BUTANE-PROPANE NEWS
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AUGUST 2025

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Should You Rethink Your Business's Retirement Plan?

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE FOR PROPANE AUTOGAS

Autogas engines in high-performance vehicles showcase propane's role in cleaner fueling in the international market

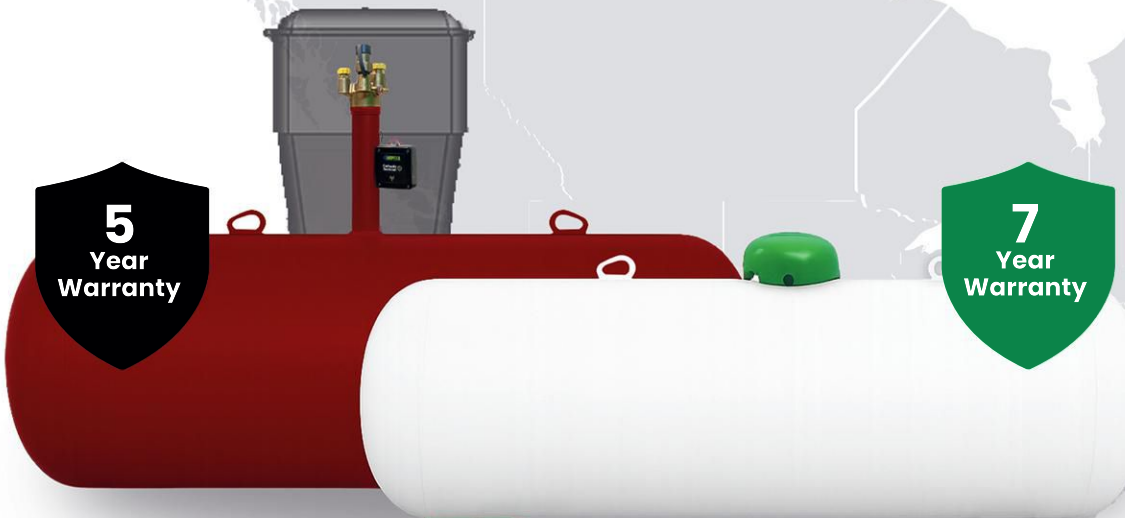




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FOR BPN'S INDUSTRY INNOVATORS!

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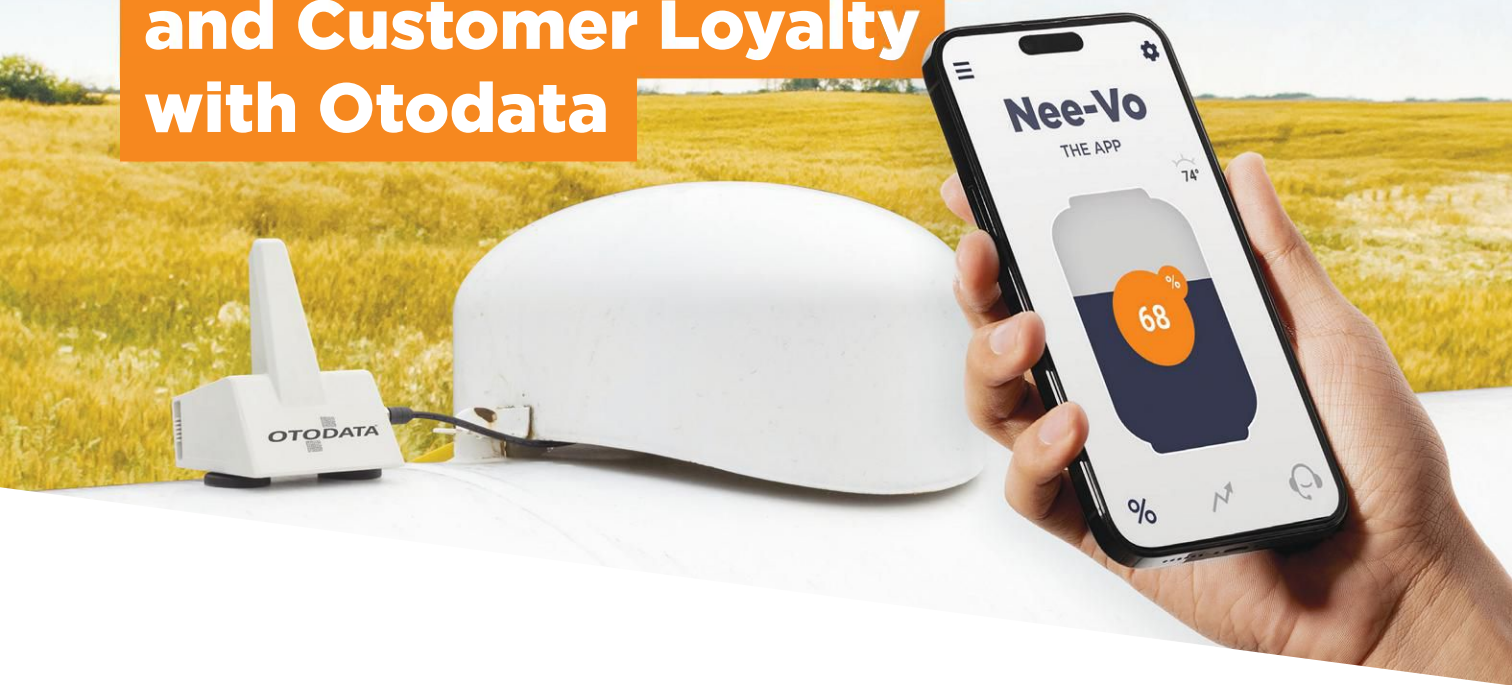
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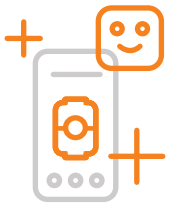
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Dear Readers,

Back in June 2021, I had just started my journey with BPN magazine as associate editor. I was mostly a stranger to the world of propane, except, of course, for the typical pop culture references and seeing cylinders outside pharmacy chains and inside grill cabinets. I still remember editing my very first BPN article and learning a new (to me) term: autogas.

Little did I know then that autogas would go on to become one of the most interesting segments of the propane industry to me. It's simultaneously accessible to the customer while functioning as a big-picture strategy for industry growth. And it's applicable to a variety of needs in a variety of locations. For example, I find it fascinating to compare and contrast the use cases for autogas in the United States versus Europe.

That's why there's so much value in continuing to spread the word — and usage — of autogas throughout this country and beyond. The average U.S. propane user may not know as much about autogas since it is far more likely to show up in truck and bus fleets than consumer vehicles here. But the decision-makers for school districts and delivery businesses, as well as fleet owners themselves, are the key demographics who need to know about the benefits of autogas for the environment and the wallet.

This industry has embraced autogas as a vital avenue for growth and longevity. That's why we cover autogas as a feature section in BPN each year and reserve space for autogas leaders to give voice to what they're seeing in the market — both domestic and international. Starting on page 24, you'll hear from ROUSH CleanTech's Todd Mouw on building cross-industry partnerships to strengthen the autogas market; on page 26, Gas Equipment Company's Gene Morrison gives behind-the-scenes info on designing the NextGen Smart Dispenser; and on page 30, Westport Fuel Systems' Robbie Smit shares where autogas is thriving around the world and the opportunities and challenges he sees ahead.

No strangers to opportunities and challenges, our 2025 Industry Innovators contest finalists also appear in this issue! You can meet all seven of these industry leaders and creative thinkers starting on page 18. Each year, we look forward to highlighting people who are making waves in their unique ways. We're thankful for everything our finalists contribute to their companies, communities and the industry by dreaming big and staying committed to propane's future.

Do you know someone who deserves to be recognized for their hard work and ideas? Don't miss out on the opportunity to nominate someone next spring! Be on the lookout for the nomination period beginning in May 2026.

Until next time,



JESSICA GRAHAM PHILLIPS
Editor-in-Chief

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-The Griffin Family, Griffin's Propane Inc.

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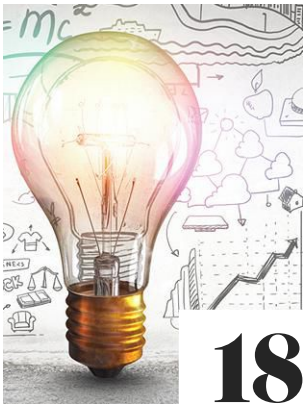
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The global expansion of autogas is driven by OEM innovation, rising fleet adoption & growing demand for cleaner, more cost-effective fuel alternatives

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Celebrating the industry's top creatives & problem-solvers



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The "Ford Raptor R," a high-performance truck installed with a propane autogas engine system.
(Image courtesy of Westport Fuel Systems)

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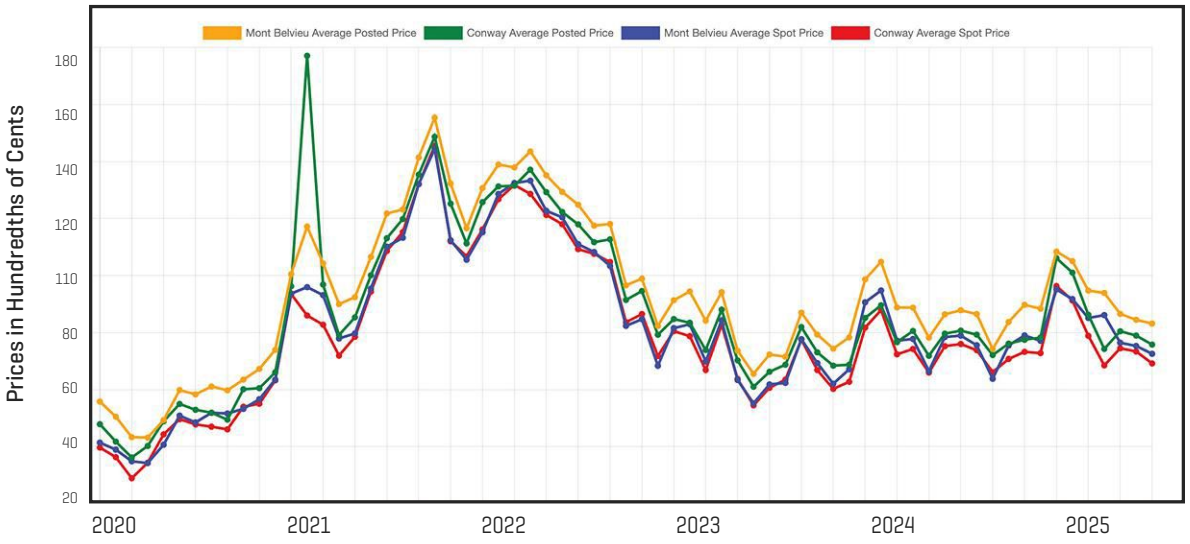
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MONT BELVIEU & CONWAY AVERAGE THURSDAY PROPANE PRICES



at a glance From June 12 to July 10, posting and spot prices decreased at the Mont Belvieu, Texas, and Conway, Kansas, locations. The Mont Belvieu posted prices decreased 1.333 cents/gal and spot prices decreased 2.375 cents. Conway postings decreased 3.167 cents/gal and spots decreased 4.375 cents over the month.

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

	6/12/25	6/19/25	6/26/25	7/3/25	7/10/25
Mont Belvieu					
posted	84.480	89.814	83.397	80.564	83.147
spot	74.750 – 75.875	79.000 – 81.000	72.250 – 72.500	71.250 – 71.500	72.375 – 72.750
Conway					
posted	78.960	84.250	78.960	74.710	75.793
spot	73.000 – 73.750	77.000 – 78.880	71.750 – 72.000	68.625 – 69.000	68.625 – 69.750

at a glance

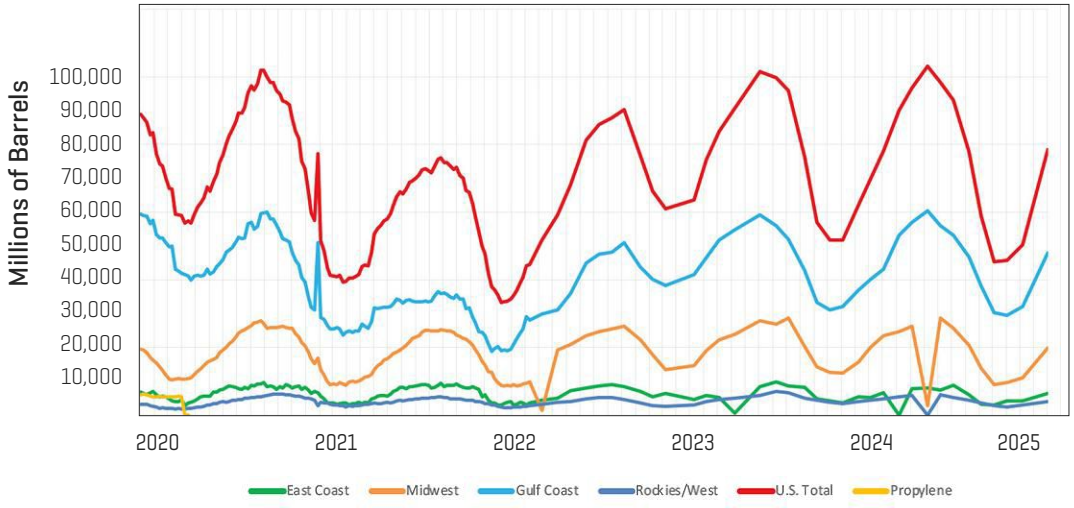
Canada's primary underground propane inventories increased by 45.1% in June, according to the Canada Energy Regulator (CER). The total represented a month-to-month increase of 241.7 Mcm. Compared to a year earlier, stocks were lower, with 220.4 Mcm, or 22.1%, less product on hand. *(Editor's Note: Due to BPN's publishing schedule, June inventory data is the latest available from the CER.)*

CANADIAN INVENTORIES (Thousand Cubic Meters)

PROPANE	June 2025	May 2025	Change	June 2024
Propane-East	219.5	122.8	78.8%	224.1
Propane-West	557.6	412.6	35.1%	773.4
Total Propane	777.1	535.4	45.1%	997.5
BUTANE				
Butane-East	340.9	213.2	60%	213
Butane-West	573.7	467.7	22.7%	459.4
Total Butane	914.6	680.9	34.3%	672.4

Source: Canada Energy Regulator

U.S. PROPANE INVENTORIES



at a glance

United States propane stocks experienced a 12.399-MMbbl increase from June to July. East Coast stocks increased 1.065 MMbbl, the Midwest increased 5.224 MMbbl, the Gulf Coast increased 5.224 MMbbl, and the Rocky Mountain/West Coast increased 922,000 bbl. Compared to the same time in July 2024, the July 2025 stocks were 398,000 bbl higher.

U.S. PROPANE INVENTORIES

June 6 – July 4, 2025, and One Year Ago (Thousand Barrels)

	6/6/25	6/13/25	6/20/25	6/27/25	7/4/25	7/5/24
East Coast	5.372	5.116	5.710	6.497	6.437	6.535
Midwest	14.622	15.623	16.975	18.422	19.846	23.432
Gulf Coast	42.830	43.464	46.227	46.929	48.054	43.237
Rocky Mtn & West Coast	3.162	3.320	3.702	3.803	4.084	4.783
U.S.	65.986	67.523	72.615	75.651	78.385	77.987

Editor's Note: The Energy Information Administration (EIA) will no longer be reporting monthly residential prices from April through September. Publication of this data will resume on the EIA website in October on a weekly basis and will resume on this page in our November 2025 issue.

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

MISSOURI CONGRESSMAN REINTRODUCES BILL TO CUT PROPANE REGULATIONS

Congressman Eric Burlison of Missouri reintroduced the Propane Accessibility and Regulatory Relief Act to exempt propane tanks with a capacity of up to 126,000 pounds from burdensome federal regulations. In 2006, Congress authorized the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to establish the Chemical Facilities Anti-Terrorism Standards (CFATS) to identify and regulate high-risk chemical facilities. However, when setting the threshold for regulation, DHS chose a limit of 60,000 pounds for propane — creating a costly burden for propane retailers and users across the country. The Missouri Propane Gas Association applauded Burlison for reintroducing the bill, which is aimed at relieving propane retailers and users from federal regulations that drive up operating costs and hinder supply efficiency. The bill was filed in Washington on June 13 and would amend current guidelines under CFATS by raising the reporting threshold for propane storage from 60,000 pounds to 126,000 pounds, as the existing 2006 threshold has forced small and midsized propane businesses to invest in costly compliance measures.

TWIN FEATHERS ANNOUNCES REBRAND TO WESTLARK ADVISORS

Twin Feathers, an energy advisory service provider operating for over two decades, has officially rebranded as Westlark Advisors. The change reflects the company's broader strategic vision, including an expanded global focus and a deeper commitment to helping companies navigate energy markets with clarity, confidence and long-term value. A continued emphasis on strengthening its client relationships is at the forefront of Westlark Advisors' new approach. By collaborating closely with businesses, the team provides customized advice and solutions to drive measurable results and support long-term growth. Westlark Advisors is sharpening its attention on global markets to provide organizations with the expertise needed to succeed internationally. The expanded reach allows the company to offer guidance to clients as they navigate the complexities of energy markets throughout the world.

BLUEOX ACQUIRES ACE-ROBBINS

Blueox, based in Oxford, New York, has acquired Ace-Robbins Inc., of Tunkhannock, Pennsylvania. The transaction, announced by Cetane Associates, was completed on June 6. Ace-Robbins was started in the 1940s, when James Ace operated several businesses in the Tunkhannock area, including feed, farm supply, fuel and appliance sales. In 1956, Frank Robbins joined as manager, and by 1964, the two became partners and officially formed Ace-Robbins. Since 1982, Ron and Abby Kukuchka have owned Ace-Robbins, and have grown the company through strategic acquisitions and expanded product lines to serve their community's energy needs — adding propane delivery and service, a state-of-the-art appliance showroom and a team of highly trained propane and fuel technicians. Blueox is a full-service energy provider, offering propane, bioheat fuel oil, kerosene, diesel and gasoline delivery. The company also installs and services heating and cooling systems, including furnaces, boilers, water heaters and air conditioning units. Jared Bartle, president at Blueox, said, "We are thrilled to be acquiring such a wonderful company with a rich history and deep ties to the community. We are committed to honoring the legacy that has been built."

EDP APPOINTS CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER


Merle Edington

EDP has appointed Merle Edington as chief operating officer (COO), effective immediately. Edington brings more than 25 years of leadership experience in the propane industry, along with a background as a United States Army Special Forces veteran. Since joining EDP in 2022 as regional vice president for the Southwest region, Edington has helped enhance operational performance, strengthen service center leadership and implement key initiatives to improve efficiency. Prior to joining EDP, Edington held senior leadership roles at ThompsonGas, Ferrellgas and Liberty Propane, where he led large-scale operations, managed acquisition integrations and built high-performing teams across multiple regions. As COO, Edington will oversee all operational functions across EDP's nationwide footprint, including regional leadership, safety, supply and field technical support.

WESTMOR INDUSTRIES HIRES TERRITORY MANAGER FOR TRUCK & TRAILER DIVISION


Mike Smit

Westmor Industries LLC hired Mike Smit as sales territory manager for its truck and trailer division. In his new position, Smit will serve the propane and petroleum industries, providing bobtail, refined fuel truck and crane service truck expertise to customers. With more than 20 years of experience in various sales roles across multiple industries, Smit is excited to help customers find solutions through Westmor's extensive product line while providing excellent support and service. He looks forward to gaining knowledge in the propane industry and serving his customers. While expressing his enthusiasm about Smit joining the Westmor sales team, Brady Griffith, sales manager for the Northwest, said, "Mike's core values align heavily with Westmor's brand and those of our customers. He is determined to continue developing our brand recognition and customer service in the Wisconsin area, and we know he will do an excellent job."

BLUE FLAME GAS ACQUIRES PROCTOR GAS

Blue Peak Resources announced that Blue Flame Gas has acquired Proctor Gas of Proctor, Vermont, in a strategic sale to the Hoosick Falls, New York-based company. Proctor Gas has served Addison, Rutland, Bennington and Windsor counties in Vermont since 1966, making it the longest-running propane gas company in

the region. The company was founded by Match Taranovich, the son of immigrants, who saw an opportunity to build something lasting when he purchased the propane and appliance division of Proctor Coal Company from George D. Johnson. With the support and encouragement of his wife, Ella, and their young son, Jimmy, he made the bold decision to branch out on his own. Together, they laid the foundation for what would become a trusted family business. Match and Ella ran Proctor Gas side by side. Their shared dedication and hard work set a strong foundation for a business built on integrity, service and family values — principles that continue to guide Proctor Gas to this day. "We are honored to be chosen to continue the stewardship of Proctor Gas. It will be a privilege to join the family that [former owner Judy Taranovich] has cultivated over the years," said Andrew Liporace of Blue Flame Gas Company.

Industry Calendar

Aug. 13-15 Pacific & Western PGAs Convention
npga.org
Santa Rosa, CA

Aug. 20 New Jersey PGA Night at the Ballpark
njpga.org
Trenton, NJ

Aug. 26-28 Rocky Mountain Propane Association Fall Board Meeting
rmpropane.org
Anaconda, MT

Sept. 11 Wisconsin PGA Board Meeting
wipga.org
TBD

Sept. 12 Oklahoma PGA Board Meeting
okpropane.org
Oklahoma City, OK

Sept. 15 Louisiana PGA Board of Directors Meeting
lapropane.org
TBD

Sept. 15-17 NPGA Fall Technology, Standards & Safety Committee Meeting
npga.org
Pittsburgh, PA

Sept. 16-17 South Dakota PGA Annual Convention
sdp2ma.com
Deadwood, SD

Sept. 16-18 Arizona PGA Annual Meeting
arizona-propane-gas-association.square.site
Mesa, AZ

Sept. 18-19 Benchmarking Fall Meeting
npga.org
Providence, RI

Sept. 21 Southeast Propane Alliance Fall Meeting
southeastpropane.org
Atlanta, GA

FOR ADDITIONAL CALENDAR ITEMS, **VISIT BPNEWS.COM.**



THE FUELING STATION

From June 29-July 2, propane industry members gathered to celebrate and collaborate at this year's Mid-States Propane Expo. Attendees converged at the Margaritaville Resort in Osage Beach, Missouri, to enjoy some golf, reconnect with industry contacts and discuss the latest trends in propane. The annual event is hosted by the Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma state associations. These photos, courtesy of the Missouri Propane Gas Association, give an insider's view of this year's event.



















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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 MOST SENSIBLE THING YOU'VE EVER HEARD SOMEONE SAY?

From timeless advice to everyday wisdom, industry members reflect on the sayings that stuck — & why they still matter

Do you have a wise grandmother or dad who shared some words to live by? Is there a neighbor, author, colleague or movie character who said something sensible that caught your attention and continues to stay on your mind? Sensible sayings tend to have staying power!

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.

WISDOM AROUND US

The most sensible thing I've heard someone tell me is 'noes are free.' It has been something I live by now: not afraid of asking anything to anyone and not fearing rejection. Better to ask and know what the answer is than to not ask at all and wonder 'what if?'

SAM FUNG
EMERSON FISHER LP GAS
MCKINNEY, TEXAS

'Reserve judgment. You don't know what other people have been through or are going through.' We are living in a world where we see people struggling almost every day. It's easy to criticize their circumstances, but that choice is almost always made without any context or knowledge. I'm happier when I remember that everyone has their own challenges and my judgment doesn't help.

JOSH SIMPSON
LITTLE KAMPER LP
MANTECA, CALIFORNIA

My wife, Allison, often reminds me that 'people are complex.' I have a tendency to label people as good or bad, optimists or pessimists, kind or unkind, based on one specific interaction. People are much more complicated than that and exhibit many different behaviors. I work hard to remember that I have to take the 'bad' along with the 'good.' Everyone deserves better than being labeled.

DON MONTROY
BERGQUIST INC.
ROCKFORD, MICHIGAN

My best friend Janice told me that saying, 'I'm sorry, that doesn't work for me,' is an acceptable answer in certain circumstances. Instead of implying that you might be able to do something, or may be able to 'whatever' initially, and causing the other person to leave thinking it's a done deal, just be up-front and direct. And you don't have to explain your negative response either. You can just state the truth and move on.

LESLIE WOODWARD
FAIRVIEW FITTINGS
OAKVILLE, ONTARIO, CANADA

My mother said to me years ago, 'Never a borrower nor a lender be.' She was talking about borrowing and lending amongst friends. I made the mistake of ignoring that advice a couple times and both times it did not work out well for me. Clearly, it was sage advice! Too many hard feelings are created when somebody doesn't follow through with a promise!

JUDY TARANOVICH
PROCTOR GAS INC.
PROCTOR, VERMONT

'You can't put an adult head on a child's shoulders.' This was advice given from my Grandma Sheehan to my mother many years ago. I repeat this to myself



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many times a day as I raise my children. It's a good reminder that although my teenager looks more like an adult each day, her brain is still developing. As adults, I know we expect a lot of children, so it's a good reminder that they're young and still learning each day!

ABBY THURSTON
RURAL COMPUTER CONSULTANTS
BIRD ISLAND, MINNESOTA

There are so many sensible things that have been told to me. There were certainly times when I needed some sense knocked into me. Some of those 'sensible sayings' directed to me are not appropriate for this column. One that I like especially is when I am stuck and need to make a change. It goes, 'If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you've always got.' There are many sayings that are very similar, like the definition of insanity, etc. This sensible saying requires me to think about what I need to do if I want to achieve different results. Whether it's career, hobbies, fitness or family, if I want a different outcome, I need to change. That change can be continuous learning, practicing more, exercising or spiritual growth. So, the bottom line is, improvement or change requires effort.

TOM KRUPA
NGL SUPPLY TERMINALS CO.
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

The golden rule: 'Treat others as you wish to be treated.'

BOYD H. MCGATHEY
EDP
PARKVILLE, MISSOURI

One of the most sensible things I've heard or read is from the author Ian MacLaren: 'Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.'

BRUCE SWIECICKI
CONSULTING ENGINEER
TINLEY PARK, ILLINOIS

'Do … or do not. There is no try.' From 'Empire Strikes Back,' Episode 5 of Star Wars.

RICHARD STRYCHARZ JR.
WALTER'S PROPANE
SUNDERLAND, MASSACHUSETTS

SENSIBLE NOTES

There are a couple sensible phrases that I seem to have on a loop in my brain. One is commonly attributed to Mark Twain: "It is never wrong to do the right thing." A simple saying that may challenge our ethics and morals throughout the day, throughout life.

Another sensible thing I consider often was said to me by my dad, Casey Jarvis: "The only dumb question is the one you don't ask." To gain knowledge and understanding, this guideline has been key, especially in academics and business.

Backing this up, as I was going through an onboarding session for the National Propane Gas Association's executive committee, Chair Ray Murray suggested that we "ask the question that is on your mind, because if you've thought of it, certainly others are thinking it too. Be the one to ask it for all to learn from the response."

Wrapping up with one last saying attributed to English actress Kate Winslet — it seems sensible to me: "Life is short, and it is here to be lived." Wishing you an enjoyable summer.

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



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.

CONNECTICUT COURT DISMISSES ATTEMPT TO BLOCK PROPANE STORAGE FACILITY

After 11 years of legal battles, a Connecticut court cleared the way for the proposed bulk facility to be constructed

On Jan. 25, in the second of its two decisions on the project, the Connecticut Appellate Court rejected a lawsuit by a citizens group, North Branford Citizens Against Bulk Propane Storage, to block the construction of a propane storage facility. The decision, which comes after an 11-year legal battle, may finally pave the way for the facility. The court found that the citizens group did not have legal standing to file its suit.

AN APPLICATION

The saga began in May 2014, when a company called 2772 BPR LLC filed an application with the North Branford planning and zoning commission for a zoning change to permit construction of a bulk storage facility in North Branford. Bulk storage of propane was a prohibited use under the town's zoning regulations, and an exception was required. The applicant company appears to be owned by J.J. Sullivan Inc., a small, local, family-owned propane and fuel oil distributor.

The planned facility included two 30,000-gallon tanks, a garage, a connector building and an office building. Tanker trucks delivering propane to the storage tanks, as well as bobtail delivery trucks filling up to make customer deliveries, would have to traverse along a heavily traveled commuter route to access the facility.

WETLANDS REVIEW

In September 2014, following up on its zoning application, 2772 BPR submitted a site development plan application to the commission seeking approval to construct the facility. The commission held a hearing in October, but then suspended the proceeding pending a review by the state environmental agency of the impact of the facility on a local wetlands area.

More than two years later, in January 2017, that agency issued a decision in favor of 2772 BPR. In March 2017, the planning and zoning commission resumed its hearing.

The commission, by a 3-2 vote, denied 2772 BPR's site plan application, and the company appealed to the Connecticut Superior Court, which denied the appeal. Undeterred, the company then went to the Connecticut Appellate Court, and in September 2021, that court reversed the lower court judgment, apparently clearing the way for the project.

CITIZENS GROUP APPEARS

But not so fast. Back in March 2017, while the zoning commission was holding its hearings on the 2772 BPR site plan application, a citizens group, North Branford Citizens Against Bulk Propane Storage, entered the picture. It filed its own lawsuit, naming as defendants the zoning commission, the town of North Branford, 2772 BPR and Town Councilman Donal Fucci.

The citizens group claimed that in 2014, Councilman Fucci and the town's mayor attended a closed hearing of the zoning commission to lobby in favor of the project. Specifically, they wanted the



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commission to amend the town's zoning regulations in a way that would facilitate the sale of a piece of property to 2772 BPR. It was on this property that the bulk storage facility was to be built.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST?

It was alleged that Councilman Fucci had an interest in this property and stood to gain from its sale to 2772 BPR. (He strongly denied this.)

After two members of the commission voiced objections to the amendment, the town council, with Councilman Fucci voting in favor, voted to replace them. At the next meeting of the newly comprised commission on Aug. 7, 2014, the commission approved the amendment.

The plaintiff citizens group also claimed that the proposed facility would harm its members because it would "clog traffic on an already congested commuter road" and would "diminish property values due to the proximity of a potential boiling liquid expanding vapor (BLEVE) explosion."

DISMISSAL & APPEAL

In August 2023, the trial court dismissed the lawsuit. It did not address the substance of the citizens group's claims but rather concluded that it "failed to exhaust its administrative remedies." Specifically, the plaintiff did not file an appeal of the August 2014 zoning decision within 15 days, as required by Connecticut law. The plaintiff appealed to the appellate court.

The appellate court did not address the timeliness of the plaintiff's appeal of the zoning decision. Instead, it asked whether the plaintiff citizens group had legal "standing" to file the lawsuit.

'STANDING TO SUE'

The concept of legal "standing" has been much in the news lately. What does it mean? The courts will not allow a lawsuit by someone who dislikes an action but has no direct and personal stake in it. You cannot sue someone because you don't like an action they took. You must have been actually harmed by that action.

The appellate court noted the plaintiff's claim that it had standing:

"The sole plaintiff in the present case is an association of residents of the town. The plaintiff does not claim that it has standing on the basis that the plaintiff's own interests were injured by the defendants' actions; rather, the plaintiff claims that it has standing to vindicate alleged injuries to its members' interests."

AGGRIEVED?

The court stated that in this case, the plaintiff must show that at least one of its members was aggrieved by the zoning decision:

"...at least one of [the association's] members [must have] an interest in the subject matter of the controversy that is distinguishable from that of the general public, and that it has suffered a direct injury to that interest."

It concluded that the plaintiff association did not meet this burden, stating that "the complaint does not

identify any of the plaintiff's members or describe any member's interest beyond the vague allegation that they reside in the town and oppose construction of the facility."

Addressing the potential threat of a BLEVE explosion, the court stated:

"There is no allegation, for instance, that any member of the plaintiff owns or resides on property that is adjacent to or in close vicinity to the facility. Nor is there any allegation describing how likely it is that a BLEVE would occur, what would happen if a BLEVE did occur, how it would affect the surrounding area, or the extent of the area that would be affected. The allegations that the plaintiff's members would suffer '[d]iminished property values due to the proximity of a [BLEVE]' and '[a]nxiety' due to the risk of a BLEVE, therefore, are too vague and uncertain to infer that any of the plaintiff's members would be harmed in a manner that is distinguishable from the general public."

VIOLATION OF TRUST?

The court similarly rejected the claim that potential traffic congestion was a basis for the association's standing to sue:

"Similarly, in the absence of any allegation that the plaintiff's members either reside near or regularly travel through the area in question, the allegation that the defendants would be harmed by '[a]dditional traffic onto Foxon Road' does not support an inference that the plaintiff's members would be affected by such traffic any more than other members of the public who travel through the area."

Finally, the court was not persuaded that Councilman Fucci's alleged (and vigorously contested) "violation of the public trust" was enough to establish that association members were sufficiently aggrieved to have standing to sue:

"Accordingly, we conclude that the allegation that Fucci's actions violated the public trust, without any allegation of how that violation affected the plaintiff's individual members in a manner distinguishable from those in the community as a whole, was insufficient to establish that the plaintiff's members were aggrieved."

The court affirmed the dismissal of the lawsuit, and the plaintiff association has not appealed. After a tangled, 11-year legal battle, the way is finally clear for the bulk storage facility in North Branford, Connecticut. Perhaps the moral of the story is a commentary on our litigious times, and on one small, family-owned propane dealer's persistence in clearing the many legal hurdles that stand in the way of development.



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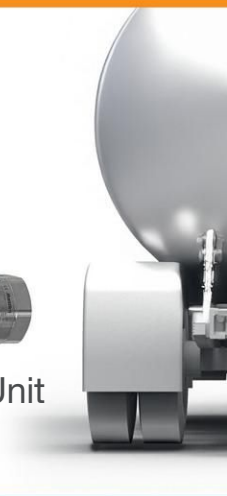


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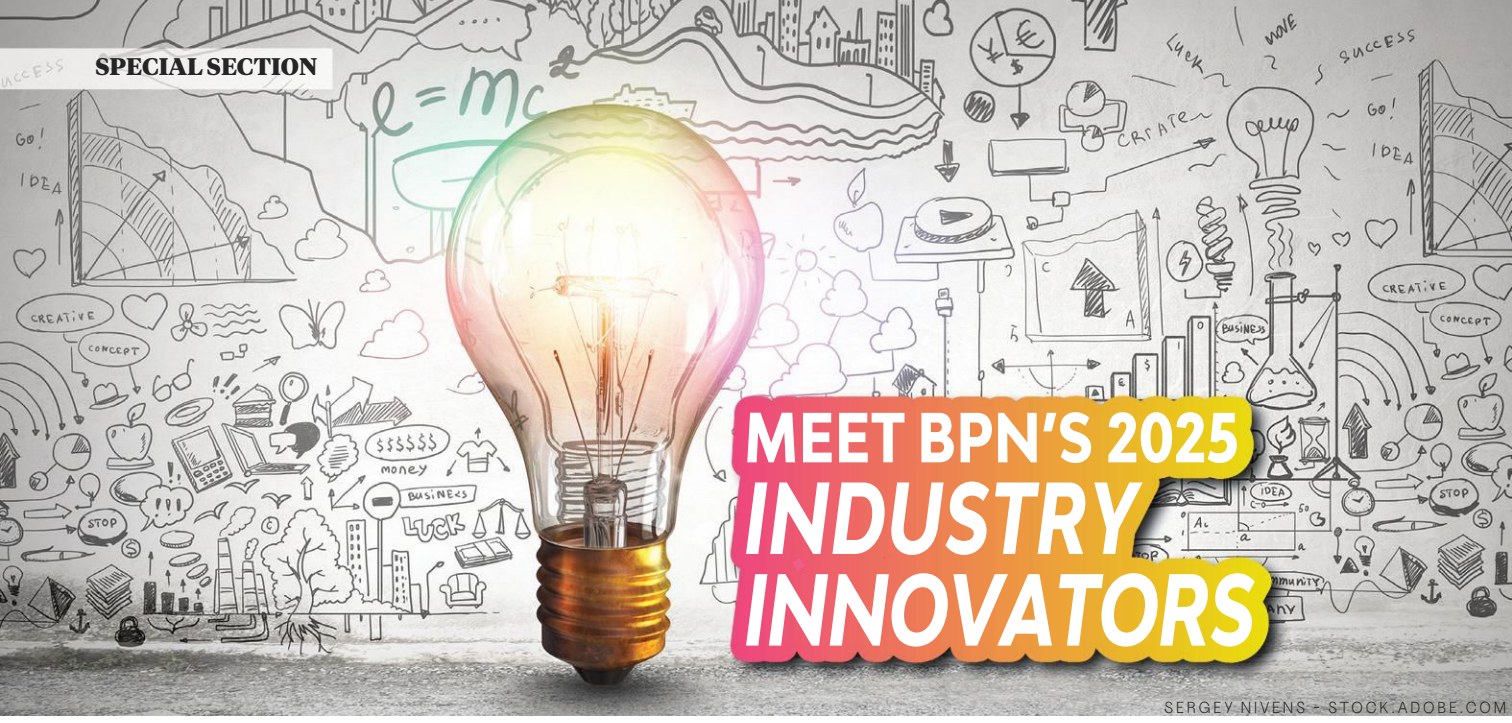
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How do you — *you, not the dictionary* — define "innovation"? What does that word really mean to you? Maybe you see it as big-picture ideation that disrupts a market. Maybe you see it as practical steps that lead to important change on a smaller scale. Or maybe there's something in between. Whatever your view, the concept of innovation is key for forward momentum — not just staying afloat, but thriving.

In that regard, we're pleased to introduce the finalists for our 2025 Industry Innovators contest! These seven professionals are finding creative ways to ensure propane never loses its relevance in the energy conversation. Read on to learn what innovation means to this group and how they're making positive change within the industry.



AMANDA BOHM

Manager
Sunrise Propane

AMANDA GRACE BOHM'S ENTRY into the propane industry began soon after her college graduation in 2021. At just 19 years old, she earned her Cat 1 601 Qualifier License and dove into the field, determined to gain hands-on experience from the ground up.

"I started by shadowing our bobtail drivers, tank setters, gas pipers and salesmen," Amanda recalls. "That hands-on experience was crucial in shaping how I approach leadership today." Her commitment and curiosity helped her quickly rise through the ranks, eventually becoming manager of Sunrise Propane, a family-owned company in Hudson, Florida, serving the local community since 1989.

Since taking on a leadership role, Amanda has focused on driving innovation by involving her team in improvements that increase efficiency, reduce risks and enhance customer service. "To me, innovation is about creating meaningful change through new ideas, processes or improvements that adds value or solves a problem in a unique or more effective way," she says. "I measure innovation by the impact it has on not only the company, but our amazing employees."

She views innovation as a team effort and actively encourages input from staff at all levels. "Whether they are in the office or in the field, I regularly ask for their input," Amanda says.

She also cultivates a culture where employees are empowered to identify issues and propose changes. "I encourage staff to question inefficiencies, share ideas and take ownership of improvements."

One area where this mindset has had an impact is customer experience. "We have been working with our software company, monitoring company, processing company, etc., to provide customers with modern convenience," Amanda explains. These efforts aim to streamline operations and offer customers a more efficient, user-friendly experience.

Thinking outside the box is a key component of Amanda's leadership. "Whether it is reworking outdated workflows or introducing new technologies, I constantly look for ways to improve efficiency and service," she says. "The industry can learn from our approach by embracing a culture where creative ideas are encouraged at every level."

Amanda is also deeply committed to professional growth. In 2025, she earned her Master Cat 1 Gas License, a milestone she says reflects her "continued commitment to the industry."

Amanda sees cross-generational collaboration as vital to the propane industry's future. "The most effective path forward lies in bridging these generational strengths," she says. "Cross-generational collaboration will lead to well-rounded, innovative solutions to allow the propane industry to preserve its core strengths while positioning itself for future success."

Looking ahead, Amanda envisions a future where propane is recognized as a clean, innovative and respected energy source. "I plan to continue contributing by pushing for smarter technologies, advocating for sustainability initiatives and helping modernize how the industry operates from the office to the field," she says. "I also want to inspire the next generation to see the propane industry with real career opportunities."



DEREK POE

Executive Director
Missouri Propane
Safety Commission

THERE ARE MANY PATHWAYS into the propane industry, but it's unlikely that many start with golf. After a chance meeting with a high school acquaintance at a golf course, Derek Poe took his shot as a service technician with Titan Propane. In 2022, after more than 15 years in the propane industry, his experience and expertise led to him to the role of executive director for the Missouri Propane Safety Commission.

"This role is a culmination of my industry experience, commitment to safety, and passion for advancing propane education and regulation in Missouri," he says.

In Derek's world of propane safety, this looks like developing a safety vision that is comprehensive and efficient.

"I look at innovation through a safety compliance and regulations lens," Derek says. "Innovation means applying forward-thinking solutions to strengthen safety systems, streamline compliance and adapt to an evolving regulatory landscape."

At the Missouri Propane Safety Commission, Derek has his hands in many key safety solutions: a redesigned inspection cycle, Missouri-specific training materials, a safety trainer evaluation rubric, improved data collection, modernized forms, improved communication with external partners — and more.

"These initiatives collectively enhanced operational efficiency, reduced costs, improved data-driven oversight and strengthened industry engagement," he explains.

It's commonly said that necessity is the mother invention. For Derek, this is certainly true, but truly comprehensive innovation also involves a systematic approach to potential problems.

"Innovation in a compliance-driven environment begins with situational awareness and a structured, evidence-based approach," he says. "My process combines data analysis, field inspector knowledge of current trends and strategic evaluation to generate and test practical, forward-thinking solutions."

As in any effective program that addresses sore points for a company or industry, teamwork and communication are key. Daring to develop new, bold ideas while keeping a pulse on valuable regulations and insights that have been handed down is part of the balance of innovation. What the propane industry cannot afford, according to Derek, is complacency.

"One of the biggest obstacles to innovation in the propane industry is complacency — the tendency to continue doing things the way they've always been done simply because they've 'worked' in the past," he says. "Innovation doesn't mean abandoning what works — it means being willing to ask, 'Can this work better?' And that's a question the entire industry should keep asking."

This question drives much of what Derek does in his work and has led to the successful implementation of improved safety processes across Missouri. It is also a question that can help the entire industry notice possible blind spots and continue to develop.

"By normalizing improvement as the standard, we create a culture where progress isn't optional — it's expected," Derek says. "And when you're always looking to make things better, new ideas tend to emerge naturally."



JULIE KRAUS

CEO
Western States Propane

THE YEAR WAS 1993, and Julie Kraus, along with her husband, Mike, knew the local market needed a propane company dedicated to values, customer service and community relationships. Together, Julie and Mike opened Western States Propane in Elko, Nevada — the first of an eventual three locations.

Julie views her time with Western States Propane as a hands-on journey, building a thriving company from the ground up while being involved in every aspect of the business. As CEO, she stays true to the company's core values of service, integrity and community commitment — an unwavering dedication to her original vision.

With almost 32 years in business and counting, Julie is no stranger to innovative thinking that fosters a work environment and customer retention strategy that sticks. In her view, innovation is about "finding better, smarter and often simpler ways to solve problems."

"It is not always about creating something new; it can be improving an existing process, anticipating a customer's unspoken need, or streamlining communication to reduce delays and confusion," she says. "Innovation is driven by curiosity, practicality and a willingness to ask, 'Why are we doing it this way, and can it be better?'"

Julie believes the key to natural innovation and new ideas is knowing how to prioritize. "Not every idea needs to be acted on right away, and some are better suited for later or not at all," she explains. "I have learned to evaluate ideas based on their potential impact, alignment with our goals, and how they affect our team and customers. From there, we take a thoughtful, phased approach to testing and implementation."

This line of thinking has led to solutions that drive efficiency and long-term sustainability at Western States Propane. Julie and her team let a balance of technology, foresight and customer needs guide their decisions today.

Julie also doesn't underestimate the importance of educating customers and the community — not just about safety and the energy efficiency of propane, but also its evolving role in clean energy.

"I believe our commitment to community and client education is a core part of our success and relevance as a propane provider. That outreach — combined with a relentless focus on service — has helped us build trust and position propane as a smart, sustainable option. All these efforts reflect my belief that innovation ... is about listening, adapting and leading with purpose," she says.

Education continues to be of particular importance to Julie, as she works to ensure both she and her team stay informed on important industry topics and helps position propane as "clean, reliable, efficient and American-made" to her community.

Julie believes regulatory restrictions are one of the biggest obstacles to innovation in the industry. Part of the challenge, she says, is misconception and lack of awareness about how clean and versatile propane is, making it hard to build momentum and support.

"To overcome these challenges, we need a stronger, unified voice as an industry," Julie says. "Propane has so much to offer the world, and I am committed to being part of the effort that ensures its continued relevance, sustainability and positive impact."



MARTY KIRSHNER

Partner
Gray, Gray & Gray

MARTY KIRSHNER HAS MADE IT HIS MISSION to help propane marketers take an integrated approach to managing the business and financial side of their companies — but he brings more to the table than just earnings statements and tax returns.

In Marty's nomination for Industry Innovators, a longtime industry partner stated, "Marty is continuing the legacy of innovation at Gray, Gray & Gray [for] propane retailers and other fuel distributors. For more than 34 years, the firm has conducted an annual nationwide survey of energy dealers, with Marty spearheading the introduction of a propane-specific version of the survey."

Marty's work in helping his propane marketer clients also demonstrates his commitment to the future of the industry. "Marty is an advocate for the propane industry and for propane businesses," the nomination said. "He is an advocate for using a company's financial results as the platform for making data-enriched decisions on operations, marketing, purchasing, hedging, hiring, and mergers and acquisitions — all the way to personal financial management for propane business owners."

A graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Marty earned a master's degree in accounting at Northeastern University. Joining Gray, Gray & Gray in 2008, Marty was mentored by Joe Ciccarello, the firm's managing partner at the time, who also led the Energy Practice Group. "While I worked in several other industries, the home heating industry just clicked for me in terms of understanding it," Marty says. "Top that off with the opportunity at 22 years old to attend industry events like trade shows and I fell in love with it."

Marty enjoys the challenges and the opportunities that come with the complexity of propane and heating oil companies, along with the camaraderie that exists throughout the industry.

In terms of industry innovation, Marty believes it is "simply finding ways to do things better and more efficiently. When I first started out in accounting, I had a laptop and would schlepp a huge briefcase with a scanner, audit files and other large pieces of equipment to do my job. Now audits are almost entirely paperless, and I am able to work and service clients anywhere versus work being performed solely on-site."

Marty acknowledges the propane industry is built on tradition, but also has never shied away from trying new things. He always encourages discovering better approaches. "The current generation of propane leaders excels in understanding and utilizing new technologies, enabling them to work more efficiently and achieve faster results," Marty says. "By combining the wisdom and experience of seasoned professionals with the younger generation's newer approaches, the industry on the whole stands to advance."

While frequently working with companies individually, serving as an extension of their management teams, Marty is also delighted to hear and see the benefits the yearly Gray, Gray & Gray propane survey provides the industry. "The best and highest use of the survey data we generate is for a dealer to compare their own company's numbers against the industry standards. It can really help identify strengths and areas for improvement."



MIKE DODD

CEO
Propane Ninja

MIKE DODD IS THE VISIONARY cofounder and CEO of Propane Ninja, a fast-growing and full-service propane company in Florida. With a sharp entrepreneurial instinct, a commitment to exceptional customer experience and a relentless drive to innovate, Mike has spent the last 11 years transforming a grassroots idea into a regional propane powerhouse.

A nomination for Mike to join the 2025 Industry Innovators cohort highlighted his journey into propane and his work with his business partner, Peter Samuelsson, to grow Propane Ninja from a startup into a multiprogram company.

The journey began with Mike's frustration with poor service in Florida's 20-pound propane cylinder exchange market. He traded his car for a pickup truck and set out to change the industry. His father's observation of market gaps sparked an idea, and soon Mike and Peter were off and running with Propane Ninja, a name that came about when Mike's wife saw him heading out dressed in all black to deliver cylinders.

Mike embraced the metaphor — stealthy, precise, efficient — and Propane Ninja was born along with its mantra: "We slip in, do the work, make the delivery — no interruptions for our customers."

"I didn't come from propane. I came from grit," Mike says. "I started Propane Ninja with $5,000 to our name, no investors and a chip on my shoulder. My background was hammered out by my family business as a child working in construction at a young age. I developed the itch for the entrepreneurial grind working with my family."

"At the time, just before we started this endeavor, my father was working for a major propane company, and I noticed something they were blind to: They weren't willing to put in the effort to service the hospitality industry to the extent it needed," Mike explains. "That was my 'in.' We saw a gap, and we moved on it. At 26 years old, we set up shop with another local propane dealer to fill our grill cylinders, and the momentum built from there."

Early on, Mike and Peter identified pain points in propane marketing and tackled them head-on, rotating between sales and delivery to avoid burnout, collecting used tanks from dumps and Facebook listings, then refurbishing and delivering them to backyard grillers. It was scrappy and risky — but it worked.

Mike believes that innovation isn't about gadgets and gimmicks. "I measure innovation by outcome," Mike says. "If it saves time, drives profit, improves customer retention or reduces errors, it's working. … If my team can't feel it or our customers can't see it, it's not innovation — it's noise."

Over 11 years, Mike built Propane Ninja from two men and a truck into an Inc. 5000 company with 70 employees and millions of gallons sold annually. The company expanded into forklift supply, patio heaters, bulk delivery and ag solutions. Alongside Peter as his business partner, the company has become a model of operational strength, customer loyalty and smart growth.

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REESE MOORE

CEO

Mopeka Products LLC

"I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IN PRODUCT DESIGN," says Reese Moore, CEO of Mopeka Products LLC. Reese started his career in the automotive and marine industries, working for large, publicly traded companies.

"Following that, I got into the propane industry, doing design and production support of propane regulators and similar," Reese explains. "And just prior to starting Mopeka, I was involved in some high-tech electro-mechanical gaseous fuel controllers for heavy-duty engines running [liquefied petroleum gas] and [natural gas]."

Reese was recommended for inclusion in the Class of 2025 Industry Innovators due to his visionary leadership, allowing Mopeka to become a global leader in tank and cathodic protection monitoring solutions.

"His relentless commitment to innovation has transformed how the propane and broader energy industries manage critical liquid commodities like propane, butane, anhydrous, ammonia and water," the nomination stated. "Mopeka's solutions — driven by award-winning sonar technology, intuitive mobile apps and powerful cloud-based platforms — have reshaped expectations for real-time visibility, accuracy and safety across the supply chain. These technologies not only enhance operational efficiency but also contribute to environmental responsibility and customer service."

Mopeka is grounded in a culture of innovation that Reese has carefully cultivated. His leadership has overseen four successful patent grants (with 11 pending applications), the launching of the Cathodic Sentinal for underground tank cathodic protection monitoring, the success of the company's Bluetooth and cellular tank sensors, and a growing number of sensor deployments in its B2B and B2C markets.

"To me, innovation isn't about blue-sky thinking or waiting for a lightning bolt of genius," Reese shares. "It's about observation — staying close to the customer and tuned into the real world. Over time, I've learned the best ideas don't come from inside a whiteboard session. They come from watching where people struggle. Every frustration, every workaround, every time someone says, 'There's got to be a better way' — that's where innovation begins."

Reese believes that Mopeka has built its successful products simply by paying attention.

"I used to spend too much time trying to invent the next big thing out of thin air," he says. "But once I shifted to listening — really listening — to our customers and partners, it became clear: They were already telling me what needed to be built."

Reese also stresses the importance of collaboration with other industry companies. "Collaboration is at the core of everything we do at Mopeka. I don't believe innovation happens in isolation. It happens when you're out there in the field, listening to customers, sitting across the table from partners and asking the right questions."

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TJ JOHNSON

CEO

Eco Power Equipment

TJ JOHNSON, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF ECO POWER EQUIPMENT, grew up around construction equipment rental yards and fabrication shops.

"Turning wrenches and solving field problems came early," TJ says. "I spent a decade in the rental and industrial distribution space, rotating through roles in service, sales, product management and eventually general management."

Those years exposed TJ to the recurring pain points contractors faced with power, heat and lighting on remote sites — especially in Canada's extreme cold.

As CEO, TJ acquired a majority stake in Cavalier Industries in 2015 and launched its Eco Power Equipment Division.

"Subsequently, as a partner and investor in Hybrid Light Solutions, I spearheaded the opening of its U.S. assembly and service hub in Minnesota," he says. "Today, I lead the team at Cavalier while providing operational direction at Hybrid Light Solutions, with our combined teams totaling 50 people serving clients worldwide."

In one of two nominations for TJ as a 2025 Industry Innovator, a nominator shared about TJ's commitment to better fuel: "Eco Power builds power generators and heaters, natural gas and propane in Canada. TJ has always focused on quality and value as they sell into the rental market. He's against diesel and always has been."

According to TJ, the creation of Eco Power's mobile, propane-powered generators started with one of their largest propane rental partners sharing a frustration in a meeting.

"Their business ground to a halt every summer," TJ explains. "Without demand for temporary heating, they were parking bobtails, laying off drivers and struggling with the seasonality of the model. We asked, 'What about power generation?' They said, 'If you can build it, we'll buy the first one and help launch it.'

"Two months later, we showed up with a prototype on a trailer," TJ continues. "True to their word, they bought the first unit and that kicked off our journey into propane-powered generators."

Adoption was accelerated with the tightening of Tier 4 diesel emissions regulations combined with constant issues like wet stacking in low-load diesel applications.

"Customers were consistently looking for a cleaner, more reliable alternative," TJ says, citing data-backed storytelling as the best way to position propane as a prominent, viable fuel for the future. He shares that grassroots sales execution, partnerships and strategic collaboration with propane marketers have helped move volume, expand awareness and solve customer pain points together.

TJ believes innovation is practical creativity that ships new ideas that reach the field, lower costs, reduce emissions, and improve uptime and performance.

As a key innovator in the industry, TJ is sure to continue turning creativity into new avenues of exploration.

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BUILDING THE PROPANE AUTOGAS 'DREAM TEAM'

When propane marketers, technology manufacturers & fleet operators work together, it strengthens opportunities for autogas & the entire industry

BY TODD MOUW



IMAGES COURTESY OF ROUSH CLEANTECH.

The transportation and energy industries are at a turning point. Propane autogas has proven to be a strong alternative fuel for fleets in our nation. However, to fully realize this market's potential, we need more than just new fuel technology. We need collaboration. Strategic partnerships between propane marketers, fleet operators and fuel system manufacturers help build out the "dream team" for creating win-win arrangements and encouraging the use of propane as a reliable, proven and readily available transportation fuel.

This deep collaboration will drive the sales of both propane autogas and the vehicles that run on it. Propane marketers possess knowledge in fueling and infrastructure, while propane fuel system manufacturers have expertise in their technology. Fleet operators, on the other hand, while not necessarily on top of all of the ins and outs of alternatives to gasoline and diesel, know their businesses down to the mile.

It's a simple equation: The more vehicles that run on propane autogas equals the more gallons of propane sold.

Advantages of Partnerships

Fleets are dealing with many challenges, from environmental initiatives to technology not yet ready for prime time. Diesel trucks are being phased out in many sectors and the steps to environmental compliance are costly and complicated. While electric vehicles (EVs) show promise, they are not yet suitable for the heavy demands of Class 4-7 vocational trucks and buses.

However, fleet operators may not have the resources — or time — to manage new fueling systems or grasp the broader benefits of switching to propane. This is where propane marketers play a vital role, because they are the boots on the ground. Their understanding of how the available propane fueling systems are a smart business solution makes them a valuable partner to fleet operators.

By building trust, educating fleet operators and serving as consultants, propane providers can become essential for the enduring success of fleets. The reward? A loyal customer base.

Investing in these partnerships is a long-term commitment, not a quick win. Propane marketers should consider themselves as trusted advisors in creating a foundation for lasting, mutually beneficial relationships.

Long-Term Mindset for Growth

According to motorsports legend and founder of Roush Industries, Jack Roush, building customer relationships is about sustained engagement: "It is a marathon and not a sprint." This shifts the focus from one-time sales to long-term customers. Propane marketers must embrace a mindset that prioritizes trust and value over time.

What does this mindset look like in practice? It means investing in fleet success. Support fleets beyond their initial purchase with ongoing advice, training and data-driven insights. Be the trusted resource and stay updated on original equipment manufacturer (OEM) offerings, advancements in autogas technology and industry success stories. When fleet operators see you as a reliable expert, they're more likely to return.

Organize ride-and-drives, demos and tours. Share customer testimonials to provide information straight from their peers. This helps instill confidence in the viability of propane autogas. Ask propane fuel system manufacturers or OEMs if they have case studies they can share. These initiatives highlight both your product's value and your commitment to fleet success.

Propane Marketers Take the Lead

Propane marketers have a unique ability to close crucial knowledge and operation gaps for fleet operators. Here's how you can strengthen your role as a strategic partner in today's competitive autogas markets:

- *Master the propane autogas landscape.* Deepen your understanding of propane autogas infrastructure, fueling choices and maintenance needs. Knowing the technology behind autogas systems and where to ask questions allows you to address fleet concerns and also build credibility right away.
- *Implement propane autogas internally.* One of the fastest ways to earn credibility with potential customers is to use propane autogas within your own fleet. Fleet directors look to their propane marketers for real proof of expertise. Operating propane-powered bobtails, service trucks or cylinder delivery trucks demonstrates your confidence in the technology.
- *Provide next-level customer service.* Set yourself apart by offering ongoing support. From helping with diagnostics and repairs to providing proven infrastructure options, your readiness to go the extra mile will keep you ahead of competitors. Having trained technicians on your team ensures customers transition smoothly to propane autogas.
- *Invest in your team.* Make sure all employees feel confident talking to fleet operators about the benefits of propane autogas. Give them the tools and training they need — whether that's tapping into resources from the Propane Education & Research Council or partnering with OEMs. When the team understands both the environmental and economic advantages of propane, they'll be able to speak with clarity and credibility. A well-informed team builds trust and strengthens your service offering.

Position Your Business for Autogas' Future

Now is the time for propane to expand as a vehicle fuel. Moving forward and seizing this opportunity requires teamwork and a customer-focused approach. Here are some steps you can take today:

- Attend factory workshops or ride-and-drives to learn about propane autogas from fuel system manufacturers.
- Use propane vehicles in your own fleet to lead by example.
- Join local pilot programs for schools or government agencies to highlight propane autogas success stories in your area.
- Engage with customers and gain a solid understanding of their motivations and priorities. Then, use your industry expertise to educate them.

Fleets are ready to switch to propane, but it's our responsibility as an industry — and a team — to guide them on that path. Collaboration, education and a consistent focus on long-term success will make propane autogas the nation's top choice for transportation.

For propane marketers, the path forward is clear. Will you be a partner to your customers or just another vendor?

Todd Mouw is executive vice president of sales and marketing for ROUSH CleanTech, an industry manufacturer of alternative fuel vehicle technology with over 3,000 customers and over 3 billion miles of data. Mouw has served as president of the NTEA Green Truck Association. To learn more, call 800-59-ROUSH or visit roushcleantech.com.





THE NEXT GENERATION OF AUTOGAS DISPENSERS

GEC's Gene Morrison explores the design & development process for the company's NextGen Smart Dispenser

BY JESSICA GRAHAM PHILLIPS

IMAGES COURTESY OF GAS EQUIPMENT COMPANY

Gene Morrison began his career in the warehouse of Gas Equipment Company (GEC), and it turned out to be the perfect placement for him as he quickly took an interest in the company's OEM Fabrication Shop.

"This aligned with my mechanical interests," Morrison said. "I grew up tinkering with machines and electronics with my dad, so building [autogas] dispensers was very interesting to me."

By July 2019, Morrison had progressed from an inside sales position — where he continued to learn more about autogas dispensers and code requirements for using the stations — to his current position of dispensing systems product manager. With the directive to take the department to what the future of GEC dispensers could be, he's spent the past several years working directly with customers and end users to tailor GEC's product line to what the industry was expressing a need for.



"I believe the customer input is vital to evolutions in equipment and our industry because that feedback allows you to adjust existing designs and innovate new products," he said.

In his role, Morrison oversees the entire GEC product line and ensures the company's standards of quality are met with every order that goes out the door. As a customer-facing representative for GEC, he attends multiple conventions each year, allowing him to foster and build relationships with manufacturing partners and end users. He's also responsible for GEC's technical support and installation/startup procedures, traveling to oversee the implementation of projects all over the country.

One of Morrison's biggest projects is his involvement with the development of the NextGen Smart Dispenser, a notable entry into the autogas dispenser market. Morrison tells us more about the dispenser and his team's design process in this Q&A below.

Can you tell us about the NextGen Smart Dispenser, i.e., its functionality, its use cases, etc.?

The NextGen dispenser uses the LCRiQ logic as our main component. The calculator is tried and true as a trusted piece of equipment in the industry. We have software coding that was developed by our integrated systems team that allows us to control the functionality of the register in addition to our transaction database. We have full operational capabilities of the equipment for tracking your fleet as an included component of the equipment. All that information is stored on our servers and delivered through our EZLink Office database. We are currently still running our beta testing phase with multiple locations operational; the reports coming in are all consistent for ease of use and installation, no maintenance, and a very sleek and modern design for high curb appeal.

When it came to the development of the Smart Dispenser, what was the catalyst for the idea?

GEC is a distributor first and foremost; this has always been who we are and will continue to be. But in our OEM Fabrication Shop, we have been taking more and more of a hands-on approach, building as many components as we can ourselves. This was the push for the development of this dispenser, to have an electronic registration autogas unit so that we control the production process as much as possible. This allows us to create a product that can be developed to the needs of the customers and be more aggressive with pricing — delivering a high-quality product at the most affordable price we can.

What was your role in the development of the dispenser?

I want to start by saying this was a complete team effort; without the support of my colleagues, this project would have been nothing more than a concept. I oversaw the entire design process for the dispenser to give us the sleek look we have. I also worked directly with the software team to create the database and functionality that I believe was needed based on the input from end users. I was part of every step of the design and layout for the equipment in our shop, using input from the entire team and customers to guide me to the final product.

Tell us about the design process — what considerations did your team consider to ensure a successful product that would meet a need in the market?

The primary focus of the equipment is durability; it will not matter how good it looks if it does not work. We wanted to ensure that the NextGen was simple and direct in design to allow for ease of service and use. The next consideration was to develop a product that does not 'look' like other dispensers in the market.

How does the dispenser ensure ease of use, clarity & efficiency for both first-time and frequent users?

The NextGen dispenser has a very simple design; the user interface is alphanumeric with an easy-to-read keypad. We interface the drivers and departments on the backend with software for simple keypad interaction. All of the control actions are automated, so the customer needs only to remove the nozzle from the holster once the transaction is authorized, and everything else will begin in sequence.

What sort of testing did the dispenser go through before hitting the market?

We are using existing hardware and software through the LCRiQ that allows us confidence in the equipment. Internally, we ran software and hardware testing for 10 months prior to the first units going into the field. We had also been running BETA units in the field for six months prior to introduction to the market.

What moments stand out as victories for your team during the design/development process?

The first thing that comes to mind was when we performed our first interface test of our software to the LCRiQ. This was the most important part of the project. If we could not make the controls work the way we needed, then the whole concept would have to go in a different direction. The other big win was when we first unveiled the unit at the National Propane Gas Association's Southeastern & International Propane Expo. Hearing the feedback from all the customers that echoed what our hopes were from a design standpoint told me that we had nailed the needs and wants of the users.

How do equipment & technological innovations help to bolster autogas' position as a viable fueling option in the United States?

Technology has come so far over the last 20 years that we are on par with other fuel sources. Now as we continue to demonstrate the economic and environmental benefits of propane as autogas, we need to have a product that looks and feels like what people are used to. Creating a unit that operates easily for minimal transition from the norm, while also having a more modern curb appeal, is the piece that is missing. My hope is that the NextGen dispenser can become a fueling station that [stands out in the market].

Why is it important for the propane industry to fully embrace autogas as a valuable avenue for growth?

Autogas gallons have huge untapped potential for marketers. These are gallons that will only add to their bottom line versus combating their growth in other sectors. Even a small fleet has the potential to add thousands of gallons annually to their volume and will see consistent returns on the investment. If we want to remain a viable industry for the next 100 years, then we have to find other sectors that can benefit from us. Autogas is the perfect opportunity, in my opinion.

Jessica Graham Phillips is the editor-in-chief of Butane-Propane News.



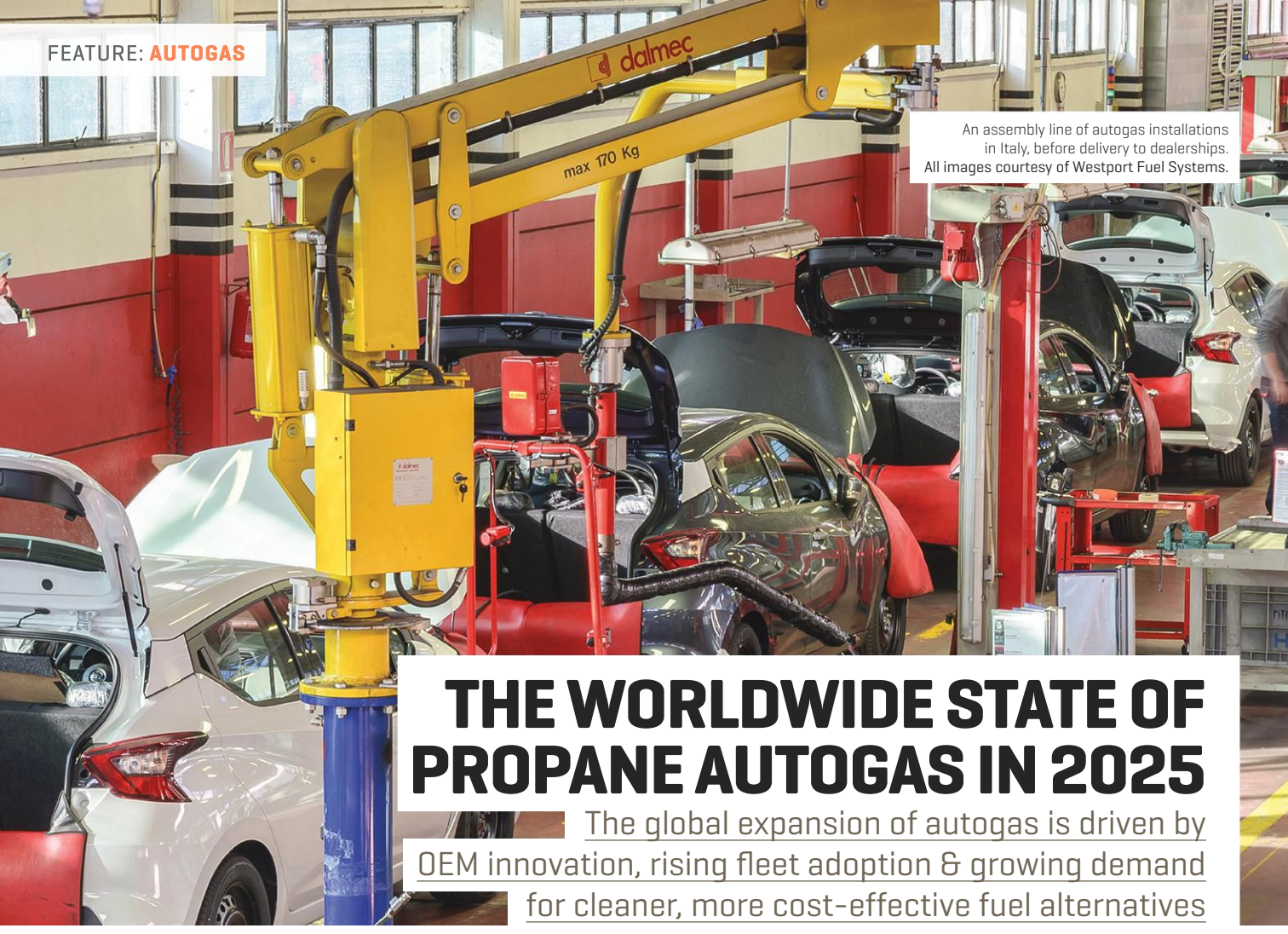


Your Most Successful Winter Begins Now

Prepare for the arrival of winter weather by introducing more of your customers to the many ways propane can provide warmth and comfort all season long. While it's essential to start organizing winter deliveries, this season is also an opportunity to grow your business. From fireplace installations to backup power generators, you can offer solutions now that will keep your customers comfortable as the colder months arrive.

PREPARE YOUR CUSTOMERS FOR THE COLDER MONTHS AHEAD

Begin preparing your marketing materials to help your customers get ready for a safe and comfortable winter season.



An assembly line of autogas installations in Italy, before delivery to dealerships. All images courtesy of Westport Fuel Systems.

THE WORLDWIDE STATE OF PROPANE AUTOGAS IN 2025

The global expansion of autogas is driven by OEM innovation, rising fleet adoption & growing demand for cleaner, more cost-effective fuel alternatives

BY ROBBIE SMIT

The European autogas market is mature, strong and diversified. Due to its size, it is also deeply integrated. Some of the largest manufacturers of autogas fuel systems and storage equipment work with vehicle manufacturers (OEMs) developing autogas innovations on the newest engines.

Countries such as Italy, Poland and Turkey have adopted autogas on the largest scale, and they represent the majority of the European market. Italy has a diversified market and success in all segments, with a steady year-over-year growth from approximately 150,000 new autogas registrations in 2023 to an expectation of more than 200,000 additions in 2025 — potentially an annual all-time high.

In Turkey, over 30% of the total consumer car fleet is running on autogas and is growing to an expected market share of 40% in the near future. In the rest of Europe, autogas is present in most countries because of its maturity and size. In some of those countries, autogas' market share decreased, while in other countries, it's a completely new, emerging fuel option.

Autogas Demographics in Europe

With a vast network of public fuel stations and the economic price of autogas, most autogas users are consumers who drive often or wish to save on fuel costs. Consumer-typical vehicles include passenger cars of all sorts, ranging from economical brands and smaller engines to luxury SUVs with large displacement engines. Pickup trucks that are manufactured in the United States and sold in Europe are usually driven on autogas — about 80% of them, regardless of brand or size.

In Eastern Europe, where wages are lower compared to the west, there is a strong desire to use an economical fuel option. Used cars with autogas are imported out of Western Europe, and a substantial number of vehicles from the U.S. find their way annually to this region. Because the U.S. traditionally has larger displacement engines, it is desirable to run these on autogas.

Autogas by OEMs Is On the Rise

A number of OEMs in the world are using the potential of autogas by annually selling hundreds of thousands of cars, SUVs and trucks that come off the factory lines with autogas as the main fuel or as bi-fuel.

In Europe, there are two large brands that offer a variety of models with several engine options on autogas. These bi-fuel

models are sold throughout Europe and serve a community that is conscious of fuel costs. It is not uncommon that the autogas bi-fuel car is sold for the same price as the gasoline version. Sales figures are strong and increasing, with future outlooks being very positive.

Korean OEMs, including Kia and Hyundai, maintain course in offering autogas in a variety of models off the factory line. Korea has one of the largest autogas fleets in the world — it is, in fact, the largest per capita. The industry in Korea is also mature and well-integrated.

Traditionally, autogas cars are used in the taxi industry, running autogas as a single fuel, but because of regulation changes in 2019, the market has spread more to consumers and businesses.

Since 2024, Kia and Hyundai have also released commercial vehicles with autogas. These small commercial vehicles were mainly diesel trucks in the past, but since 2024, the options have been electric vehicle (EV) or autogas, with autogas taking the lion's share. Considering that more than 100,000 commercial vehicles such as these were sold annually, the autogas fleet in Korea is continuing to grow.

In these two autogas regions in the world, the OEMs are contributing over half a million autogas vehicles every single year.

Autogas for the Consumer's Car

Even though the OEM numbers are impressive, the range of vehicles that OEMs release with autogas is somewhat limited. The public is looking for more options, different models and newer engines. Therefore, car manufacturers, national importers and car dealer organizations have teamed up with autogas fuel system manufacturers to bring more offerings to the table.

It's usually faster and less costly for OEMs or national importers to work with autogas fuel system manufacturers to develop and release new vehicles according to specific market or customer demand. In this case, autogas becomes an option to add to the vehicle, as it is being ordered at the dealership. With these new vehicles, autogas fuel systems are not installed in the OEM factories.



Another view of autogas installations in Italy.

Instead, this role is performed by channel partners in the industry, commonly using the same technology and delivering the bi-fuel autogas vehicles to the dealerships before they are delivered to the customer. Consumers appreciate this added option, as year-over-year sales growth is showing in Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

What About Commercial Vehicles?

If the European car industry was not so addicted to diesel for the small- and medium-duty commercial vehicles, autogas would surely be growing in this segment as well. With the existing distribution network of fuel — the service network of the industry — we must conclude that opportunities for immediate cleaner fuel adoption are left on the table there.

The taxi industry is the main commercial autogas driver in Europe, with the addition of U.S.-made trucks that are occasionally being used as work vehicles instead of European-made diesel vans. In the U.S. and Canada, however, this is completely different. Here, we see the main users for autogas are commercial fleets. There are various reasons why this is the case.

Commercial vehicles in North America are a great fit for autogas; the types of vehicles and engine specifications as seen in U.S. pickup trucks, vans, SUVs and box trucks are suited for autogas and readily available with certified technology. The operational use of certain types of businesses and fleets makes autogas the best and most sensical alternative fuel to use.



The engine of the Ford Raptor R, showing the autogas technology underhood.

On top of that, it is proven to offer fuel cost savings to the businesses, including governmental fleets where cost savings are a service to the public. Even though the scale of adoption is nowhere near Europe, when looking at the U.S., there is stable, proven autogas technology available with an expanding network. It is no surprise it has shown continuous growth in the past several years.

There is continued progress in the school bus market segment, where OEMs have long embraced autogas. It is a pillar of confidence to drive people's children to school daily on autogas.

No matter the location — Europe, Asia, North America or Africa — taxis use autogas in some capacity around the world. This shows it's not a gamble at all; you can't drive around the Strip for more than two minutes without seeing a propane autogas taxi.

In the transit sector — again a vital industry that is bringing people to work, hotels or their doctor appointments every single day — autogas is even beating the future technology on usability and preference.

Autogas or EV?

Autogas can make existing vehicles run on a cleaner fuel and reduce fuel costs at the same time. You don't need to buy a new or different vehicle. It can make a big impact today — not just tomorrow or sometime in the future.

In some parts of the world, the infrastructure is already there; why not use and expand it more? There is a reason why approximately 80% of the new commercial vehicles in Korea are sold as the autogas version and not the EV — the usability for the owner or operator being the main one.

What impact does the weight of a battery electric vehicle (BEV) work truck or van have on the operational use? This — and the range of BEVs — are an issue. Transit companies are choosing autogas over a BEV van, even if the BEV is heavily subsidized. Unless new battery technology is developed and implemented, BEVs are not expected to play a significant role in the commercial vehicle space.

What about hybrids? The good news is that autogas and hybrids go hand in hand. With the increase of hybrid engines in vehicles all over the world, the adaptation of the same vehicles with autogas has increased as well. It makes the vehicle more economical and cleaner to operate.

Hybrid engines are likely to become more common in commercial fleet vehicles as emission reduction efforts continue; autogas is expected to benefit from this shift, which some view as a more logical alternative to a politically driven push for BEVs.

Renewable Propane Autogas

Besides autogas being cleaner than gasoline and diesel, there is another opportunity for autogas to play a role in the reduction of emissions for fleets and car owners. Using renewable autogas — derived from biodiesel and sustainable aviation fuel production — has also proved effective.

Using the same fuel system technology, large quantities of this type of renewable fuel have been used, and it has proved effective in both blended and full content applications. The U.S. holds a leading role in the development and adoption of renewable propane autogas. Canada is following suit, showing the same promising results in fleets that began testing it in 2024.

In Europe, the process and adaptation are slower in automotive use. There, the use of renewable autogas is applied more to power generation or industrial applications. As of 2025, production



volume in Europe is falling behind demand. In Italy, there are regulations implemented that promise a blended use of 20% renewable autogas, but the goals will not be met if production is not increased.

In Belgium, about 10% is already being blended across the board by regulation. Using renewable autogas and increasing its production is an opportunity for the entire autogas industry. The public and political focus on cleaner emissions will continue, and this solution has proved that it works with existing fuel systems and engines. With the choice for blending, it is possible to impact a larger quantity of fuel, minimizing cost differential and broadening the reach and places of adoption at the same time.

The Continuing Evolution of Autogas Technology

The automotive industry is reducing emissions on internal combustion engines; vehicles emit much less than a couple decades ago. The evolution of engines has resulted in technologies such as direct injection engines and hybrid engines. Autogas fuel system manufacturers have shown the ability to adapt to these ever-changing conditions.

In 2025, from a technology standpoint, any relevant direct injection engine can be outfitted with an autogas fuel system. The adoption of hybrid engines and autogas is going in the same direction. Strides are being taken to make autogas fuel systems more efficient and more powerful, improving electronics and reducing size without compromise, where engine compartments are getting crowded.

Simplifying hardware components while still retaining all technological features to improve ease of installation and control or reduce costs where possible is an ongoing effort that can be expected from the industry.

Despite the ongoing political push for BEVs and EVs, autogas should not be discounted as a viable fuel source for the global fleet. Using existing autogas networks and the opportunity to expand them is more cost-efficient and scalable than other solutions. The current status of the market shows that autogas' success and potential continues to grow. In the U.S., autogas use by fleets is expected to increase. The pace in which this growth happens is merely dependent on the industry itself.

Robbie Smit is the area manager for North America and Korea for Westport Fuel Systems. His focus is on business development of the propane autogas fuel system brands of Westport. Smit has been involved in the U.S. and Canadian markets in various capacities since 2005.





WHY EVERY PROPANE BUSINESS SHOULD RETHINK ITS RETIREMENT PLAN

A loyal workforce requires long-term offerings that help you & your employees plan for the future

BY PATTY HUTCHINSON



LEMONSOUP14 – STOCK.ADOBE.COM

For many small to midsized propane companies, building or improving retirement plans often gets pushed aside. It's not that owners fail to see the value; instead, immediate priorities often win out. With driver shortages, technician turnover and regulatory issues such as tariffs, many leadership teams remain focused on keeping operations on track.

But here's the reality: A retirement plan is more than just a benefit — it's a business asset. When done correctly, it helps you recruit and retain employees, reduce taxes and build long-term wealth. And it doesn't need to be complicated, especially if you have the right financial adviser and plan team by your side.

RETIREMENT PLANS: MORE THAN JUST A PERK

A retirement plan is one of the most powerful tools a propane business can use. Some of the benefits include:

- *Supporting employee savings:* Whether your team includes younger workers just entering the workforce or seasoned employees nearing retirement, offering them a well-structured plan provides them with a smart way to save.
- *Building owner wealth:* As a business owner, having the right plan helps you build personal retirement savings and lower your tax liability.
- *Improving recruitment and retention:* In today's job market, competitive benefits matter. A strong plan helps to attract high-quality candidates and reduce costly turnover.
- *Boosting productivity:* Financially secure employees are more focused, engaged and committed to the business.

This is especially relevant in the propane industry, where many employees stay with their company for decades. A retirement plan sends the message that you're committed to employees' long-term well-being. Offering a quality plan is something larger competitors and national energy providers often use to their advantage.

WHY THE RIGHT FINANCIAL ADVISER CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Creating a retirement plan for your employees isn't just about checking a box. It takes strategy, customization and ongoing oversight. Just remember that you don't need to manage the plan alone.

Working with a financial adviser who has a dedicated retirement plan team is valuable. Together, they bring the tools, experience and structure you need to help create a plan tailored to your organization. They also stay with you and remain committed to keeping it running smoothly over time.

Here's what a strong retirement plan team can help deliver:

1. Plan Design That Works for You

Your propane business has unique needs. Maybe you want to reward long-term

employees with profit sharing. Perhaps you're looking for a safe harbor 401(k) to simplify compliance. The right advising team will walk you through plan options aligned with your workforce, budget and long-term goals.

For example, a company with seasonal workers may need a plan that limits eligibility to full-time employees while still meeting IRS nondiscrimination rules. A family-run distributor may consider a defined benefit or cash balance plan to supercharge owner savings during peak earning years. There is no one size that fits all; flexibility is key.

2. Vendor Coordination & Cost Management

It takes multiple parties to effectively run a retirement plan: recordkeepers, custodians and also third-party administrators. Your retirement plan team can help you select the right vendors, coordinate their services and regularly benchmark fees to keep the plan cost-effective.

This coordination results in fewer administrative headaches for internal staff and provides greater consistency for all employees.

A good team can also help ensure your plan's documentation stays current, you meet your deadlines and reporting is complete. These are just a few of the areas where many small businesses may fall short without realizing it.

3. Fiduciary Risk Management

As a plan sponsor, you carry important fiduciary responsibilities. That means you must always act in the best interests of your plan participants. Failing to meet those obligations can carry serious consequences.

A financial adviser with a retirement plan team can help reduce that risk by:

- Monitoring investments and maintaining documentation
- Drafting and updating your Investment Policy Statement
- Leading regular plan reviews and fee benchmarking
- Providing fiduciary services under ERISA 3(21) or 3(38) to share or offload investment oversight
- Managing administrative tasks to improve compliance

4. Employee Education & Participation

Even the best plan won't deliver value if your employees don't use it. That's why education and engagement are critical. Your plan team can deliver onboarding sessions, one-on-one support, digital tools and ongoing communication to help participants understand their options and stay involved.

Higher participation not only benefits your workforce, but it also strengthens the plan itself. This helps create a more valuable benefit for everyone.

DON'T WAIT UNTIL IT'S A PROBLEM

Too often, propane business owners fall into one of two traps: delaying the decision to create a plan or letting an outdated plan go unchecked. Either option can potentially cost you through missed tax savings, poor employee engagement or unnecessary administrative risk.

Instead, take a proactive approach. Consider partnering with a financial adviser who understands the demands of running a propane business and brings a dedicated retirement plan team to the table. Together, you can help build a plan designed to serve your employees, strengthen your business and help you build your financial future.

Patty Hutchinson is director of retirement plan services for Savant Wealth Management, headquartered in Rockford, Illinois. Hutchinson is an accredited investment fiduciary and has been involved in the financial services industry since 2006. Her specialties include team building and coaching,



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DE-RISKING STRATEGIES TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR INSURANCE POLICY

De-risking helps propane retailers reduce exposure to accidents & insurance issues by addressing safety & compliance risks before they escalate

BY JUSTIN UNGER

De-risking is the process of identifying and reducing potential risks that could negatively impact a business, project or investment over time. It involves proactively taking steps to prevent problems before they happen, helping to improve long-term stability and protect against loss.

De-risking is essentially a more formal way of saying you're reducing or minimizing risk. It's a strategy used across many industries — including by propane retailers — to protect people, property and business operations. While the term might sound technical, it's something propane companies do every day, often without even realizing it.

For example, let's say you have a customer whose driveway includes a homemade bridge that looks unstable. You know that sending a bobtail truck across it could be dangerous; not only could the bridge collapse, but your driver could be seriously injured and your equipment badly damaged. In this situation, you decide to stop delivering propane to that customer until they provide a safe, stable access point. That decision isn't just about convenience — it's a deliberate move to avoid unnecessary risk. That's de-risking. You're protecting your drivers, your equipment and your company's liability by choosing not to put people in a hazardous situation.

So, while it may sound like a buzzword, de-risking is something responsible propane retailers already do. It's about making smart decisions that reduce exposure to accidents, lawsuits, insurance claims and costly downtime.

Insurance companies also practice de-risking, especially when dealing with high-risk industries like hazmat operations, including propane. De-risking in this context means identifying businesses that present a higher potential for accidents, claims or regulatory violations — and taking steps to reduce that exposure. For example, if an insurance provider audits a propane retailer and finds serious safety or compliance issues, they may decide that the risk of insuring that business is too high. As a result, the provider could choose to increase premiums, limit coverage or even deny coverage altogether. In some cases, the insurer may drop the policy unless the problems are resolved within a certain time frame.

If your propane company is labeled high-risk, it can mean higher costs, fewer coverage options and pressure to quickly fix issues. That's why it's important to take audit results seriously and address them with the help of professionals who understand both the propane industry and insurance expectations.

In the insurance world, we have noticed a growing trend: more and more providers are auditing retail propane operations as part of their risk management process. These audits often result in detailed reports that highlight various compliance issues, which retailers are required to correct within a specific time frame in order to maintain their insurance coverage. Failing to meet these deadlines can lead to increased premiums, policy cancellations or denial of future claims.

As a result, many propane retailers find themselves overwhelmed, trying to interpret complex audit findings and implement the necessary changes quickly. In most cases, they seek the help of experienced consultants who understand industry regulations and insurance requirements to help navigate the process, resolve issues efficiently and avoid business disruptions.

By taking proactive steps, propane retailers can avoid the stress of a bad audit and show insurance providers that they run a safe, compliant and professional operation. The result? Better coverage, more trust from insurers and greater peace of mind. Here are some ways your propane company can avoid unnecessary risks.

1. KEEP ACCURATE & UPDATED RECORDS

Make sure all documentation — such as employee training records, delivery logs, maintenance reports and safety inspection forms — is complete, organized and easy to access. Auditors rely heavily on paperwork to evaluate your operation, so neat and current records make a strong impression.

2. MAINTAIN COMPLIANCE WITH SAFETY REGULATIONS

Follow all federal, state and local safety rules, including Occupation Safety and

FUELING THE FUTURE WITH AUTOGAS



NextGen Smart Dispenser shown with optional skid package

NextGen Smart Dispenser

- Self-Contained and Self-Controlled Functionality
- LCR.iQ® Technology
- Remote Updatability
- EZ-Link Software Integration
- Sleek, Modern Design



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Health Administration, Department of Transportation and National Fire Protection Association standards. Regularly review and update your procedures to make sure they reflect current laws. This includes proper tank placement, valve inspections, fire safety and correct labeling of hazardous materials.

3. TRAIN YOUR TEAM REGULARLY

Your employees should be trained on safety procedures, emergency response and how to properly handle propane equipment. Keep written proof of training and refresh courses regularly. A well-trained team is a sign of a responsible and safety-minded company.

4. CONDUCT INTERNAL SAFETY AUDITS

Don't wait for your insurance company to find problems — do your own safety checks. Walk through your facilities and delivery procedures to spot any hazards, out-of-date equipment or areas where rules aren't being followed. Fix issues right away and keep a log of what was found and corrected.

5. MAINTAIN EQUIPMENT & VEHICLES

Regular maintenance of tanks, hoses, trucks and other equipment shows that you take safety seriously. Keep a maintenance schedule and make sure repairs are done promptly. Well-maintained equipment lowers the risk of accidents, which is something auditors look for.

6. DOCUMENT INCIDENT REPORTS THOROUGHLY

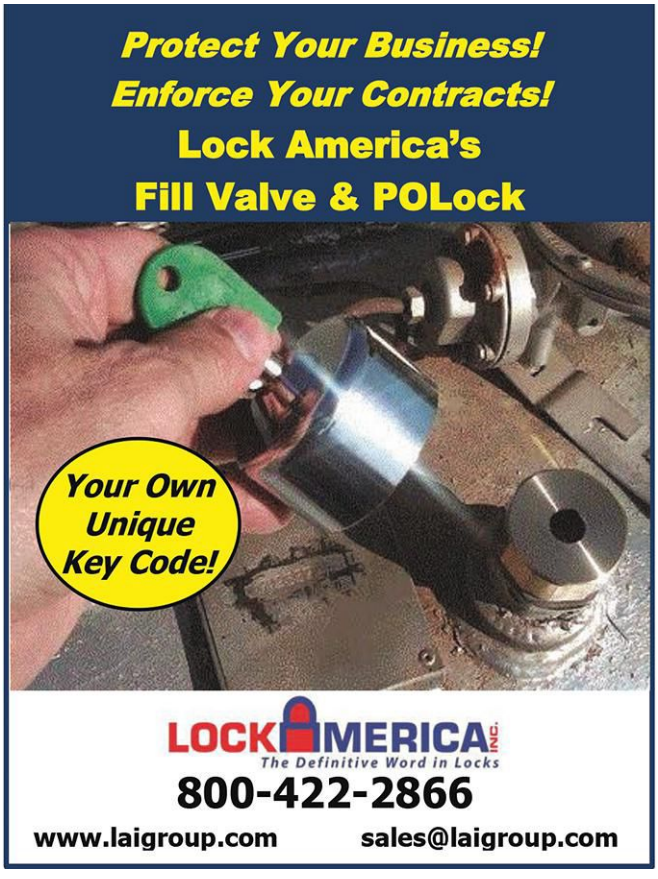
If an accident or safety incident does occur, document it in detail. Include what happened, when and where it happened, who was involved and what was done to correct the issue. Showing that you learn from mistakes and take corrective action can be beneficial during an audit.

7. CONSIDER HIRING A CONSULTANT

If you're unsure about your level of compliance or want to be extra prepared, a propane consulting company can help. Consultants know what auditors look for and can point out areas you might miss. They can also help you create better systems to stay audit-ready all year-round.

Justin Unger has been in the propane industry for 25 years. Unger is a co-owner of 1075 Consulting, working with many independent marketers seeking help in compliance and training without the need for a full-time safety and compliance officer. 1075 Consulting is a full-service fractional partner that can assist with everything from new employee training to state and federal compliance, pre-sale business evaluation, business valuations and sales.







STRENGTHENING PROPANE OPERATIONS THROUGH PROACTIVE MAINTENANCE

Preventive measures boost safety & extend equipment life in your operational practices

BY BRYAN WENDT

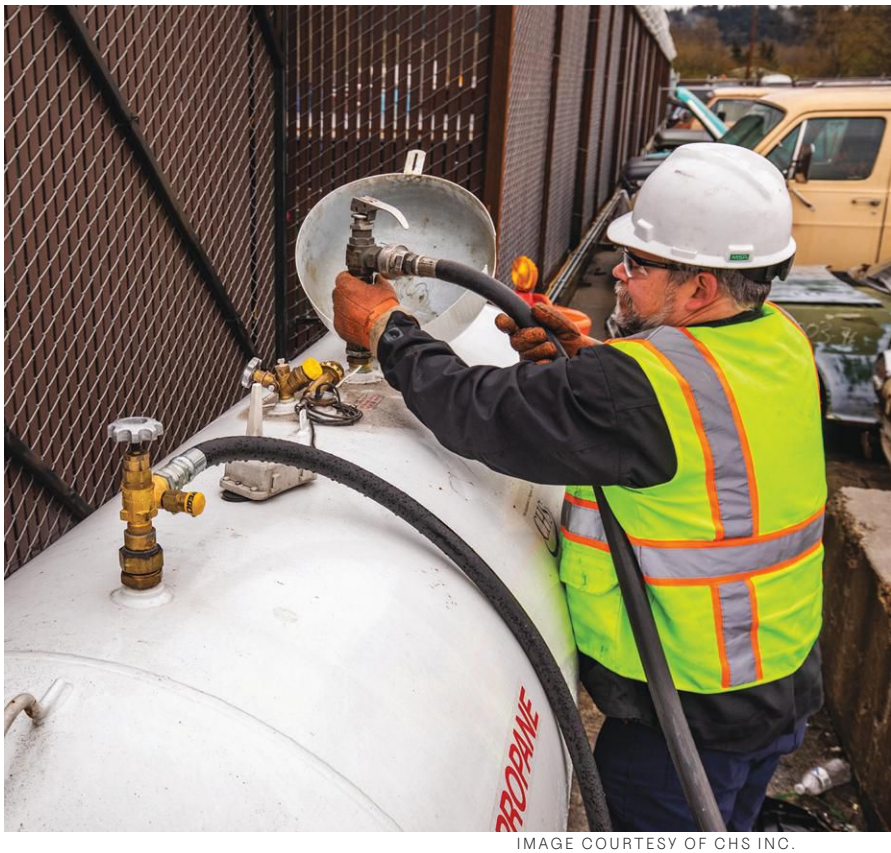


IMAGE COURTESY OF CHS INC.

In the propane industry, where safety, compliance and reliability drive best practices, proactive maintenance has become a business imperative. From underground tanks and transport fleets to bulk plants and retail terminals, companies are investing in preventative protocols that do more than just reduce downtime. These measures enhance safety, extend equipment life and help mitigate the risk of costly incidents.

ADDRESSING AN AGING PROBLEM: TANK MAINTENANCE

Properly maintained domestic propane tanks, both below- and aboveground, should be regularly monitored for safety and efficiency. Retail propane companies should ensure that aboveground tanks, whether owned by the company or the customer, are fit for filling. Summer is the perfect time to ensure tank blocks provide clearance above the ground, physical damage hasn't occurred and the tank's coating is sufficient. Additionally, it helps to take a few extra minutes to educate your customers on any important regulatory updates, as well as your company's expectation related to vegetation and objects around the tank.

For underground tanks, there's not much to see, which presents certain challenges. Of course, inspection of the valves and piping is required, but so is ensuring the cathodic protection continues to provide said protection. Otherwise, whether old or new, an underground tank's lifespan could be cut short prematurely.

Cathodic protection works by using a sacrificial anode to draw electrons away from the steel tank, effectively preserving its structural integrity.

According to NFPA 58 (the National Fire Protection Association's Liquefied Petroleum Gas Code), cathodic protection systems must first be tested upon installation, then 12 to 18 months after the first test and then every three years. The test involves placing a probe into the ground and measuring electrical potential with a multimeter, which confirms whether the protective system is still functioning. The code requires the two most recent tests to be retained.

Spring and summer are ideal testing seasons due to soil moisture levels. These seasons are also a great time for companies to conduct inspections before the ground freezes.

BULK PLANT & TERMINAL VIGILANCE

While large wholesale terminals are subject to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Process Safety Management (PSM) standards, which mandate hazard analysis and mechanical integrity programs, most retail bulk plants are exempt. However, for all bulk plants, certain sections of PSM may provide valuable guidance to ensure bulk plant compliance and safety.

For example, some companies are finding it beneficial to occasionally bring in third-party inspectors to assess tanks, valves and piping. These inspections have proved valuable to ensure compliance with the latest codes.

For example, a substantial code change to bulk plant requirements in NFPA 58 occurred in 2011, making inspections especially useful to ensure a bulk plant remains compliant to the newest version of the code.

These evaluations often involve elements of a mechanical integrity program. In these inspections, wall thickness is measured, identifying early signs of corrosion or fatigue. While not required and potentially viewed as an additional cost, these proactive inspections have proved effective at catching issues before they lead to operational disruptions or incidents.

Routine care, such as repainting tanks and applying protective coatings, also plays a role. Though simple, these measures significantly delay corrosion and preserve the service life of equipment. And with summer being a slower time for propane distribution, it is a perfect time to evaluate equipment and complete maintenance.

ENHANCING SAFETY THROUGH SMARTER FLEETS

Proactive maintenance extends to delivery vehicles. Bobtail trucks, which deliver propane to homes and farms, are subject to regulations from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), including routine safety inspections.

To reduce risks and improve efficiency, many companies are adopting new truck technologies, such as rear-facing cameras, backup proximity sensors, ergonomic rear fills and auto-neutral gear systems. Considering a company standard for new equipment and retrofitting existing equipment may pay dividends with reduction of incidents, vehicle repairs and property damage. Backing in and out of some homes can be a challenge for bobtail drivers. Providing additional technology on their trucks helps reduce risk.

These nonmandated upgrades can improve driver safety, protect equipment and reduce accidents. Businesses taking these measures demonstrate how the industry is taking opportunities to increase safety and going beyond the minimum requirements.

EFFICIENCY & SAFETY IN CONSUMPTION BILLING

Though not directly a maintenance strategy, consumption billing offers important benefits in operational efficiency and customer safety. By placing meters on customer tanks and billing them based on actual usage, propane companies can avoid "out-of-gas" scenarios that can trigger service disruptions or accidents. From an equipment perspective, it helps avoid situations where customers consider altering their propane systems and ruin equipment.

This model, similar to natural gas utilities, also provides a monthly payment structure that may be more accessible to some customers. While not yet widely adopted, early pilots





suggest this approach has the potential to enhance safety and customer trust — two pillars of successful propane operations. Plus, it increases retail company efficiency, reducing trips out to customers.

BUILDING A MAINTENANCE CULTURE

Even the best equipment needs structured oversight. That's where retail leadership and systems like computerized maintenance management systems (CMMS) come into play. These platforms help companies log, schedule and track maintenance activities in alignment with manufacturer recommendations and internal policies.

It's not just about knowing how to inspect a tank or replace a valve — it's about building a company culture that values preventative work and embeds it into daily operations. Successful programs rely on strong management direction, seasonal planning (especially before winter demand spikes) and clear accountability. Voluntarily adopting some PSM principles where they are not required, such as routine hazard analysis and mechanical integrity inspections, can yield enormous dividends in both equipment longevity and operational stability.

A CALL TO ACTION

For propane retailers and suppliers, the choice is clear: There's value in consistently implementing proactive maintenance programs when working with customers. Some initial ideas to consider include:

- Spend extra time with customers to educate them on propane equipment maintenance (painting, excessive vegetative growth, etc.)
- Follow company policies and equipment manufacturing recommendations
- Incorporate systems to embed maintenance into daily routines
- Explore inspection programs to ensure equipment is functioning properly and up to code
- Evaluate options that go above and beyond the norm that can increase safety and equipment longevity (i.e. back-up cameras for bobtail trucks)

Whether through cathodic testing, fleet enhancements or inspection of bulk plants by third parties, proactive maintenance is a priority that can pay dividends in reducing downtime, enhancing safety, extending equipment life and mitigating the risk of costly incidents.

Bryan Wendt is the propane safety and operations manager for CHS Inc., overseeing the propane safety program and wholesale asset operations. He joined CHS in 2015 as a project engineer, managing capital projects for CHS grain processing facilities and has partnered with teams across CHS to drive efficiency and operational excellence. Visit chsinc.com.



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ARE YOU COMPLACENT OR COMPLIANT AS AN INSURANCE CUSTOMER?

A wilderness close call illustrates how complacency can undermine safety in propane operations

BY FRANK THOMPSON

The night was the darkest and the quietest I had ever experienced. I had been invited to hunt moose in the interior of Alaska with a good friend. He had the only cabin on a small lake, which could only be reached by float plane.

When I arrived, there was another friend of his there from Pennsylvania. Our host said there were only two rules we had to comply with. One, we slept in the bunk beds — one facing the door, one facing the back of the cabin — with a loaded rifle positioned in each direction.

The second rule was to never go to the outhouse without taking your rifle. The reason? The outhouse was 50 feet away and covered on only three sides, with the open side facing the water. A wild animal could easily come between you and your gun back in the cabin — and that could prove fatal. Wildlife often came to the lake to drink.

On the third morning, a frantic sound erupted from the outhouse. Within seconds, we saw the issue: A mother grizzly and her two cubs were down at the lake — between the cabin and the outhouse. The friend from Pennsylvania had forgotten his rifle. He was panicked. In quiet voices, we told him to stay still and silent. We had our rifles ready in case she charged.

Fortunately, she didn't. She walked along the shoreline, and our friend made it back to the cabin, shaken but safe. He knew the rule. But in just two days, complacency had set in. He felt comfortable enough to break a basic safety protocol — and it nearly cost him his life. It could have also cost the bear's life and the lives of her cubs, as a defensive shooting would have been illegal and tragic so late in the season.

This story is not unlike what we often see in propane companies that have been operating for many years. Over time, a strong safety record can give way to overconfidence. "We haven't had a claim in years" becomes the norm, and slowly, standards begin to slip. Complacency replaces vigilance. Safety becomes an afterthought. The result? Operational inefficiency, regulatory violations, lost

business, damaged customer trust and — in some cases — the loss of insurance coverage altogether.

In today's world, we often hear, "I'm paying more for less, so I'm having to make do." That mentality can lead to cut corners and unchecked risks. Being compliant today requires more active management, not less. Leadership must be fully engaged in safety, training and compliance oversight — especially with a new generation of employees entering the workforce.

TIPS FOR PROPANE COMPANIES TO AVOID COMPLACENCY

To remain diligent and compliant, consider these best practices:

- *Conduct regular safety audits:* Schedule internal and external audits at least annually. Identify gaps and take corrective action before issues become violations.
- *Refresh training often:* Don't wait for the calendar to force compliance. Host quarterly safety meetings, drills and hands-on refreshers for both drivers and service technicians.
- *Empower employees to speak up:* Create a culture where safety concerns can be voiced without fear of backlash. Often, frontline employees spot issues first.
- *Use checklists and digital tools:* Reinforce daily and weekly checklists for inspections, leak testing, emergency equipment and delivery procedures. Use apps or software to ensure documentation isn't missed.
- *Rotate responsibility:* Assign different team members to lead safety reviews or toolbox talks. This keeps engagement high and fosters shared accountability.
- *Simulate "what if" scenarios:* Encourage your team to play out "what would you do if … " situations. These are powerful reminders of the risks at hand.
- *Review incidents, even minor ones:* Near misses are warning signs. Review them like actual events and update policies if needed.
- *Work with a risk-savvy insurance partner:* Partner with insurance providers that offer training tools, on-site consultations and safety resources. Insurance should be more than a policy — it should be a strategic partnership.
- *Engage with industry associations:* Stay current by being active in the National Propane Gas Association and your state propane gas association. Regulations evolve, and staying informed helps avoid unintentional noncompliance.

In the wilderness, a single forgotten rifle can mean the difference between life and death. In your business, a single lapse in attention can have equally serious consequences. The companies that thrive long term are not just compliant — they are vigilant.

Frank Thompson is a chartered property and casualty underwriter based in Phoenix, Arizona. He is the owner of PT Risk Management, an independent insurance company specializing in writing propane and petroleum risk policies across the United States. Visit ptrisk.com.



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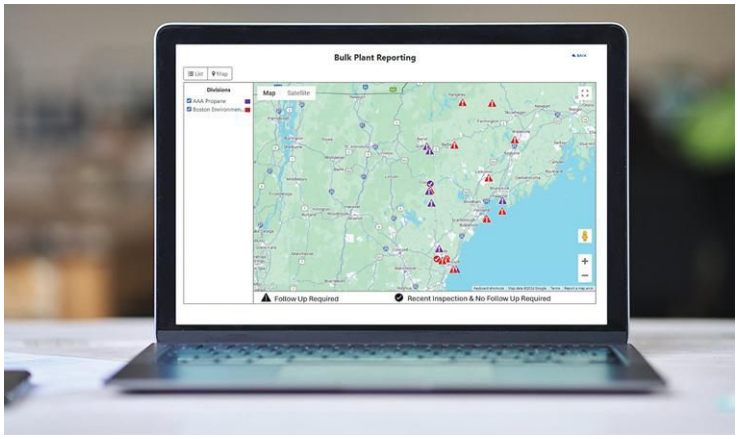


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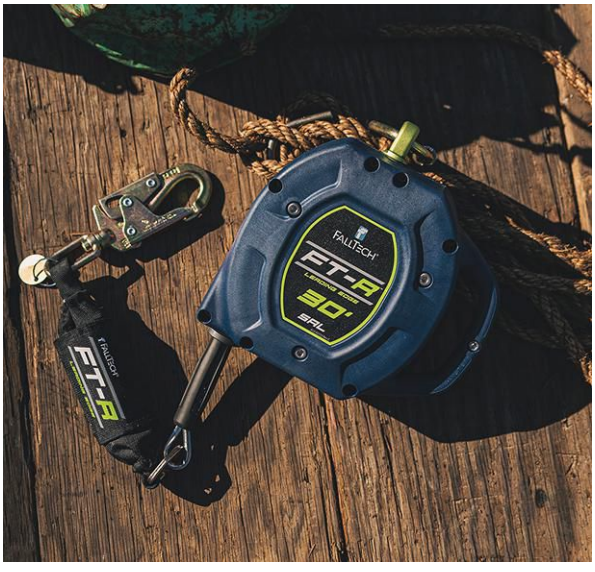


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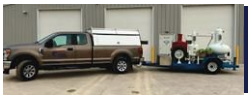
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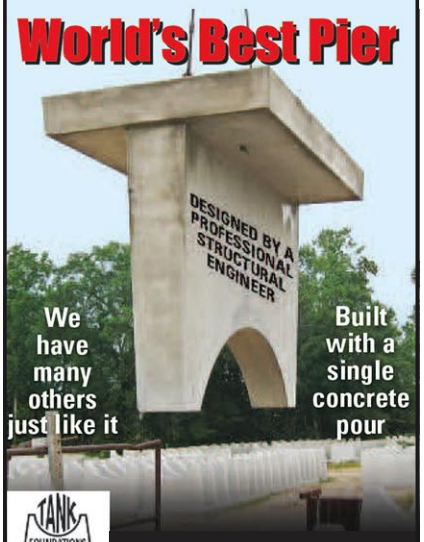


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Describe your current role at your company. I lead the development and execution of our channel strategy within the utilities sector. This involves close collaboration with our marketing, sales and product teams to ensure we're building solutions that truly align with our customers' needs and support their long-term growth. In addition to shaping our go-to-market strategy, I'm also responsible for driving new sales opportunities and managing key strategic partnerships. My role bridges the gap between customer needs and product innovation, ensuring everything we deliver adds real value to our clients and strengthens our position in the market.

What skill do you think everyone in your role or a similar one should learn? Our industry is built on relationships, and one of the most valuable skills we can have is the ability to truly listen to one another. Often, if we take a moment to listen just a bit more deeply, we can better understand the real need or request behind what's being said.

What would you say is the best lesson you've learned in your career? When I was fresh out of college, I had the privilege of working for a wonderful mentor, Ranee Flynn. She was incredibly smart and generous with her time. I had been researching a major account for weeks, and it was a big opportunity. As we prepared to go into the meeting, she asked a simple but pointed question: 'If the client asks how you calculated this number, what's your response?' I couldn't answer. The numbers had come from another department, and I hadn't dug deep enough to fully understand them. Because of that, she didn't let me attend the meeting. It was tough love, but after our conversation and explanation of why, her message stuck with me. She taught me that clients spend a lot of money and extend a lot of trust to hire experts. And while my numbers were technically correct, I needed to understand every aspect of how they were derived, what they meant and how they would impact the client's business. If I wasn't prepared to answer those questions confidently and on-the-spot, I could unintentionally make the customer feel uncertain or, even worse, provide misinformation that could affect their business and potentially ours. In that case, I had no business being in the meeting. Since then, I've become known as someone who asks a lot of questions when reviewing reports or cost analysis, and I've never made that mistake again.

Have you ever felt 'imposter syndrome'? How did/do you overcome it? I've been in the recurring billing and utility industry since 2010. In the beginning, it was challenging to be a woman in such a male-dominated field, and it was often difficult to be taken seriously. However, over time, building strong relationships and becoming involved with organizations like Women in Propane and Women in Energy has been incredibly empowering. These connections have helped highlight the presence of brilliant women in the industry. The outpouring of support I've experienced over the years has not only shifted the way I view the industry, but also the way I see myself.

If you could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be? That's such a tough choice, but if I could only eat one meal, it would have to be a charcuterie board loaded with fruits and vegetables.

Do you have any pets? If so, tell us all about them! We have a goofy Cavanese puppy named Chispa who is never far from my side during work and often makes appearances on webcalls, along with several tanks of pet fish in a variety of species. It's fascinating to watch them school and interact.

What are some of your hobbies outside of work? Living in Maine, I spend a lot of time outdoors year-round with family and friends. Depending on the season, we enjoy bonfires, camping trips, hiking and skating. When the weather gets colder, I like to stay in and spend time sewing and working on crafts.

Visit bpnews.com/industryinsider for an extended Q&A with Marci, where she shares more insights on the industry, as well as the candy inventor she'd most like to meet.

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