota, division. The acquisition became effective May 5. This strategic move strengthens Superior Fuel's presence in north-central Minnesota and enhances operational efficiency across its service territory. With this acquisition, Superior Fuel now operates 21 bulk plants and six regional offices throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin, underscoring its commitment to delivering dependable, local service backed by regional scale. Superior Fuel Company will remain dedicated to providing safe, reliable and cost-effective fuel solutions for residential, commercial and agricultural customers across the upper Midwest.

TREY BRASSEAUX PROMOTED TO VP AT CETANE ASSOCIATES

Cetane Associates announced the promotion of Trey Brasseaux to vice president. Brasseaux joined the firm in 2023 and quickly became a valued member of the team, known not only for his extensive financial expertise, but also for his positive attitude. In his new role, Brasseaux will lead Cetane's financial team, bringing his strong analytical skills and thoughtful leadership to every engagement. Brasseaux has more than eight years of client advisory experience in financial roles with professional services firms. Prior to Cetane, he served as an associate at J Wolf and Company, an investment bank that raises capital for acquisitions in the lower middle market. He also spent five years at Opportune LLP, providing finance and accounting advisory services to private and public energy clients across multiple sectors.

MID-MONTH UPDATE: MID-MAY PRICES UP FROM APRIL

During the latest mid-month period, prices at Mont Belvieu, Texas, increased. The posted prices increased 5.084 cents/gal, from April mid-month to May mid-month, and the spot prices decreased 4 cents. Conway, Kansas, postings increased 11.334 cents/gal, and spots increased 9.5 cents over the month. The Mont Belvieu mid-April posted price was 81.48 cents/gal. The next week the price increased 12.417 cents to 93.897 cents, followed by a 2.083-cent increase to 95.98 cents. Prices then increased 7.084 cents to 103.064 cents the first week of May. The following week, the price fell 24.75 cents to 78.314 cents/gal. At mid-month, postings increased by 8.25 cents to 86.564 cents/gal. Compared to the same time in May 2024, the May 2025 prices were 8.334 cents higher. The Conway mid-April posted price was 69.126 cents/gal. The next week the price increased 5.15 cents to 74.276 cents, followed by a 0.7-cent increase to 74.976 cents/gal. Prices then increased 0.151 cents to 75.127 cents the first week of May. The following week, the price decreased 1.584 cents to 73.543 cents/gal. At mid-month, postings increased 6.917 cents to 80.46 cents/gal. Compared to the same time in May 2024, the May 2025 prices were 8.584 cents higher. Mont Belvieu spots opened mid-April at 80 cents/gal. The next week the price increased by 5.875 cents to 85.875 cents, followed by a 0.875-cent increase to 86.75 cents the next week. Prices then decreased 16.25 cents to 70.5 cent/gal the first week of May. The following week, the price decreased 0.375 cents to 70.125 cents/gal. At mid-month, they increased 5.875 cents to 76 cents/gal. Compared to the same time in May 2024, the May 2025 prices were 10 cents higher. Conway spots opened mid-April at 64.5 cents/gal. The next week the price increased by 3.5 cents to 68 cents, followed by a 1.75-cent increase to 69.75 cents the next week. Prices then decreased 3.75 cents to 66 cents/gal the first week of May. The following week, the price increased 3 cents to 69 cents/gal. At mid-month, they increased 5 cents to 74 cents/gal. Compared to the same time in May 2024, the May 2025 prices were 8.5 cents higher.

DCC ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Following DCC's announcement on Nov. 12, 2024, that the company would focus on the energy sector, DCC announced changes to its leadership team to align its management structure with company strategy. Kevin Lucey, who has been the chief financial officer (CFO) and an executive director since 2020, will

become chief operating officer upon the conclusion of its annual general meeting on July 10. In this newly created role, Lucey will continue to partner with Chief Executive Donal Murphy in the overall management of the group and will be responsible for driving the performance of DCC's energy activities in line with its Cleaner Energy in Your Power strategy. Lucey will lead DCC's regional management teams and continue to be a member of the board. Conor Murphy will succeed Lucey as CFO and will be appointed as an executive director. Murphy joined DCC in 1998. He has held many senior leadership roles, both within the energy business and at the group level, including director of group finance. He is currently the CFO of DCC Energy. Fabian Ziegler, current CEO of DCC Energy, will leave DCC in July 2025.

Industry Calendar

June 15-17
SE Propane Alliance Annual Convention
southeastpropane.org
Isle of Palms, SC

June 17-18
North Dakota PGA Annual Meeting
ndpropane.org
Medora, ND

June 18-20
Indiana PGA Summer Convention
indianapropane.com
French Lick, IN

June 18-20
PGA New England Summer Meeting
pgane.org
Newport, RI

June 24-26
Colorado/New Mexico Summer Convention
copropane.com
Albuquerque, NM

June 25-27
Pennsylvania/New Jersey Joint Annual Meeting
papropane.com
Bethlehem, PA

June 27
Nebraska PGA Board of Directors Meeting
nebraskapropane.com
Kearney, NE

June 29 – July 1
Alabama/Louisiana PGA Summer Meeting
alabamapropane.com
Orange Beach, AL

June 29 – July 2
Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri — Mid-States Propane Expo
propanemissouri.com
Osage Beach, MO

July 9-11
Kentucky PGA Summer Convention
kypropane.org
Covington, KY

July 15-16
PERC Council Meeting
propane.com
Birmingham, MI

July 21-23
Minnesota Propane Association Retreat
discoverpropanemn.com
Breezy Point, MN

FOR ADDITIONAL CALENDAR ITEMS, VISIT BPNEWS.COM.





Nancy Coop is an industry advocate. She is a director at the M&A advisory firm Cetane Associates. Contact Coop at ncoop@cetane.com. Visit cetane.com.

WHAT'S THE BEST BOOK YOU'VE READ THAT HELPED YOU IN LIFE & BUSINESS?

From parables to biographies, industry peers share the books that have shaped their outlook on work, life & everything in between

This is another question worthy of bringing back from the archives as new books are written or read and new contributors to this column have their favorites. In this column, adopted from the familiar "Heard on the Street" format, we offer our responders a chance to answer the question posed in the title. These are their replies reported verbatim.

SUMMER READING LIST?

'Unbroken' by Louis Zamperini. Mr. Zamperini's story of struggle, redemption and forgiveness served to remind me of things my father tried to teach me when I was too young to understand the lessons. Mr. Zamperini was an imperfect person who came to realize through his triumphs and struggles what it truly means to live in faith and act in service of Jesus Christ.

JOSH SIMPSON
LITTLE KAMPER LP
MANTECA, CALIFORNIA

OK, I know you're going to think this is crazy, but this silly little book really helped me several years ago and it comes to mind from time to time when I get stubborn and don't want to change my ways. The name of the book is 'Who Moved My Cheese' by Spencer Johnson. It's a cute little parable book on how important it is to consider change in changing times.

JUDY TARANOVICH
PROCTOR GAS INC.
PROCTOR, VERMONT

The book I have in mind is 'One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich' by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. It's a story about Ivan, who is imprisoned in a Russian gulag and must find small ways to help him make it through the day in the best frame of mind that he can muster. It's a lesson in positive thinking that has myriad applications in day-to-day life. But it's also the first book title that came to mind as I recalled a Literature 101 class in junior college that took me from just reading words to learning to search for perspectives and biases of authors and other important details that can lead to a deeper understanding of the piece.

BRUCE SWIECICKI
CONSULTING ENGINEER
TINLEY PARK, ILLINOIS

Recently, I read a self-improvement book called 'Atomic Habits' by James Clear. Although I typically prefer fiction, this book came highly recommended by a friend, and it did not disappoint. 'Atomic Habits' explores how small changes in habits can lead to significant results over time. One key idea that really resonated with me is the principle of making just a 1% improvement each day. It's a simple yet powerful concept that now prompts me to ask myself daily, 'OK, what's one small thing I can do today to be 1% better?' Reading it made me way more aware of my habits, especially the not-so-great ones. If you're looking for something easy to read but packed with really practical advice, I'd definitely say give 'Atomic Habits' a shot.

STACI RAMMEL
WOODRUFF ENERGY
BRIDGETON, NEW JERSEY

One book I often think about that helped shape my outlook on life is 'Breakfast of Champions' by Kurt Vonnegut. The book was recommended to me by my dad when I was a junior in high school. Looking back at it now, I think Dad was just happy to see me read a book ... any book. 'Breakfast of Champions' contains enduring human issues like mental illness, finding purpose or meaning in life, how we treat those we love and humanity in general, written



NEW AFRICA - STOCK.ADOBE.COM

in an amusing way. The book opened the door for me to many other Vonnegut novels, all with very similar themes and all darkly comical. 'Breakfast of Champions' immediately led me to read 'Slaughterhouse Five,' which helped shape how I think of war and the ways it changes the young people's lives that fight them. (Kurt Vonnegut was a [prisoner of war] in World War II.) Dad must have known what he was doing. He made lifelong Vonnegut fans of my brothers, too. I think we all share similar values that run as a common thread through all of Vonnegut's books: cruelty in this world of any kind is completely unnecessary. Regardless of religion, social status, education or wealth, people must take care of one another. We'll all have better lives for it.

DON MONTROY
BERGQUIST INC.
ROCKFORD, MICHIGAN

I recently read 'Elon Musk' by Walter Isaacson. Wow, I didn't know Elon was such a complex person. Six-hundred-plus pages and I couldn't put it down. It was fascinating to hear about his upbringing and each of his companies, not to mention all of his 'baby mama drama.' Elon's passion and vision for the future is what drives him. When his company goals are unmet, he personally gets involved with the frontline workers to problem solve and invigorate his team until the breakthrough happens. I enjoy reading biographies about any successful person.

JULIE JOHNSON
TED JOHNSON PROPANE
BALDWIN PARK, CALIFORNIA

I would have to say that there are two books that have helped me in life and business. The first book is Stephen Covey's 'The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness.' This book picks up from his '7 Habits of Highly Successful People' and provides some insight to taking your life to the next level. He really emphasizes balance in life, making sure that we continue to work on our four intelligences (mind, body, heart and spirit). If we keep these four areas in balance, we will achieve more and live a happier, more fulfilled life. It's a longer read, but his style is very relatable and easy to understand. Great follow-up to his bestseller. The second book that I really enjoy and have shared with my kids is Andy Stanley's 'Better Decisions, Fewer Regrets.' In this book, Andy talks about the five questions that we should ask ourselves before we make decisions in our life, especially the big ones like career, relationships, purchasing a house, etc. Andy provides a biblical and common-sense approach for decision-making, in the hopes of avoiding regrets. I gave it to my kids and their husbands as a guide to help through the big decisions they will be making. It is a short read but a great message. I strongly recommend this quick read, especially for our younger generations.

TOM KRUPA
NGL SUPPLY TERMINALS CO.
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

The best book I've read that helped me in life and business is 'Everything I Know About Business I Learned From the Grateful Dead' by Barry Barnes, Ph.D. The book transformed my thoughts on business and taught me how business culture was more important than setting goals or KPIs. It showed me how to run a business on what felt right for our clients and our employees. Some of the chapters are titled 'Strategic Improvisation,' 'Live Your Values,' 'Be Kind to Your Customers,' 'Share Your Content,' 'Create a Business Tribe' and 'Innovate Constantly.' I highly recommend [it] for both business and personal growth.

STEVE ABBATE
CETANE ASSOCIATES
KENT, CONNECTICUT

A quick read called 'The Richest Man in Town' by V.J. Smith is about a Walmart

cashier named Marty who genuinely enjoyed his job. He went the extra length to connect with people, look them in the eye to ask how they were and truly listened. Marty made people smile and had a positive impact on how people felt when they'd leave the store. As technology continues to evolve, I believe it's necessary to remember the importance of that human interaction in our everyday lives. Small things can go a long way.

ABBY THURSTON
RURAL COMPUTER CONSULTANTS
BIRD ISLAND, MINNESOTA

One of my favorite books that has really helped me in my career and personal life has been 'Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High.' This is key in a working world where there can be a lot of misconceptions that, if not addressed immediately or correctly, could lead to unnecessary damage to a working relationship. I, myself, have been guilty of trying to avoid the hard conversations and just hoping they pass and try to move on. I've found this book to be very helpful not only in approaching difficult topics with my coworkers and customers, but also close friends and family when the 'elephant in the room' has to be addressed. This book has given me so much insight on how to properly approach those hard topics to discuss with others without a fear of offending or hurting their feelings.

SAM FUNG
EMERSON FISHER LP GAS
MCKINNEY, TEXAS

'The Good Old Days, They Were Terrible!' Read that in 10th grade. Do not remember if that was the exact title. Do not remember the author, either [Editor's Note: The author is Otto Bettmann]. All about life in the early, early days. Makes you think about how far we all have come along. Other than that, I am not a book person.

RICHARD STRYCHARZ JR.
WALTER'S PROPANE
SUNDERLAND, MASSACHUSETTS

THE LIFE-BUSINESS CONNECTION

These submissions from our colleagues remind me that great books on life can help our work lives and great books on business may help our lives outside of work. Several of these book authors have advanced degrees and wisdom regarding what creates success in our lives. Kindness, flexibility, dedication, compassion, service, patience, positive thinking, new habits, humor, life balance, common sense, values, overcoming fear and reflection are offered by these authors as guidelines to being our better selves.

If you are interested in submitting responses, please contact Coop at ncoop@cetane.com.



LP CYLINDER SERVICE INC.

QUALITY STEEL

Tanks You Know People You Trust

Trust ***Quality Steel Corporation*** and ***LP Cylinder Service*** to give you a peace of mind and the best products & services in the industry. Committed to the success of our customers and propane industry for over *60 years*.



www.lpcylinder.com 570-685-7924 www.propanetank.com 800-345-2495



David Schlee is an attorney practicing in Kansas City, Missouri. He has been representing propane and natural gas distributors in fire and explosion litigation since 1986, and has authored BPN's Propane & the Law column since September 1989. He can be reached at dschlee@dschleelaw.com.

HOME IMPROVEMENT COMPANY SUED IN OHIO PROPANE EXPLOSION

A devastating explosion raises questions about jobsite safety & liability

A lawsuit was recently filed based on a tragic October 2024 explosion in Ellsworth, Ohio. Four people were killed in the explosion, which demolished their residence. Window World, a home improvement company, is the defendant. The propane supplier was not sued.

PROPANE APPLIANCES

The explosion happened at the residence of Jeffery and Joann Kocanyar, a couple in their late 60s who had owned the house for over 20 years. There were two propane appliances in the house — a furnace and a fireplace.

According to reports, the fireplace was rarely, if ever, used by the Kocanyars, and there is no evidence it was being used on the day of the incident. It is unclear whether the furnace was operating at that time.

Propane was supplied to the house from a 500-gallon tank located in the backyard. The record is unclear as to who owned the tank. The last delivery to the tank was made on March 18, 2024, over six months before the explosion. Just under 250 gallons were delivered, making it unlikely this was an out-of-gas delivery. The propane was provided by Salem Propane, a local distributor.

Prior to Oct. 4, the Kocanyars' daughter, Julie Lubic, arrived from Chicago with her husband Adam. It was their first wedding anniversary, and they planned to spend it with Julie's parents in Ellsworth. They were staying in the residence at the time of the explosion.

VINYL SIDING

Also at some point prior to Oct. 4, the Kocanyars decided to have vinyl siding installed over the wood siding on their house. They hired Window World, a local home improvement company, to do this work. The Window World crew arrived at about 9 a.m. on Oct. 4. They first set up scaffolding beside the two-story structure and then began to apply Tyvek "house wrap" over the original wood siding. The plan was to then install the vinyl siding over the Tyvek material.

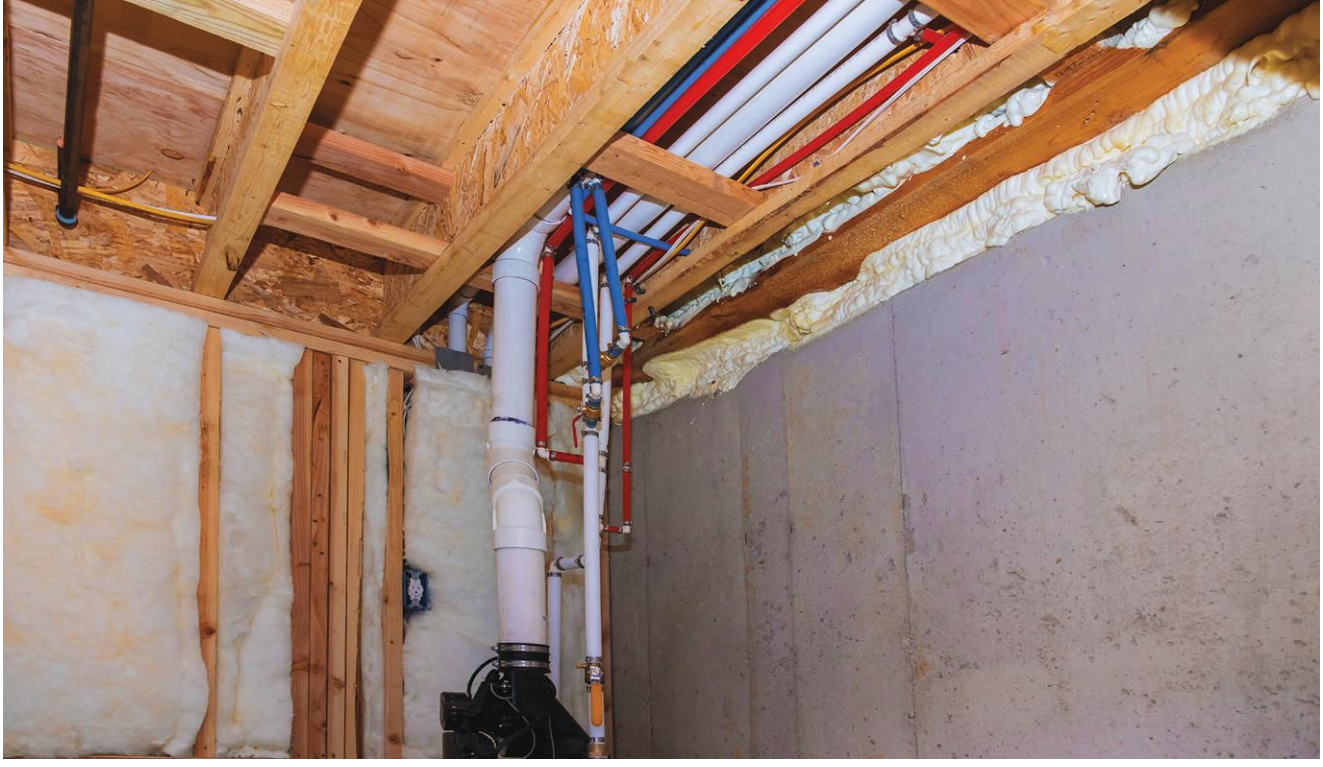
BROKEN WATER LINE

All seemed to go normally through the course of the day. Neighbors heard loud banging from the house, but this would not be that unusual for the installation of vinyl siding. However, later in the day, a neighbor was cutting his grass when he observed Jeff Kocanyar and his "son" (apparently son-in-law Adam) outside on the deck behind the house. The neighbor later gave a statement to an investigator from the state fire marshal's office:

"Jeff was on the back deck erecting a very long, approximately 20-25 feet (almost) to the top of his two-story house — looked to be a silver pole. Then he and his son took it toward the front of his house."

This "silver pole" is not identified in the record of the state fire marshal's investigation. However, it could well be a damaged water pipe that was being removed rather than erected. Just before 4:30 p.m., Joann texted the owner of Window World. The project manager for Window World was interviewed by the state fire marshal investigator, who stated in his report:

"Travis [the Window World manager] explained that at 1626 hours, he had received a text message, as well as photographs, from Joanne Kocanyar stating that Window World crews had accidentally broken a water pipe within the basement of the residence. Kocanyar shared seven photographs of the broken pipe that was located within the interior northeast corner of the structure. This PVC pipe identified was utilized for an outdoor water spigot on the outside of the residence located at the northeast corner. Kocanyar stated in her message that her



UNGVAR - STOCK.ADOBE.COM

husband, Jeff, was going to the hardware store to purchase the materials to fix the pipe and that she was just bringing it to his attention."

The water line break was bad enough that there was flooding in the basement. It is not clear from the state fire marshal's report or from any other reports of the incident how the Window World crew damaged a water line inside the basement when it was installing siding on the outside of the residence. However, there is nothing in the public record suggesting that this did not happen.

In any event, it appears that Jeff Kocanyar was able to fix the water line by the end of the day. The Window World crew continued to work at the site until about 7 p.m.

EXPLOSION

The next morning, an explosion destroyed the Kocanyar residence. The first alarm at the fire department was at 7:20 a.m. and the Window World crew had not yet arrived to continue the siding work.

It was a massive explosion. The state fire marshal report describes a large debris field extending 360 degrees from the building. Several photographs that accompany the report show a huge area of debris with no evidence of anything left of the residence. The report states that the basement foundation walls were all that remained of the two-story structure.

Joann and Jeff Kocanyar, as well as Julie Lubic, were found dead at the scene. Adam Lubic was found alive and was transported to a nearby hospital, where he died shortly thereafter. Family members have said that Joann and Jeff would certainly have been up and moving around the house at the time of the explosion.

LAWSUIT

The state fire marshal's report states that the "most probable cause of this incident is an explosion due to propane leak." However, the report does not identify the source of the leak or the source of ignition.

On March 26, a wrongful death lawsuit was filed on behalf of the families of the Kocanyars and Lubics. From news reports, Window World appears to be the only defendant. Understandably, it does not appear that the propane supplier was sued.

At the core of the lawsuit is the plaintiffs' allegation that the Window World crew severed a propane line inside the basement. At this point, there is no direct evidence of that in the public record. Certainly, the state fire marshal report does not reach this conclusion.

On the other hand, the crew apparently did break a water line inside the basement, where gas lines were also located. So, it is entirely plausible that the crew broke a gas line in addition to the water line.

ALLEGED NEGLIGENCE

Plaintiffs contend that Window World's negligence caused the gas line leak. Among other things, they argue that Window World should have conducted an inspection to identify the location of all gas lines in the house and should have turned off the propane supply at the tank before starting work. It adds that Window World was negligent in failing to train its employees in the proper way to work around gas lines.

It will be some time before this lawsuit goes to trial. And the fact remains that most cases like this are settled before trial. That may well happen with this lawsuit. In the meantime, this suit stands as a reminder that not every serious propane explosion results in litigation against the propane distributor.



Johnny Nickel is the managing editor of Butane-Propane News.

RECKONING WITH THE COMPLICATED LEGACY OF THE LINE 5 PIPELINE

Legal challenges loom over the Great Lakes oil pipeline, raising questions about energy safety & reliability

In the November 2024 issue of BPN, Derek Dalling — president and CEO of Dalling & Associates Inc., a major lobbying firm in the propane industry — gave an update on the status of the Line 5 tunnel project underway in Michigan. In his overview of the then-current legal challenges, Dalling made a case for the tunnel project, citing the increase of energy offerings in the area and the environmental security of further protecting the pipeline.

Dubbed the "Great Lakes tunnel" for its location under the Straits of Mackinac, the proposed construction of a protective tunnel around the Line 5 oil pipeline would be funded entirely by Enbridge, a large company that oversees the Line 5 pipeline and manages over 110,606 miles of gas transmission across parts of Canada and the United States, according to the company's website.

While advocates of the Great Lakes tunnel tout the overall good of the pipeline and its positive economic impact on the area, the tunnel project, as well as the pipeline itself, has not been without its critics.

Before digging further into the more recent updates and status of the ongoing discussion around the tunnel project, it could be helpful to zoom out and review the history of the pipeline.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LINE 5

By 1953, the year the Line 5 pipeline was completed by Bechtel Corporation, oil transportation had come a long way since the first pipeline was constructed. Made of iron and 2 inches in diameter, the world's first pipeline — built by hand in Pithole, Pennsylvania — was an endeavor spearheaded by the innovative oil buyer Samuel Van Syckel in 1865. In what was perhaps an omen of things to come, the project was met with such staunch — and at times violent — resistance from the workers whose jobs it was replacing, Van Syckel deployed his own private militia to guard the pipeline from would-be attackers. In spite of the looming threat of discontented workers, soon thereafter pipelines were crisscrossing all over Pennsylvania and beyond.

In the 1950s, pipeline technology had advanced well beyond the innovations of Van Syckel. Bolstered by the boom in innovation from World War II, the minds at Lakehead Pipeline Company (which would later come to be known as Enbridge) developed plans to construct a seamless steel pipeline that would transport oil from Superior, Wisconsin, to Sarnia, Canada. Upon completion, the pipeline would offer a safer and more efficient method of oil transportation, especially through the tricky Straits of Mackinac. Previously, oil tankers had to take the slow and sometimes risky treks through the waterways between Superior and Ontario, a path that had seen the wrecks of many ships over the years, including the infamous Edmund Fitzgerald.

In 1953, Lakehead Pipeline Company lobbied to pass a bill (Act 10 of 1953) that subsequently cleared the way for the Department of Environment, Great

Lakes and Energy (EGLE) — called the "Conservation Commission" at the time — to grant easements for construction on state-owned lands and waterways. Because the push for stricter environmental management at the federal level would not come until much later, the bill passed with minimal environmental restrictions or review. So long as certain engineering safety specifications were met by Lakehead Pipeline Company, the easement allowed the company "to construct, lay and maintain pipelines over, through, under and upon certain lake bottom lands ... for the purpose of transporting petroleum and other products."

Given the current disagreements around the pipeline, it might come as a surprise to learn the project was by and large welcomed and even celebrated by the Michigan community at the time. For many, it was yet another symbol of the innovation and growth in infrastructure taking place in America.

SAFETY CONCERNS GROW

For many years, Enbridge enjoyed relative peace and quiet in the public eye as the silent pipelines did their important work at the bottom of the Great Lakes. All of that changed in 2010, when Enbridge's Line 6B spilled over 800,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River, located in Michigan. The spill garnered greater concern from the public and the Michigan government regarding the real risks posed by the Line 5 pipeline. A spill in the Great Lakes could be catastrophic.

To make matters worse, the spill was attributed to Enbridge's failure to maintain the safety of the 6B pipeline. With further scrutiny being given to the safety of the pipelines, it was discovered that Enbridge had violated Section (A) (1) of the original 1953 Line 5 easement agreement, which states that "the maximum span or length of pipe unsupported shall not exceed 75 feet." As far back as 2001, Enbridge has applied for emergency permits to add anchoring supports to the pipeline, requests that the EGLE (then called the Department of Environmental Quality) has largely granted. However, in 2014, Enbridge submitted documentation to the state of Michigan that revealed that since at least 1963, there have not been support anchors at the required 75 feet mark as laid out in the agreement. Enbridge had been violating the easement agreement for at least 50 years. What is more, during the process of installing additional safety anchors in 2014, the pipeline's protective coating was damaged — a fact that Enbridge did not disclose until three years later.

In 2016, amid growing concerns from the public and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians in particular, EGLE allowed permitting for four of Enbridge's proposed anchor additions but denied permitting for an additional 18 anchors.

Tensions continued to ramp up between government regulatory bodies and the status of the pipeline. In 2017, the state of Michigan struck an agreement with Enbridge, called the First Agreement, that the company would amend gaps in the line's protective coatings and meet certain operational safety measures. The agreement also called for Enbridge to study alternative options to the pipelines. Less than six months later, a boat anchor rammed into Line 5, causing the pipeline to receive two dents on the western line and one on the eastern line. The pipeline's already questionable safety status was quickly becoming more urgent.

In October 2018, Michigan entered into another agreement with Enbridge, dubbed the Second Agreement. This agreement called for the construction of a tunnel that would protect a new portion of the pipeline under the Straits of Mackinac, funded entirely by Enbridge. The Great Lakes tunnel project was born.

CONFLICTING GOVERNMENT MANDATES & PRESENT-DAY LEGAL CHALLENGES

In a twist of irony, the same government that entered into an agreement with Enbridge to construct the Great Lakes tunnel would soon oppose both the tunnel project and the pipeline itself. The new Michigan governor, Gretchen Whitmer, who took office in January 2019 alongside Attorney General Dana Nessel, publicly opposed the Line 5 pipeline. Shortly after taking office, Nessel filed a lawsuit against Enbridge, claiming the original easement should be void and the pipeline should cease operations. In 2020, Governor Whitmer cited violations of the public trust doctrine and sent a notice to Enbridge that the 1953 easement was revoked.

In a relatively short time span, Enbridge has become embroiled in more legal difficulties and challenges than it has ever experienced in its 75-plus years of existence. The number of lawsuits involving Enbridge is significant and difficult to track.

One lawsuit, initiated by Enbridge, pushed back against Nessel's formal legal opinion issued in 2019 that the state legislature was not operating in line with the Michigan Constitution when it created the Mackinac Straits Corridor Authority and entered into the Tunnel Agreement with Enbridge. Since BPN's November 2024 article covering Line 5, the Michigan Court of Appeals has found that the Michigan legislature acted within its rights and that the agreements between Michigan and Enbridge were valid. The decision was welcomed by many in the propane industry, including the National Propane Gas Association.

Another lawsuit, initiated by the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, resulted in a federal judge giving Enbridge until 2026 to shut down parts of the pipeline that run through reservation land. As part of a long-term solution to the decision, Enbridge proposed a 41-mile reroute of the pipeline around reservation land, a plan that was permitted and approved by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, but which has since been met with more opposition from the Bad River

Band tribe. Both Enbridge and the Bad River Band tribe have appealed the court decision before the U.S. 7th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Enbridge has also filed a case against Governor Whitmer and the Department of Natural Resources in federal court over the governor's aforementioned 2020 notice calling for the pipeline to cease operations. In the lawsuit, Enbridge claimed the state of Michigan was unlawfully interfering in the pipeline's operation. In a recent update in late April, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit reviewed the case and found that Enbridge's lawsuit could proceed in federal court. The appeals court disagreed with the defendant's arguments that Enbridge's lawsuit violated 11th Amendment sovereign immunity. This marked another victory for Enbridge.

Perhaps the most significant lawsuit on watch right now is one brought by Nessel in 2019, seeking to void the original easement agreement with Enbridge. The case has been remanded to Michigan state court, a decision affirmed by the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals and a step that is seen by many as an early success for the attorney general. However, no one is sure of how the various cases involving Enbridge will turn out. In a legal web as complicated as this — which involves various cases, safety reports, governmental agencies, appeals courts and a new administration's executive orders declaring an energy emergency — it will require time to fully understand the fate of the Enbridge Line 5 pipeline and the communities it impacts.

REFLECTIONS ON LINE 5 & THE ENERGY CONVERSATION

At the heart of the debates surrounding Line 5 and the Great Lakes tunnel project is a valid question about American energy. How can we balance the type of innovation put on display in the Line 5 pipeline, which led to affordable and accessible energy options for everyday Americans, while taking care of the planet we all call home?

Unfortunately, there are no easy answers to this question. We can no longer deny the impact that our human habits have on the climate. But it is equally true that any environmentally friendly solution must be human friendly, ensuring the affordability and reliability that fuels a flourishing community.

One helpful example of a possible way forward is the "wide path approach" to clean energy advocated by Tucker Perkins, president and CEO of the Propane Education & Research Council. It seems unlikely that one energy solution will have the final say in our future energy landscape. Whatever the specific answers are, it's clear propane will have a role to play.



How Can You Grow Delivery Efficiency?

Software is an integral part of your business.
Choose a partner whose products enable you to grow.



ADD SYSTEMS
ALWAYS MOVING FORWARD

SOFTWARE FOR THE PETROLEUM & CONVENIENCE STORE INDUSTRIES

Learn more at addsys.com
800-922-0972

EXPECT MORE

FISK TX-3
CAN HOLD UP TO FIVE 1000 GAL TANKS

Long Range Propane Hauling



Options available on all current inventory trucks - new and used.

New Inventory *Available Today:*

We are now ISO Certified

CONTACT *FISK* TODAY 920-626-1500 *www.fiskinc.net*

PROPANE TANK SERVICE AND INSTALLATION TRUCKS AND TRAILERS

2025 NPGA SE EXPO SHOWCASES INDUSTRY RESILIENCE & UNITY

The expo in Charlotte drew thousands of industry professionals for 3 days of innovation, leadership & a renewed sense of mission

BY CHRISTINA MILLER



Steve Kaminski delivers his opening speech at the expo.

The National Propane Gas Association's (NPGA) 2025 Southeastern & International Propane Expo opened April 4-6 at the Charlotte Convention Center in Charlotte, North Carolina, with an energizing call to action and a renewed sense of purpose among propane professionals.

Drawing thousands of attendees from across the United States and abroad, the expo reaffirmed its place as the industry's largest gathering, featuring a variety of educational sessions, exhibitor showcases and inspiring moments that brought the industry's mission into sharp focus.

OPENING CEREMONY & KEYNOTE ADDRESS: A UNIFIED IDENTITY

The expo's opening ceremony delivered what many attendees later described as one of the most energizing opening addresses in years. Steve Kaminski, president and CEO of NPGA, set the tone early with a powerful reminder:

"I want to commend everyone in the room and the entire propane industry on your efforts in January and February. We finally had a cold winter, which was tremendous, and the vast majority of the country saw long, broad stretches of cold. We saw very few hiccups, and even though … conditions differed from the winter of 2013-2014, the cold was very similar, and it demonstrates just how far this industry has come in the last 11 years. Kudos to everyone and the actions you have taken over the last 11 years to prepare the industry for this kind of stretch of winter."

NPGA Chair Thomas Van Buren of Pico Propane and Fuels was introduced after Kaminski and said, "I've never been more excited or proud about our future. We're going on the offense now. Propane is the leading energy solution for cooking, home heat, water, heat, power, emergency relief and more. Propane and you improve and save lives. Propane and our people are truly beacons of hope. … We have a proud industry and an amazing product with the responsibility to promote and protect propane as an exceptional energy solution. We need to share that message in our proud story [and] in our communities."

POWERING THE FUTURE WITH INNOVATION

Following Van Buren's address, Tucker Perkins, president and CEO of the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC), took the stage to expand on the industry's future-facing vision.

"We have so many reasons to celebrate. I hope you feel the mood — the mood feels so different. But let's celebrate because we had it, right? We had the coldest January since 2010. [It's] probably the fourth-coldest winter since 2010. And you know what? You performed. Everybody performed.

"Well done," he continued. "Couldn't do it any better, and I hope you realize how important that action — not easy action, that hard action that takes teamwork, diligence, commitment — how much that goes to help us to tell the story. I want to celebrate you for your winter work. Unbelievable job. Well done. Thank you."

The address highlighted the indispensable role propane plays in crisis response, from natural disasters to infrastructure breakdowns. Perkins illustrated this with vivid examples: propane tanks airlifted to isolated islands, technicians using chainsaws to restore service after storms and ATVs hauling tanks to cut-off rural communities.

"That's what propane people do. That's how you respond," he said.

The message was not only retrospective but forward-looking. Perkins shared a case study involving a luxury homebuilder who, after





From left: Curtis Sobottka, Garrett Sager, Joe Figueroa, Allison Platz-Velazquez and Barrett Conway accept plaques from BPN Editor in Chief Jessica Phillips at the Young Professional of the Year award reception.

experiencing grid failures, turned to propane for a complete retrofit — installing tankless water heating, generators, cooking equipment, fireplaces and even a combined heat and power (CHP) unit. "They built a perfectly resilient home … One that we demand," he said.

Perkins presented propane as a practical and scalable solution in a transitioning energy landscape. He highlighted success stories, such as a fleet contractor serving the U.S. Postal Service: "We saved over $14 million since 2015 when we went propane." He also cited a school bus driver from South Carolina's second-largest fleet: "I've driven for almost 3,000 miles of propane buses. I [haven't] yet had any issue. The propane technology doesn't let me down."

Throughout his remarks, Perkins emphasized the need to seize the moment. "We've bought four years for sure of propane. That is like a gift of fish — it's not going to last a long time," he warned. He urged attendees to act now by deepening their knowledge of emerging technologies and forging new partnerships.

The ceremony concluded with three clear directives: Commit to safety. Commit to learning. Act with urgency. "We have the fuel. We have the tools. We have the innovation. We have to happen," Perkins said.

STEVE SPURRIER DELIVERS KEYNOTE

Legendary college football coach and 1966 Heisman Trophy winner Steve Spurrier added to the momentum with a keynote address centered on leadership and adaptability. Drawing parallels between the gridiron and business, Spurrier emphasized preparation and execution. His personal stories and humor resonated with the audience, reinforcing the expo's theme of resilience through clarity and action.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

With more than 40 sessions and workshops, the expo's educational programming reflected the complexity and drive of today's propane industry. Notable sessions included "Propane's Role in Responsible and Sustainable Energy Diversification in Power Generation," presented by Bert Warner of PERC, which highlighted propane's expanding role in grid resilience and energy diversification.

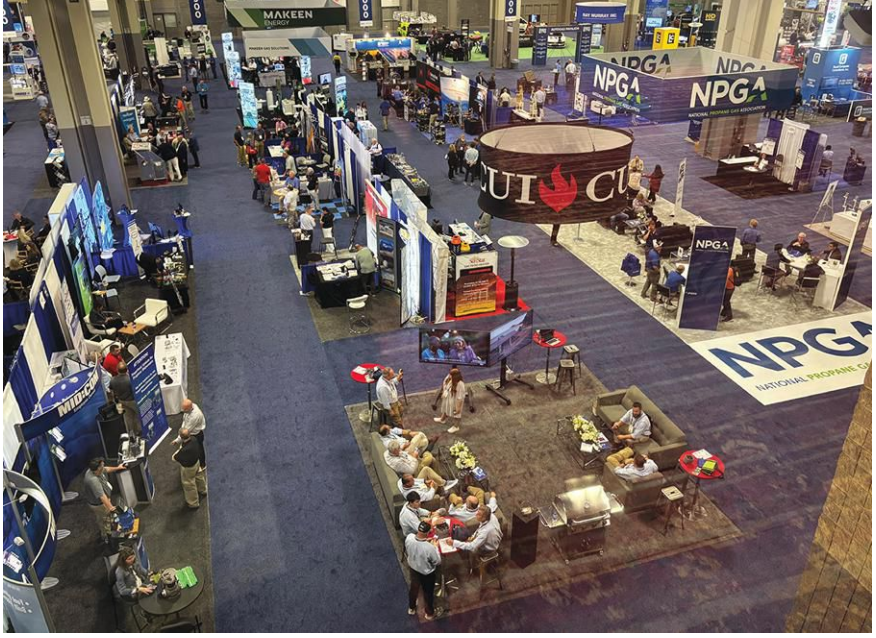
Another session, "Reigniting Propane: Incorporating Automation, Digital Platforms and AI Into Your Strategy," explored how companies are leveraging advanced technologies to optimize operations and improve customer engagement. Topics across the broader agenda ranged from safety standards and regulatory compliance to workforce development and environmental policy.

NETWORKING & SPECIAL EVENTS

The expo continued to serve as a hub for professional connections and community recognition. The Exhibit Hall Welcome Reception immediately followed the general sessions, allowing attendees to network while exploring cutting-edge products.

The Women in Propane Leadership Forum featured an interactive workshop designed to elevate leadership skills and foster inclusive dialogue. Meanwhile, the first-annual Young Professional of the Year Award reception, sponsored by BPN and Ferrellgas, celebrated emerging leaders who are shaping the future of the industry.

Barrett Conway, managing director of Cetane Associates, was the first recipient of this award. The four additional finalists were Joe Figueroa, vice president, mergers and acquisitions at Ferrellgas; Allison Platz-Velazquez, director of marketing and sales at Delta Liquid Energy; Garrett Sager, co-owner of Henley Propane; and Curtis Sobottka, customer service supervisor at Ferrellgas.



A view from above of this year's exhibit hall.

INNOVATIONS ON DISPLAY

The exhibit hall offered attendees the opportunity to see the latest innovations firsthand. With over 250 exhibitors, the New Products Showcase drew particular attention. Technologies in alternative fuel vehicles, energy storage, CHP systems and smart monitoring reflected how propane continues to innovate in response to both market demands and regulatory shifts.

Demonstrations, live Q&A sessions and product unveilings gave attendees tangible insights into where the industry is heading. Across the floor, the energy was forward-looking and action-oriented.

CLOSING REFLECTIONS

The 2025 Southeastern Expo delivered not only on its promise of networking and innovation but also on inspiration and strategy. With clear calls to action from its leadership, the event positioned propane as a reliable, adaptable and essential energy source.

Attendees left with renewed purpose and the tools to meet the moment. As Perkins asked in closing, "Is this a place I can be fulfilled and will fulfill me for the rest of my days?" For many at the expo, the answer was a resounding yes.

With resilience, innovation and unity at its core, the propane industry made it clear: We are propane people. That means something.

Christina Miller is the associate editor of Butane-Propane News.



ELAFLEX

A SAFER SYSTEM

Pull-Away Hose Assembly - Tanker Loading



Increase Safety · Reduce Costs · Better Handling

Pull-Away Coupling



LPG Propane Hose

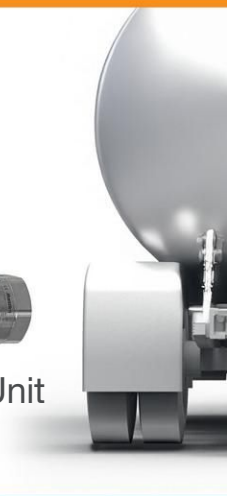


DGC Coupling





Tank Unit



ELAFLEX 'Pull Away Hose Assembly' protects your people and the assets.

ELAFLEX PACIFIC PTY LTD

Unit 29/58 Box Road · Taren Point, NSW, 2229 · Australia · Tel. +61 2 8058 9258 · info@elaflex.com.au · elaflex.com.au

MEET THE RISING STARS OF THE PROPANE INDUSTRY

This year marked a special move for the industry with the inaugural Young Professional of the Year award, recognizing individuals 40 and under who are making an impact on propane through their leadership, engagement and achievement. Ahead, meet the first-ever Young Professional of the Year award winner, as well as the four finalists, as we recognize their accomplishments and celebrate what younger generations are bringing to the industry.

When Barrett Conway joined the Cetane Associates team in 2019, no one could predict what would come over the following years, like the COVID-19 pandemic, major shifts in political leadership and rapidly evolving energy policies. Amid this unpredictability, Conway purchased Cetane Associates from Steve Abbate in 2022, and considering Conway's career accomplishments and the fresh perspective he brings to the propane industry, that's a move that made sense in a world of uncertainty.

"It was a major milestone for me — both emotionally and financially," said Conway. "What makes it even more meaningful is that the entire team remained in place, and we've grown significantly from 10 people in 2022 to nearly 25 by mid-2025. Supporting such a talented team and helping our clients navigate some of the most important transitions in their lives has been incredibly rewarding."

One of the projects Conway has implemented at Cetane's helm is a partnership with the Safe House Project to develop a training program specifically designed for service professionals to help identify and respond to signs of human trafficking.

"Since these professionals often enter homes and businesses, they're in a unique position to spot potential red flags," Conway said. "The program features educational videos that highlight key indicators — such as unusual behaviors, physical signs and environmental cues — paired with real-world scenarios and expert guidance. Participants can earn a certification by completing the training and passing a brief quiz. It's a powerful way to equip our industry with tools to make a real impact beyond business."

Conway has shown his commitment to taking care of the people of the industry — and beyond. It is clear through Conway's words and actions that he is passionate about being instrumental in propane's bright future, from shepherding clients through major transitional periods to being, in his words, "a champion for young people not only to succeed but to thrive in this field."

"I believe younger generations are playing a key role in driving innovation within the propane industry — particularly when it comes to adopting and implementing new technologies," he continued. "There's a growing openness to modern tools and digital solutions, and much of that momentum is being led by younger professionals who are bringing fresh perspectives and a willingness to challenge the status quo. It's helping the industry evolve in ways that make us more efficient, connected and future-ready."

In that regard, Conway is looking to a proactive future for the industry to push forward beneficial initiatives for propane in the wake of the recent positive momentum at the federal and legislative level. Conway sees this shift away from the propane industry's reactionary defense mode of the past five years as an opportunity to advocate for growth and build a more resilient future.

It's no wonder Conway fit right into the role of this year's award winner.

"I'm incredibly honored to be named the inaugural Young Professional of the Year. It's truly humbling to be recognized by my peers in the propane industry — people I deeply respect and admire. This award is a reflection of the support I've received from my wife, mentors, colleagues and the entire Cetane Associates team, and I'm grateful to be part of such a dedicated and forward-thinking industry."



BARRETT CONWAY
YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR
Managing Director, Cetane Associates

And Conway isn't anywhere near done. With goals to continue growing both the brand and the team at Cetane Associates in the next five to 10 years, he's in it for the long haul, alongside his peers, to position the industry for long-term success.

"What motivates me is the desire to leave a lasting positive impact on the world. I've been fortunate to be given a great opportunity at a young age, and with that comes a strong sense of responsibility and excitement. Leading Cetane Associates through new challenges and opportunities is what drives me every day. The potential to make a meaningful difference — both for our team and for the clients we serve — is what keeps me energized and focused."

As the first person to receive the Young Professional of the Year award, where Conway goes from here will be exciting to watch as he contributes to a promising future for propane.



JOE FIGUEROA

2025 FINALIST

Vice President, Mergers & Acquisitions, Ferrellgas

If there's one thing the propane industry can commend itself for — and there are many — it's the community it has built over the decades. That's what drew Joe Figueroa, vice president of mergers and acquisitions at Ferrellgas, to both the company and to propane. Ferrellgas' strong culture of community, as Figueroa puts it, was immediately evident and reinforced the value he sees in the industry.

Since then, building community and advocating for the industry has been a major focus of Figueroa's career in propane. Figueroa entered the industry in 2020 at a time when human connection became more difficult with the challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"One of my favorite memories is from when I first started with Ferrellgas, when COVID shut down the world," Figueroa recalled. "I remember waking up one morning after starting to work from home to dozens of emails from employees I did not know. They were all checking in and offering support. At that moment, I knew this would be a place [and] industry I would work in for a long time."

Figueroa's first role at Ferrellgas was to build a development program that provided mentorship to new employees going into frontline management. That focus on the talent pipeline remains important to him today. "I believe it is important to educate those who wouldn't normally consider propane as a potential career. There are so many benefits to working in our industry," he said. "There needs to be a continued focus on facilitating efforts to drive generational engagement at different levels. Only then can we sustain the amount of momentum we have right now."

It's no wonder Figueroa became one of the finalists for Young Professional of the Year. He said standing next to his fellow finalists highlighted the industry's strength and how bright the future looks.

"It is vital to the sustainability of our industry that young professionals are engaged and invested in the future. There is so much tenure and knowledge in propane. In order to continue to grow, younger employees must learn from those tenured individuals and look for opportunities to contribute wherever and whenever they can," said Figueroa.

He added, "Seeing someone spend 20 to 30 years in one place because they love what they do is incredibly special. My advice is to come into our industry and learn."

As the workforce continues to evolve, people like Figueroa have the opportunity to bridge generational gaps and foster shifting norms and ideals. Figueroa noted that at times, despite the sense of community, the propane industry can still seem fragmented. He sees the potential to fix that: "We are peers with a common goal of seeing the industry continue to move forward."

With people like Figueroa and his peers leading the charge, that forward momentum does look bright indeed. ★



ALLISON PLATZ-VELAZQUEZ

2025 FINALIST

Director of Sales & Marketing, Delta Liquid Energy

"Propane runs through our veins." That's how Allison Platz-Velazquez describes her family's connection to the propane industry. Platz-Velazquez works as the director of sales and marketing at Delta Liquid Energy (DLE), a company started by her great-grandparents.

But even before working full time for the company, she was actively involved in the industry, from attending trade shows to assisting around the office as a teenager. While some may become disillusioned with their parents' work, Platz-Velazquez has only good things to say about her experience.

"I truly feel like the veterans of our industry want to see younger professionals succeed because that's how our industry will succeed," said Platz-Velazquez. "I've been met with nothing but positive advice, coaching and encouragement."

Encouragement is a word that seems to encapsulate the spirit of so many in an industry filled with hardworking families seeking to enrich the lives of those around them. For her own part, Platz-Velazquez has boosted DLE's involvement in charity.

"I think my biggest, and certainly my favorite, accomplishment has been the growth of DLE's philanthropic efforts," said Platz-Velazquez. "I started our annual Donation Drive that takes place each December. We collect toys and non-perishable food items for the communities we service. We've partnered with local food banks and branches of the Salvation Army to ensure the donations are given straight back to the local communities. I also assist with our annual contributions to the 4H and [Future Farmers of America] students on the central coast."

In addition to growing roots in the community, Platz-Velazquez looks for ways DLE can expand its markets and grow its business, a skill she credits to her father.

"I'd really like to be a part of growing California and DLE's year-round gallons," said Platz-Velazquez. "I would love to see gallons in California expand into new markets like combined heat and power. The instability and expensiveness of our electric grid give us a prime opportunity to tell propane's reliability story."

For Platz-Velazquez, the future of propane is bright and the opportunity for growth is ripe. All it takes to capitalize on that potential is a concerted effort to invest in the future, including the young professionals already making a difference.

"Being invested in the future of our industry is an extension of being invested in ourselves," she said. "Current young professionals will eventually be the leaders of the industry as our more experienced generations move on and/or retire. Now is the time to get involved and learn from those who have paved the way while also sharing our ideas for innovation. The only way our industry continues for our children's and grandchildren's generations is if those of us with new ideas and fresh passion get involved and share our voices." ★

The paths are wide and many that lead young professionals to pursue a career in propane. For Garrett Sager, owner of Henley Propane, the invitation to join the industry came from his father-in-law, who, like so many, owned and operated his own family propane business. Prior to joining him as a business partner and successor to the company, Sager worked in a field that at first glance seems to have little in common with propane: healthcare. It was during his time in healthcare, however, that Sager honed a strong willingness to explore new ways of doing things.

"Speaking from my own experience, when I joined our business, I saw opportunities to modernize and streamline many aspects of our operations," said Sager. "I implemented updated technologies, enhanced our software capabilities, invested in more advanced equipment and placed a strong focus on digital presence."

Sager's keen eye for the latest trends in technology and his eagerness to innovate point to the importance of upcoming generations' involvement in the propane industry. Younger professionals are tasked with upholding and building on the legacy of those who made the industry what it is now — something that resonates with Sager.

"It's incredibly important for young professionals to be invested in the future of the propane industry because we are the ones who will carry it forward," said Sager. "For me, that starts with advocacy and education. Many people don't even realize the scale or importance of our industry. I believe in raising awareness about the role propane plays in energy, safety and sustainability."

Sager is a prime example of how younger generations are apt to understand and meet the concerns of an evolving base of customers who are increasingly frustrated with the cost of living and environmental neglect. Sager cares about the larger picture: Success for the propane industry means shifting public perception. For Sager, this task is all about education.

"I believe we need to do a better job of showing consumers that propane is not only a reliable and efficient energy source, but a cost-effective and environmentally friendly alternative to electricity."

While Sager focuses on the future, he is also in tune with the ways past leadership has laid the foundation and support for upcoming generations. When reflecting on his greatest mentors, he credited his father-in-law and grandfather-in-law, both previous



GARRETT SAGER

2025 FINALIST

Owner, Henley Propane

Henley Propane owners. According to Sager, any successful innovation must always strike the balance between trying something new and retaining the wisdom of the past.

"I've focused on modernizing parts of our business while also reinforcing old-school traditions," said Sager. "It's a balance I've come to really appreciate. ... It's not just about change for the sake of change; it's about building a strong foundation and positioning the business for long-term growth in a digital-first world."

BUILT TO LAST LONGER™

THE ORIGINAL FORGED BRASS LOCKWING BALL VALVE THAT CHANGED THE GAS INDUSTRY



Jomar VALVE

JOMARVALVE.COM

One of the benefits of working in the propane industry is the sense of fulfillment and accomplishment that comes from providing the fuel that keeps customers warm whenever and wherever they need it. Curtis Sobottka feels that every day in his role as customer service manager at Ferrellgas and takes pride working in an industry that helps others and provides a professional challenge for his career goals.

That's why he left communications after 10 years in the field. He wanted something more challenging, and his role with Ferrellgas has provided that ever since. Now he uses his position to encourage others through effective team management.

He sees one of his biggest contributions as "being able to shape my coaching style to how people want to be coached. Someone that people on my team can look up to and work for because they know they have someone that will fight for them each day." His long-term goal is to remain an effective leader at Ferrellgas and build relationships with the Government Affairs Committee for the Minnesota Propane Association, which Sobottka also works with.

Sobottka's commitment to being a leader and participating in the larger goals of the propane industry speaks to why he was named a Young Professional of the Year finalist. And he has a vision in mind for his cohort of young professionals in the industry: "We are the future of this industry. We need young professionals to drive the industry down the right path. Our future depends on those young professionals to ensure propane always remains a necessary product for millions of people. I would ask all young professionals to get involved. ... The more involvement you have and you promote it, the more invested and dedicated you become to the industry."

Sobottka also recognizes where younger generations have the opportunity to take propane into new and growing territories. "Millennials and Gen Z prioritize safety protocols and environmentally friendly practices. They are advocating for cleaner fuels, renewable energy integration and sustainable operations, leading to a shift toward greener propane solutions and more rigorous safety standards. These generations seek meaningful work that aligns with their values. They are motivated by roles that contribute to community well-being, energy resilience and environmental stewardship, influencing companies to emphasize corporate social responsibility and community engagement."



CURTIS SOBOTTKA
2025 FINALIST
Customer Service Manager, Ferrellgas

As future generations fill in the spaces left by retirees, the propane industry will continue to evolve with new technologies, regulations and best practices. Sobottka urges new generations to "stay curious and committed to ongoing education. Also, building trust and maintaining good relationships with clients is essential. Provide reliable, respectful service and communicate clearly."

What's clear is that Sobottka will push the industry forward for years to come.

Fleet managers, transport owners, and fuel transporters turn to Westmor when they're frustrated with downtime and maintenance issues, when they want to reduce operating costs with low quality and outdated equipment. Oftentimes, they're having troubles with their trailer weights and payload capacity.



TRANSPORT IT YOUR WAY

SCAN TO LEARN MORE

WESTMOR

westmor-ind.com

» Match your trailer and equipment to your operational needs
» Design equipment to maximize your payload capacity
» Diversify your operation with the ability to transport or deliver liquid gases
» Made in the USA

BACKYARDS ACROSS BORDERS: HOW PROPANE FUELS OUTDOOR LIVING IN THE US & CANADA

From patio heaters to pool comfort, propane powers outdoor lifestyles shaped by geography, culture & climate

BY CHRISTIAN LEVAC

IMAGES COURTESY OF PROPANE LEVAC.



Outdoor living is a defining part of the North American lifestyle. Whether it's grilling dinner with family or warming up a chilly spring evening with a patio heater, outdoor spaces have evolved into true extensions of the home. Propane plays a central role in this transformation — not just in summer, but all year-round — especially in regions like Canada and rural areas across both countries where it also fuels homes, businesses and farms.

As more homeowners invest in outdoor living spaces, propane is being embraced as a reliable, clean and portable energy source that brings comfort, convenience and performance to the backyard. But how propane is used — and which products dominate the market — differs significantly between the U.S. and Canada, influenced by weather patterns, cultural behaviors and energy infrastructure.

Canada: Making the Most of Short Summers With Long-Burning Heat

In Canada, propane is a year-round necessity, but its presence becomes especially visible once winter begins to retreat. With long, cold winters and a relatively short summer season, Canadians are eager to make the most of every warm day. Propane helps extend that outdoor window, allowing people to enjoy their patios, decks and pools even in shoulder seasons.

Patio and pool heaters have become staples in Canadian backyards. These appliances are often used weeks before and after the typical summer season, helping homeowners and hospitality operators reclaim their outdoor spaces during cool spring mornings or brisk autumn evenings. In contrast to the U.S., where such units are often found in commercial venues, in Canada they're increasingly common in residential settings.

Another trend is the growing popularity of full-featured outdoor kitchens. Canadian homeowners are investing in propane grills, side burners, stoves, and even propane-powered lighting and fire features. With evenings that remain cool even during peak summer, the ability to generate instant, adjustable heat is a game changer. Propane not only powers the cooking — it sets the ambiance.

Spas and boutique accommodations have also embraced propane for its combination of performance and aesthetics. Patio heaters, fire bowls and decorative flames powered by propane help create an inviting atmosphere, particularly in cooler regions or shoulder seasons.

Propane at the Heart of Ontario's Winter Festivals

Even in the depths of winter, propane helps Canadians stay outside — and enjoy it. Across Ontario, propane plays a vital role in powering winter festivals where access to electricity is limited or unreliable. From small-town holiday markets to large-scale events like Ottawa's Winterlude, propane-fueled food trucks and vendors are a staple.

One iconic example is the beloved BeaverTail — a deep-fried, cinnamon-sugar pastry served piping hot from propane-powered trailers. Whether it's heating fryers or keeping vendors warm during subzero temperatures, propane makes it possible to deliver hot comfort food and warm hospitality, even in the heart of winter.

This use of propane in public, seasonal events highlights its portability, dependability and cold-weather performance — proving it's not just a home energy solution, but a community enabler that supports local culture and outdoor enjoyment all year-round.

Propane Infrastructure Supports Backyard Growth

One of the reasons propane is so seamlessly integrated into Canadian outdoor living is that it's already widely used indoors. In rural and off-grid communities across Canada, propane is often the primary fuel for space heating, water heating and cooking. This familiarity and existing infrastructure — from refillable cylinders to on-site tanks — supports the expansion of propane use into outdoor environments.

Many Canadian homeowners already have the service, safety knowledge and supplier relationships in place. That confidence encourages more ambitious backyard investments, including high-Btu freestanding heaters, multiburner cooking stations and larger storage setups that support multiple appliances.

Propane Pool Heating: A Canadian Staple

In provinces with shorter swimming seasons, propane-powered pool heaters are a practical necessity. The ability to quickly raise water temperatures makes propane ideal for those cool mornings or transitional seasons. Fast ignition, high output and portability make it one of the most efficient choices available — especially in regions where grid electricity is expensive or less reliable.

The U.S. Market: Diverse Climates, Diverse Applications

While propane is also widely used outdoors in the U.S., regional climate differences lead to a wider range of applications — and consumer priorities. In southern and coastal states, outdoor living is often a year-round activity. As a result, homeowners may focus more on aesthetics, permanent installations and integrated outdoor spaces.

Built-in firepits, outdoor fireplaces and combination kitchen-lounge areas are popular in markets like California, Florida and Texas. These setups often prioritize design and ambiance, with propane providing clean-burning, low-maintenance performance that's easily integrated into landscaping and architecture.

In the northern U.S., propane plays a more seasonal role, echoing some Canadian patterns — particularly when it comes to extending the outdoor season with patio heaters and pool warmers. However, usage rates can differ due to greater access to natural gas in some regions, as well as different home heating patterns.

Shared Role: Powering Resilience Through Backup Generators

Across both countries, propane's role as an energy source during power outages is well established. Whether it's ice storms in Quebec, hurricanes in Florida or wildfires in California, propane-powered backup generators provide critical peace of mind. For many rural and off-grid households — particularly in northern Canada or parts of the American Midwest — these systems are a lifeline.

Propane's ability to store indefinitely without degradation, unlike gasoline or diesel, makes it a highly attractive solution for emergency preparedness. Homeowners are increasingly seeing the benefit of using propane for both everyday comfort and energy security.

Consumer Behavior: Function vs. Flair

Canadian buyers tend to prioritize cold-weather performance, durability and ease of storage. Products with fast ignition, strong wind resistance and portability are often favored, especially given the need to disassemble or store outdoor gear during harsh winters.

In contrast, U.S. consumers — particularly in warmer climates — often put more weight on design, entertainment value and permanent installation. Products that integrate seamlessly into a patio's look and feel are popular, as are multifunctional features like cooking-fire table hybrids or designer flame columns.

Understanding these behavioral differences is key for manufacturers and marketers looking to serve each audience effectively.

Looking Ahead: The Role of Renewable Propane

As the propane industry continues its push toward lower-carbon fuels, renewable propane is starting to make its way into these same outdoor



applications. While still emerging in many markets, renewable propane offers the same performance and portability as conventional propane, but with a smaller carbon footprint.

For homeowners and businesses focused on sustainability, this represents an exciting opportunity to reduce environmental impact without compromising on comfort or functionality. Patio heaters, grills and outdoor fireplaces fueled by renewable propane could be an early win for residential decarbonization efforts.

One Fuel, Many Lifestyles

From snow-covered patios in Ontario to sunny decks in Arizona, propane fuels outdoor living in ways that reflect each region's climate, culture and consumer needs. Its versatility and ability to operate independent of the grid makes it uniquely suited for powering the evolving outdoor lifestyle across North America.

As energy providers, appliance manufacturers and consumers alike look for cleaner, more reliable solutions, propane's role in outdoor living is only set to grow. And whether it's grilling steaks, heating the pool or lighting a fire to gather around, propane continues to bring people together — across borders and seasons.

Christian Levac is president of Propane Levac, an energy solutions provider based in St.-Isidore, Ontario. With over two decades of experience in propane distribution and customer service, he brings a practical, consumer-driven perspective to energy trends. Reach him at christian@propanelevac.com or visit propanelevac.com.



FLEET TRUCKS, INC.

BUY USED WITH CONFIDENCE.

Used Propane Service Trucks Available for Immediate Delivery

2016-2020 Ford F550s / Ram 5500s Equipped with Hiab Cranes Currently Available

1341 Aycock-Norman Road, Lincolnton, GA 30817

CALL: (706) 770-7005

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: FLEETTRUCKSINC.COM

"Purchasing multiple trucks from Fleet Trucks, Inc has enabled Texas Star Propane to expand its delivery capabilities, improve route efficiency, and ensure timely service to customers. The reliable fleet purchased from Bentley and his team, reduced maintenance downtime and boosted operational productivity. This investment has supported business growth by enhancing customer satisfaction, increasing delivery volume, and allowing the company to meet rising demand across wider service areas, ultimately contributing to stronger market presence and profitability.

We have been highly impressed with the relationship we have built with Bentley and his team. We are rapidly expanding and will continue to buy more trucks for our fleet from him."

Josh Kasprzak
Executive Vice President of Operations



ENERGY FOR EVERYONE®
propane

Raising the Standards on Forklift Safety

June is National Safety Month and June 10 is National Forklift Safety Day, making this month the perfect opportunity to connect with your current and prospective customers in manufacturing, warehousing, logistics, ports, and other industries. Start meaningful conversations by leveraging PERC's free resources to review forklift training and safety guidelines or highlight how you can support their material handling needs, while positioning yourself to grow your forklift gallons in 2025.

REINFORCE SAFE CYLINDER DELIVERY PRACTICES WITH YOUR DRIVERS

Use this opportunity to remind your delivery drivers of the best practices for safely delivering forklift cylinders to your customers.

GOING PREMIUM: AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO PATIO HEATERS IN HOSPITALITY

Why a high-end propane service makes sense for high-end industries

BY CHRIS HINCHMAN

IMAGES COURTESY OF WESTAIR GASES & EQUIPMENT



WestAir Gases & Equipment has never been a fan of the status quo. When the company evaluated propane in the hospitality business, the team saw the same story everywhere: standard steel tanks and a one-size-fits-all approach that may not always cut it for high-end resorts and restaurants. So, even though propane was not a primary focus for WestAir, the company decided to explore a different approach.

A Gap in the Market

The hospitality industry prioritizes customer experiences. From the moment guests check in to the moment they leave, every detail matters. But behind the scenes? The propane powering patio heaters was often treated like an afterthought and not managed with the same attention to detail.

The WestAir team wondered: What sort of service do premium resorts really need? They expect premium quality in any other aspect of their business, so why not when it comes to their gas service?

That's when the idea came to develop a propane service tailored to the hospitality sector.

Jumping into a competitive industry with a premium approach wasn't the safe play, but WestAir was ready to take the risk and see the reward. While steel tanks continued to dominate the market, the company invested in fiberglass tanks. Rather than focusing solely on delivery, WestAir also expanded into the heater and cylinder exchange business.

These weren't small bets. Buying new equipment, acquiring cylinder exchange businesses across Southern California and

developing custom solutions required significant investment. The company viewed these moves as part of a long-term strategy rather than short-term gains.

A Practical Shift to Fiberglass Tanks

Premium 5-gallon fiberglass propane tanks aren't standard propane cylinders and offer several practical advantages over steel alternatives.

They are lighter than traditional steel tanks, stackable for easy storage and easier to handle, which means less risk of an injury anytime someone needs to move one. That's particularly important in industries with frequent staff turnover and training demands.

From a safety perspective, these tanks are in a league of their own. They feature an internal check valve that prevents overfilling — you don't have to open a bleeder valve like with traditional tanks. They stop automatically with the appropriate vapor space necessary for the tank. This means less risk, less training required and a safer operation overall.

Additionally, the tanks do not rust, which helps maintain a clean appearance in customer-facing environments. For resorts and hotels that invest millions in their appearance, this matters.

Although these tanks come at a higher cost compared to standard tanks, WestAir notes that many clients see long-term value in the improved safety, functionality and appearance.

> [Premium resorts] expect premium quality in any other aspect of their business, so why not when it comes to their gas service?

Using Technology to Get 'The Basics' Right

WestAir Gases & Equipment barcoded all of its cylinders, a feature the company calls "accurate cylinder management," which the team acknowledges might not sound revolutionary — and it isn't — but the impact on customers is. Clients know exactly what their propane population is, in real-time, so they're never overcharged — and they can hold WestAir to it. The company also uses this technology to better track usage and tweak the amount and frequency of product deliveries.

This is something WestAir has deployed for years across other industries it serves, and it makes people's lives easier. The team has found it particularly





impactful for busy hospitality operations. When you're running a resort or a restaurant, for example, the last thing you need to worry about is your guests getting cold and having to wait for your next delivery window (or paying extra for emergency deliveries).

Growth With Increasing Demand

Over the past two years, WestAir has been aggressively growing its portfolio and expanding its footprint across Southern California. The company has acquired cylinder exchange businesses specifically serving the hospitality industry because the team saw a perfect match between their approach and what these high-end clients wanted.

The company also updated its storage cages to provide an improved visual to industrial options. Heaters are reliable and stylish.

And the company's entire service model centers on understanding operational priorities in hospitality, with an emphasis on consistency, aesthetics and ease of use.

There's Room for Premium in Propane

What WestAir found is that there's absolutely a place for a higher-end service and businesses in the propane space. Hospitality businesses that care deeply about guest experience understand that every touchpoint matters — even the propane tanks tucked behind the scenes.

Taking a risk and thinking outside the box to accommodate the industry has yielded a significant positive response. Propane companies across the industry can contribute to building increasingly positive relationships with clients in the hospitality market by committing to a premium approach that better matches the needs of these specific customers.

Turns out, when you create a premium solution for businesses that value quality, they notice the difference.

Christopher Hinchman serves as general manager of propane at WestAir Gases & Equipment. With 17 years in the propane industry, Hinchman brings extensive experience from both national and local independent distributors. His expertise spans bulk, residential, industrial, agricultural, auto fuel, cylinder exchange and hospitality markets. WestAir Gases & Equipment is an industrial and specialty gas distributor based in San Diego, California, serving the western United States since 1970. With 19 locations across California and Arizona, the company provides industrial, medical and specialty gases, including nitrogen, oxygen, argon, propane and custom-blended mixtures. The company offers both cylinder gases and bulk delivery systems, complemented by comprehensive technical support and safety training for customers. Visit westairgases.com.





INGUSA group

Semi TRAILER for LPG

From 10,000 to 16,000 Gallons



Tanks

From 67 up to 12,000 Gallons

- 100% powered by clean energies
- Sand & shot Blasting for painting
- ASME qualified TIG, GMAW, FCAW Welders. NDE UT, RT, MT, PT.

CONTACT US

(+52) 664-120-2097
(+52) 33-1410-6529

international@ingusa.com
www.ingusagroup.com

‘ON THE ROAD AGAIN’ — TRANSPORT & DELIVERY VEHICLES KEEP PROPANE ON THE MOTORWAY DAY AFTER DAY

The transportation & bobtail sectors are navigating turns in the road & in business operations

BY BPN STAFF



Image courtesy of Lux Industries

Without bobtails and transport vehicles, propane would quite literally never get anywhere — seems like a simple concept, right? But so much thought, preparation, and attention to detail and safety goes into the transport and delivery of propane all over the country. Behind these processes are the design and manufacturing innovations that make it all possible.

In this year’s Propane Transport & Delivery special section, we’re covering both the bobtail side and the transport and logistics side. Ahead, you’ll hear about bobtails from Joe Hicks, sales manager for Lux Industries; Tim Schweppe, general manager — propane division for Arrow Tank & Engineering Co.; and Chris Mace, salesman for White River Distributors. After that, we’ll hear from the transport side with Henry S. Papiano, president of C Three Logistics, and Patrick Maher, chief commercial officer of Grammer Logistics. Both sections will cover product updates marketers should know about and the headwinds the industry is currently facing or seeing on the horizon.

For an extended version of this article, including insights from additional companies, visit bpnews.com/equipment.

BOBTAILS

Are there recent bobtail design innovations your team has integrated or is looking to integrate in the near future?

Hicks: Piping. Our design eliminates vertical piping and reduces the number of flanges needed. By eliminating vertical piping and flanges, it reduces the weight, flow restrictions and maintenance.

Schweppe: Yes! We recently introduced a new deck and fender design on our bobtails. These are the major changes with the main focus being better corrosion resistance, additional truck frame space for components, and reduced weight.

1. Better paint coverage: The assembly is bolted after the vessel is painted, which improves better coverage in areas that need it most.
2. Shorter fenders allow more available frame space to mount toolboxes, heat exchangers, hydraulic reservoirs, tire chains, tank evacuation access, etc.
3. 2B finish stainless steel deck provides a higher level of polish, which means more protection from stains and corrosion resistance.
4. Improved protection from undercarriage: Precision fitted stainless steel rear filler panel protects rear head from rocks, gravel, road debris and overall deck cleanliness.
5. Arrow’s Deckline skirting identity retained: Aesthetically engineered to maintain the sleek design characteristics of the original Deckline.

How has your company navigated ongoing changes in tariffs?

Hicks: Purchasing additional inventory items for the near future is not affected by tariffs. [We are] working closely with vendors, giving them future forecasts of equipment we need so we will have access to that equipment.

Schweppe: Our team did a great job forecasting our needs coming into 2025. At this point, we are in a comfortable position where we own much of our major inventory at pre-tariff pricing. We have an open line of communication with our network of vendors from which we purchase our chassis and other components. It is imperative we stay vigilant with changes and communicate to our customers so there are no surprises.

Mace: Our company has received notifications from 90% of our vendors that prices will be increasing 5%-25%. We are holding off as long as possible, but eventually we will be forced to pass that increased cost along to our customers.

How does your team plan around delays in manufacturing?

Hicks: Keeping stock inventory and having a couple of vendors we purchase from allows us the ability to reduce delays as much as possible. In the case delays



Image courtesy of White River Distributors

happen, we lean on vendors to inform us in sufficient time so we can inform the customer to plan accordingly.

Schweppe: We started placing orders to our vendors at higher levels and much further in advance since the first round of tariffs in 2018 in an effort to avoid manufacturing delays and deliver on time. While this has a significant impact on cash, it is a necessity nowadays to meet customer expectations.

Mace: We are blessed at White River Distributors to have an extremely experienced team that has navigated material shortages. This has allowed us to stay on schedule for the most part.

Have you seen any effects from inflation? If so, how have previous strategies helped you navigate those challenges?

Hicks: Costs have risen between 3% and 6%. Having a close relationship with vendors, we are able to get information about when prices might rise to give customers time to adjust.

Schweppe: This has been ongoing since 2018. Unfortunately, very few suppliers adjust prices when the markets drop to lower levels.

Mace: There has been a significant price increase due to inflation and rising raw material costs. To keep our prices competitive, we have stocked up on inventory in hopes inflation will subside and costs will move back toward normal.

What trends are you seeing these days in the bobtail driver workforce?

Hicks: Talking with propane business owners, this seems to be a challenge to get new drivers. Some of the causes are due to the requirements to get certified.

Schweppe: Fortunately, we are seeing improvement in the number of applicants and skill levels.

Mace: We have many customers who are struggling with CDL/hazmat drivers. Because of this, the drivers have been more involved in the ordering process, making the trucks even more user-friendly for those drivers.

Have there been any positive signs regarding historic or current issues facing the bobtail industry?

Hicks: Chassis and equipment are more available, causing some vendors to have more inventory. Because of this, prices have held steady for the last two to three years and some vendors have lowered pricing to move inventory.

Schweppe: Bobtails are being produced at a higher quality than ever. Builders have embraced modern technology and processes to make this happen. In addition, most people today are aware that it takes a registered cargo tank facility to build a legal bobtail to operate on the roads. Bobtails must display a data plate for the cargo tank itself and a cargo tank motor vehicle plate that certifies the tank and assembly meet DOT MC-331 specifications. Additionally, every bobtail must have a certificate of compliance for the tank construction and for the assembly. This assures that critical items such as impact protection, piping assemblies, mounting, etc., meet MC-331 specs and where applicable have design certification calculations to back it up.

Mace: All the safety innovations that are integrated into the modern bobtails have resulted in a safer workplace for drivers, along with the general public.

TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

Are there recent innovations in the transport/logistics industry that your team has integrated?

Papiano: We utilize McCleod and have been very pleased with the software. It has several features, including a maintenance function that has integrated that department with our safety department. We are no longer waiting for inspections to be uploaded and checked. Once an inspection is complete the software communicates internally and lets dispatch know the trailer is safe to transport. That, coupled with the drivers uploading their paperwork at the offload site, means many of our customers have been invoiced while the driver is still on location, speeding up the load information timeline.

Maher: We continue to invest in and develop solutions to make our customers' lives easier. Partnering with a transportation provider should be seamless and add value to your business. Being a traditional asset-based trucking company, we have expanded our services to now include managed transportation and truck brokerage. This has broadened the solutions we can provide for the NGL space, not limiting us to geography or equipment type to meet the customer's needs. Further, we continue to develop rail-to-truck solutions in several markets, where landing products closer to the end user is key, from both a cost and efficiency perspective.

How has your company navigated ongoing changes in tariffs?

Papiano: Tire prices seem to be the ones that are going to cost the most. We were fortunate to upfit most of our equipment with tires prior to the tariffs coming out; however, I feel that the other shoe has not dropped yet on the amount of price increases that we are going to see for truck parts, fluids, etc.

Maher: As a transportation provider,

we are closely watching the potential impact of tariffs on our equipment and maintenance parts. We maintain an ongoing and consistent dialogue with our long-standing vendor relationships. Our customers are also trying to navigate changes in real time. Grammer's flexibility to meet changing demand remains key in supporting the butane and propane markets.

How does your team plan around delays in manufacturing?

Papiano: I feel that we are the best at this in the business. Our drivers are very good at relaying delays and outages back to our dispatch team, which enables them the opportunity to flex around those delays and keep the wheels moving. Many times we are working directly with the refineries and terminals to understand their capacity and working our dispatch around their issues to avoid delays.

Maher: Leveraging technology and an in-depth market knowledge of the NGL and LP gas markets is key. Our team works to understand the customer's unique business to mitigate delays and pivot quickly. We leverage technology, starting with in-cab devices, to provide us with real-time tracking and tracing back to our central operation center. The plan is built with room for flexibility, as some delays are unavoidable.

Have you seen any effects from inflation? If so, how have previous strategies helped you navigate those challenges?

Papiano: Have not seen this yet; however, the rates are definitely going down. We are in a "post-COVID" era and rates are getting closer to pre-COVID numbers. It is difficult to navigate with insurance premiums, tariffs and wages all going up; however, we have worked hard to reduce our expenses to make up the difference.

Maher: Yes, we've continued to experience inflationary pressure across multiple areas of our business



Image courtesy of Grammer Logistics

— particularly in labor, equipment, maintenance, insurance and technology costs. We are actively mitigating these pressures through a return-oriented approach to cost evaluation, ensuring every dollar we spend improves the quality or efficiency of our business for the benefit of our customers and employees. We are also leaning more heavily on technology to drive efficiency and reduce waste. Lastly, we are being very thoughtful about the market niches we serve best — doubling down and increasing network density where our capabilities are best aligned with our customers' demand.





What trends are you seeing in the transport and logistics workforce?

Papiano: The key to the shortages of drivers is dispatching smarter. With our dispatch technology, we are able to reduce dead head and strategize the peaks and valleys, and by doing so, accomplish the same volume with less power units. The best hiring recruiters we have in our company are the current drivers. We strive to make the driver understand how important they are, and their word of mouth has enabled a steady flow of applications coming in.

Maher: The ability to hire certified mechanics, especially in rural areas, has been challenging. We operate the largest fleet in the industry of MC-331 pressurized tanks, which require specialized maintenance. We perform these services at our regional shop facilities located throughout the U.S. From a driver perspective, while the average age of truck drivers in the U.S. is 49 years old, it is not uncommon for fleets to be comprised of many drivers in their 50s and 60s. The longer-tenured drivers have invaluable experience and product knowledge, which takes time to replicate with younger drivers entering the workforce. Grammer's training and in-field development is focused on equipping the drivers with the skills and knowledge needed to excel at their jobs long term.

Have there been any positive signs regarding historic or current issues facing the transport industry?

Papiano: The transportation [industry] has been impacted for common carriers dramatically, with retailers purchasing their own tractor trailers. While this is great for the retailer to have more control of their supply, it creates a void in the slow months for common carriers to keep trained, experienced drivers employed year-round. This has an adverse effect on the entire industry because when the winter finally does hit, the common carriers are the ones that respond to the demand. Not having the current driver pool able to deliver to many of these locations that only need support for a few months out of the year causes delays with deliveries and can create safety issues with not every plant being built the same way, as well as slowing the flow. When I first entered this industry over 25 years ago, it was the opposite. The common carriers were growing because the retailers were getting out of the hauling sector. With the current changes in federal regulations and the price of insurance, I feel that we will see this circle back around.

INTERMOUNTAIN TRUCK
Propane Trucks & Services
DISPENSERS
UL Listed, Fully-skidded & Plumbed
Standard, Large Cabinet & Auto Gas
Tank sizes 250-30,000 Gallon
Nationwide Meter Calibration Service
Site Plan, Permitting & Fire Analysis Packages Available
BOBTAILS
Fully Customizable
Tank sizes 2,000-5,500 Gallon
12 Month Warranty on All Components
30+ years of Production Experience
Industry Leading Safety Features
UTAH
2927 AMERICAN WAY
OGDEN, UT 84401
FLORIDA
565 GUS HIPP BLVD
ROCKLEDGE, FL 32955
MONTANA
968 DEMERSVILLE RD
KALISPELL, MT 59901
CONTACT TODAY
833 - 221 - 3299
SCAN TO LEARN MORE

Pacific Truck Tank inc.
PETROLEUM AND PROPANE TRUCKS
Call for a FREE quote
(800) 350-9030
Serving the West for over 40 years!
Solutions.
Experts.
Quality.
Support.
Custom-built propane bobtails,
Stellar LPG service trucks
• New trucks
• Refurbished trucks
• Repairs
• Switchovers
• Parts
THE HARDEST WORKING, MOST EFFICIENT TRUCKS
Preview our online truck gallery PacificTruckTank.com
7029 Florin-Perkins Road, Sacramento, California USA

WILL TRUMP'S EXECUTIVE ORDERS INCREASE THE COST OF PROPANE?

EVERYTHING BUSINESSES & CONSUMERS NEED TO KNOW



The orders could boost propane growth — but raise tariff concerns

BY CHRIS DALY

Since returning to office, President Donald Trump has wasted no time, releasing dozens of executive orders (EOs) on his first day back in the White House on Jan. 20.

Various EOs are relevant to the propane industry. As global economics is a key market condition that will influence changes in the price of products like propane, we have analyzed the initial reaction to the announcements.

THE EXECUTIVE ORDERS THAT WILL BE FELT BY THE PROPANE INDUSTRY

Of the dozens of EOs released by Trump, those that will grab the attention of businesses tied to the propane industry and their consumers, in particular, include actions to:

- Adjust the tariffs that affect the energy sector to increase the competitiveness seen within both domestic and international markets
- Declare an energy emergency in which high energy prices have been put under the spotlight
- Increase and streamline energy infrastructure and production domestically by simplifying permitting processes and reducing regulatory barriers
- Promote energy choice and appliance neutrality by introducing policies that aim to prevent favoritism of a single energy source or appliance to create a level playing field in the market
- Reallocate federal grants previously only focused on electric vehicles to create more opportunities for the research and development of alternative energy initiatives

HOW THE EXECUTIVE ORDERS COULD AFFECT THE PROPANE MARKET FOR THE BETTER

Another EO to note is Trump's establishment of the National Energy Dominance Council. A fact sheet on the official White House site details how this move can be positive for the United States. (Visit tinyurl.com/nationalenergydominance.)

Detailed as a means for "positioning American energy for the next century," this EO looks to develop American energy resources in a way that will allow the nation to rely less on foreign entities.

According to another section of the fact sheet, "American energy dominance is the most reliable way to ensure the


BIGC STUDIO - STOCK.ADOBE.COM

stability and affordability of American energy prices."

Recent history should provide some comfort for how Trump can empower energy production in the U.S. After all, during Trump's initial term in the White House, the country became a net exporter of energy for the first time in almost 70 years.

Trump's first term saw millions of acres of land across the U.S. opened for the development of domestic energy, many new energy jobs created throughout the nation and American families saving $2,500 on average per year on their gas and utility costs.

Speaking recently at the CERAWeek by S&P Global conference, Interior Secretary Doug Burgum acknowledged that the U.S.' abundant natural resources significantly outweigh the $36 trillion that the nation is in debt.

Mr. Burgum went on to claim that the country's 10-year long-term interest rate would decrease if financial markets were given the opportunity to understand the value of the U.S.' natural resources. He pointed out: "The interest rates right now are one of the most significant expenses we have as a country. ... So, one of the things that we have to do is unleash America's balance sheet, and President Trump is helping us do that."

CONCERNS IN THE PROPANE INDUSTRY ABOUT THE EXECUTIVE ORDERS

There are some trepidations surrounding the introduction of these EOs, however.

The National Propane Gas Association (NPGA), which will be working to ensure the EOs are implemented throughout each sector the organization works in on behalf of the propane industry, had a pair of primary concerns.

As outlined by NPGA's President and CEO Steve Kaminski at the 2025 NPGA winter board meeting in Clearwater, Florida, one of these concerns is the tariffs, which will be placed on equipment and parts that arrive in the U.S. from across the globe to then be used by businesses in the propane industry.

"Steel tanks and cylinders manufactured outside of the United States and sold into the United States will get slapped with this 25% tariff. This is impacting a number of manufacturer members."

Another of NPGA's concerns is going to be the tariffs on propane coming into the U.S. from Canada. This is because the association lists annual cross-border propane sales from Canada into the U.S. to amount to $1.9 billion, but a 10% tariff will work out at $190 million per year.

Trump's temporary increase in tariffs on goods from China to 125% and Beijing's imposing tariffs of 84% on U.S. imports at the start of April have also led to speculation about how these moves may impact the U.S. propane industry.

As reported by Reuters, industry insiders have commented that Chinese petrochemical makers, which currently purchase $11 billion of U.S. propane per year, look set to reduce output or shut for maintenance in the very near future because of tariffs on U.S. imports driving up costs.

NPGA stated that it will monitor how Trump and his administration approach tariffs. Though Kaminski did add, "This is one of our top priorities, but we also have a massive opportunity with this new administration — with the new appointees to the Department of Energy, Department of Transportation and EPA, which are all pro-energy choice, and with the new Congress.

"We have as good of an opportunity over the next several months as we've had in a long time to position propane very well in the future."

NEXT STEPS FOR BUSINESSES & CONSUMERS

As propane has become one of the talking points following the announcement of Trump's executive orders, it's important for businesses and consumers to investigate the benefits of using propane without delay.

Start by evaluating your energy needs. Switching to propane can assist with many business operations and provide heating solutions around facilities. Getting in touch with a propane supplier will also help you understand the cost-saving options of switching or expanding the use of propane.

As domestic energy infrastructure and production is set to increase and be streamlined through Trump's EOs, make sure you are keeping up to date about any legislative changes and incentives that could be introduced across the nation that will affect the price and availability of propane.

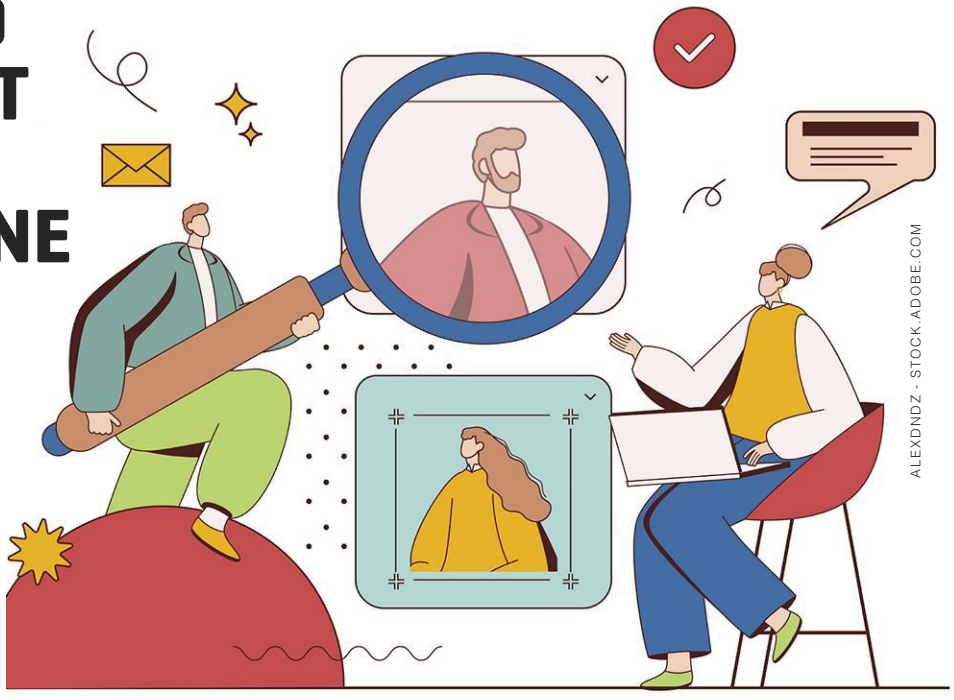
Chris Daly is chief operating officer of DCC Propane, based in Lisle, Illinois. Previously, Daly was the regional general manager at Suburban Propane Partners and also held positions at Agway and EDP. Visit dccpropane.com.



HOW TO AVOID THE HIGH COST OF BAD HIRES IN THE PROPANE INDUSTRY

Research-informed practices to ensure you find the right employee fit

BY MATT LEONARD


ALEXDNDZ - STOCK.ADOBE.COM

In the propane industry, where precision, safety and trust are fundamental, hiring is more than a transactional HR function. It's a strategic investment. A single misstep can undermine not only productivity and team morale, but also safety, customer satisfaction and long-term profitability.

While most companies recognize the cost of a bad hire, the true impact is often underestimated. According to industry research, 95% of organizations admit to making at least one bad hire annually. In propane operations, where roles range from technically skilled drivers and technicians to administrative and sales professionals, these hiring missteps can quickly escalate into safety issues, compliance risks or reputational damage.

This article explores evidence-based practices for reducing bad hires — rooted in research, case studies and industry-specific insights — with practical takeaways for propane leaders looking to improve hiring outcomes.

UNDERSTANDING THE REAL COST OF A BAD HIRE

A "bad hire" is typically someone who negatively impacts productivity, retention, performance and team culture. But the costs go well beyond payroll or replacement expenses. Hidden costs often include:

- Lost business and missed opportunities
- Decreased team performance and morale
- Increased risk exposure (e.g., safety violations, compliance issues)
- Lower customer satisfaction
- High turnover and recruitment costs

Organizations lacking a consistent and structured selection process are statistically five times more likely to make these costly errors. On the other hand, past studies have proved that strong onboarding and hiring systems can improve new hire retention by up to 82% and productivity by over 70% for actual businesses, not just the theoretical ones.

For propane businesses, the message is clear: Hiring practices must be intentional, structured and aligned with operational goals.

BEST PRACTICES FOR IMPROVING HIRING OUTCOMES

Drawing from experience in the propane sector, experts have identified several practices that significantly reduce hiring risk and improve workforce stability.

1. Conducting Culture & Leadership Assessments

Effective hiring practices start with understanding the leadership environment and company culture. By evaluating the behavioral traits, motivators, competencies and energy levels of current managers, organizations can better understand what success looks like inside their unique ecosystem.

This data-driven insight is particularly valuable for:

- Succession planning
- Team alignment and collaboration
- Hiring decisions for both field and office roles
- Preparing future leaders

For example, in a comparative study of five commercial driver-intensive businesses, those that implemented robust leadership and hiring diagnostics saw a 57% reduction in accidents and an 80% reduction in turnover within two years.

2. Standardizing the Interview Process

Many poor hires can be traced to unstructured interviews. Companies that invest in structured interview training for

hiring managers typically experience:

- More consistent candidate evaluations
- Fewer legal risks due to compliance-focused questions
- Improved team collaboration in decision-making
- Better overall candidate experience

For propane roles like commercial driver's licensed drivers, dispatchers and administrative staff, a standardized interview process ensures candidates are assessed fairly and accurately, based on job-relevant competencies.

3. Leveraging Behavioral & Cognitive Assessments

Modern assessments can reveal how a candidate is likely to think, act and engage in a specific role. Evaluations that measure behavioral traits, motivators and competencies have become increasingly popular for their predictive accuracy. However, not all assessments are created equal! Many "popular" hiring assessments lack all three key insights — usually, motivators and competencies.

Key assessment dimensions include:

- Judgment and rule following (critical in safety-sensitive roles)
- Customer orientation and problem-solving
- Self-starting and accountability
- Cultural fit and adaptability

These tools help hiring managers move beyond résumés and gut instincts, offering an objective lens on candidate suitability and long-term potential. For driver-specific roles, for example, using the correct assessments can accurately predict the likelihood of accidents, making decisions easier when more than one candidate is in the mix for potential hiring. Having more information helps make better decisions.

4. Auditing the Candidate Experience

How applicants experience your hiring process can significantly influence who applies and accepts an offer. Studies show that a positive candidate experience can improve hire quality by up to 70%. Best-in-class organizations regularly audit their candidate journey — from job posting to onboarding — to identify and remove friction points such as:

- Lack of timely communication
- Ambiguous expectations
- Inconsistent messaging about company values and goals

Improving these elements not only boosts the applicant pool but also reduces ghosting, a growing issue in many sectors, including propane.

LINKING TALENT STRATEGY TO BUSINESS GOALS

Too often, hiring is handled in a vacuum, disconnected from larger business objectives. Hiring should reflect broader goals such as expansion, innovation or safety performance. For instance:

- A company expanding into new geographic markets might prioritize hiring leaders with experience scaling teams or entering new territories.
- If the priority is improving customer service, candidates with strong empathy and problem-solving capabilities should be front-runners.
- When safety is paramount, technical expertise and rule-following behavior take center stage.

Organizations that align hiring criteria with strategic goals consistently outperform their peers on key metrics like growth, productivity and customer satisfaction.

BUILDING A STRONG EMPLOYER BRAND

Today's candidates are evaluating you as much as you're evaluating them. Employer branding — the impression your organization gives job seekers — can be a competitive advantage. Effective employer branding includes:

- Clear and compelling job descriptions
- Transparent hiring processes
- Thoughtful onboarding plans
- Communication that reflects the organization's values

Companies that invest in employer branding are up to three times more likely to hire top performers and reduce time-to-fill.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ONBOARDING

Even a great hire can underperform without proper onboarding. Successful onboarding programs go beyond paperwork and orientation — they focus on early engagement, expectations and cultural integration.

A 30-60-90-day onboarding plan should include:

- Short-term performance goals
- Job-specific training
- Mentor or peer support
- Regular check-ins with supervisors

Organizations with effective onboarding processes report significantly higher new hire retention, engagement and productivity.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR THE PROPANE INDUSTRY

Propane companies cannot afford to make hiring mistakes with an aging workforce, growing safety demands and a competitive labor market. Operational, financial and reputational risks are simply too high.

Yet the good news is that hiring mistakes are preventable. Companies can dramatically improve their hiring results with the right tools, structure and strategic alignment. From commercial drivers to administrative professionals and emerging leaders, the path to success starts with better hiring — and better hiring starts with intentional, research-informed practices.

Matt Leonard is a subject matter expert in hiring and talent strategy within the propane industry. He serves as vice president of business development for Strategic Talent Management and chief strategy officer for the Southeast Propane Alliance. With over a decade of experience in recruitment and workforce development, Leonard has partnered with propane companies across the country to build high-performing, future-ready teams. If you're interested in learning more, he can be reached at 207-373-9301 or matt@strategictalentmgmt.com.





RASSCO - STOCK.ADOBE.COM

MAKE THE MOST OF ENROLLMENT CAMPAIGNS WITH A RESULTS-DRIVEN MARKETING STRATEGY

Your toolkit to ensure you get the most value possible out of your campaign

BY JENNIFER LECLERC

Have your enrollment campaign promotion tactics gone stale? Are you signing up as many customers as you can? Are you ready to evaluate your enrollment campaign marketing strategy this year to incorporate digital elements, target and acquire new customers, and really get the most value out of them?

You can implement a robust marketing strategy to boost engagement, increase enrollment and improve cash flow. With a thoughtfully planned and executed enrollment marketing campaign, you'll enroll more customers and build stability for your company during the busiest time of year.

GET THE MOST VALUE OUT OF ENROLLMENT CAMPAIGNS

From attracting and retaining new customers to securing a steady cash flow, a tactically executed campaign can bring in revenue and stability for your company. But if you don't have an effective marketing strategy in place, the success of your enrollment campaigns may be lackluster.

Marketing your campaigns strategically will deliver these benefits to your company:

1. *Customer retention:* Executing a well-planned enrollment marketing campaign keeps it in front of your customers and reminds them to re-enroll, so there are no surprises later. This helps build customer loyalty and trust in your brand, meaning customers are less likely to shop around.
2. *Stable cash flow:* Strategic marketing will lead to more customers signing up, resulting in early and steady payments that will improve cash flow and help you avoid the unpredictability of dips and spikes in revenue throughout the heating season.
3. *Ease for customers:* You can make it easy for customers to enroll online by providing the information they need in your marketing so they don't have to call the office. This will reduce the amount of time your employees need to spend on the phone and improve overall workflow.
4. *Attract and secure new customers:* Grow your business by using enrollment campaigns as a customer acquisition tool. Enrollment campaigns are a powerful way to help you attract and retain new customers over the long term.

YOUR CAMPAIGN MARKETING TOOLKIT

When you launch an enrollment campaign, there are several marketing options that can make the process easier for you and

your staff, especially when it comes to the administrative tasks of communicating with and enrolling customers.

For emails, letters, webforms and more, there are usually variable fields in the message that can show customers their projected monthly payment or prebuy payment, increasing the likelihood of enrollment and saving your team a step in the process. A few other ways to ensure you get the most value out of your enrollment campaign in marketing include:

Emails

Email campaigns are a great way to get the word out to your customers about your enrollment offers. With most email service providers allowing for personalization and segmentation, you can — and should — reach your customers where they are. You can segment and personalize your emails based on factors like whether customers have previously enrolled or are good candidates to enroll. You can also include fields for projected payment amounts. Projecting the monthly payment for budget plans is a powerful marketing tool to persuade customers to contact you, regardless of whether they were previously enrolled in the program.

Online Enrollment

Having a dedicated landing page with a form customers can complete to enroll in a plan or initiate an enrollment adds convenience and ease for customers, potentially increasing the number of sign-ups you get for your campaign. You can link this from a website page, email, banner or include an easy link on your enrollment letter as an option.

Enrollment Through Your Customer Portal

If your company offers a customer portal, portal-based enrollment can have several benefits for your team, including reducing paperwork, phone traffic, data errors and more. Portal-based enrollment is an easy, efficient and convenient way for customers to sign up, which they'll appreciate.

ADVERTISE YOUR CAMPAIGN WITH AN INTEGRATED MARKETING STRATEGY

If you've struggled to enroll customers into your campaigns in the past, ineffective marketing may be the reason. An integrated marketing strategy across channels will help your company enroll more customers than in previous years without a robust marketing strategy. An integrated marketing strategy consists of marketing with an enrollment letter, email(s), an update or landing page on your website, and more. With each marketing item reinforcing the other, a strategically executed campaign will lead to increased engagement, higher enrollment and a smoother heating season.

PROACTIVE PROMOTION

Having a structured marketing plan in place for your enrollment campaigns is not just a good idea — it's essential. Many customers start planning financial decisions well ahead of taking them on. Advertising early gives customers plenty of time to understand their options, ask questions and make informed decisions. Start planning your marketing ahead of the enrollment period so everything is ready to launch the moment enrollment opens.

ENROLLMENT CAMPAIGNS ARE A WIN FOR ALL

Thoughtfully planned enrollment campaigns benefit both propane companies and their customers. Clear choices, proactive communication and more financial freedom empower customers to plan ahead. A well-executed enrollment marketing campaign will increase your enrollment numbers, help you retain and attract customers, drive revenue and improve cash flow during one of the most hectic times of year for companies like yours.



Jennifer LeClerc is the vice president of marketing at Consumer Focus Marketing. She can be reached online at consumerfocusmarketing.com or by email at jennifer_leclerc@bostonenv.com.



BLT Tanks LLC

800-753-5467

BLTTanks.com

Selling & Refurbishing Propane Tanks Since 1994

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

30,000 gal Used As Is 2006 Trinity Storage Tank $90,000



150 gal Rebuilt 1980's+ $550



172 gal Rebuilt $450



120 gal "pigs" Rebuilt $575



420 lb Used As Is DOT $299



150 gal Used As Is serviceable $399



420 lb Rebuilt 1980's+ $499



33 lb Used As Is aluminum 10+··· $100 each



240 lb Used As Is excellent $195

Call for availability. Limited warranty on all rebuilt tanks.

All prices are plus freight. Prices and availability are subject to change.

ARROW TANK AND ENGINEERING CO.

FAMILY OWNED • MIDWEST BASED • 60+ YEARS IN BUSINESS

NEW • USED • REFURBISHED







CODE REPAIRS • REFURBISHING • TESTING AND INSPECTIONS • EXPERT ADVICE • COMPETITIVE PRICING

Email us at propane@arrowtank.com or call 888-892-7769 • www.arrowbobtails.com

moveit inc.



YankATank • Tank Roller
E-Moto Tank

Less expense - Safer - Faster - Easier Professional

YankAnUpright • Tank Inverter
Polyminder

Moveitinc.com 509-269-4632

DAVIS AIRTECH

We're interested in purchasing your surplus register cores



VEEDER-ROOT
7890 for $75

7887 for $50

We will also purchase Neptune cores

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

WARNING
INDUSTRY DISRUPTION IN PROGRESS

Join the revolution at
MakingPropaneSexy.com

Rural Computer Consultants, Inc.



Peterbilt 537 - 3499 Gallon 325HP, Allison automatic trans, aluminum wheels, rear diff. lock, stainless deck, fenders and meter box. $227,599.00

800-252-5467

Lin's PROPANE TRUCKS

See our current inventory and YouTube videos online at LinsPropaneTrucks.com.



Freightliner M2 - 3499 Gallon 350HP, Allison automatic trans, aluminum wheels, rear diff. lock, stainless deck, fenders and meter box. $225,849.00

LinsPropaneTrucks.com







CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

Closing Dates: Insertion orders or deletions must be sent to Cahaba Media Group by the 8th of the month preceding issue date. Send all materials to lfranklin@cahabamedia.com or call 205-278-2875. Remittance must accompany order.

Display Classified: $145 per col. inch, 1 time; $125 per col. inch, 6 times; $115 per col. inch, 12 times. Display type will be used for heading. Publisher will set for maximum effect in space purchased.

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. Please include dept. number of ad on envelope.

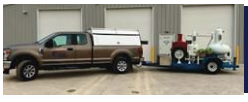




Propane and Refined Fuels Truck Service Center and Sales


Propane Bobtails


Refined Fuels


Meter Calibrations
WI, MN, MI, IA


Bulk Storage


Standby Systems

FELKER TRUCK AND EQUIPMENT INC
DALE, WISCONSIN
920-779-9826
www.felkertruck.com

Connect with BPN on social media and find more content at bpnews.com.

BPN



ROEDA
SIGNS PRINT SERVICE
We Get You Recognized
708.333.3021 roeda.com

ADVERTISER INDEX

Advertiser	Page
ADD Systems	16
Alliance Energy Services	36
American Standard Mfg	10
BLT Tanks LLC	44
C Three Logistics	FC
Cetane Associates	43
ELAFLEX Pacific PTY LTD	21
Fisk Tank Carrier	17
Fleet Trucks Inc	28
H&H Sales Company	20
INGUSA	33
Intermountain Truck Rebuilders	37
Jomar Group	24
LPG & NH3 Supply Inc	32
Metsa Tanks	7
Otodata Inc	1
Pacific Truck Tank Inc	37
Propane Education & Research Council	29
Quality Steel Corporation	11
RegO Products	BC
Teeco Products Inc	IBC
TerraVest Industries	IFC
Westmor Industries LLC	25

Jared Lusk

Director of Pricing & Supply
Duncan Oil Company



Describe your current role at your company.
I manage a diversified supply portfolio of refined fuels and propane for Duncan Oil Company. This includes keeping supply relationships, monitoring supply/demand conditions, mitigating risks and negotiating contracts. Also, I execute various pricing strategies that help keep Duncan Oil Company's pricing competitive for our customers.

How did you get your start in the propane industry?
I got my start in the propane industry by working for a family-owned jobber that started their own propane business. I worked with refined fuels supply first and then learned propane.

What advice do you have for someone coming into the industry?
Find wise mentors and learn as much as possible. 'Ignorance and arrogance are twins, as are wisdom and humility.'

What do you think would surprise someone about the job you do?
The sudden increase and decrease in propane demand.

> **Find wise mentors & learn as much as possible. 'Ignorance & arrogance are twins, as are wisdom & humility.'**

Who has/have been the strongest influence(s) in your career to date?
My parents, my pastor and leaders at Duncan Oil Company.

If you could change something in the industry, what would you change?
I would make it easier for trucking to do their job.

What or who motivates you?
Valuable and honest accomplishments.

What's your favorite part of the workday?
A win.

How do you maintain a healthy work-life balance while pursuing your goals and ambitions within the demanding and dynamic environment of the propane business?
Working with good people allows for work-life harmony. Working with bad people can never be balanced. This can also be illustrated by imagining how time seems to move slowly when you're in pain, yet when you were with your girlfriend back in the day, an hour went by like a minute.

What's your most-used productivity hack?
Group messaging can help alleviate making timely phone calls.

How would you spend an unexpected day off?
On an unexpected day off in springtime, I'd likely be working at home doing yardwork or getting the garden ready. If chores are done, then my family and I enjoy mushroom hunting or turkey hunting.

TEECO
PRODUCTS, INC.

Here For The Propane Industry Since 1946

Our FOCUS Is Serving You



Teeco has been serving the Propane Industry since 1946. In all those years, one thing that remains the same is our unwavering commitment to being there for our customers and our industry. We continue to work hard to bring you the products you need quickly and efficiently, as well as offering free online training opportunities so you and your team can get the knowledge you need to use these products safely.

You can count on Teeco for the best equipment, knowledgeable associates and professional services. Call us or visit us online or in person to let us know how we can help you.

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

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

www.teecoproducts.com

Irvine, CA · Sacramento, CA · Auburn, WA · Rapid City, SD

RegO® Presto-Link – Fast, accurate testing

The Presto-Link Bluetooth device communicates with the RegO app to allow for pressure readings to be obtained on your mobile device. The result is a safe, secure, efficient and cost-effective way for on-site service personnel to obtain pressure readings to assist with fine tuning and troubleshooting a propane vapor system.



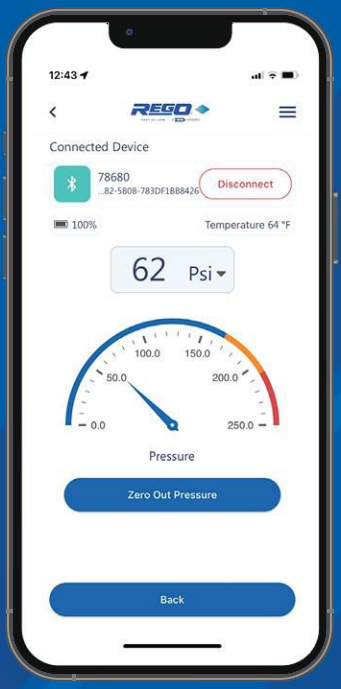
- **Bluetooth connection thru an Android or Apple Device**
- **Lightweight & compact design**
- **Battery percentage indicator**
- **1.5 times overpressure protection**
- **Bluetooth connection up to 100-foot range allows for troubleshooting and adjustment to systems while recording the pressure**
- **Visual indicator for pressure settings; Red casing indicates a high-pressure device and black casing indicates a low-pressure device**





Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play



Convenient and easy to use...

Download it for FREE!

The RegO App – RegO Connect Features

When registered under the RegO Connect App, the user will have access to the RegO Connect Management Portal and RegO App Connect Features.

- **Customer database provides Customer account information captured through Cargas or RegO Connect customer management portal.**
- **Administrators will have the ability to create new user profiles to allow for log-in capabilities through the RegO App**
- **Reports can be reviewed on the portal that were created using the RegO App. This provides the ability for admins and managers to review reports and filter by date, report type and user.**
- **Regulators, containers and other equipment can be monitored and filtered by date of manufacture thru the Asset Hub. This will give the ability to export a report for expired regulators and other pertinent assets.**



Scan here to download the new RegO Connect Brochure

Copyright © 2024 OPW Propane Energy Solutions