



e Journal

Industry News for Michigan Propane Marketers

In This Issue

[MPGA Board meets in January](#)

[2015 MPGA Dues Reminders](#)

[Hours of Service Update](#)

[PERA Signed into Law](#)

[Michigan Road Funding Update](#)

[2015 Midwest Convention](#)

November-December Edition, Issue #102



MPGA Holiday Office Hours

From all of your friends at the MPGA...Whether you are working this holiday season or with family and friends, the MPGA wishes you a wonderful holiday!

In observance of the holiday season the MPGA office will have limited office hours.

December 23 - Open 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

December 24 - Closed

December 25 - Closed

December 26 - Closed

December 29 - Open 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

December 30 - Open 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

December 31 - Open 8:30 am - 1:00 pm

January 1 - Closed

January 2 - Closed

Quick Links

[MPGA Website](#)

[Midwest Propane Gas Convention](#)

[Propane Emergency Training Photos](#)

[MPGA PAC Donation](#)

[Homebuilder Information, Tax Incentives & Rebates](#)

[Low Income Customer Resources Available](#)

MPGA Board of Directors Meets in January

The MPGA Board of Directors will meet January 13-14, 2015 at the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort Hotel in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. The overnight room rate is \$109. Contact the hotel directly at (888) 732-4537 to reserve your overnight room. The limited MPGA room block expires on December 30, 2014.

The schedule for the Board of Directors and related meetings is:

Tuesday, January 13, 2015

11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Past President's Council

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

MPGA Operations Meeting

5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Committee Meetings

Wednesday, January 14, 2015

8:30 - 11:00 a.m.

MPGA Board of Directors Meeting

11:00 a.m.

Michigan PERC Board of Directors Meeting

Upcoming Calendar of Events



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
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

As always, the MPGA Operations Meeting, Board of Directors Meeting, and the Michigan PERC Board of Directors Meeting are open to all MPGA members.

2015 MPGA Dues Notices

By now, you have likely already received your first MPGA dues notice for the 2015 dues billing. Several members have already returned their dues payments, and the MPGA thanks you.

The MPGA has a couple of important reminders for the 2015 dues invoices.

First, as you may recall, the MPGA recently announced dues changes beginning with the 2015 dues year. For marketers, dues have been increased to \$400 per plant for all plants your company operates. This is the first dues increase in nearly 10 years for marketers. For associates, dues have been increased to \$400 per company. This is the first dues increase ever for associate members. Your MPGA leadership sought these changes to both make the dues process easier and to help the MPGA with its expected legislative and regulatory battles over the next several years.

Second, for those marketers with multiple locations, please use the following form to report your additional plants. If you do not want them listed in the directory, simply note that by checking the box on the form. Simply click on the following link for the [Additional Plant/Employee Information Sheet](#)

The MPGA leadership thanks you for your continued support and membership and wishes you a successful 2015.

MPSC Moves to New Location

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) today held its first Commission meeting at its new location - 7109 West Saginaw Highway, Lansing, Mich. Flood damage caused the MPSC to move to temporary locations since July 2011.

"This move reunites all MPSC-related staff at one location," said MPSC Chairman John D. Quackenbush. "The Commissioners, MPSC staff from all divisions, administrative law judges and attorney general staff will once again be located at one site, making it easier for the many people who interact with the MPSC."

A [map](#) of the new location is located on the [MPSC website](#).

While the physical address has changed, the mailing address remains the same: P.O. Box 30221, Lansing, MI 48909.

The move did require new phone numbers, which are [listed here](#). The MPSC's toll-free number for Michigan customers seeking assistance with electric, natural gas, telecommunications or cable television needs remains the same: 1-800-292-9555. Email addresses remain the same.

Directors Meeting
Hilton Polaris Hotel
Columbus, OH

Hours of Service Restart Information

FMCSA suspends enforcement of certain sections of the Agency's Hours of Service (HOS) rules as required by the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, enacted December 16, 2014. Specifically, FMCSA suspends the requirements regarding the restart of a driver's 60- or 70-hour limit that drivers were required to comply with beginning July 1, 2013.

With the President signing the bill into law, the current 34-hour Hours of Service restart provisions, which went into effect July 1, 2013, have been suspended. Specifically, the current requirements that specify two 1 am to 5 am periods as part of the restart period are no longer required nor is the restriction to use the restart once every 168 hours (or seven days). In other words, the restart requirement reverts back to what it was prior to July 1, 2013.

With this action, drivers will now be permitted to restart their weekly hours by taking at least 34 consecutive hours off-duty, regardless of whether it includes two periods of time between 1 am and 5 am. A driver can also utilize the restart more than one time per week, if necessary.

Also, the reason why the restart provisions are suspended through September 30, 2015 is because they were part of the annual spending bill, the terms of which expire at the end of fiscal year 2015, which is September 30.

For more information, visit the FMCSA at:

<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations/hours-service/hours-service-drivers>.

President Signs Propane Education and Research Enhancement Act of 2014

President Barack Obama signed H.R. 5705, the "Propane Education and Research Enhancement Act of 2014," into law. This piece of legislation modifies the functions of the Propane Education and Research Council and the data that the Department of Commerce is to use in developing its annual propane price analysis.

Richard Roldan, NPGA's President and CEO said, "This bill is a significant win for both propane consumers and the industry. Last winter, during the hardest winter our nation has faced in more than 25 years, the propane industry could not educate consumers on the steps necessary to prepare their propane-heated homes for the winter. Allowing the industry to use its own funds to reach our customers only makes sense."

Under the Propane Education and Research Act of 1996, the Department of Commerce (DOC) must calculate annually the price for "consumer grade propane" and compare it with an index of prices of specified competing fuels. If the price of propane exceeds a certain threshold, the industry is restricted from conducting most educational outreach activities. In 2009, due to a misinterpretation of the law by the DOC, the restriction was triggered and all educational outreach ceased.

While the law requires DOC to recalculate the price comparison every six months, it has only been completed three times in the last five years. H.R. 5705 specifies Congressional intent that DOC must use data reflecting all propane sectors, not just residential.

Roldan continued, "This law is a perfect example of what Congress can accomplish when they work together. With bi-partisan support, this bill passed unanimously in the House and Senate and consumers are the ultimate beneficiary."

Look for more information on this important industry milestone in the Fall/Winter issue of the MPGA's *Propane Journal* coming to you soon.

Michigan Road Funding Legislation Passes

A marathon legislative session concluded last week with the adoption of a widespread package of bills aimed at fixing Michigan roads through increased funding. The package was adopted by both the State House and State Senate after nearly 19 hours of back and forth negotiations that included Governor Snyder.

The package is expected to be signed by Governor Snyder, but that will not be the final action if the road funding increase is to take place.

Instead, under the legislation, Michigan voters will need to approve the action as a large part of the road agreement included a ballot measure to raise the Michigan Sales and Use Tax from 6 percent to 7 percent. If it is ultimately adopted at the polls, the measure will raise \$1.2 billion for Michigan road construction projects.

The key pieces of the large package and compromise agreement included the increase in the sales tax from 6 to 7 percent, a new fuel tax set at 14.9 percent of the wholesale price which will replace the gas tax, removal of the sales tax from gasoline, and fee increases on vehicle registration and heavy trucks.

Additionally, the MPGA successfully fought for inclusion of all alternative fuels and a new surcharge on electric and hybrid vehicles so that all vehicles using Michigan roads pay for the ability to use the roads. Currently, propane is the only alternative fuel vehicle that pays road taxes. If adopted, natural gas vehicles, biodiesel, ethanol, electric and all other alternative fueled vehicles will be subject to the new wholesale fuel tax or surcharge just like propane vehicles.

MPGA Government Affairs Committee Chairman Wayne Kohley noted, "In a perfect world I'd like to see road funding handled differently, but something has to be done, and there are pros and cons to everything.

Good news is that most crane trucks will be excluded from an increase, bad news is that every bobtail and every transport will see registration fee increases."



Following the very successful Midwest Propane Gas Convention held earlier this year, the Midwest Propane Gas Association wasted little time in scheduling the 2015 show. The Midwest Board is pleased to announce that the 2015 Midwest Propane Gas Convention will be held May 5-7, 2015 at the Hilton Polaris Hotel in Columbus, Ohio.

Midwest Chairman David Lowe noted, "Based upon the terrific feedback from marketers and suppliers alike, the entire Midwest Board happily scheduled the 2015 show. The hotel was outstanding, the show was a big hit with everyone, and the 2015 Midwest Convention will feature another strong agenda."

"Seeing what a tremendous success of the show this year made our decision much easier," said Dave Long, Midwest Director from Michigan. "We received more sponsors, golfers and marketers than we expected. We wish to thank all of our sponsors and attendees. We appreciate everyone that exhibited, attended, and spoke at the convention as they made the event so successful. The exhibit hall was full and the hotel venue worked out perfectly. I for one am really looking forward to getting back there next year."

Fellow Midwest Director from Michigan Dave Biggs noted, "As always, the Midwest Convention includes changes to make it the most enjoyable regional industry convention possible. Next year look for the improvements made to highlight our truck vendors and lawnmower area. Plus, you just can't beat the Midwest education topics!"

Suppliers and exhibitors do not need to wait to 2015. The Midwest Convention exhibit space is already open and exhibitors are taking exhibit space at a faster pace than last year. There is little doubt that the 2015 Midwest Convention exhibit floor will be packed once again! Don't forget, in addition to the same, lower convention costs, 2015 exhibitors receive:

- New mid-week conference
- Free "All Access" passes for exhibit personnel
- Free attendee mailing list sent one week before and after the convention
- Free company listing in the convention program
- Opening Reception on the Tradeshow Floor on Thursday
- 6 hours of exclusive, dedicated trade show time
- Free parking
- New this year! Outside truck spaces come with an indoor exhibit booth at NO ADDITIONAL COST

- Lower overnight costs

To reserve your booth space, visit the Midwest Convention website at: www.propaneshow.com.

Women In Propane Announce 2015 Officers

Several propane industry leaders will begin 1-year terms on the National Propane Gas Association's Women in Propane Council beginning January 1, 2015. During NPGA's Fall Board Meeting, Cindy Platz-Belmont, co-owner of Delta Liquid Energy, was named Chair of the Council and Kelly Bosak, Ferrellgas, was named Vice-Chair. Tracy Kirkman, part owner of Ehrhart Propane & Oil, will continue as Treasurer. More than 500 members of the propane industry are now members of the Women in Propane Council.

In addition to these two Executive Council positions, WIP's committee leadership will also transition in the coming months. Lisa Gerwitz will become Chair of the Programs & Events Committee and Sarah Knight, Ferrellgas, will become Vice-Chair. Leslie McCraw, Blue Rhino, will Chair the Membership Committee and Aubree Barbosa, Ferrell North America, will serve as the Vice Chair. Lauren Clark, Bergquist, and Kerri Essington, Ferrell North America, will assume roles of Past Chairs of their respective committees and act as liaisons to the executive board.

"The Council has an exciting year ahead, and I am looking forward to working with this talented group of women," said Cindy Platz Belmont, WIP's incoming Chair. "As our membership grows, we are expanding WIP's program offerings and our industry presence," she continued. Jill Hopkins will become the Immediate Past Chair and Nancy Coop will continue in her role as Founding Chair.

For more information about joining the council, please visit: www.npga.org/WIP.

Secure your CNP Transactions this Season

This season, card-not-present (CNP) transactions may be one of your most vulnerable spots. Online and phone order volume is likely to be high, so it's important to increase your vigilance when it comes to monitoring transactions.

In a CNP environment, the merchant is always at greater risk and card fraud attempts are more common. Obtaining positive address verification and CVV numbers are critical for avoiding chargeback liability. You can also limit your vulnerability to fraud by looking out for the following red flags. While some transactions like these might be legitimate, take time to be sure.

Be wary of the following occurrences:

- A new customer, especially from out of the area.
- Multiple card entries for high-dollar orders.
- Billing and shipping information don't match.
- Multiple purchases of the same item.
- Multiple transactions from a single IP address.

- Sequences of similar account numbers.
- One card used for sending shipments to multiple addresses.
- Several cards used for shipping to a single address.
- International shipping.
- Orders from Internet addresses that use free email services, which may not verify the user's identity.

You can also minimize the risk of these fraudulent incidents by imposing company-wide procedures that include:

- online mapping of shipping addresses
- business name searches
- verbal authorization from issuing banks for any suspicious transactions
- setting a transaction threshold above which management-level signoff is required

Staying up to date with critical security standard PCI DSS is also key. PCI is essential for maintaining a secure network, protecting cardholder data, implementing a vulnerability management program, and ensuring strong system and data access control measures. No one wants to lose a sale or spend time fixing a transaction that has been compromised, but this is especially true during the hectic holiday season. Remind staff members to be on the lookout for suspicious transactions and encourage them to slow down with prevention in mind.

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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

Propane marketers can 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.



Human Resource Services

KeystoneHR, 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, KeystoneHR 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. KeystoneHR provides your HR management so you and your team can focus your efforts on core business activities that drive profitability. Contact KeystoneHR at (888) 811-0450 or by email at jmartin@keystonepeo.com.

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