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August Edition, Issue #99

[Governor Snyder, State of Michigan Work with MPGA to Encourage Propane Customers to Prepare for Coming Heating Season](#)

The MPGA and leaders throughout our state government continue to work cooperatively to help propane customers prepare for the coming winter.

Earlier this week, Governor Rick Snyder urged propane customers in Michigan to get their tanks filled before the heating season starts. "Last winter was one we'll all remember," Snyder said. "This is especially true for some propane customers who found it challenging to find additional propane as cold temperatures lingered. That's why now is the time to get an early fill, lock-in prices ahead of the heating season and get on a budget payment plan, if available."

Snyder announced that various state agencies are ready to assist propane customers, should the upcoming winter put a squeeze on propane supplies again. "To marshal every state resource, I have directed multiple state agencies to continue working together to protect the health and safety of Michigan residents as we approach the heating season," he said. The MPGA continues to meet with, assist and work cooperatively with all of the state agencies Governor Snyder has assigned to the task.

[Heating Assistance](#)

The Michigan Energy Assistance Program, administered by the Michigan Department of Human Services, offers assistance to low-income utility customers, including propane customers. Residents in need of heating assistance with deliverable fuels are asked to call 2-1-1 or visit Michigan.gov/heatingassistance for help.

[New Propane Website](#)

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) created a new website - Michigan.gov/propane - where customers can get more details about all state-related propane programs and other resources about the propane industry.

[New Consumer Tips Sheet](#)

The [MPSC's new consumer tips sheet on propane](#) provides useful information for customers to consider before the heating season begins, including a list of helpful questions to ask before signing a contract.

[More Monitoring of the Propane Market](#)

[Incentives & Rebates](#)

[Low Income Customer Resources Available](#)

Upcoming Calendar of Events



October 8-9, 2014

MPGA Board of Directors Meeting
Bavarian Inn Resort & Conference Center
Frankenmuth, MI

December 18, 2014

MPGA Past Presidents Council Meeting
Location TBD
Mt. Pleasant, MI

December 18, 2014

Michigan PERC Chairs Planning Meeting
Location TBD
Mt. Pleasant, MI

January 13-14, 2015

MPGA Board of Directors Meeting
Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort
Mt. Pleasant, MI

April 28-29, 2015

MPGA Board of Directors Meeting
Treetops Resort
Gaylord, MI

May 5, 2015

Midwest Propane Golf

The MPSC will also now monitor wholesale propane prices throughout the state to look for any indications of price or supply problems that may be developing in specific areas, and it will continue to list the average statewide price of propane for residential customers on its website.

The Michigan Department of Community Health has important information on how to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning when using alternative heating sources.

The Michigan State Police provides important information on how to be prepared for emergencies.

"The state is prepared to assist propane customers, should the coming winter throw bitter cold temperatures and massive snowfalls our way again," Snyder added. "Customers can do their part by being prepared as well. Getting an early propane fill is the first and most important step propane customers can take now."

MPGA Unveils The Michigan Propane Consumer Safety Preparedness Campaign

To supplement the PERC Consumer Safety Preparedness Campaign (see next story in this issue of the E-Journal), the MPGA has started its own safety campaign to deal with the negativity surrounding propane from last winter's issues and getting consumers to work with their propane providers to be prepared for whatever winter brings Michigan this year.

The MPGA campaign will feature a radio campaign with a commercial developed by PERC directed at consumers and customized to Michigan. The radio spots will begin running now in select media areas of our state to give not only the best value to bring better awareness to the areas of our state impacted most by last winter.

Additionally, the MPGA campaign will feature a social media campaign in place of radio ads in the other areas of Michigan.

The MPGA Marketing Committee is spearheading this effort in Michigan.

On a related note, PERC will start a \$6.1 million dollar safety awareness program, that includes print media, cable and satellite TV, and Google, from September through November. Michigan will be included in that campaign. The MPGA campaign is geared to be on the street in the near term and feathered into the beginning of the PERC campaign. Combined, the two programs should give excellent coverage on a State-wide basis, to remind propane consumers to be prepared, continue/develop a strong relationship with their propane provider, and to work with their propane provider for the best options.

PERC Unveils New Consumer Safety Preparedness Campaign

As reported in the previous issue of the E-Journal (June 2014), the PERC Council was considering adoption of new program, entitled the

Outing

Bent Tree Golf Course
Sunbury, OH

May 5-7, 2015

Midwest Propane Gas
Convention
Hilton Polaris Hotel
Columbus, OH

May 6, 2015

MPGA Board of
Directors Meeting
Hilton Polaris Hotel
Columbus, OH

May 20, 2015

MPGA Propane Safety
Awareness Day
Michigan State Capitol
Lawn
Lansing, MI

July 22-24, 2015

MPGA Annual Summer
Convention
Bavarian Inn &
Conference Center
Frankenmuth, MI

July 24, 2015

MPGA Board of
Directors Meeting
Hilton Polaris Hotel
Columbus, OH

Consumer Safety Preparedness Campaign, to help the industry as it recovers from one of the most challenging winters on record. PERC is in the process of introducing the Consumer Safety Preparedness Campaign to thousands of propane professionals.

To support your efforts, the Propane Education & Research Council will unveil a national multimedia safety campaign aimed at residential customers beginning September 8, 2014. Through TV and online advertisements, PERC will encourage them to visit a new industry website, propanecomfort.com, and urge them to call their propane providers about early fills and payment programs if they haven't already done so. The goal is to prevent surges in demand during severe winter weather that could put families (and propane companies) at risk of running low on fuel.

The Consumer Safety Preparedness Campaign is designed to promote public safety and support propane companies' communications programs in three ways:

1. Reassuring contract customers that they were smart to choose propane and lock in supplies for winter.
2. Spurring will-call customers to fill up sooner and to consider becoming contract customers.
3. Presenting propane in a positive light to current and prospective residential users.

Please take a moment to become familiar with the elements of the campaign by visiting Propanecomfort.com, an interactive site where users and prospective users of propane will find important safety, efficiency, and preparedness information.

To help you remind your customers to plan ahead, customizable materials with campaign messaging are available at propanemarc.com.

Additionally, the campaign will include:

- "Creature Comforts," a 30-second commercial that is designed to appeal to the hearts and minds of TV viewers in propane country and drive them to visit propanecomfort.com. The spot is available to view on propanecomfort.com.
- "Efficiency Tips for Your Propane Home," a video that explains how to get the most out of a home's propane appliances. The video is available to view on propanecomfort.com.
- A print advertisement, a radio advertisement, a brochure, a mail insert, and an email attachment - all available for download from propanemarc.com, the home of PERC's online catalog.

More resources for you and your companies will become available in the coming days and weeks; watch for announcements in future issues of the E-Journal and messages from PERC.

Bureau of Fire Services Announces Changes

The Bureau of Fire Services (BFS) has announced changes that impact the propane industry.

First, the BFS has reorganized its inspectors. Effective August 11th, 2014, inspectors changed districts and territories. These changes were made to better incorporate BFS with how the Bureau is structured, and more importantly brings the per tank/facility ratio by inspector in better alignment. All inspections, including re-inspections, for that particular area will be the responsibility of the new HMSI assigned. BFS has provided the MPGA with the new map of areas for inspector responsibilities. If you would like a copy of the map, simply [click here](#) to request it to be emailed to you.

Speaking of inspections and re-inspections, the Bureau of Fire Services/Storage Tank Division will begin affixing a sticker to aboveground storage tank facilities during triennial inspections, final installation inspections or re-inspections to show that they have been certified per Public Act 207. The sticker will be placed on the tank in close proximity to the fill. At larger bulk facilities the sticker will be placed on the fill riser and each certified tank. The sticker will have the month and year of the inspection punched out. The certification will be valid for 3 years from that date.

It is BFS intent that once this triennial (3 years) cycle has been completed and all AST's have had a sticker applied, the practice of filling non-certified tanks will be reduced in addition to reducing the number of non-certified tanks in general.

The Storage Tank Division will institute this process October 1, 2014.

Share Your Expertise at the Midwest Propane Gas Convention & Trade Show!

The Call for Presentations for the 2015 Midwest Propane Gas Convention & Trade Show is now open.

The 2015 convention will be held May 5-7, 2015, at the Hilton Polaris Hotel in Columbus, Ohio. We invite you to share your best practices, successes and proven techniques. Please complete the proposal submission form to submit a presentation for consideration.

The submission deadline is September 4, 2014.

For assistance, contact [Geri Root](#) at 888-925-4492.

MPGA Fall Board of Directors Meeting

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held at the Bavarian Inn & Conference Center in Frankenmuth, Michigan. The meetings will be held October 8-9, 2014. As always, the MPGA Board of Directors and Michigan PERC Board of Directors meetings are open to the entire membership.

The agenda for the meetings follows:

Wednesday, October 8

3:00 - 5:00 pm MPGA Operations Meeting

5:00 - 7:00 pm MPGA Committee Meetings

Thursday, October 9

8:30 am - 12:00 pm Board of Directors meeting
12:00 pm Michigan PERC Board of Directors meeting

IMPORTANT CORRECTION: New Medical Rule for CMV Drivers

In the most recent Spring/Summer 2014 issue of the Michigan Propane Journal, there was an article that detailed the new medical rule for CMV drivers. The MPGA would like to alert you to an important correction. The state of Michigan, through Public Act 181, recognizes all changes made for intrastate drivers and those changes also apply to all interstate drivers. The article mistakenly pointed out that the changes apply to intrastate drivers only. Again, that inference was incorrect as the Michigan State Police noted to the MPGA. *Please make note of this important clarification as those changes apply to all CMV drivers in Michigan.*

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has implemented new requirements for interstate commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers to obtain physical examinations and medical certificates from medical professionals listed on the National Registry.

The new U.S. DOT program requires any healthcare professionals whose scope of practice includes performing physical examinations and issuing medical certificates for CMV drivers to meet the requirements of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR) and be listed on the National Registry by May 21, 2014.

Prior to setting up the registry, drivers were able to receive examinations and medical certification from any medical doctor.

The new program applies to all CMV drivers in Michigan.

The National Registry ensures that medical examiners fully understand the medical standards regulated by the FMCS as well as ensure public confidence in the quality of the medical examinations of CMV-interstate drivers.

Drivers can find certified medical examiners in their area by visiting the registry online at: <https://nationalregistry.fmcsa.dot.gov> and click on "Distribution of Certified Medical Examiners".

New Federal Motor Carrier Safety Law and Governor Authority

On June 30, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Reliable Home Heating Act (Public Law 113-125). The measure was introduced by Senator Thune, SD on March 6, 2014, and was originally co-sponsored by Senators Klobuchar, MN; Coats, IN; and Blunt, MO with bipartisan support from additional co-sponsors Senators Hoeven, ND; Ayotte, NH; Chambliss, GA; Fischer, NE; McCaskill, MO; and Johnson, SD.

The Act directs the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to recognize any 30-day emergency period declared by a state governor due to a shortage of residential heating fuel (and up to two additional 30-day periods) as one during which FMCSA Federal

Motor Carrier Safety Regulations shall not apply to any motor carrier or driver operating a commercial motor vehicle providing residential heating fuel in a geographic area designated as under a state of emergency. It defines the term "residential heating fuel" to include heating oil, natural gas, and propane.

It also directs the Administrator of the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), using data compiled from the EIA Weekly Petroleum Status Reports, to notify the governor of each state in a Petroleum Administration for Defense District if that district's inventory of residential heating fuel has been below the most recent five-year average for more than three consecutive weeks.

The law also requires FMCSA to revise its' rules, as needed, to be consistent with the law and such revisions might provide for additional clarification of how it should be applied. NASEO's initial review suggests that states should be prepared to make changes as may be required for granting waivers from the federal motor carrier safety rules. The new law allows Governor's to waive the rules for up to a total of 90 days. However, the existing rules also state that the emergency relief remains in effect for the duration of the emergency (as defined in 49 CFR 390.5) or 30 days, whichever is less. The FMCSA must initiate rulemaking to implement this element of the statute. In the current regulations, only the FMCSA Field Administrator has the authority to extend the original 30 day emergency declaration. A proposed rulemaking would modify the existing regulations to allow the Governor to extend the emergency relief in support of an ongoing emergency specifically related to the operation of a commercial motor vehicle providing residential heating fuel, for the duration of the emergency or an additional 60 days, whichever is less.

PERC Reduces Prices for Safety Messages

The Council voted to reduce the cost of communicating important safety messages to your customers as a means to increase consumer safety. Effective immediately the cost reductions for its 4 most popular consumer safety brochures are as follows:

[Important Propane Safety Information for You and Your Family Brochure](#)

\$10.80 to \$6.25 per package

[Propane Safety Booklet](#)

\$9.80 to \$6.25 per package

[Important Propane Safety Information for Users of Small Cylinders Brochure](#)

\$10.80 to \$6.25 per package

[CSST Consumer Information Brochure](#)

\$7.00 to \$1.25 per package

In addition, the cost of shipping these brochures was reduced. The cost and shipping reductions for these brochures are retroactive for marketers who have purchased them on or after May 1, 2014. Those marketers will receive a credit to the cost and shipping reductions for future purchases on all products featured on

www.propanemarc.com.

EMV

The term EMV is everywhere. EMV stands for Europay, MasterCard and Visa, a joint entity established with the goal of developing specifications for more secure payment transactions. While there is still some debate on the inevitability of EMV, recent large-scale data breaches in the news, such as the one at Target, have spurred some in the industry to push for adoption due to its superior security. EMV technology has been used widely overseas for years and has been linked to significant reduction in fraud in the card-present environment.

As the U.S. catches up with this capability, we anticipate huge changes in the landscape of payments acceptance and beyond - for the better. Not only will security be vastly improved, but the ease and speed with which card-present transactions can be authenticated will help enhance convenience for shoppers, changing the face and pace of credit card usage and acceptance.

Chip-enabled cards, or "smart cards," look just like a regular credit card but have a microchip embedded inside. The microchips inside these cards communicate with EMV-enabled point of purchase devices to verify the card is valid. The chips encode the cardholder's data in a more secure way than the traditional magnetic stripes; because chip cards have the ability to change their coding on a rotating basis, they are much more difficult to copy for fraudulent use.

During a sale there is a two-step verification process. The customer will need to present either their card and a PIN (called Chip and PIN) or their card and a signature (called Chip and Sign).

If you haven't already made the change to accept EMV cards, the current deadline to do so is October 2015. This might involve the purchase of new equipment or simply upgrading what you already have. After the deadline, fraud liability is scheduled to shift from card issuers to retailers who are not set up to accept EMV cards. Since 46% of credit card fraud takes place at the POS, it's possible that this could translate into significant costs for retailers.

It is important to remain current on changing requirements and deadlines. As a member of your association, take advantage of the relationship that has been established with a processing partner to keep pace with all the intricacies of EMV technologies and compliance. In today's climate, you need a provider that will go beyond processing transactions to act as an advisor and resource, helping to find the right EMV solutions to suit your business.

For more information on EMV and all information related to credit card transactions, simply contact Veracity.



Comprehensive Insurance Services

The MPGA has teamed with Beckwith Financial Group to offer you complete insurance coverage and financial planning services. Simply [click here](#) and find out how "the big B" can help you enjoy exclusive benefits offered only to MPGA members.



Credit Card Processing Services

Veracity Payment Solutions - the association's endorsed credit card processing company-now offers a new "two-sided interchange" pricing model. The average processing rate for a propane dealer is expected to drop to 1.40 percent.

To learn more about "two-sided interchange" and how it can significantly reduce credit card processing costs, contact Chuck Shults at Veracity at 888.599.2209 and let them know you are an MPGA member. Or [click here](#) for more information.



Mobile Phone

Take advantage of smartphone and calling plan offers from Verizon Wireless and National Purchasing Partners-Energy. Receive exclusive discounts on eligible calling plans along with great discounts on select smartphones to help your employees remain connected, productive and efficient. Sign up today with Verizon Wireless and take advantage of these exclusive savings and promotions. Save 22% off your Verizon Wireless monthly access fees. For more information visit www.mynpp.com or call 800-810-3909.



Customer Appliance Protection Plans

Your customers' home and family are important. You can trust our experience, our legacy, our team, to provide them with the best equipment, knowledge, safety and service. Across Canada and the US, the Direct Energy Home Services team leads the way in heating and cooling, water heaters, plumbing, electrical work, maintenance and protection plans. Interested in eliminating home repair and replacement costs for your customers.

Contact [David Michael](#) or call 740.302.3240 to schedule a consultation.

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Human Resource Services

Saving time and money while significantly reducing employee-related liability are goals for all business owners. Keystone HR (formerly known as The Foundation Team), the association's endorsed HR service provider, converts these goals into reality by effectively handling part or all of the human resources functions within a company. From payroll processing services to providing worker's compensation and unemployment insurance for your employees, Keystone HR is legally responsible for most of your employee support activities including labor law compliance, tax compliance, worker's compensation and unemployment claims handling and much more. Keystone HR provides your HR management so you and your team can focus your efforts on core business activities that drive profitability. Contact Keystone at (888) 811-0450 or by email at fbenages@keystonepeo.com.



Customer Credit & Collection Services

The MPGA knows that managing customer credit and collection are among the top challenges our members face. The MPGA also knows how much you value the loyalty of your customers when dealing with sensitive credit issues. That is why the MPGA has teamed with Transworld Systems and CashFlow Consultants, LLC to bring you their GreenFlag Profit Recovery program. With Transworld's proven system of diplomatic contacts, your slow-paying accounts are conditioned for urgency to pay on time, while maintaining customer satisfaction and loyalty. Transworld Systems has the impact of third-party intervention while allowing you to maintain complete control of the process, and their GreenFlag Profit Recovery service features a low, flat fee. Transworld serves over 1,100 propane and heating oil locations nationwide, and has a success rate of 4 times the industry average. Discover the benefits and value that the GreenFlag Profit Recovery program from Transworld Systems can provide your propane company. Contact CashFlow Consultants, LLC, your exclusive MPGA agents, at 517-662-0126.

Disclaimer

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