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Industry News

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LPGas

Ray Murray acquires McTier Supply assets LEE, MASSACHUSETTS

Ray Murray Inc. has acquired the Midwest assets of McTier Supply from Sam McTier, who is joining the company to help service and integrate customers.

RMI has also hired Paul Bolduc, McTier Supply's only salesperson in the Midwest region. Customers will be served from RMI's Pennsylvania warehouse, which offers same-day shipment of orders.

Michael Hopsicker, RMI's president and chief executive officer, said McTier customers will be pleased to find online ordering capability, a lower freight-free program, increased product availability, and a broader group of factory-trained people to help with orders, installation and service.

The acquisition follows last month's announcement that Cramer Decker Industries, a wholesaler of compressed gas and cryogenic and related products, had acquired "certain assets" from McTier. Cramer Decker is servicing former McTier high-pressure and propane customers in 16 states.

NPGA prepares to fight latest bobtail tax increase proposal WASHINGTON, D.C.

The National Propane Gas Association is gearing up to fight a proposed increase in the hazardous materials registration fee for larger propane marketers.

The organization is hoping members will send letters to the Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration to voice opposition to the measure. It has distributed a grassroots correspondence menu designed to help letter-writers. The public comment period ends Oct. 16.

The proposal would raise the 2007 registration fee from \$975 to \$1,975 for propane marketers with total receipts higher than \$6.5 million, plus a \$25 administration fee. The fee would be raised the following year to \$2,975, plus the administration fee.

The money would fund the national Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness grants program at about \$28 million, as part of the Bush administration's fiscal year 2007 budget proposal to Congress.

NPGA said it "strongly believes that this proposal is unfair" because it will subsidize non-propane hazmat sectors who have not undertaken the measures the propane industry has to increase safety. It also designates a "large" propane company as one with \$6.5 million in receipts – but a "large" fuel oil company must make \$11 million for that moniker.

Propane companies will not know whether they meet that mark from year to year because it is based on the changeable price of propane. NPGA argues that a company's size is better reflected by the number of its employees.

Lastly, it says DOT has been unwilling to require a full accounting of the money it spends through this program.

The two-tier fee structure was established in 2000, setting the fees at \$275 for small businesses and \$1,975 for others, plus the \$25 administrative charge. In 2003, a budget surplus allowed the fee to drop to \$125 and \$275 (plus the administrative fee), but that was readjusted in 2006 to \$250 and \$975.

The HMEP grants program would fund emergency response plans and train safety officials responding to a hazardous materials emergency.

Energy Guys return to the airwaves in new propane ads WASHINGTON, D.C.

Bumbling Electricity and smart, confident Propane are returning to T.V. and radio stations across the country this fall as the Propane Education & Research Council's consumer education campaign resumes.

Two new commercials will air on cable stations HGTV, DIY Network, CMT, TBS and USA, and on satellite channels through Direct TV and DISH Network. The commercials will be broadcast Sept. 4 through Oct. 8, and Oct. 16 through Nov. 13.

In one, Propane and Electricity tour a new home under construction, with propane appliances such as a tankless water heater and a cozy fireplace being installed. The other demonstrates how calm Propane is during a storm, while Electricity is a "nervous wreck." When a black-out occurs, Electricity stops mid-sentence, but Propane simply clicks his fingers to start a propane-fired generator that quickly saves the day.

"We are very excited about our stand-by generator ad, which will add to our generator campaign this fall," said Kate Caskin, PERC's senior vice president.

The industry also has participated in a new five- to seven-minute program on tankless water heaters and radiant floors that save energy costs. The show, "Hot Trends in Energy-Efficient Homes," was created by the Scripps network with input from PERC. It will appear on Food Network, HGTV and DIY Network beginning at the end of October.

Contact PERC for Energy Guys signs, shirts and decals, available through the online Propane Industry Resource Catalog or by calling 866-905-1075.

Missouri center to help businesses conserve energy COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

Researchers at the University of Missouri-Columbia are using a \$900,000 federal grant to establish a center designed to help medium-sized manufacturing and industrial businesses reduce energy costs.

The grant from the Department of Energy will help to create the Missouri Industrial Assessment Center, which will be run by the college of engineering's Industrial and Manufacturing Systems Department and the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Department. Total funding for the project will exceed \$1 million.

The center is one of 26 nationwide research centers, including six new ones, the DOE is funding. University researchers and eight students will provide free energy efficiency studies and offer strategies to about 15 businesses throughout Missouri, Illinois, Iowa and Kansas, helping them reduce their operating costs.

Researchers will evaluate a company's energy consumption and review manufacturing processes, air conditioning and heating systems and overall lighting consumption. Companies that adopt the centers' suggestions typically save about \$55,000 a year, the DOE reports.

Bin Wu, professor of industrial and manufacturing systems engineering, will direct the center.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Underground tanks safe in storms, ad says

The reliability of underground tanks is touted in a new advertisement that promotes propane as an ideal energy source for storm-resistant homes.

The ad explains that, since propane is not connected to a grid like electricity, underground tanks are not generally damaged by a storm. The ad also demonstrates how propane-fueled generators provide a reliable source of electricity should the power go out in a storm.

The Propane Education & Research Council advises marketers to use the ad during peak storm and hurricane seasons.

For more information, consult the Propane Marketing Resource Center or contact Tracy Burleson at 202-452-8975 or tracy.burleson@propanecouncil.org

TouchStar, UPS Logistics announce new alliance TULSA, OKLAHOMA

TouchStar and UPS Logistics Technologies have agreed to a strategic alliance created to capitalize on the demand for durable, automated mobility platforms with real time route optimization and communications protocols for field and sales workforces.

"Incorporating the tactical routing, fleet management and delivery optimization tools of UPS Logistics gives our customers the ultimate competitive edge," said TouchStar CEO Peter Gibbs.

"With our combined offerings we can deliver real time route visibility and dynamic execution, giving our customers control over their fleet without all the paper," said Len Kennedy, COO of UPS Logistics.

In addition to supplying handheld devices and industry-specific software applications, TouchStar's provides systems analysis; project consultation; project management; workforce training; maintenance and exchange services.

UPS Logistics Technologies provides transportation management software designed to increase the overall efficiency of distribution companies.

Stop-fill technology wins grant LOS ALAMOS, NEW MEXICO

Adept Science & Technologies LLC (ASCENT) has won a \$173,700 grant from the federal Department of Energy for its sonic stop-fill technology that prevents overfilling of propane and anhydrous ammonia tanks.

ASCENT's Maximus technology uses an acoustic method to detect and prevent overfills. The technology reduces air pollution by not relying on liquid-gas spray from the outage gauge as a visual cue to stop filling. The device externally senses when the tank has reached a predetermined volume.

The company was among 10 grantees from 219 applicants.

Paraco Gas contributes to breast cancer foundation PURCHASE, NEW YORK



In an effort to promote breast cancer research, Paraco Gas Corp. has painted four of its bobtails pink and will donate a portion of the proceeds from every gallon delivered by these trucks over the next year to the American Breast Cancer Foundation.

The trucks are in service throughout Putnam, Suffolk, Nassau and Westchester counties in New York, and Fairfield, Litchfield and New Haven counties in Connecticut.

"Our trucks are not even on the road with full delivery schedules yet, and numerous people have approached our drivers asking questions. We have noticed heads turn as we pass," said Mike Gioffre, vice president of sales and marketing. "We are proud to support such a worthy cause."