

OCTOBER 2025

BUTANE-PROPANE NEWS

BPN

How Propane Marketers Can
Be **Key Energy Partners** in
Emerging Sectors

6 Steps to Rebranding Your
Propane Company

Legal Resiliency in Propane

How better contract strategies & risk
management can protect the industry
from legal & liability challenges

+ Global LPG
Dynamics
in 2025



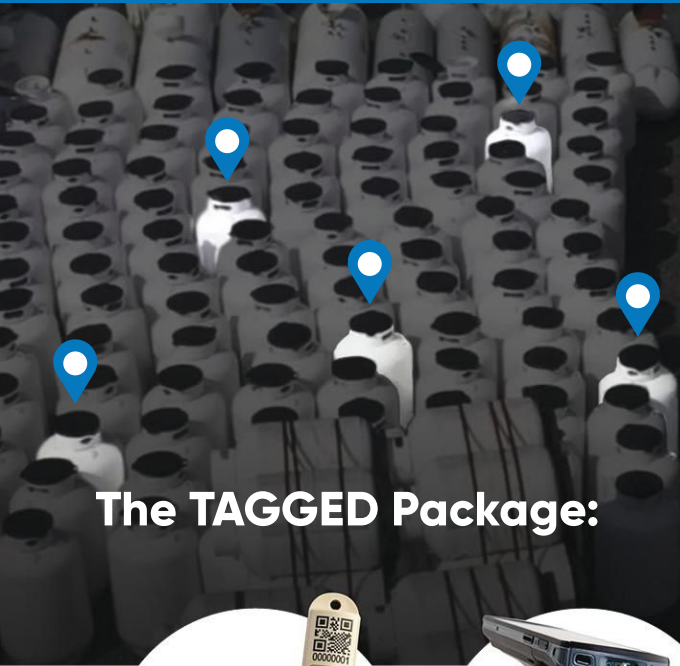
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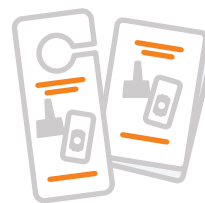
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Dear Readers,
The propane industry is no stranger to the world of litigation. With a product that can be dangerous if not handled correctly by the consumer, companies have to look out for themselves to ensure they're protected and closely following all safety and compliance standards. Without attention to the tiniest details, disaster

could strike for the company and for the consumer.

One of the things I respect most about this industry is its commitment to what I've mentioned above. Though any company can run into legal issues, there is a demonstrable dedication among propane company leaders and employees to adhere to the strictest of standards to avoid the worst-case scenarios. And it's no wonder: According to an analysis on legal disputes among midstream oil and gas companies from JD Supra, a thought leadership service for legal and business sectors, there are four broad areas of legal cases affecting oil and gas:

- *Contractual disputes* — "Disputes often stem from interpretation issues in transportation, gathering or processing agreements. These can include disagreements over tariff structures, allocation of costs for compression or dehydration, minimum volume commitments and timing of performance obligations. Conflicts may also arise related to ... failure to meet delivery or takeaway commitments."
- *Price gouging and failure to perform* — "This category encompasses legal actions stemming from extreme environmental or economic conditions, where companies are accused of exploiting their market position or failing to meet contractual obligations during times of crisis."
- *Valuation and production disputes* — "These cases involve legal conflicts related to shareholder class action lawsuits, allegations of accounting misstatements or claims of fraudulent disclosure of reserves."
- *Eminent domain and easement disputes* — "This category pertains to legal cases concerning private land use for public or governmental projects, often involving disagreements over compensation for the acquisition of easements for infrastructure like midstream pipeline development."

As you can see, there's a lot to be aware of on the legal and litigation side of a fuel business. In our feature section for this issue, Michael LoCoco of McCoy Leavitt Laskey LLC uses his experience working with propane companies in legal cases to provide an in-depth analysis of indemnification clauses in contracts on page 22, as well as the pitfalls to avoid. We also have tips for a successful duty to warn mailing operation on page 26 from P3 Propane Safety's Jerry Schimmel, as well as a Q&A with EDP's Russ Head on page 28 about ensuring proper tank placement to mitigate issues that could arise from improper procedures.

We hope the topics covered here provide a helpful road map to strengthening the propane industry's legal resiliency.

Until next time,

Jessica G. Phillips

JESSICA GRAHAM PHILLIPS

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VOLUME 57 ISSUE 10

October 2025



28



32



40



42

Feature Series: LEGAL & LIABILITY CHALLENGES

22 Why Indemnification & Defense Clauses Aren't 'Set It & Forget It'
Indemnification clauses matter more than you might think

26 The Key to Impactful Annual Duty to Warn Mailings
From being proactive to considering third-party mailers, these duty to warn tips will ensure your customers remember the message

28 Minimizing Legal & Liability Risks in Tank Placement
Clear communication, proper documentation & proactive inspections are key to reducing liability risks in propane tank placement

Special Section

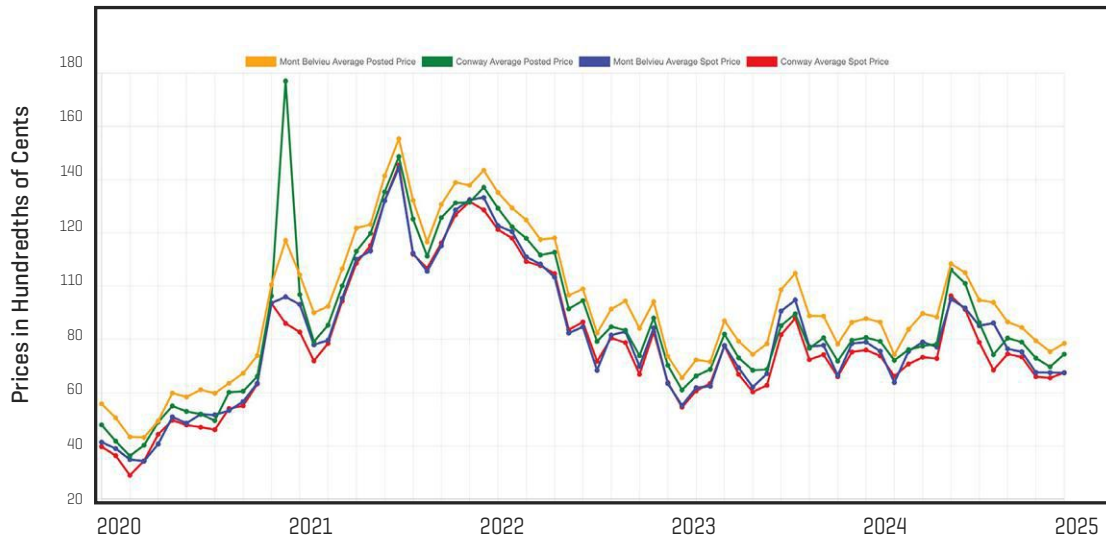
30 International Insights
A roundup of current global LPG dynamics from WLGA & Argus Media's 2025 statistical review



On the Cover
Adherence to safety standards & legal best practices is the strongest protection against litigation in the propane industry.
(Image: Adobe Stock)

- 4 Marketplace**
- 6 News & Events**
- 8 The Fueling Station**
- 10 Verbatim**
What is the one invention you would take away from the world if you could?
- 14 Marketing**
Rebranding in the propane industry: A 6-step guide for owner-operators
- 18 Workforce Development**
From avoidance to action: 12 drama-free ideas for holding people accountable
- 20 Resource Center**
Growing propane gallons starts with breaking into new sectors
- 32 Equipment**
Accelerating construction timelines with propane-powered soil & surface drying solutions
- 36 Management**
Sustaining employee culture during company growth
- 38 Strategy**
Data drives effective propane autogas fueling
- 40 Finance**
Planning for a smooth exit in the propane industry
- 42 Technology**
Propane's role in the next generation of heat pumps
- 47 Advertiser Index**
- 48 Industry Insider**

MONT BELVIEU & CONWAY AVERAGE THURSDAY PROPANE PRICES



at a glance During the latest mid-month period, prices at Mont Belvieu, Texas, were mixed. The posted prices increased 3.083 cents/gal, from August mid-month to September mid-month, and spot prices decreased 0.25 cents. Conway, Kansas, postings increased 4.71 cents/gal and spots increased 2 cents over the month.

MID-WEEK AVERAGE POSTED/SPOT PROPANE PRICES [Cents per Gallon]

	8/14/25	8/21/25	8/28/25	9/4/25	9/11/25
Mont Belvieu					
posted	75.397	76.064	77.397	78.230	78.480
spot	67.250 – 67.750	68.000 – 68.250	67.625 – 68.000	68.375 – 69.000	67.000 – 67.875
Conway					
posted	69.703	70.997	71.810	73.913	74.413
spot	65.000 – 66.000	66.500 – 67.500	65.750 – 66.500	68.500 – 69.000	67.000 – 68.000

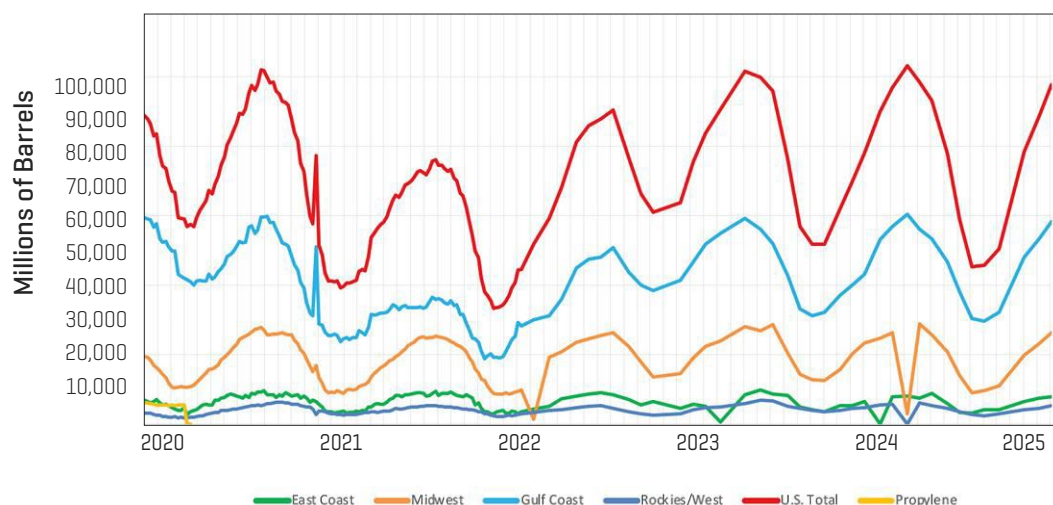
at a glance Canada's primary underground propane inventories increased by 37.2% in August, according to the Canada Energy Regulator [CER]. The total represented a month-to-month increase of 339.7 Mcm. Compared to a year earlier, stocks were lower, with 321.6 Mcm, or 20.4%, less product on hand.
[Editor's Note: Due to BPN's printing schedule, August inventory data is the latest available from the CER.]

CANADIAN INVENTORIES [Thousand Cubic Meters]

PROPANE	Aug 2025	July 2025	Change	Aug 2024
Propane-East	392.9	290.5	35.3%	441.1
Propane-West	859.8	622.4	38.1%	1133.1
Total Propane	1252.6	912.9	37.2%	1574.2
BUTANE				
Butane-East	553.2	448.8	23.3%	468.6
Butane-West	776.1	641.5	21%	619
Total Butane	1329.3	1090.2	21.9%	1087.6

Source: Canada Energy Regulator

U.S. PROPANE INVENTORIES



at a glance

United States propane stocks experienced a 9.022 MMbbl increase from August to September. East Coast stocks increased 380,000 bbl, the Midwest increased 3.152 MMbbl, the Gulf Coast increased 4.871 MMbbl, and the Rocky Mountain/West Coast increased 619,000 bbl. Compared to last year, the September 2025 stocks were 817,000 bbl lower.

U.S. PROPANE INVENTORIES

Aug. 8 – Sept. 5, 2025, and One Year Ago (Thousand Barrels)

	8/08/25	8/15/25	8/22/25	8/29/25	9/5/25	9/6/24
East Coast	7.528	8.357	7.899	8.686	7.908	7.833
Midwest	23.171	23.943	24.674	25.591	26.323	26.318
Gulf Coast	53.303	54.158	55.478	56.614	58.174	56.917
Rocky Mtn & West Coast	4.609	4.784	4.921	5.236	5.228	5.749
U.S.	88.612	91.242	92.972	96.128	97.634	96.817

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.

NORTH STAR ACQUIRES HEARTLAND GAS IN NORTH DAKOTA

Heartland Gas Company of Park River, North Dakota, has been acquired by North Star Co-Op of Cavalier, North Dakota. The transaction closed on April 17. Heartland Gas was founded in 1990 by Jim and Rebecca Chyle. Throughout the years, they have served the Park River and northeastern North Dakota communities with dependable propane deliveries and exceptional service. In addition to being a full-service propane retailer, they offered valuable service on grain dryers in the area. North Star is a well-known local cooperative in northeastern North Dakota providing propane, refined fuels, and agricultural products and services.

WEST BASIN CONTAINER TERMINAL CUTS EMISSIONS, GRID STRAIN WITH PROPANE

Amid rising energy costs and stricter emissions regulations, West Basin Container Terminal (WBCT) at the Port of Los Angeles is opting for propane power to deliver cleaner port operations without sacrificing productivity. With one of the largest propane terminal tractor fleets in the U.S., WBCT has significantly improved air quality in San Pedro and surrounding communities. Since making the switch from diesel to propane terminal tractors, WBCT has reduced harmful tailpipe nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions by 99.9% and total hydrocarbon emissions by 75%. WBCT started transitioning its entire fleet of diesel terminal tractors to propane in 2003 as part of a planned facility expansion that required the adoption of alternative fuels. Since then, propane has become a core part of its operational and sustainability strategy, and its fleet has grown to 114 propane terminal tractors, 80 of which are advanced ultra-low NOx models with even cleaner performance.

NPGA ANNOUNCES PROPANE INDUSTRY DISASTER RELIEF FUND

The National Propane Gas Association (NPGA) announced a new program called NPGAid, which will assist full-time NPGA member company employees who need financial assistance in the

wake of disasters or personal hardship. In a news release that appeared in “The Bobtail” newsletter, NPGA stated it “decided to start this fund in the aftermath of Hurricanes Helene and Milton in 2024, which were devastating to so many, including several NPGA member companies and their employees. The propane industry is an energy first responder — moving people and product to help devastated communities recover in times of disaster.” Stephen Kaminski, NPGA’s president and CEO, stated, “While the propane industry is always first to raise its hand to help others, Helene and Milton helped us realize that we had no direct way to help members of our own community cope with severe hardship. NPGAid is a way for us to meet that need. NPGAid will provide tax-free grants of up to \$2,500 to qualified applicants directly impacted by a natural disaster or similar event.” The fund relies on support from the National Propane Gas Foundation, individual donations by the Foundation’s partners, propane industry members and/or the general public. Donations to the fund can be made as one-time gifts or recurring contributions. NPGA has committed to matching up to the first \$100,000 in donations. The Emergency Assistance Foundation will serve as the administrator for the fund. NPGA members can apply for financial assistance through the application process on npgaid.com.

NANCY COOP TO RETIRE FROM CETANE ASSOCIATES



Nancy Coop

Cetane Associates announced that Nancy Coop will retire from the company and the propane industry at the end of this year. In a press release, the Cetane team said, “Throughout her career, Nancy has made a significant impact on the industry, on Cetane and on the many colleagues who have had the privilege of working with her. Her kindness, dedication and vision have shaped not only Cetane, but the propane community as a whole. Nancy’s propane career has been defined by leadership,

innovation and advocacy. She was the founding chair of the National Propane Gas Association’s Women in Propane business council, creating a collaborative environment for men and women across the propane industry. Her career spans owning and leading her family’s bobtail manufacturing company, executive roles with major propane marketers and longstanding volunteer service with both the NPGA and the Western Propane Gas Association. In 2022, Nancy was honored as the first woman inducted into the LP Gas Hall of Fame. Since joining Cetane six years ago, Nancy has been widely admired for her positivity and relentless drive to improve. She has created an environment that focuses on teamwork and family, while always looking for ways to make things better and inspiring everyone around her to strive for excellence. She helped shape Cetane into the company that it is today.” Coop said, “It is not easy to say goodbye to the wonderful group [at Cetane] or to my long-term terrific friends in the propane industry. Twenty years ago, I stepped into my dad’s shoes at JARCO. At the end of this year, I’ll retire with gratitude and pride for a late-in-life career that brought me joy. I will add a special shout-out to the women and men in the industry who boldly forged the Women in Propane Council to support the industry’s future success.”

DAVID MALINAS APPOINTED OPW PRESIDENT



David Malinas

OPW, a Dover company, announced that David Malinas has been appointed OPW president. Malinas brings more than 20 years of operational leadership experience to his new role. He most recently served as chief operating officer of Duravant, a global automation equipment company headquartered in Chicago. Prior to Duravant, Malinas served as president of the industrial process segment at ITT and held senior executive roles at Thermo Fisher Scientific and Danaher Corporation. He first joined Dover in 2019 as senior vice president of operations, a role he held for nearly four

years. During that time, he led the development and execution of Dover's manufacturing strategy, with a strong focus on footprint optimization, continuous improvement, supply chain efficiency and quality enhancement. His efforts were instrumental in driving profitable growth across Dover's operating companies. Malinas succeeds Kevin Long, who spent 11 years with Dover, including serving as president of OPW since 2017.

MID-SEPTEMBER POSTED & SPOT PRICES UP FROM AUGUST

During the August to September mid-month period, posted prices at Mont Belvieu, Texas, increased 3.083 cents/gal, while spot prices decreased 0.25 cents. Conway, Kansas, postings increased 4.71 cents/gal, and spots increased 2 cents over the month. The Mont Belvieu mid-August posted price was 75.397 cents/gal. The next week the price increased 0.667 cents to 76.064 cents, followed by a 1.333-cent increase to 77.397 cents. Prices then increased 0.833 cents to 78.23 cents the first week of September. At mid-month, postings increased by 0.25 cents to 78.48

cents/gal. Compared to last year, the September 2025 prices were 4.25 cents higher. The Conway mid-August posted price was 69.703 cents/gal. The next week the price increased 2.294 cents to 70.997 cents, followed by a 0.813-cent increase to 71.81 cents/gal. Prices then increased 2.103 cents to 73.913 cents the first week of September. At mid-month, postings increased 0.5 cents to 74.413 cents/gal. Compared to last year, the September 2025 prices were 2.287 cents higher. Mont Belvieu spots opened mid-August at 67.25 cents/gal. The next week the price increased 0.75 cents to 68 cents, followed by a 0.375-cent decrease to 67.625 cents the next week. Prices then increased 0.75 cent to 68.375 cents/gal the first week of September. At mid-month, they decreased 1.375 cents to 67 cents/gal. Compared to last year, the September 2025 prices were 3.88 cents higher. Conway spots opened mid-August at 65 cents/gal. The next week the price increased 1.5 cents to 66.5 cents, followed by a 0.75-cent decrease to 65.75 cents the next week. Prices then increased 2.75 cents to 68.5 cents/gal the first week of September. At mid-month, they decreased

1.5 cents to 67 cents/gal. Compared to last year, the September 2025 prices were 1 cent lower.

SEYMOUR COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT UNVEILS PROPANE BUSES

Seymour Community School District students have boarded new buses this 2025-2026 school year. At a ribbon-cutting ceremony, the district unveiled a fleet of 20 Blue Bird Vision propane school buses, contracted through Kobussen Buses, which run entirely on propane autogas. Each of the new 2025 Blue Bird Vision Propane 77-passenger school buses comes equipped with a 7.3L V8 Ford engine and a ROUSH CleanTech propane fuel system. Ford's 335-horsepower 7.3L engine is compact, powerful and easy to maintain. This bus retains equivalent horsepower torque and warranty coverage as its gas and diesel counterparts. Purchased from Blue Bird's authorized dealer, Wisconsin Bus Sales, the buses will be fueled at a recently installed propane station located at Kobussen's Seymour facility. Country Visions Cooperative will serve as the fuel provider for the first five years. 🚐

Industry Calendar

Oct. 15-16 PGA of New England Fall Annual Meeting
pgane.org
Portsmouth, NH

Oct. 20-22 NPGA Fall Board of Directors, Committee & Section Meetings
npga.org
Burlington, VT

Oct. 21 Missouri PGA Board Meeting
propanemissouri.com
Jefferson City, MO

Oct. 27-28 New York PGA Fall Board Member Meeting
nypropane.com
Saratoga, NY

Oct. 28-29 Ohio PGA Quarterly Membership Meeting
ohioproganegas.org
Westerville, OH

Oct. 28-30 Florida PGA Fall Meeting
floridapropane.org
Daytona Beach, FL

Oct. 29 New Jersey PGA Board Meeting
njpga.org
Trenton, NJ

Nov. 4 Indiana PGA Fall Board & Member Meeting
indianapropane.com
Carmel, IN

Nov. 12 Illinois PGA Board Meeting
ilpga.org
Springfield, IL

Nov. 14 Oklahoma PGA Board Meeting
okpropane.org
Oklahoma City, OK

Dec. 2-3 PERC Council Meeting
propane.com
Destin, FL

Dec. 11 Nebraska PGA Board Meeting
nebraskapropane.com
Kearney, NE

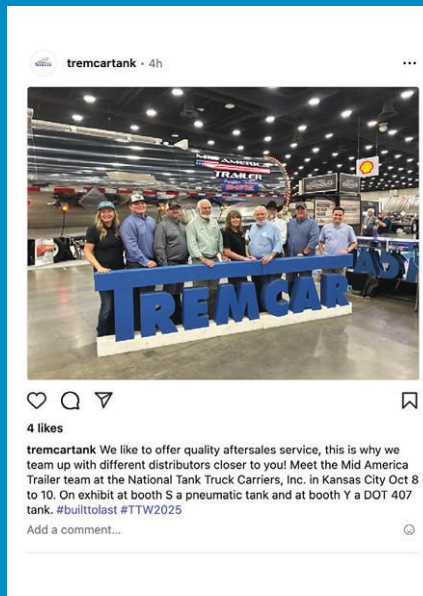
FOR ADDITIONAL CALENDAR ITEMS, VISIT [BPNEWS.COM](https://bpnews.com).

THE FUELING STATION



It's October, and fall is here. With colder weather comes activities that keep our industry busy — not merely in the day-to-day operations of providing essential energy for heating, but also in a variety of propane events, community outreach programs and chances to escape the heat at local farms and fairs with friends and family.

Enjoy some of these images from around the propane community, including posts celebrating National Propane Day and a glimpse of the mascot “Energy Bear” seeking the thrills in a visit at a local amusement park.





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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 1 INVENTION YOU WOULD TAKE AWAY FROM THE WORLD IF YOU COULD?

Your colleagues reflect on the world's worst inventions, from the dangers of nuclear fission to the underwhelming flavor of fish sticks

Is this an easy question for you to answer, or is it a tough one? Some of our responders say it's simple and others gave it deep thought.

You'll find that this month, there is more agreement in the answers than we've seen before.

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.

ARGUABLY, THE NO. 1 OFFENDER

For obvious reasons, nuclear weapons are one invention I'd take away from the world. I don't believe they serve a purpose other than to destroy civilization. I know you didn't ask for two inventions to take away from the world but, personally, I could do without fish sticks as well. They're not good. If you're reading this and happen to like fish sticks, I'm sorry. You don't have to eat them.

DON MONTROY
BERGQUIST INC.
ROCKFORD, MICHIGAN

The one invention I'd take away from the world is nuclear fission, the process of splitting heavy atoms into lighter ones. Although used for the benefit of generating electricity, the downside is obviously its use in atomic and nuclear bombs, a continuing threat to the existence and advancement of humanity on this planet. I'm hoping for the expeditious scaling up of the nuclear fusion process, which produces more energy with much less radioactive waste.

BRUCE SWIECICKI
CONSULTING ENGINEER
TINLEY PARK, ILLINOIS

I would take away the invention of weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear bombs, chemical and biological weapons are extremely dangerous and have the potential to cause catastrophic damage to the environment and mass scale loss of human life.

LAUREN CLARK
BERGQUIST INC.
TOLEDO, OHIO

The serious answer to this question

would be nuclear weapons, aka the atomic bomb. Though we would lose the option of nuclear energy as a power source, it would be worth it never to have to worry that our world could be destroyed if someone pushes a button. The fun answer to this question is 'The Clapper.' Walk into a room, clap your hands and the light turns on? I'm still scarred by the horrific commercials.

LESLIE WOODWARD
FAIRVIEW FITTINGS
OAKVILLE, ONTARIO, CANADA

OFFENDER WITH PASSIONATE CRITICISM

My impression is that social media has become the tobacco of the 21st century — discovered and promoted in a way that made its use common long before anyone understood its actual consequences. I'm not going to pretend to know the cause and effect of social media on our society, but I will point out how it is used to threaten, harass and intimidate young people. I think the world was a happier place before we unleashed the power of 'influencers' in hot pursuit of likes and



shares without any connection to truth or consequences.

JOSH SIMPSON
LITTLE KAMPER LP
MANTECA, CALIFORNIA

I believe the one thing I would take away from today's world is social media. As fun as it can be to connect with friends and family, I think it is the one thing that has caused so much anger and hatred in our society. People are too quick to repost things that are not true or respond to posts in anger. FYI: No debate, civil or cruel, has ever been won on Facebook. Stop fighting!

JUDY TARANOVICH
PROCTOR GAS INC.
PROCTOR, VERMONT

Social media! Sorry, I think it does more harm than good. That can be defined from young kids to adults talking more than they should. It is like in a crowded room, you say one sentence to the first person and by the time it goes around, the original sentence has been said in so many different ways and would not be

what was originally said. You get the idea. I know it is not all of that. However, for the most part, it is out of control.

RICHARD STRYCHARZ JR.
WALTER'S PROPANE
SUNDERLAND, MASSACHUSETTS

When I first read the question, the first thing that came to mind was smartphones. But after more thought, I think my answer would be social media. I'm not sure the amount of time people spend on social media is healthy for our youth or real-life relationships. I gave up all those platforms except LinkedIn years ago. I didn't realize how much time I spent scrolling through them — not to mention how much division there is on many of them.

BOYD H. MCGATHEY
EDP
PARKVILLE, MISSOURI

LET'S NOT FORGET THESE INVENTIONS, EITHER

Probably electric appliances. Propane generators remind us that electricity doesn't always deliver, but propane does.

Honestly, our jobs would be a whole lot easier without constantly fighting the electrification trend. We could spend less time explaining why propane outperforms and more time just enjoying the fact that it does.

STACI RAMMEL
WOODRUFF ENERGY
BRIDGETON, NEW JERSEY

Agent Orange, which is a chemical herbicide and defoliant — used not only by the U.S. during the Vietnam War but also by other countries. Nine chemical companies produce it. At first, the concern was for people's health, but now more research shows its toxicity to our environment. Using steam or flame powered by propane to control pests or weeds is a safer solution.

JULIE JOHNSON
TED JOHNSON PROPANE
BALDWIN PARK, CALIFORNIA

This one is easy to answer: photovoltaics! I was born and raised in a beautiful area of southeastern Oklahoma known as the 12-mile prairie. Both my mom's and

dad's families have lived in the area for close to 200 years! Solar farms are taking over the area, and it makes me sick to see beautiful land covered in those damn old solar panels — yep, I'm cussing! Both my boys still live in the area, and they will be surrounded by them. Hope everyone has seen Billy Bob Thornton's speech on an episode of 'Landman' about the importance of petroleum as the energy source we all need. And he cusses more than me! Feeling very strongly about this subject right now. I'm sure they may have their place in our world, but please don't cover the beautiful farmland that raises our cattle and other foods. I would say I'm sorry for my rant but, really, I'm not!

PAULA MOORE
BLACKBURN PROPANE SERVICE INC.
DURANT, OKLAHOMA

Water bottles. It is a love-hate relationship in our household. My children love shopping the newest water

bottles on the market, but the cabinet space that holds these water bottles is like playing a game of Tetris.

ABBY THURSTON
RURAL COMPUTER CONSULTANTS
BIRD ISLAND, MINNESOTA

I know this is not an invention, but it is something that I would like to discontinue: bottled water. Every time I buy a case, which I don't often do, I think of all the plastic bottles that are not recycled and end up in all kinds of places where they don't belong. I am so happy when I see people walking about with their reusable, insulated water bottles. I hope that continues to take off and we can somehow provide bulk water at events for refills vs. getting 16 ounces of water in a plastic bottle for \$3 that will end up in a landfill, the side of the street or worse, in our oceans. I just think that we have become such a wasteful society and are only hurting the future of our

environment. Unfortunately, it's too expensive and not profitable to recycle these empty bottles. Probably gonna get some comments on this one ...

TOM KRUPA
NGL SUPPLY TERMINALS CO.
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

DUALITY OF INVENTIONS

Some inventions have two aspects, both the beneficial and the detrimental contributions to human beings and the environment. We have often struggled with the creation of some inventions — whether to embrace or deny the beneficial parts while faced with the opposing, damaging parts. In this column, we raise “what-if” questions to explore human nature, to provide different opinions and to bring our propane community together. 📌

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



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Generators can help your customers maintain a good quality of life during electric grid outages. If your customer is considering adding propane power generation to their home, help them understand how reducing the number of electric appliances in favor of propane appliances, such as water heaters and furnaces, can reduce their electric load. This will not only reduce the cost of a new whole-home backup generator but also help them save on energy costs when power is restored.

HELP YOUR CUSTOMERS SPECIFY THE RIGHT GENERATOR FOR THEIR HOME

A standby generator can ensure a homeowner's quality of life by keeping the electricity flowing in the event of a power failure, and it can even serve as a primary energy source for homes built off the grid.





Learn when & how to rebrand your propane company with strategies to strengthen identity, build customer trust & support long-term growth

Rebranding is more than a new logo or name. It's a reset button — a rare opportunity to align how your propane company is seen with where your company is headed. But in an industry where legacy, loyalty and word of mouth

We get it. At Navara Marketing, for example, we recently went through a rebrand ourselves. After years of collaborating, we merged two industry-

If you're a propane dealer thinking about a rebrand or even just wondering if it's time, this guide will walk you through what to consider. We'll share real-world insights from our transition and offer practical advice so you can rebrand with confidence.

- You're growing into new markets, and your name doesn't reflect your service area anymore.

- You've acquired another company or are going through a generational leadership transition.
- Customers don't remember your name or confuse you with competitors.
- Your visual identity feels outdated, especially compared to competitors with modern websites, trucks and signage.
- You've outgrown your original mission and need to reflect a broader service offering beyond propane (HVAC, plumbing, etc.).

Rebranding is not about change for the sake of change. It's about realignment: making sure your external identity reflects your internal vision. Ahead are six steps to take when setting out on the rebranding journey.

STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR 'WHY'

Before you hire a designer or brainstorm new names, ask yourself one critical question: "Why are we rebranding?"

The answer will shape every other decision. At Navara, for instance, the "why" was simple: Two companies had been operating side by side, serving the same clients in the energy space. We were already collaborating, but the split identity created confusion and inefficiency. We needed one brand to represent one team, one voice and one mission.

Whether your reason is growth, consolidation or modernization, make sure it's rooted in business strategy, not personal preference.

STEP 2: NAIL DOWN THE STRATEGY

Once your "why" is clear, define your brand positioning. This is your compass.

- Who are your ideal customers now and in the future?
- What makes you different from other dealers in your area?
- What do you want people to feel when they hear your name?

This is also the stage to get input from key stakeholders. Interview your best customers. Talk to your employees.

Take your time. Get clear on your goals. ... Surround yourself with people who know how to guide the process. Because when it's done right, a rebrand isn't just cosmetic — it's transformative.

Review competitor branding in your region. This feedback will guide your messaging and design choices.

STEP 3: CHOOSE A NAME YOU CAN OWN

This may be the hardest part. In our case, we learned quickly that trademarking a generic name would be nearly impossible. So, we took a different path and created a name from scratch: Navara.

The name we created is rooted in the word "navigate," reflecting our mission to guide clients through marketing decisions with clarity and momentum. It's easy to pronounce, visually clean and trademarkable. In a similar vein, here's what to consider if you're choosing a new name:

- Check domain availability and social handles.
- Do a trademark search through the United States Patent and Trademark Office.
- Avoid descriptive names that box you in or mirror existing competitors.

In the short-term, a unique name may feel unfamiliar. But long term, it creates space for your brand to grow.

STEP 4: BUILD A VISUAL IDENTITY THAT FEELS LIKE YOU

This is where it starts to get fun, but don't skip the strategy.

Your logo, colors and typography should feel aligned with your customer base. If you serve a high-end residential clientele, your visuals should reflect that level of polish. If you're all about speed and reliability for commercial accounts, your look should feel bold,

efficient and trustworthy. Don't forget these essentials:

- Logo and brand marks for print, web and vehicles
- Truck wrap designs with high readability at a distance
- Uniform updates for field staff and drivers
- Digital assets like a modern website and updated email signatures
- Physical assets like letterhead, building signage and billboards

It's often worth hiring a branding expert familiar with the propane space. It saves time and prevents costly mistakes.

STEP 5: PREPARE INTERNALLY BEFORE YOU ANNOUNCE

What's one of the biggest mistakes companies make during a rebrand? Announcing it before their team is ready. Before you go public, make sure:

- Every team member knows the new brand story and how to talk about it
- All paperwork, invoices and digital tools reflect the change
- Your customer service team is trained to answer questions and reinforce continuity

At Navara, we had weekly internal check-ins to coordinate updates and identify gaps. We created brand launch kits and mapped every place the old brand existed, down to forgotten PDFs.

STEP 6: COMMUNICATE CLEARLY WITH CUSTOMERS

The launch is not just a reveal. It's a relationship moment. Here's how to roll it out effectively:

- Send a personal letter or email from the owner explaining the change.
- Update your website with a banner or FAQ section about the rebrand.
- Use postcards or flyers with delivery invoices to reinforce the message.
- Post on social media with photos of new trucks or branded gear.
- Answer the question: "What does this mean for me?" Reassure customers that pricing, service and team members remain the same.

Rebranding is a chance to reconnect. Use it to thank customers, tell your story and reinforce trust.

THE PROS & CONS OF REBRANDING

As you're considering a rebrand, think through any pros and cons.

Pros:

- **Stronger positioning:** You stand out in a crowded market.

- **Improved recall:** A memorable name is easier to refer and recommend.
- **Team alignment:** A rebrand can reenergize your culture.
- **Digital momentum:** Modern visuals and messaging can improve website traffic and conversions.

Cons:

- **Cost and time:** Rebranding takes resources and can feel overwhelming.
- **Customer confusion:** If not communicated well, it can create short-term doubt.
- **Operational lift:** You'll need to update signage, forms, systems and more.

The key is preparation. The more thorough your planning, the smoother the transition.

REBRAND WITH INTENTION

At Navara, we didn't rebrand because it was trendy. We rebranded because it was

necessary. It aligned our team, sharpened our message and positioned us to better serve our clients.

If you're considering a rebrand, take your time. Get clear on your goals. Build a plan. And surround yourself with people who know how to guide the process.

Because when it's done right, a rebrand isn't just cosmetic — it's transformative. 🏠

Brett Lewis is a cofounder of Navara Marketing, having merged L4 Group with Maderia Group after both companies collaborated for over a decade. He leads strategy and positioning for energy and service brands. With over 15 years of experience in digital marketing, Lewis specializes in building systems that drive measurable growth through brand clarity, SEO and customer-focused campaigns. Visit navaramarketing.com.



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FROM AVOIDANCE TO ACTION: 12 DRAMA-FREE IDEAS FOR HOLDING PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE

A step-by-step path to promoting responsibility in the propane workplace

BY KATE ZABRISKIE

Most of us have been there. A deadline whooshes by, a teammate consistently shows up late to meetings or someone just isn't pulling their weight. And what do we often do? We avoid the conversation, hoping the problem will magically resolve itself. Spoiler alert: It never does.

Dodging these accountability conversations doesn't help anyone. In fact, it usually makes things worse.

When we let issues slide, we're essentially signaling that standards don't matter. Before long, missed deadlines pile up, trust crumbles and frustrations boil over. So how do we break this cycle? How do we muster the courage to address issues without being labeled the office hammer or hard-nose?

Here's a practical road map to hold others accountable with respect, clarity and confidence.

PREPARATION IS YOUR BEST FRIEND

Before you jump into an accountability conversation, thoughtful preparation is essential. Think of it as setting the stage for success.

1. Get Clear on What's Bothering You

Ask yourself: What exactly is the issue? Stick to the facts and avoid making assumptions. For instance, instead of thinking, "They clearly don't care about their work," focus on specifics: "The report was due Monday, and it's now Thursday." A fact-based approach prevents the conversation from veering into personal attacks.

2. Check Yourself First

Accountability starts with you. Have you communicated your expectations clearly? Are you modeling the behavior you're expecting? If you've dropped the ball somewhere, own it up front. For example: "I should have addressed this sooner, and that's on me." Nothing derails an accountability conversation faster than hypocrisy.

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

While accountability conversations are rarely fun, approaching them with clarity and respect can make the exchange easier.

3. Be Direct & Respectful

It might feel tempting to soften the conversation with small talk, but directness is more effective. Try saying, “We need to talk about the missed Johnson project deadline.” It’s simple, clear and respectful — no need for elaborate warm-ups or sugarcoating.

4. Make It a Dialogue, Not a Monologue

Many accountability conversations fail because they turn into lectures. Instead, aim for a dialogue by asking questions and inviting the other person’s perspective. You might learn about obstacles you weren’t aware of or uncover miscommunications about priorities. For example:

- “Can you share what happened with the missed deadline?”
- “What challenges were you facing that I might not have been aware of?”

By asking questions, you create an opportunity for collaboration rather than confrontation.

FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS, NOT BLAME

Blaming someone for a mistake rarely leads to productive outcomes. Instead, shift the focus to problem-solving and shared goals.

5. Frame the Conversation Around Shared Objectives

Emphasize that you’re on the same team and working toward the same goals. For example: “We both want this project to succeed. How can we make sure we’re hitting our deadlines moving forward?” This approach fosters collaboration and encourages the other person to take ownership of the solution.

6. Be Specific About Expectations

Vague promises like “I’ll do better” don’t cut it. Instead, set measurable, actionable goals. For example: “So we agree — status

reports will be submitted by 3 p.m. every Friday?”

FOLLOW-THROUGH IS EVERYTHING

The conversation doesn’t end when you walk away. True accountability requires consistent follow-up to ensure progress.

7. Reinforce Expectations

After the conversation, monitor the agreed-upon actions. Check in regularly to review progress and address any lingering challenges. For example: “Let’s touch base next week to see how the new timeline is working.”

8. Acknowledge Improvements

When someone makes progress, recognize it. Positive reinforcement strengthens accountability and builds trust. For example: “I noticed the last few reports came in on time — thank you for making that a priority.”

HOLDING YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE

Accountability isn’t just something you demand of others — it’s something you must embody. Admit your mistakes, be transparent about your expectations and follow through on your commitments. Modeling accountability creates an environment where everyone feels responsible for their actions.

9. Own Your Shortcomings

If you’ve let issues slide in the past, address it openly: “I realize I haven’t been consistent in addressing these kinds of issues, and I’m working to change that.” This level of honesty not only builds trust but also sets the tone for a culture of mutual accountability.

BUILDING A CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability should be a team-wide practice, not a one-time event. Here’s how to create a workplace culture where accountability is the norm:

10. Make Accountability Routine

Regularly check in with team members to discuss progress, challenges and expectations. Use these check-

ins to normalize feedback and course correction.

11. Celebrate Success

When team members hold themselves accountable or improve their performance, acknowledge it. Positive recognition reinforces the value of accountability and encourages others to do the same.

ADDRESS PATTERNS, NOT JUST INCIDENTS

One-off conversations are necessary, but patterns of behavior require a bigger-picture approach.

12. Get to the Root Cause

If you notice recurring issues, address the trend instead of treating each instance as an isolated problem. For example: “I’ve noticed a pattern of late reports over the last three months. Let’s discuss what’s going on and how we can address it.” This approach ensures the root cause is tackled, not just the symptoms.

THE PAYOFF

Holding people accountable at work isn’t about being hard on others — it’s about fostering trust, improving performance and supporting your team’s success. Avoiding these conversations might feel easier in the moment, but it ultimately leads to bigger problems down the line.

Start small. Address one unresolved issue this week. Be prepared, stay direct and focus on solutions. By practicing accountability consistently and modeling it yourself, you can help build a workplace culture where trust and respect thrive. 📌

Kate Zabriskie is the president of Business Training Works Inc., a Virginia-based talent development firm. She and her team provide on-site, virtual and online soft-skills training courses and workshops to clients in the United States and internationally. For more information, visit businesstrainingworks.com.



GROWING PROPANE GALLONS STARTS WITH BREAKING INTO NEW SECTORS

With new materials from PERC, propane marketers can position themselves as key energy partners in meeting today's demands

BY BERT WARNER

IMAGES COURTESY OF PERC

Reliable energy is a top priority for businesses in critical sectors. Frequent power outages, a strained electrical grid and the increased risk of natural disasters have made it clear that our infrastructure may no longer be able to meet today's demands.

Industries like health care, senior care, food service, hospitality, higher education, multifamily housing and manufacturing all depend on reliable access to power — not only for safety, but because it can seriously impact a business's bottom line. For the first time, United States infrastructure received a C grade on the 2025 American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) report card. In 2024 alone, the U.S. experienced 27 billion-dollar disasters, resulting in more than \$182 billion in damages.

In addition, a recent Department of Energy report, "Evaluating the Reliability and Security of the United States Electric Grid," warns that some regions of the U.S. could face more than 800 hours of power outages annually by 2030. That's more than 33 days of downtime in a single year for businesses that are reliant on uninterrupted operations.

These challenges have commercial businesses searching for technology and energy solutions that are reliable, affordable and readily available — solutions that propane marketers are well-equipped to provide.

PROVEN TECHNOLOGIES TO BOOST RESILIENCE & EFFICIENCY

Propane marketers play a critical role in educating commercial customers on proven technologies that can support their energy goals, lower costs and improve resiliency. Two promising systems gaining traction in the commercial space are combined heat and power (CHP) and propane-powered cooling



A propane tank provides fuel for a CHP system.



A mower boasts a propane cylinder attachment as its fuel source.

technologies. CHP systems generate electricity while capturing waste heat to power additional applications such as space heating, hot water, cooking, sterilization, laundry and more. CHP units work independently from the grid and are not impacted by widespread power outages, ensuring year-round reliability.

Propane-powered cooling systems are another powerful tool for resilience. Typically used for comfort conditioning, dehumidification, medium-temperature refrigeration and high ambient cooling, propane cooling is ideal for customers looking to reduce grid reliance and peak electricity charges.

By educating original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), engineers, building owners and facility managers about these systems, propane marketers can position themselves as strategic energy partners, opening the door to year-round

gallon sales, especially in energy-sensitive industries.

TOP SECTORS IN NEED OF RESILIENT ENERGY

The need for reliable energy is urgent in industries where downtime can put lives, businesses and comfort at risk. In health care, facilities can't afford power interruptions. Outages disrupt patient care, medical refrigeration, electronic records and emergency services. With CHP systems, these facilities have energy security and increased efficiency.

Similarly, guests and residents at hotels and multifamily properties expect hot water, lighting, climate control and Wi-Fi. An outage can damage reputations and result in a loss of revenue — but with CHPs, building owners can take control over their energy supply and deliver on all those amenities without compromising on cost.

Restaurants, grocery stores and food processors are especially vulnerable. From refrigeration and cooking to HVAC and lighting, these businesses require 24/7 reliability. According to a National Restaurant Association report, more than 60% of operators said energy and utility costs have become a significant challenge for their restaurant.

"The way we're looking at this is to make a profit center out of our boiler room instead of it being a cost center," said Anders Thorson, U.S. market manager at EC Power Inc. "The end users are going to save a ton of money by installing a CHP unit, all while reducing emissions."

Propane marketers have an opportunity to address these sector-specific challenges by offering solutions that deliver value to today's most energy-sensitive markets.

THE REAL COST OF EFFICIENCY

Energy-resilient applications have a strong track record of delivering an impressive return on investment. The ASCE noted that every dollar invested in resiliency produces \$13 in avoided recovery expenses, according to its 2024

economic analysis. CHP systems, which achieve efficiencies of more than 80%, along with resilient propane cooling systems, offer a compelling investment for commercial customers. That's why more than half of U.S. states now recognize CHPs as part of their Portfolio Standards or their Energy Efficiency Resource Standards.

Still, the U.S. has yet to fully capitalize on these advantages. The Environmental and Energy Study Institute has shared that the amount of energy lost in wasted heat in the U.S. exceeds the total amount of energy used in Japan. Despite the clear benefits of CHP systems, they remain underutilized in the U.S., largely due to a lack of industry awareness, while many European countries have embraced the technology through more proactive education and support.

Efficient technology depends not only on energy output, but also on fuel availability and long-term performance. Propane marketers can reassure customers that propane is a stable, domestic energy source. Nearly 90% of U.S. propane supply is produced domestically, making it less susceptible to international disruptions or unexpected tariffs that often impact other fuels. Propane's portability means it can be delivered virtually anywhere, even in emergencies, and unlike diesel, it won't degrade over time. As a result, propane systems are always ready to operate with lower maintenance and no risk of fuel degradation. In a CHP system or cooling application, that reliability gives businesses peace of mind.

THE FIRST STEP TO GROWING GALLONS

Propane marketers looking to grow their gallons should start by identifying commercial accounts that operate year-round and rely heavily on heat or cooling. Think about the health care, hospitality, multifamily, food service and manufacturing customers in the community. From there, work with OEM partners to build a plan on how to successfully connect with those

decision-makers. Many OEM partners offer full-service support from design to installation and maintenance, allowing marketers to bring more to the table when connecting with prospects in the area.

Superior Plus Propane is already putting this strategy into action by collaborating with OEMs and expanding its portfolio of energy solutions.

"For me, this whole CHP thing is relatively new as of the last couple of months, but folks like Anders and his team have really helped us get familiar with it," said Dom Splendore, senior manager of marketing at Superior Plus Propane. "Right now, we're working on identifying the right people. We've got a couple of folks looking into this and a list of customers who might be the best to engage with."

To support these efforts, the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) is helping propane marketers build strong relationships with prospects to adopt reliable, efficient and sustainable propane-powered systems. Programs like the Alternative Technology Demonstration & Research Program, which you can learn more about at propane.com/alttech, were developed with that in mind. Commercial and industrial building owners can now alleviate some of the upfront building or retrofit costs by receiving up to \$30,000 for CHP projects and \$300 per ton for propane-powered cooling systems.

In return, participants share data on the overall performance, emissions, fuel usage and cost savings of the project. That data helps strengthen OEM partnerships, supports new technology development and expands the propane industry's collective impact. 📌

Bert Warner is the director of commercial business development at the Propane Education & Research Council. He can be reached at bert.warner@propane.com. Visit propane.com/alttech for more information on PERC's resources and to apply.



WHY INDEMNIFICATION & DEFENSE CLAUSES AREN'T 'SET IT & FORGET IT'

Indemnification clauses matter
more than you might think

BY MICHAEL LOCOCO

Generally, no one ever calls me on a good day for their business. As a result, I find myself frequently advising business owners on what they can do to avoid ever needing to be in the same room with me. Not a month goes by where I don't find myself reviewing a newly filed lawsuit or demand and lamenting the absence of some simple measures a client might have taken to ensure they were protected from the time and expense associated with litigation. I'll review their contracts and often I'll find good language requiring their subcontractor to defend and indemnify them and to ensure they have insurance requiring they be added as an additional insured.

Unfortunately — and equally as frequently — I'll find that the subcontractor did not add them as an additional insured or did so improperly. Then comes the unfortunate phone call with the client to inform them that their indemnification and defense clause, while well written, likely won't get them out of the lawsuit. Luckily, the remedy to this problem isn't difficult and simply requires the installation and observation of a few common-sense best practices. Indemnification and defense clauses aren't "set it and forget it" — and taking a few extra steps can mean the difference between intrusive and costly litigation and a simple tender process and assumption of defense by your subcontractor's insurance company.

Simply put, an indemnification and defense clause serve the same purpose as any contract clause: to provide certainty to the signing parties as to the duties and responsibilities for each. More specifically, the purpose of an indemnification and defense clause is to ensure that if a subcontractor exposes the general contractor or property owner to liability due to their negligence, that contractor will defend the other party in a suit, indemnify them for any financial losses and hold them harmless — not seeking remuneration for any of the preceding payments.

Now, in practice, many contractors, if not most, are not sufficiently capitalized to bear the expense of multiyear, multiparty litigation out of their own pocket. As a result, the agreement to such a clause is only as good as the contractor's ability to pay. Therefore, most well-written clauses contain requirements for the contractor to obtain sufficient insurance and to ensure the other party is added as an additional insured to their policy. But these clauses are only worth their writing if they are actually followed.

WHY INDEMNIFICATION CLAUSES OFTEN FAIL

One of my favorite legal quotations comes from the classic film, "A Few

Good Men": "It's the difference between paper law and trial law." On paper, the indemnification clause may be well written, but if the requirements of the clause are not followed, then practically, they have little value.

Consider the following example. Acme Propane contracts with Delta Construction to service some of its propane lines. As a result of Delta's negligence, an accident occurs and a home fire starts, resulting in property damage and bodily injury. The homeowner's insurance and the injured family sue both Delta and Acme. Acme, relying on its indemnification clause, tenders the defense of the action to Delta and its insurance carrier. They come to find that Delta never added Acme as an additional insured and the carrier denies the tender. Acme's lawyer calls Delta's and maintains that despite the lack of insurance, Delta still has an independent requirement to indemnify Acme. Delta's lawyer acknowledges this, but notes that Delta is a small business, a single-member LLC with three employees and no appreciable assets. Acme can assert its contract rights all it wants, but Delta doesn't have the meaningful ability to pay a lawyer out of its own pocket to defend Acme, much less the cost of experts or the costs of any judgment. Acme, practically, now has no choice but to incur these expenses itself.

Another legal aphorism I find helpful when explaining the law to nonlawyers is that in the world of contract law, there isn't right and wrong — there's performance and the cost of breach. Most of the time indemnification clauses contain no specific penalties for the contractor if it fails to procure the required insurance. But again, even if it did, we return to the difference between paper law and trial law.

Consider, again, the previous example between Delta and Acme. Imagine the contract between the two contained a clause noting that if Delta failed to procure the required insurance, adding Acme as an additional insured, and litigation resulted, Delta would owe

Acme \$50,000 as a penalty. Practically, Delta has no ability to pay this penalty, and it would likely simply result in the dissolution of the LLC. Moreover, it does nothing for Acme in the litigation it faces as a result of Delta's negligence.

While there are certainly other significant reasons such clauses fail (e.g. poor draftsmanship or jurisdictional requirements) to result in a successful acceptance of a tender of defense, common sense practices can ensure businesses get the most out of their well drafted contractual defense and indemnification provisions.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMPLIANCE

Given the preceding, breach penalties are not particularly helpful as a remedy. In my experience, as well, most of the time when indemnification clauses fail, it is the result of honest oversight by the contractor. Thus, the remedy to such problems is not more severe breach penalties, but the installation of best practices and proper workflow tasks to ensure the provisions are followed.

Now, in many cases where I am hired to pursue a tender to a hired contractor, I am provided a certificate of insurance from the contractor. However, this certificate almost always notes that it is not a controlling insurance document and frequently, even in cases where a certificate of insurance (COI) is on file, the actual policy itself fails to provide coverage. Prudent hiring companies ought to include in their workflow (and contract language) the requirement for the indemnifying contractor to provide them with an actual copy of the policy showing the addition of the hiring party as an additional insured before work begins. From this document, the hiring party can verify it has been added and that all required coverages (e.g., errors and omissions, completed operations, etc.) are present.

An additional, and unfortunately frequent, cause of tender denials is the lapse of coverage. This can occur due to a payment oversight, or often as a result of a project that takes longer than

the stated policy period on the COI. There are many cases where a COI was obtained prior to the project beginning, but the project lasts longer than the policy period on the COI, and the policy was not renewed or was transferred to a new insurer by an agent who did not add the hiring contractor as an additional insured. Prudent hiring contractors ought to verify the payment schedule of premiums by their contractor and should consistently verify during the project (or projects) that the premiums are being paid and the policy has not lapsed. Moreover, they should ensure their contractor informs them if insurance changes and make sure they obtain a copy of any new policies. These practices, taken together, can eliminate the sources of many tender denials.

THE VALUE OF PROACTIVE MEASURES

While the above remedies may seem tedious, in practice they amount to a few

extra minutes of phone calls and emails for a given project. When the alternative is expensive and time-consuming litigation, they are the definition of an ounce of prevention being worth a pound of cure. While there are certainly many additional considerations for such clauses (e.g., quality of draftsmanship, limits and coverages required, and jurisdictional considerations), simple steps can make such clauses effective and valuable. Working with your legal team, prudent businesses should establish workflows to:

1. Ensure contractors provide up-to-date copies of certificates of insurance and policies containing the required limits and provisions
2. Verify coverage details for all contract requirements
3. Monitor premium payments and ensure the policy remains active
4. Require and follow up on notifications of insurance company

changes, policy amendments or cancellations

A single avoided lawsuit will pay for such measures a hundred-fold. In conclusion, indemnification and defense clauses are not “set it and forget it.” They are as valuable as almost any clause in a contract when it comes to party expectations and avoiding increased costs. With a few simple steps, they can give the parties the peace of mind they expect at the time of signing — and beyond. ▀

Michael LoCoco is a litigator with McCoy Leavitt Laskey LLC. McCoy Leavitt Laskey LLC is a preeminent fire and explosion defense firm in the United States. Attorney LoCoco is an experienced litigator with a background in both plaintiff and defense side personal injury, products liability and construction litigation.



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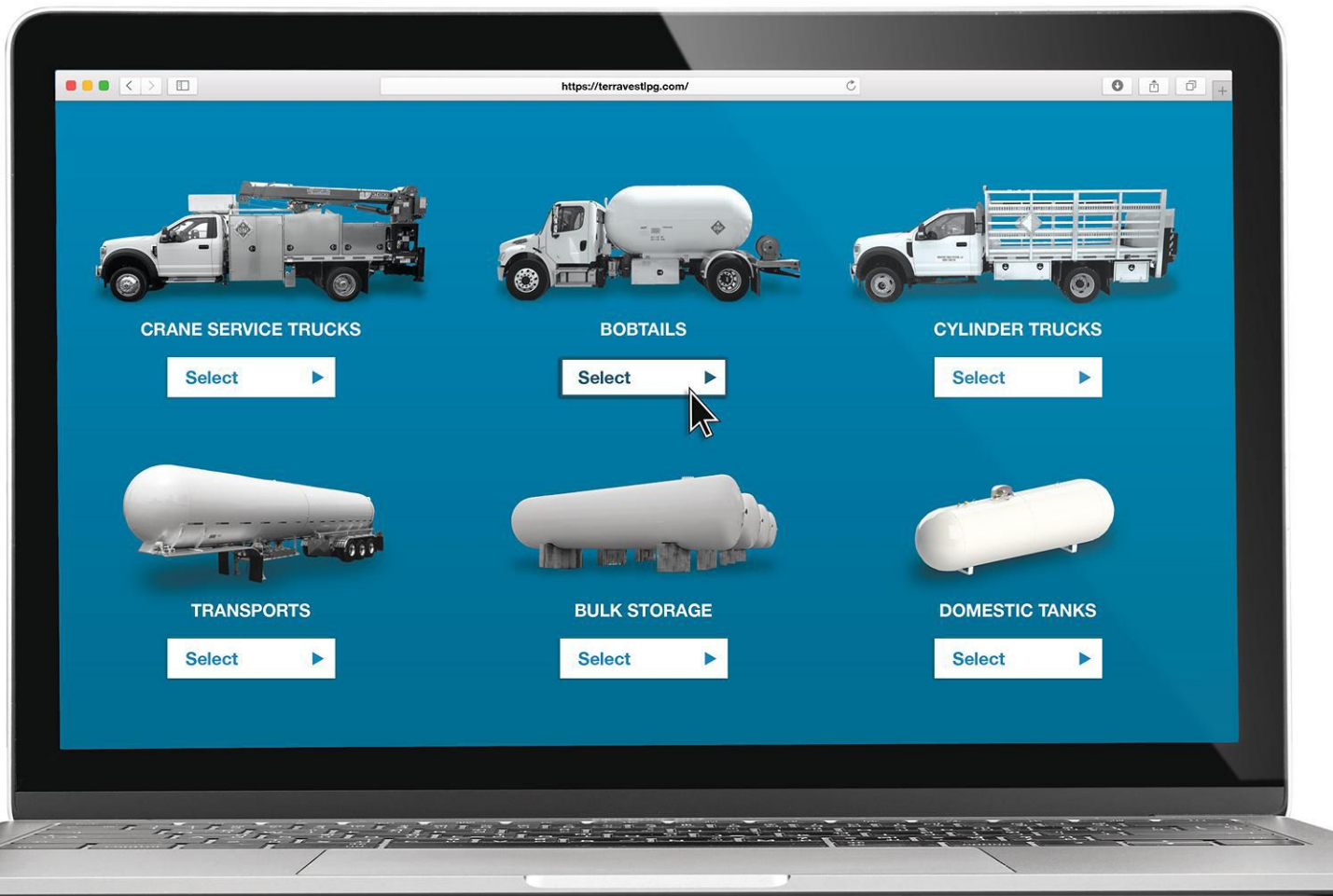


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THE KEY TO **IMPACTFUL** ANNUAL **DUTY TO WARN** MAILINGS

From being proactive to considering third-party mailers, these duty to warn tips will ensure your customers remember the message

BY JERRY SCHIMMEL

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Every propane marketer has a responsibility to inform their customers about proper propane use and storage, pertinent safety information and possible hazards related to propane. Are you implementing the right steps to ensure your customers and company are protected from preventable propane accidents? Duty to warn is an annual risk mitigation process for propane dealers to inform customers of this valuable information. Educating your customers about the proper use and storage of propane, as well as how to detect the warning signs of a gas leak, can significantly reduce the risk of propane-related hazards on customers' properties. Equally important, it can reduce the risk of liability for your company.

By proactively informing customers, propane marketers who implement duty to warn safety mailings — an industry best practice endorsed by legal counsel and insurance companies — provides protection for customers and employees and legal protection for the company should a residential or commercial propane accident occur. Annual safety mailings must include several essential items that are both impactful and informative, ensuring customers get the message and remember it. This is also where third-party providers can be a vital resource for propane marketers to uphold quality, compliance and consistency with their annual duty to warn safety mailing.

WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF AN IMPACTFUL DUTY TO WARN MAILING?

1. PERC's Scratch-&-Sniff Brochure

The Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) literature included in a safety mailing should consist of a scratch-and-sniff brochure (mercaptan odor) titled "Important Propane Safety Information." This brochure is designed to educate consumers to identify the smell of propane, respond to gas leaks, avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, use qualified professionals to install and service propane appliances, and more. Customers who read and apply this information will significantly reduce the possibility of a propane accident.

2. Informative Letter About Propane Safety

A letter branded with your company logo, name and contact information serves as an introductory overview message for customers to understand the risks related to propane, as well as proper use and storage. It also introduces the accompanying PERC brochure.

3. Jurisdictional Pipeline Color Marking Chart (Jurisdictional Accounts Only)

If your company has jurisdictional propane accounts, you must inform them of the national 811 service for safe digging near propane pipelines. In a letter or in brochure form, this information must

Annual safety mailings must include several essential items that are both impactful & informative, ensuring customers get the message & remember it.

be communicated twice per calendar year, per Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations Parts 191 and 192. More information is available at call811.com.

4. Verified Documentation for Your Duty to Warn Mailing

An official, independent, third-party certificate serves as documented proof that your duty to warn mailing was completed and sent, ensuring full compliance with industry standards — an essential safeguard for your records and insurance requirements.

WHY IT'S HELPFUL TO CONSIDER THIRD-PARTY MAILINGS

The true cost of managing your duty to warn mailing internally can be much higher than propane providers anticipate, especially when it comes to paying for postage, printing, brochures and lost hours your team could have spent completing work in the field. Consider sourcing this process to an outside vendor. A third-party vendor can provide propane marketers with a comprehensive and cost-effective program that includes branded, customized safety letters and the PERC brochure. Plus, they can mail this package directly to your customers and provide verification.

While methods like using in-house staff or providing information in welcome packets, on bills or forms, or even on your website may seem sufficient, you may still run the risk of substantial gaps in compliance and documentation that can leave you unprotected in the event of litigation or for insurance purposes. A third party for your annual duty to warn can ensure complete, documented compliance, while saving time, reducing risk and protecting your business.

Some of the main benefits of a third-party provider include professionally printed materials, printing and postage

discounts, reduced risk of returned mail, third-party verification, approval from legal counsel and insurance providers, record retention and overall efficiency.

THE FUTURE OF DUTY TO WARN SAFETY MAILINGS

In recent years, there have been a high number of reported propane incidents; therefore, PERC is working on new and more effective ways to get the safety message to propane customers. A survey conducted by a PERC-appointed vendor determined there is significant interest in a digital duty to warn offering, and eventually, the digital offering will supplement the standard mailing. Because a digital mailing cannot include a scratch-and-sniff test, the digital mailing will include an option to order a free test card with propane odorant on it.

MAKE THE SMART CHOICE FOR YOUR DUTY TO WARN MAILING THIS YEAR

In 2024, over 5 million PERC brochures were purchased and mailed across the country by marketers. Was your company one that sent this valuable consumer safety information to its customers? Be recognized as a responsible, customer service- and safety-oriented propane marketer that puts customer and employee safety first. ■

Find an extended version of this article
with additional info about third-party vendors at
bpnews.com/safety.

Jerry Schimmel is the vice president of sales at P3 Propane Safety. He is responsible for sales and marketing for the P3 Propane Compliance System, the P3 Duty to Warn Program, and P3 Training and Consulting Services. He can be reached at jerry_schimmel@p3propanesafety.com or 401-481-2281.



MINIMIZING LEGAL & LIABILITY RISKS IN TANK PLACEMENT

Clear communication, proper documentation & proactive inspections are key to reducing liability risks when placing tanks

BY CHRISTINA MILLER



Tank placement is one of the most critical responsibilities propane marketers take on, but it also comes with significant liability risks if not handled properly. From clearance requirements to evolving property layouts, each installation presents unique challenges that can impact safety, compliance and long-term customer satisfaction. While many risks can be mitigated through careful planning and documentation, others arise after marketers leave the site — leaving companies vulnerable if standards are not followed from the start.

To shed light on how propane marketers can reduce exposure to legal and liability issues in tank placement, BPN asked Russ Head, vice president of safety at EDP, to share his perspective on the most common risks, the importance of clear communication with customers and best practices for ensuring safe, compliant installations today and in the years ahead.

From your perspective, what are the most common liability risks propane marketers face related to tank placement?

What is out of our control after we leave the site. For example, if air conditioning units are being installed next to regulators, generators or other appliances added to the system without us knowing.

What are the key clearance requirements that tend to be overlooked during tank installations?

Buildable property lines and unknown future plans. We need to talk to the customers before installation about their future plans for the property (landscaping, pools, sheds, additions, etc.).

What best practices do you recommend for ensuring safe & compliant siting of tanks, both at the time of installation and in the years that follow?

The original installation paperwork needs to be reviewed by a qualified individual, and every time a tank is filled, a quick inspection should be completed. Communicate with all of your employees about changes to installations and follow up with them.

How can improper clearances expose a marketer to legal or insurance challenges?

If an incident occurs and the codes are not met, investigations will show this and have an effect on premiums and coverages.

What advice would you give when customers request tank placements that don't meet code or safety standards?

Explain to the customer that these rules are for the safety of themselves and others. Most rules revolve around an issue that was discovered in an investigation. If you can't get the installation up to code, walk away from the customer.

Are there particular risks that differ between aboveground & underground tanks?

The obvious thing is you can't see the condition of the tank once it is placed in the ground. Special attention needs to be considered when installing and maintaining underground tanks. Document everything, and if you have the ability, take pictures.

How do property changes over time — like fences, landscaping or additions — impact liability for existing tank placements?

This can change the required distances. An inspection should be done before any filling is completed to ensure the safety and integrity of the installation.

What steps should propane companies take when revisiting older installations that may no longer meet today's codes?

Update as fast as possible.

How important is proper documentation in protecting against liability with tank placement decisions?

If it wasn't documented, it didn't happen.

What emerging challenges do you see in tank placement as regulations, customer expectations & property designs evolve?

Houses seem to be bigger and properties smaller; talking to the builders and educating them on the rules helps the placement before it becomes an issue. Be involved early in the process.

As Head emphasizes, minimizing liability in tank placement requires more than following codes — it demands ongoing communication, thorough documentation and a willingness to walk away from unsafe requests. With properties and regulations continually evolving, propane marketers must stay proactive, engage with customers about plans and revisit older installations to keep them compliant.

By building these practices into everyday operations, companies can protect themselves legally while upholding the highest standards of safety for their customers and communities. ■

Propane News.

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A ROUNDUP OF CURRENT GLOBAL LPG DYNAMICS

Key insights from WLGA & Argus Media's 2025 statistical review

BY CINCH MUNSON

IMAGES COURTESY OF WLGA & ARGUS MEDIA

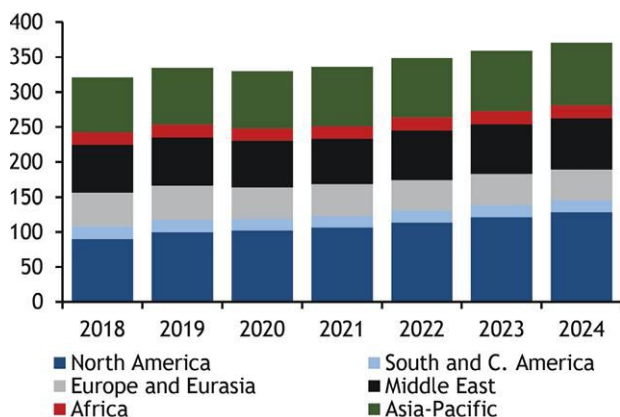
The global LPG industry is in motion. Supplies are rising, demand is shifting, trade is changing and new opportunities are emerging. These dynamics matter for every player in the industry. The “2025 Statistical Review of Global LPG,” from the World Liquid Gas Association (WLGA) and Argus Media, captures the dynamics that are reshaping the industry and driving continued growth and success.

LPG SUPPLY: ABUNDANCE, SHALE, RESILIENCE

In 2024, global liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) supply increased by 11 million tonnes to exceed 370 million tonnes in total, continuing the trend of increasing global supply and demand. North America accounted for two-thirds of the supply growth. The United States LPG output rose by 6 million tonnes to 111 million, underscoring the country's role as the world's largest producer and accounting for 43% of all LPG exports. The Middle East also experienced supply growth, and similar to the U.S., it was largely driven by additional gas processing supply. The Asia-Pacific region also showed significant growth, mostly from the expansion of refining capacity in China.

LPG production by region

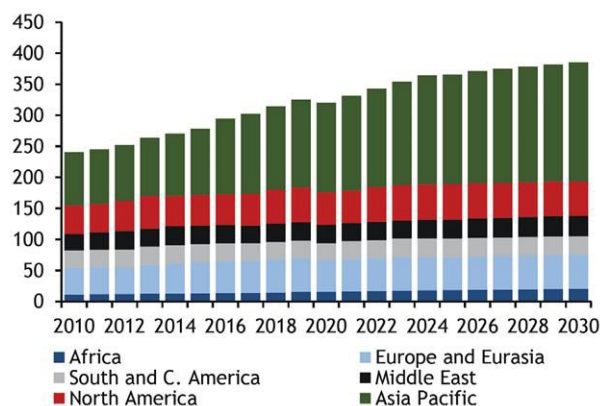
mn t



Global LPG supply reached 370 million tonnes in 2024, with North America providing two-thirds of the growth.

Total consumption by region

mn t



India's residential LPG demand climbed to 27.8 million tonnes in 2024, surpassing Africa, the Middle East and Europe combined. Africa is now poised for the next wave of growth.

For the U.S., the Permian Basin remained the key driver of production growth, providing steady propane and butane output that outpaced overall oil and gas growth. Going forward, LPG supply can grow independently of oil market cycles, providing resilience in an uncertain energy landscape.

MARKET DEMAND: PETROCHEMICALS TODAY, NEW MARKETS TOMORROW

Globally, the petrochemical sector continues to be the main driver of new demand. China added 4.1 million tonnes per year of propane dehydrogenation (PDH) capacity in 2024, reinforcing the role of propane as a feedstock for plastics and other industrial products. Since 2019, PDH capacity in China has increased from 5.2 million tonnes per year to 18 million tonnes per year, which is nearly a 250% increase. Utilization rates have softened since 2019, but PDH capacity expansion remains a defining factor for global propane demand.

At the same time, the residential market, which is the largest demand sector for LPG, held steady in 2024. Peeling this onion back, though, shows that residential demand in high-income markets, including China, fell by 3.4 million tonnes while demand in developing markets rose by 3 million tonnes. This trend is important.

In 2024, India overtook China to become the world's largest residential LPG market at 27.8 million tonnes, larger than Africa, the Middle East, Europe and Eurasia combined. Subsidy policies are politically sensitive, but relevant, and LPG continues to provide a reliable household energy source for hundreds of millions. India has also recently shown increased interest in U.S. exports, partly because China is pursuing LPG from countries other than the U.S. and because India projects continued growth in its domestic market. For U.S. suppliers and marketers, this is an important market development.

Africa continues to show potential as the next major growth market, potentially becoming one of the largest residential markets globally. North Africa markets have some of the highest residential consumption per capita; countries such as Nigeria,

Kenya and Tanzania are advancing clean cooking programs, and others are at earlier stages of a transition to LPG. International organizations, including the International Energy Agency through its Universal Access to Clean Cooking in Africa program, are making large investments to support this shift.

This highlights both the challenges and the significant opportunity for LPG in the region.

MARKET FRICTION

Rapid growth can run up against infrastructure constraints. The excess production in the U.S. has outstripped export capacity. In the Gulf Coast, export terminals fees that averaged \$30 per tonne in recent years increased to more than \$110 per tonne in the second half of 2024 and peaked near \$190. Of course, the industry is responding as expansions and new terminals have been announced.

Shipping has also been volatile. The addition of 36 new very large gas carriers, or VLGCs, in 2023-2024 put downward pressure on freight rates in early 2024 that rebounded late in the year. Conditions along trade routes, including weather and transit times — as well as trade tensions — will continue to lend unpredictability to the freight markets.

Geopolitical dynamics also impacted on LPG trade flows. Poland, once reliant on Russian LPG, secured LPG from U.S. suppliers via Sweden. China, meanwhile,

sourced just over half of its propane imports from the U.S., even amid political tensions between the two countries that may impact future demand.

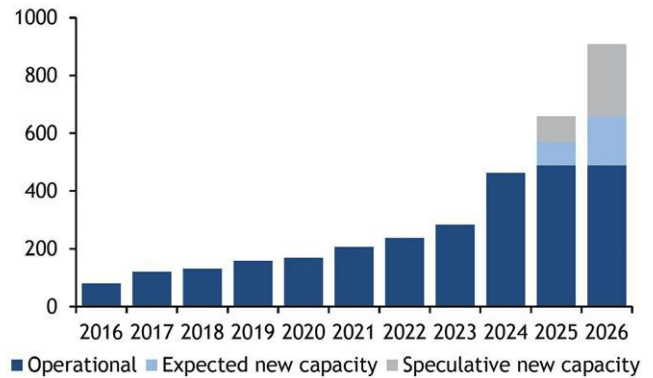
FUTURE BETS: PETROCHEMICALS, RENEWABLE LPG, AFRICA'S RISE

The "2025 Statistical Review of Global LPG" also highlights emerging shifts in the global markets.

Petrochemical demand will remain a key driver of LPG growth, though the rate will slow, and competition from ethane as a feedstock could impact demand.

Renewable LPG production capacity reached 480,000 tonnes in 2024, a 60% increase year-over-year. Brazil recorded its first sale of renewable LPG and produced renewable LPG from eucalyptus biomass, while Ireland more than doubled demand under EU mandates. Though still modest in scale, renewable LPG is establishing itself as part of the energy transition in the markets where it is in demand, and demand for renewable fuels in other industries brings opportunities and competition to the LPG industry.

Africa remains the long-term growth



Renewable LPG capacity grew 60% in 2024 to reach 480,000 tonnes, with more projects in the pipeline.

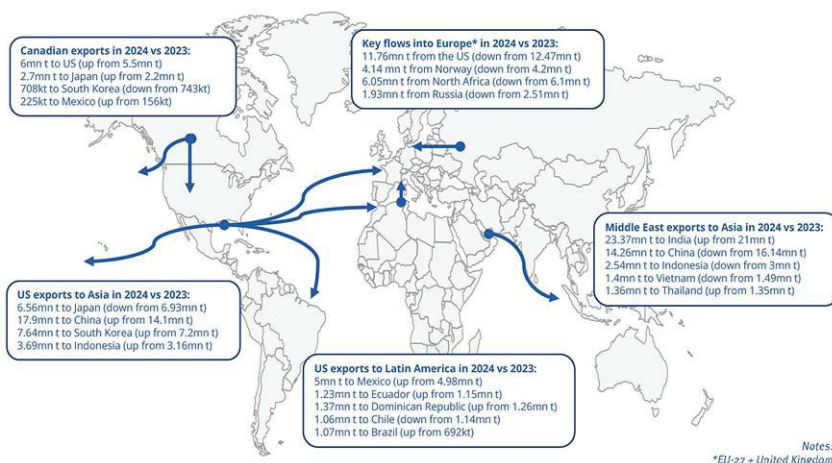
story. With nearly 1 billion lacking access to clean cooking, demand growing at double-digit rates and governments prioritizing clean cooking initiatives, the region is set to be a major driver of global LPG consumption over the next decade.

GLOBAL MARKETS, LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES

The message from the statistical review is clear: The global LPG industry is strong. It is expanding in scale, in geographic reach and in relevance.

From U.S. shale abundance and Asia's chemical capacity to Africa's clean cooking needs and the emergence of renewable LPG, the industry is on track for continued growth. ▀

Global trade flows



The U.S. accounted for 43% of global LPG exports in 2024, with Asia remaining the key demand hub.

Cinch Munson is the business development director at WLGA, where his responsibilities include industry outreach and advocacy, standards and regulations, developing renewable liquid gas markets, improving efficiencies through technologies, and innovating applications. Prior to joining WLGA, he worked with renewable fuels producer Oberon Fuels, the Propane Education & Research Council and other business development roles in energy and agriculture. The annual "Statistical Review of Global LPG" is provided free of charge to WLGA members, alongside other resources, and opportunities to connect with industry leaders around the world. For more information, visit worldliquidgasassociation.org or email cmunson@worldliquidgas.org.





The rototiller function throws soil through the 6 million Btu flame to evaporate moisture from the soil.

ACCELERATING CONSTRUCTION TIMELINES WITH PROPANE-POWERED SOIL & SURFACE DRYING SOLUTIONS

Dirt dryers are creating new paths for propane at construction sites

BY EMILY BRUCKEN

IMAGES COURTESY OF HTL TECHNOLOGIES

In the construction and earthmoving industries, delays caused by wet, unworkable soil are more than an inconvenience — they're a financial risk. For companies working against tight project schedules, waterlogged jobsites can bring progress to a grinding halt, inflate budgets and compromise soil stability.

As a result, contractors and site managers are turning to innovative solutions that harness the power of propane to keep projects on track, even in the face of adverse weather conditions.

One such advancement is soil drying equipment that uses forced hot air and a rototiller to rapidly reduce moisture content in the ground. These systems provide a fast, environmentally conscious and cost-effective alternative to traditional drying methods, such as applying lime or other chemical agents,

or relying on time-consuming air drying by mechanically turning the soil. This article explores how forced-air soil drying systems work, the role propane plays in their performance and why they're increasingly becoming an asset for construction professionals and propane suppliers alike.

THE PROBLEM WITH WET SOIL

Moisture-laden soil affects several aspects of a construction project. Wet ground can make it impossible for heavy equipment to operate safely, undermines the structural integrity of foundations and makes compaction difficult to achieve. Left untreated, it leads to costly remediation steps, extended timelines and compliance challenges on regulated jobsites.

For projects in areas prone to rainfall, flooding or poor drainage, site preparation delays are common. In the past, contractors had limited options: wait for natural drying, apply chemical stabilizers or excavate and replace the wet soil altogether. Each of these approaches comes with its own set of environmental concerns, expenses and time constraints.

PROPANE & THE RISE OF FORCED-AIR SOIL DRYING

The Soil Dryer from HTL Technologies, for example, works by blowing heated air through the top layers of the ground, while a rototiller throws the soil through the 6 million British thermal unit (Btu) flame, evaporating moisture directly from the soil matrix. These units often include a combination of high-volume blowers, burners, tillers and directional nozzles to achieve uniform drying at rapid speeds.

Propane plays a crucial role here — not only as a clean and powerful fuel source, but as a reliable option for remote or rural jobsites.

Propane-powered soil dryers offer several advantages:

- **Portability:** With self-contained propane fuel systems, dryers can be deployed anywhere without needing

access to natural gas lines or electrical infrastructure.

- **Rapid heat output:** Propane systems can generate high-Btu outputs quickly, accelerating drying times and allowing crews to resume work in hours rather than days.
- **Environmental considerations:** Unlike chemical treatments like lime or fly ash, propane combustion emits fewer pollutants and avoids introducing potentially harmful additives into the soil.
- **Efficiency:** Systems designed to work with propane are engineered for high thermal efficiency, delivering heat exactly where it's needed with minimal waste.

These benefits make propane-powered dryers a natural fit for projects that demand fast turnaround, particularly in construction, utility trenching or prefoundation work.

USE CASES IN THE FIELD

Field testing of propane-powered, forced-air soil and surface drying solutions offers valuable insight into how this technology performs in real-world scenarios. In tests conducted under controlled conditions by engineering firms and equipment developers, these systems have shown measurable reductions in soil moisture content within hours — making them a viable tool for keeping construction projects on schedule.

One such system, tested under a variety of weather and soil conditions, uses a high-capacity burner (6 million Btu) to deliver heated air while simultaneously tilling up to 10 inches deep. Operators have the ability to adjust power and fan settings to fine-tune performance depending on soil type.

KEY DATA POINTS FROM TESTING

- **Clay and topsoil mix:** Reduced moisture from 20.5% to 16.7% in



Soil dryers blow heated air through the top layers of the ground.

1.5 hours of full-power passes at a 6-inch depth.

- **Clayey silt with sand:** Moisture dropped from 25.5% to 15.1% across three passes with decreasing heat settings and final pass using only fan-driven air.

These results show that soil drying systems powered by propane can bring soil close to optimal compaction moisture within a single work session — significantly reducing downtime caused by weather delays. For construction firms and propane suppliers alike, these systems represent a growing opportunity to improve project reliability, especially in wet-weather regions or time-sensitive contracts.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROPANE

For propane marketers and distributors, the growing adoption of soil drying systems represents a unique opportunity to engage new markets. Construction and infrastructure projects operate on seasonal cycles, and the ability to offer propane as a solution during weather-related delays increases its value as a service — not just a fuel.

To capitalize on this, propane businesses can consider:

- Partnering with equipment manufacturers that provide soil dryers
- Offering jobsite delivery and refill services tailored to construction needs
- Educating construction clients on the benefits of propane-powered drying, including fuel efficiency and environmental performance



A close-up view of the soil dryer's machinery.

As industries across the board seek more sustainable and versatile fuel sources, propane continues to prove its adaptability beyond residential and commercial heating. With the right partnerships, it can be positioned as a strategic tool in improving productivity and reducing project risk.

LOOKING AHEAD

Climate unpredictability, stricter environmental regulations and rising construction costs are converging to reshape how projects are planned and executed. Technologies that mitigate weather delays

and minimize environmental impact are in high demand.

Propane-powered soil dryers meet these needs head-on — speeding up timelines, reducing costs and aligning with modern environmental priorities.

As more contractors discover the advantages of this method, there's a growing role for propane professionals

to help shape how the construction industry tackles one of its oldest challenges: working with the weather, not against it. ▀

Emily Brucken is the director of marketing at HTL Technologies, where she leads strategic communication, branding and outreach initiatives for the company's innovative equipment lines, including the dirt dryer and the track dryer. HTL Technologies designs and manufactures specialized drying equipment that helps industries overcome weather-related delays and operational challenges. The company's flagship products — the dirt dryer and the track dryer — use propane-powered, high-Btu forced-air systems to remove moisture quickly and efficiently from soil, racetrack surfaces and other environments. Learn more at dirtdryer.com and trackdryer.com.



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RIGHT MESSAGE, RIGHT CUSTOMER: SEGMENTATION THAT DELIVERS

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Brett Lewis
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The key to better marketing starts with smarter segmentation. By utilizing your BOS to pull customer lists based on the services they have — and the ones they don't — you can send messages that actually resonate. In this webinar, we'll cover how to pair email and text for stronger communication, how to "warm up" customers with texts before sending marketing messages, and show real examples of what effective outreach looks like. We'll also walk through simple automations for capturing Google reviews and improving customer retention. It's about turning the data you already have into year-round communication

that drives action, sales and profits for sustainable cash flow.

By the end of this webinar, you'll walk away with:

- At least one way to use your BOS to send better-timed messages that drive orders
- A simple tactic to catch unhappy customers before they leave a bad review
- An automation you can set up now to boost good reviews without adding more work
- How to leverage your happy customers to do and buy more, and make them stickier

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SUSTAINING EMPLOYEE CULTURE DURING COMPANY GROWTH

Thermotane Propane highlights how strong leadership, open communication & work-life balance protect culture while fueling growth & innovation

BY CHANDLER ROBERTSON



IMAGES COURTESY OF THERMOTANE PROPANE

Culture is difficult to earn, yet simple to lose. At Thermotane, the biggest challenge in maintaining culture during times of growth has been remembering that employee time is not infinite. We push and push to get all the jobs done, working late and squeezing in extra hours. The jobs get done, new customers are onboarded and even referrals come in. The mindset of “we are crushing it” is exhilarating — until a key employee turns in their two weeks’ notice.

That moment changes everything. You realize that weekdays spent working late meant missing dinners with family, canceling plans with friends and sacrificing quality of life. We have learned from mistakes like these and remind ourselves of the true purpose of the business. The culture we work to instill is simple: Give the business your best when you are here, and the business will ensure

you have what you need in life while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

MAKING EMPLOYEES FEEL HEARD & VALUED

Every employee matters. We want them to feel heard and valued as the organization scales. Everyone is different, and people only feel comfortable sharing in certain environments. Therefore, we create opportunities for feedback through company parties, team meetings, one-on-ones, team-building events, reviews, lunches and more.

Promoting from within is the most beneficial way to show value. Hiring leaders from outside the local market can be difficult, but when we promote from within, we prove that dedication is not only noticed but also rewarded.

Employee education is also very important to us. We not only pay for

further education but encourage it. We want our team members to succeed in life as well as in work, and we are always here to support their growth. We keep an open-door policy, and every employee has my personal cellphone number along with all the managers’ numbers. They are encouraged to call anytime.

BALANCING TRADITION WITH INNOVATION

At Thermotane, we communicate in person whenever possible. Just because we can host a Zoom meeting doesn’t mean it’s the right move. In-person meetings keep people engaged and present. While we embrace technology for internal communication, document sharing, and live projects, important conversations and brainstorming sessions take place at the office with everyone in attendance.

When new processes or technologies are introduced, we focus on vision. Sharing the “why” behind changes reduces resistance and increases energy. Taking the time to explain how departments work together builds buy-in and commitment. We dedicate time to one-on-one training and make sure every employee feels confident using new tools. The idea of “no employee left behind” guides us.

THE ROLE OF MIDDLE MANAGEMENT IN COMPANY CULTURE

Middle management plays a vital role in sustaining culture. I stress to them the importance of being available and keeping their ears to the ground. That means making site visits, surprising employees with drinks or lunch and being present when someone needs to talk. If an employee says they need to speak with their manager, nothing is more important than that conversation. I remind managers: “I don’t know what I don’t know.” It is their job to be informed and relay all critical information so we can maintain and grow culture.

BUILDING ON COMPANY LEGACY TO DRIVE ENGAGEMENT

Company history and legacy are powerful tools for building future engagement. Many of our employees have been here for four to 30 years, and their opinions are as good as gold. They know whether I care, listen and promote within — or if I am just someone who sounds good on stage. As Andrew Carnegie once said, “Take my money, but leave my people.” If I lost everything but kept my most loyal people, no one could beat us.

Today, we have seven employees with five or more years of service, including one at 28 years, another at 18 years and several between five and 10 years. The conversations these employees have with their teammates when I am not around are the backbone of our legacy. Sharing with new employees why long-term team members have stayed, and offering them the same opportunities, sustains that legacy.



RITUALS & SYSTEMS THAT STRENGTHEN CULTURE

We build connection across teams and generations through shared experiences. Thermotane hosts two company parties each year: a casual summer event and a formal Christmas gathering. We hold monthly team meetings, annual team-building events that mix departments and ages, quarterly sales blitzes that pair people who rarely see each other and even simple coffee or donut days. These small rituals create closeness and build culture.

MEASURING CULTURE & ENGAGEMENT

Measuring culture and engagement is both practical and personal. I observe meetings: Is one person lecturing, or is there a conversation with multiple people contributing ideas? I push managers to be inclusive and to think creatively. I also place myself in others’ shoes — whether new hire, long-term employee or manager — to understand what would drive engagement. During reviews, we ask two key questions: “What is the risk level of you leaving?” and “How happy are you here?”

LESSONS FOR OTHER BUSINESS LEADERS

The most important lesson I can share with other leaders is this: Don’t chase! If growth doesn’t feel solid, stop and regroup. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is. Culture must be protected at all costs because one bad apple can undo years of stability and goodwill. Greed is not good if you care about

people long term. Respecting employees’ time — both at work and outside of it — is nonnegotiable.

I believe the most important leadership qualities for sustaining culture are trust, honesty and loyalty. Leaders must be trusted to act in the best interests of the business and its people. Honesty starts with acknowledging your own strengths and weaknesses. Loyalty is earned through actions, not words.

CONTINUING THE THERMOTANE FAMILY LEGACY

On a personal note, my father passed away unexpectedly on Aug. 9. I had the privilege of working alongside him for almost 20 years. He carried on the legacy started by his father in 1947, and he entrusted me with that responsibility. Our legacy is one of hard work, dependability, kindness and family.

I now sit here without a business partner and without a father, wondering what my legacy will be in 20 years. I cannot control how history will remember me, but I hope my people loved working for Thermotane. I hope they valued their teammates, grew personally and professionally and knew that the company supported them. I hope our local community and our country benefited from our work. 📌

Chandler Robertson
is the president of
Thermotane Propane.
Visit thermotane.com.





IMAGE COURTESY OF SUPERIOR ENERGY SYSTEMS

DATA DRIVES EFFECTIVE PROPANE AUTOGAS FUELING

Embedded, cloud-based dispenser software offers benefits for all autogas fleet types

BY SCOTT DOUGHERTY

Editor's Note: A version of this article was previously published on bpnews.com.

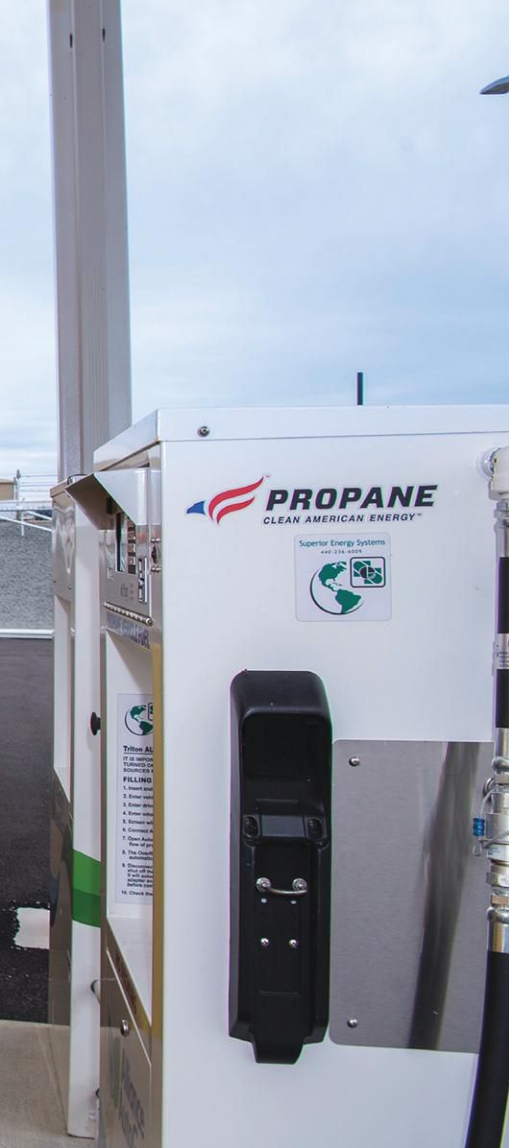
One could argue that the world has evolved from the Information Age to the era of Big Data. In virtually every aspect of business, the freshest, most

comprehensive data helps increase efficiencies, and — more importantly — curtail costs.

But in the realm of propane autogas vehicles, where do those key data points originate? Just ask John Hutchison, director of operations for Prism Propane

in North Baltimore, Ohio. His company works with six school bus customers, each with their own autogas refueling station (except one, which comes to Prism's facility to fuel). Customers with their own fueling stations generate data at the pump through the autogas dispenser they use to fuel.

"What our customers like is that they can track who and what is being filled," Hutchison said, referring to Superior Energy Systems' PRO-Vend family of autogas dispensers. "They can take some of the error out of the bus driver tracking the gallons and mileage when they are filling. The system also eliminates paperwork. They can easily pull a report from the cloud-based system for one week, a month or a year to gather information for whatever data they are seeking."



GENERATING DATA AT THE PUMP

There are a couple of ways to generate data at the autogas pump. One is through third-party fuel management, but the challenge there is ensuring the interface actually works in order to cull the data to make accurate decisions and predictions. It can also require additional costly hardware.

The more effective way is through embedded, cloud-based software in a system designed specifically for management of autogas fleets as diverse as transit buses, work trucks and school buses, like Hutchison's customers.

Take the PRO-Vend line of dispensers, for example. A touch screen interface on each stainless-steel-cabinet dispenser makes fueling simpler because drivers can initiate a fill with a key fob or access number, which minimizes training

time, increases efficiency and maximizes uptime.

Behind the scenes, the software logs every transaction, capturing critical data like driver and vehicle identification, odometer readings, gallons pumped and fueling start/end times.

All that data is instantly synced to the cloud, where authorized users — like fleet managers — can view, analyze and export reports in real time.

Hutchison said the data that is most important to his school bus fleet customers is the gallons that each vehicle uses. That translates to reduced costs — consider that the cost of a gallon of propane autogas fuel is about 50% less than an equivalent gallon of diesel. A report that shows the comparison helps make the case that propane buses are the more cost-effective route for school districts and school bus contractors.

The fact that propane buses cost about a third of an electric bus and require less costly refueling infrastructure than electric, as well as significantly lower emissions compared to diesel buses, is simply icing on the cake.

USING THE DATA

How is the generated data used?

"The customers that have their own filling station ... track their mileage and fuel usage — and when to perform their service work," said Hutchison.

That's another value of data. No fleet operator wants a broken-down vehicle far from headquarters, especially a school bus full of children. Data generated at the pump, particularly mileage data, can determine when it is time for a vehicle to be serviced, which should reduce the possibility of on-the-road breakdowns. Obviously, nothing can prevent a breakdown from occurring, but the ability of data to predict maintenance cycles can help significantly.

In an industry where uptime is everything, remote diagnostic and software update capabilities allow technicians to access data from anywhere, reducing or even eliminating the need for on-site service calls.

Dispensers that receive automatic software updates ensure that every unit in the field benefits from the latest software features and security patches. With a built-in map feature, fleet operators can locate every fueling site within their network and drill down to each site's individual transaction history. That means clicking on any fueling ticket will reveal details like employee name, vehicle ID, fuel volume and even exact time stamps.

Fleet operators can also manage their accounts from a comprehensive web interface, where vehicles, employees and customers can be easily added or deleted, along with adjusting pricing without the need for cumbersome on-site updates or extra software.

THE BOTTOM LINE

As the demand for alternative fuels like propane autogas continues to rise, dispenser technology is allowing this domestic fuel to compete head-to-head with traditional fuels like diesel and gasoline — not just on cost and emissions, but on convenience, infrastructure and intelligence.

This new breed of autogas dispensers provides a strong opportunity for gallon growth for propane marketers like Hutchison. Working with local fleets — be it transit, work trucks or school buses — to show not only the benefits of autogas, but the data that can be generated at the pump to better manage the fleet, makes the marketer that much more valuable to customers. ■

Scott Dougherty has been with Superior Energy Systems in Columbia Station, Ohio, for 13 years, beginning his career there while still in high school and advancing to his current position of sales engineer. Dougherty works in various facets of the natural gas liquids industry, including midstream, industrial and autogas.



PLANNING FOR A SMOOTH EXIT IN THE PROPANE INDUSTRY

Rising M&A activity makes early exit planning essential for propane business owners looking to protect value & retirement goals

BY DRAKE R. GRINDLE & MICHAEL P. MESCH

Merger and acquisition (M&A) activity continues to rise in the propane industry, creating both opportunities and challenges for business owners. If you own a company, it's essential to understand how these market dynamics could shape your eventual exit and retirement plans. Many owners focus their energy on daily operations, which include customer service, equipment maintenance and managing staff, among other things. Unfortunately, long-term planning often takes a back seat. But delaying exit planning until you're ready to retire often results in rushed decisions and missed opportunities. Taking time now to understand your company's value and explore transition options can help you secure a better outcome, whether you intend to sell in a few years or a few decades.

WHY BUSINESS VALUATION MATTERS

A formal valuation gives you a clear, objective measure of your propane company's worth. Without it, you're essentially guessing when making decisions about retirement income, tax strategies or estate goals. It also helps determine which exit paths might yield the best results.

Valuation is not a one-size-fits-all exercise. The number can change dramatically depending on your chosen exit strategy. Selling to a strategic buyer in the industry might produce a higher price than selling to family or management. Strategic buyers often look for ways to reduce costs through consolidation, while family or internal buyers may have to use the business's cash flow to finance the purchase, limiting how much they can pay.

Different valuation methods produce different perspectives on worth:

- **Asset-based valuations** add up everything the business owns and subtract liabilities. This is useful to estimate the value of hard assets, which buyers often find important. This is also used to help determine liquidation value.
- **Income-based valuations** focus on cash flow, assessing how steady it is and whether it's expected to grow or shrink after you leave. This approach provides the buyer with a realistic picture of cash available to fund debt and provide distributable earnings after purchase.
- **Market-based valuations** compare your business to recent sales of similar companies, offering insight into what buyers are currently paying in the propane-butane market.



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- **Industry “rules of thumb”** provide quick estimates, often based on multiples of revenue or earnings. While convenient, these averages can’t account for your company’s unique strengths, risks or growth potential.

Understanding these approaches allows you to have a more informed conversation about value and helps you recognize how changes in operations or market conditions might impact your eventual payout.

CHOOSING YOUR TRANSITION PATH

When it’s time to step away, propane business owners have several options — each with its own trade-offs.

Selling to a strategic third-party buyer often produces the highest price. These buyers typically seek operational

efficiencies and economies of scale and may offer additional payments through “earnouts” if the business hits certain targets after the sale. Earnouts can increase your total payout but also add risk since part of your compensation depends on future performance.

Transferring ownership to family members or your management team can preserve your legacy and keep the business in trusted hands. These deals often require seller financing and careful planning to maintain cash flow. Many professionals recommend a three- to five-year handover period to train successors and help ensure a smooth change in leadership.

Some owners keep their business but reduce involvement, stepping back from daily management while retaining ownership. A capable management team, incentivized through profit-sharing or stock options, can keep operations running effectively. This option can offer ongoing income and influence but requires strong leadership and oversight.

Liquidation is usually the least desirable option but may be necessary if the business isn’t sellable due to declining performance or market shifts. Knowing the liquidation value of your assets helps set realistic retirement expectations and guides estate planning.

STARTING YOUR PERSONALIZED EXIT PLANNING PROCESS

Early preparation is critical, no matter which path you choose. Consider questions such as:

- Do you have a written succession plan that outlines who will take over and how?
- How much will you need, after taxes, to fund your retirement lifestyle?
- Could your business operate effectively without you for 30 days or more? If not, what steps could reduce owner dependence and strengthen operations?

Addressing these points can help identify gaps that could undermine

your transition. Enhancing efficiency, documenting processes and mentoring future leaders not only reduces risk but also makes your propane company more appealing to potential buyers.

Planning your exit is not just about getting the highest sale price. It’s about safeguarding what you’ve built, ensuring your retirement security and leaving a stable foundation for the next generation of leadership. In an industry that is evolving quickly, proactive owners can maintain more control over timing, structure and legacy.

Starting the process now, even if retirement is years away, can help give you time to improve operations, strengthen financial performance and position your business for the best possible outcome. While you may not need to act immediately, discussing your goals with financial professionals, including an advisor familiar with the propane sector, can help you prepare a clear, well-structured plan that works for you and your family.

Authors’ Note: This is intended for informational purposes only and should not be construed as personalized financial advice. Please consult your trusted financial professional regarding your unique situation. 📌

Drake R. Grindle is a financial adviser for Savant Wealth Management, headquartered in Rockford, Illinois. He specializes in comprehensive financial planning, including tax strategies, retirement income optimization and wealth transfer. His background includes public accounting and financial statement audits for clients in a variety of industries.



Michael P. Mesch is a director of Savant Tax & Consulting in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and an accredited senior appraiser. Since 2001, he has specialized in tax preparation, audits and valuations for a variety of businesses. He also has extensive experience in financial and operational consulting.





PROPANE'S ROLE IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF HEAT PUMPS

An in-depth look at gas absorption heat pumps
& the fuel that keeps them operational

BY JOHNNY NICKEL

A gas absorption heat pump (GAHP) runs on a heat source — usually natural gas or propane — rather than electricity. GAHP technology also allows additional energy to be absorbed from outside air, maximizing energy efficiency — a prime example of how propane can play an important role in systems that are environmentally friendly.

To learn more about this technology, the current GAHP and heat pump market, and propane's role in heat pump systems, BPN reached out to Bill Hewa, product manager at Stone Mountain Technologies.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE HOW GAHPS WORK, INCLUDING THE ANESI GAHP?

The Anesi GAHP ... meets the definition of a 'heat pump' because it both generates heat and transfers heat. The Anesi GAHP is installed outside of the home, where it is connected to the propane fuel source. The heat generated from combustion is combined, through an ammonia-water thermodynamic cycle, with heat absorbed from the outdoor air and transferred into the building via a hydronic fluid. This heated hydronic fluid, consisting of water and food-grade glycol solution, is circulated

through the custom air handling unit (AHU) installed inside the building. In a forced-air space heating scenario, air is heated from the incoming solution and blown through the building's ductwork. If the heating system includes domestic hot water, the incoming heated solution is also routed through a heat exchanger within an indirect storage tank, heating the building's water. Alternate system configurations are available to accommodate hydronic heating scenarios as well as existing air conditioning coils. The highlight of the GAHP story is that fuel usage efficiencies exceeding 100% are achieved due to the unique thermodynamic cycle, which allows heat from ambient air to be absorbed and combined with the generated heat, even at temperatures as low as -15 F. GAHPS can operate at temperatures lower than -15 F, even down to -40 F, but at those temperatures, the available heat in the ambient air is negligible.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE SOME OF THE TECHNOLOGIES AVAILABLE IN STONE MOUNTAIN HEAT PUMPS? ARE THERE ANY NEWER INNOVATIONS THAT STONE MOUNTAIN HAS

IMPLEMENTED IN RECENT MONTHS OR YEARS?

The Anesi GAHP's thermodynamic cycle, which uses the ammonia refrigerant and water, works like the mechanical compressor on traditional electric heat pumps. The energy generated from this cycle also significantly reduces the electrical draw of the GAHP. The Modbus communication protocol provides reliable monitoring and control of all equipment through data exchange between sensors and logic controllers. A cellular network connection allows operational data to be shared with the factory customer service team and also enables software download in the opposite direction. Factory-installed hydronic components within the custom turnkey AHU include a hydronic pump, three-way valve, glycol expansion tank and glycol reserve tank, resulting in reduced installation time. A multispeed ECM blower quietly delivers warm air throughout the building, even during the coldest outside temperatures. Efficiency and comfort are prioritized within the technical algorithm loaded into the control board, which drives the performance of the AHU system. The design minimizes moving parts to ensure reliable, long-term operation. A companion progressive web app (PWA) is available for end users and HVAC professionals to monitor installed systems.

WHAT DOES THE PROCESS OF INNOVATION LOOK LIKE FOR THE STONE MOUNTAIN TEAM? HOW DOES YOUR TEAM REMAIN OPEN TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES?

There are several key ways that Stone Mountain Technologies stays ahead of innovation and new opportunities. First, we maintain close connections with independent research firms, such as the Natural Gas Innovation Fund, and work directly with gas providers who drive and benefit from technology improvements. A secondary tactic is working closely with our contractor base, from the perspective of continuously training contractors, but also requesting their feedback on

technology and trends. We also actively solicit feedback from contractors to constantly improve our products.

HOW DOES THE CURRENT MARKET FOR RESIDENTIAL HEATING COMPARE TO THE MARKET FOR COMMERCIAL HEATING?

The residential heating market, particularly for gas products, focuses on the cost benefits that gas offers over electricity, while also resisting regulatory pressure toward electrification. Electrification can be an expensive proposition for a solution that fails to maintain the same comfort that homeowners have been accustomed to. Commercial markets are concerned with cutting operating costs, [which can be accomplished with] efficiency levels offered by GAHP solutions. Payback is an integral part of the cost savings and capex for equipment equation.

COMPARED TO ELECTRICITY OR NATURAL GAS, ARE THERE ANY ADVANTAGES (OR DISADVANTAGES) TO INCORPORATING PROPANE IN HEAT PUMP TECHNOLOGY?

Propane heating can offer consistent and comfortable heating at a lower operating cost, with no need for backup, when compared to electric solutions. The one disadvantage is the lingering perception that propane, as a fossil fuel, is environmentally unfriendly. This perception is, of course, blatantly incorrect (and currently being 'corrected' by some governmental agencies), and [GAHP solutions] offer an opportunity to address consumers and regulators who don't see the potential in a clean, cost-effective and comfortable solution for home and business heating needs.

WHAT SHOULD PROPANE PROVIDERS & DISTRIBUTORS KNOW ABOUT THE CURRENT STATE OF THE HEAT PUMP MARKET?

Offering gas absorption heat pump technology to current heating oil customers provides them a chance to improve their efficiency and reduce operating costs significantly; at the

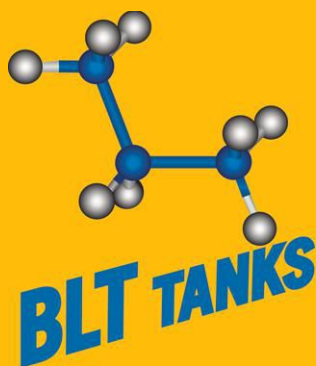


same time, this change enables gas providers to hold their customer base and mitigate losses to electrification.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL TRENDS EITHER IN PLACE NOW OR ON THE HORIZON THAT STONE MOUNTAIN IS KEEPING AN EYE ON GOING FORWARD?

Stone Mountain Technologies' ... near-term plan is to educate the market regarding our technology to increase adoption, as well as to expand the product line to cover different capacities and application types. As fuel research and development continue to increase the amount of renewable natural gas available, as well as begin offering H2 as a prospective fuel, Stone Mountain Technologies will stay abreast of research and testing so our products can operate with the next generation of fuels. We continue to monitor developments in cold climate heat pumps to ensure we offer a solution from the perspective of comfort, cost efficiency and reliability. 📌

Johnny Nickel is managing editor of Butane-Propane News.



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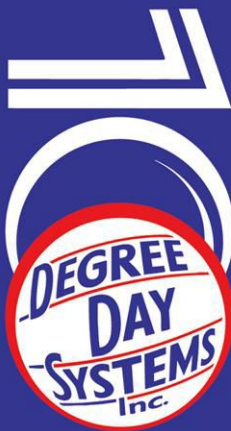
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ADVERTISER INDEX

Advertiser	Page
BLT Tanks LLC.....	44
Cavagna North America.....	17
Cetane Associates.....	16
Lock America Inc.	34
LPG & NH3 Supply Inc.....	24
Metsa Tanks	12
Navara Marketing.....	35
Nixon & Lindstrom Insurance.....	29
Otodata Inc.....	1
Pacific Truck Tank Inc.....	34
Propane Education & Research Council.....	13
Quality Steel Corporation.....	9
RegO Products	BC
Teeco Products Inc.....	IBC
TerraVest Industries.....	25
Worthington Enterprises	IFC

Frank Thompson

President & Owner,
*PT Risk Management
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Describe your role at your company.

I am a founding partner and president of PT Risk Management Insurance Services. Our agency has exclusively insured propane marketers, fuel distributors and the transportation sector that supports those industries for over 32 years.

How did you get your start in the propane industry?

Years ago, the National Propane Gas Association owned its own insurance company called Nobel. A rep from Nobel approached me and asked me if I would take five propane accounts for them in New Mexico. I then was invited to the Arizona Propane Gas Association's vendor trade show. That was the beginning of our love affair with propane.

What major shifts over the years have had the biggest impact on the industry, and what positive changes have you seen come from them?

RIN, cathodic protection for underground tanks, CETP (now PEP training) and loss control by the insurance companies have all made the propane industry safer, which benefits everyone.

If you could change one thing in the industry, what would it be?

That propane companies would proactively instill stronger safety training, rigorous documentation, advanced monitoring technologies, specialized insurance and more proactive legal strategies. A safety-first culture builds public trust and reduces jury hostility.

Have there been any industry challenges you've covered in your career that changed how you approach your role?

We have always approached every account by providing education and training to our customers and the industry to keep negligence verdicts to a minimum.

Who has been the strongest influence in your career to date?

My wife, Cindy. She was my business partner before she was my wife, and she and I built PT Risk Management from those first five accounts sitting at my kitchen table over 32 years ago.

What advice would you give someone just coming into the industry?

Don't enter the industry half-heartedly. You have to be all in. You must understand the pros of propane, but you also have to understand the dangers.

What do you think would surprise someone about the job you do?

I think the amount of knowledge about propane everyone on our staff has would surprise most people. Of course, we know insurance, but we also know propane. Everyone on our team has taken CETP training!

What motivates you to keep growing in your career?

I've always loved to learn. I read insurance journals all the time and try to predict how trends in insurance will affect the energy industry.

How do you maintain a healthy work-life balance?

It's not always easy to do based on the amount of travel this job requires, but I try to make sure to rest when I can. My wife and I love taking Viking River cruises and are preparing for one as we speak!

If you had an unexpected day off, how would you spend it?

Hunting — without a doubt. I've always loved the outdoors, and I've been fortunate to hunt in more than a dozen states and for all types of wildlife. 🏹



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