



DegreeDays

News from the Virginia Propane Gas Association

Register Today for the Spring Meeting!



Registration is underway for the 2024 VAPGA Spring Meeting in Charlottesville, VA on April 21-23. We have a great event planned, including a golf tournament, industry updates, and networking/meal events with clients and colleagues! The Omni Charlottesville just completed a renovation at the end of 2023, and it is located on Charlottesville's downtown pedestrian mall which is walking distance to a number of bars, restaurants, music venues, and boutiques.

Member Registration	\$275
Non-Member Registration	\$375
Monday Night Reception/Banquet	\$110
Golf Tournament	\$190

On Monday night following dinner, we will be hosting a cornhole tournament to support the Young Gassers Scholarship Fund.

New for 2024, we are offering year-round golf hole sponsorships at \$300 (total) to benefit the Young Gassers Scholarship Fund.

[**MORE INFO**](#)

[**REGISTER**](#)

[**BOOK YOUR ROOM**](#)

SAVE THE DATE!



SUMMER MEETING

June 30 – July 3, 2024

**Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront
Virginia Beach, VA**

[**MORE INFO**](#)

Rooming and registration info will be sent out following the completion of the Spring Meeting.



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Virginia
Propane Gas
Association

President's Message



Dear VAPGA Membership,

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank Tony Hogue for all the work he put into our association over the years and to wish him a very happy and well-deserved retirement. While I had not anticipated taking over as President until this summer, I very much look forward to the challenge and opportunity of leading VAPGA for an extended term.

I technically started in the fuel industry with my first summer job in 1998 running a cash register at one of our convenience stores. I returned to Tiger Fuel Company in 2011 as a service manager for one of our smaller divisions in Lovingston Virginia. After two years I became the Operations Manager of that office and then three years later moved to our main headquarters in Charlottesville to study under Frank Conley, a Past President of VAPGA, and ultimately take over for him as COO in 2017.

As president of our association my goals are to grow gallons by both fighting against legislation that threatens our industry and promoting our products by offering safe appliance rebates to incentivize customers to choose propane appliances. Another topic of importance is making sure that propane continues to be part of the conversation as our counties, state, and country focus on reducing carbon emissions. Tucker Perkins has done a good job of educating the VAPGA on the latest PERC efforts to prove that propane and renewable propane have an important long-term place in America's clean energy portfolio.

In addition, safety has always been a major priority of mine and a critical component of our product's longevity. I will make sure that VAPGA continues to push the envelope when it comes to promoting safety, as one mistake can damage the reputation of all our companies.

Thanks in advance to all our committee chairs, members and especially Zach and his team at Eisenman & Associates for doing the heavy lifting that keeps our association moving forward and supports our efforts.

Taylor Sutton, President

Get to Know Taylor Sutton

How long have you been in the propane industry?

I started in the industry as the service manager/salesman for our Lovingston office in 2011, so 12 years as of last October.

How did you end up in the propane industry?

My father started Tiger Fuel in 1982. He was a minority owner and initially the company only sold heating oil. Over the years he added propane, car washes, convenience stores as well as other divisions in Orange, Lovingston and Appomattox. My first job as a teenager was working in one of our C-Stores as a cashier. After college I spent 6 years in various other jobs, around 2010 my father was able to purchase the entire company and I decided to join my brother to work for the family business.

Do/Did you have a mentor? If so, what's a lesson they've taught you that you'd want to pass on to others?

I've had multiple here, but my dad was my main mentor. He, along with his leadership team, created our company culture model called "Tiger Way" which is essentially the golden rule of treating people the way you would want to be treated. The goal is to take care of our employees, so they take care of our customers, which will lead to company success.

If you could give advice to young professionals in the industry, what would it be?

Volunteer to help wherever you see a need in your organization, even if it's not squarely in your lane. Do your best to solve problems and make decisions quickly, paralysis by analysis can be more costly than the problem you are trying to solve and will send the wrong message to your team.

What aspect of volunteering for VAPGA do you find most rewarding?

Networking with other people facing the same problems is therapeutic and has introduced me to a lot of people that have helped me solve some of those problems. The constant focus on safety has kept me engaged with our leadership to make sure that stays our highest priority. Also, I've gained a much better understanding of how our state legislature works and I've learned how critical it is to be involved with our local delegates and senators to make sure they understand how important our companies are to the state.

What will you focus on during your term as President?

The association began in 1946 to promote the safe handling of our product and I think that should remain our highest

continued on page 5 >

VAPGA Legislative Day



On Thursday February 15th, VAPGA hosted a legislative breakfast reception where members had an opportunity to interact with Virginia legislators and their staff in the new General Assembly (GA) building. The GA building was buzzing, and we had a steady flow of Delegates, Senators, and their aides stop by for a cup of coffee, a pastry, and a chat. Thanks to all who helped with this event, and we look forward to growing it for next year now that we have our bearings in the new building.

Special thanks to our lobbyist, **Mike O'Connor**, for all of his hard work during session and for leading us on a bonus tour of the Capitol!



> **Taylor Sutton**, *continued from page 3*

priority. Propane accidents pose the largest threat to our businesses, and we need to encourage all of our members keep their staff and local emergency responders educated on best practices as well and make sure to avoid complacency when it comes to the daily procedures which can become mundane. Additionally, we need to make sure we add new members as consolidation shrinks our numbers. Lastly, keeping our finger on the pulse of government initiatives that might affect our industry is critical to make sure the residents of our state have the option to choose their energy source.

What are some favorite memories from past VAPGA events or meetings?

The first meeting I came to was at The Homestead and I played golf with Tim Carlson, Doug Fohl and Ray Billups. We ended up winning the tournament and I was able to spend time with some great guys that were a big part of Tiger's propane supply network. It really helped me understand the value of the association and was also just a lot of fun.

What are your hobbies/favorite activities outside of work?

I have a young son who will turn 3 in May as well as a daughter due in April, so I'm enjoying spending as much



Tiger Sutton with his father, Gordon, and brother, ????

time with them and my wife Gina as possible. I also love the outdoors and have grown up bird hunting and fishing around the state.

What's on your music playlist?

My favorite genre is alternative southern rock. The Allman Brothers, The Band, My Morning Jacket, Jason Isbell, Daniel Donato, and Brandi Carlile are a few of my favorites.

Make a PAC Donation Today!



The mission of VAPGA's PAC is to distribute contributions to candidates for the state legislature who, by their acts, demonstrate support of the propane industry and the private enterprise system. Your donations help VAPGA gain visibility and leverage access to promote our industry. Now more than ever, we need your support to combat the electrification and fuel ban efforts that threaten our industry. Please consider making a donation to the PAC today.

If you'd like to make an investment in the future of Virginia's propane industry, contact [Zach Eisenman](#), Executive Director, or [John Phillips](#), VPAC Committee Chair.

In addition to PAC donations, please let us know if you would be interested in hosting and/or meeting with a legislator this fall.

Thank You for Your Generous PAC Donations

AmeriGas

Cynthia Hamlet \$100

Bergquist

Trent Johnson \$250

Elite Power & Energy Corp.

Kelly Tidwell \$1,000

Hiltz Propane Systems

Todd Haberstroh \$500

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NGL Supply Terminals

Thomas Krupa \$500

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Virginia Fleets Access Renewable Propane With New State Contract

A new state contract brought forth by James Madison University provides vehicle fleets in Virginia with new pricing on propane autogas vehicle conversion equipment, in addition to access to renewable propane autogas.

Autogas is the third most widely used alternative fuel globally, with more than 28 million vehicles on the road worldwide.

“Autogas is a proven and viable solution for fleets in the commonwealth of Virginia today, and we are excited to offer this additional opportunity for reduced emissions with a renewable autogas component,” says Steve McCoy, vice president of business development with Blossman Gas, which is the equipment and fueling partner on the contract.

With the contract, available to all fleets, those using conventional propane autogas can purchase a renewable autogas blend of up to 20 percent, reducing emissions such as carbon and particulate matter even further, according to Blossman Gas.

Though not a fossil fuel, renewable propane is nearly identical to conventional propane in terms of its chemical structure and physical properties. As a result, renewable propane solves a variety of environmental challenges in addition to providing the benefits of conventional propane, Blossman Gas adds. Renewable propane offers sustainability benefits through reductions in carbon intensity (CI) versus traditional fossil-based transportation fuels. CI is the amount of carbon by weight emitted per unit of energy. Renewable propane is estimated to have one of the lowest CI levels, even when compared to electric vehicles.

“Propane autogas is a widely available fuel used in public and private fleets in Virginia, and I’m so glad to have this fuel on state contract,” says Alleyn Harned, executive director of Virginia Clean Cities at James Madison University. “It is exciting for JMU to launch a statewide contract for this renewable fuel option.”

Blossman Gas is a founding member of Alliance AutoGas, a cooperative providing EPA-certified autogas vehicle conversion equipment to U.S. fleets.



VAPGA's 2024 Scholarship Application is Live!

The VAPGA Scholarship is offered to current VAPGA members and dependents of current VAPGA members who are enrolled full-time in an accredited two or four-year academic institution or trade school (as of Fall 2024).

Additionally, VAPGA has an endowed scholarship at BrightPoint Community College (Fund #6018). The endowed scholarship is available to all BrightPoint students, and annual scholarship awards shall be determined by BPCC Foundation, based on the amount of funds available and the number of students eligible to receive a scholarship. Preference is to be given to students who work for a VAPGA member or dependent.

The deadline for applications is April 15th. Recipients are notified by July 1st. More information as well as an application can be found on the BPCC website [here](#). For more information, click [here](#).

Southern Virginia Higher Education Center Awarded

Shoutout to **Joe Pennesi** and **Davenport Energy** for their support of a local tech school in securing a \$10,000 PERC grant to support workforce development in Southern Virginia!

Our members are making a positive impact across the Commonwealth!

View the letter from the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center [here](#).

MemberNews

VAPGA Member, **Taft Yeatts** (Davenport Energy) sent some photos of LP gas being transported in Malta & Greece during his International trip last Fall. Propane gets it done across the globe!



In Memoriam



Greg Narron, April 30, 1960–January 13, 2024. Greg was the owner/President of Petroleum Tank Corporation in Kenly since 1990. He took pride in his business and loved his employees and customers. He graduated from ECU in 1982 with a business degree. Greg was very social and had many great friends in his personal and professional life. He loved golf, spades, fishing, and traveling. Greg was a long-time active member of VAPGA and will be deeply missed.

Read his obituary [here](#).

Safety&Training

Work is underway in confirming the 2024 training schedules. Many companies have already reached out to schedule individualized trainings. Please forward any training requests or ideas to Dennis Cruise (Outreach Coordinator) at propanetrainingservices@gmail.com or Gary Nouse at gnouse@hiltzpropanesystems.com. We are also confirming details for the Bobtail Rodeo, which we are planning to host in Richmond in May. More details to come on that once it is confirmed. This has always been a well-attended program that combines training, skill, competition, and comradery for everyone who participates.

More information will be given once plans are finalized. We will need volunteers to assist with delivery of this event.

Sterling, Virginia Explosion

On Friday, February 16, an explosion occurred at a residential home in Sterling, VA. Multiple local and national news outlets covered it, and many cited that a leaking 500-gal underground tank was discovered at the residence.

Sadly, a Loudoun County fireman, Trevor Brown, was killed and 10 other firefighters were transported to the hospital as a result of the explosion. The exact cause of the incident is still under investigation, and we are awaiting more details to come out.

With the investigation still ongoing, VAPGA has prepared a press release that we are sharing with media outlets, and we encourage our members to share as they see fit. You may also use this press release as talking points for your customers, staff, etc.

Read the press release [here](#).

PERC

Rebate Available for The Heat Pump Helper

The [Hydronic Heat Pump Solution](#), The Heat Pump Helper, is now available! This exciting new technology disables electric emergency heat strips and replaces them with a hydronic (water) heating coil. This alternative source of heat is then used in a dual fuel configuration to provide all heat to the home once the heat pump begins to struggle (when outdoor temperatures dip below 40 degrees). The hydronic coil is supplied by water that is already being heated by your current propane water heater. It is compatible with most water heaters: tankless, tanked, combi-boilers, and solo boilers.

We are offering propane industry employees rebates to try this system in their homes, at little or no charge. In exchange, participants must provide feedback about their experience with the system and installation.

If you are interested in trying The Heat Pump Helper, please complete the interest form [here](#).

Please note that completing this form does not guarantee a reservation or approval for the purchase of a unit. Applications will be made available as reservation slots are opened.

Check out a video [here](#).

PERC Sales Report

PERC Sales Report portal will open on March 1st and closes on May 31st! Please ensure your company participates as an accurate counting of VA's gallons impacts our PERC funds. The more gallons, the more PERC funds. Reports is easy, secure, and confidential.

2024 Propane Construction Research Program is Accepting Applications

The 2024 Propane Construction Research Program is now open and accepting applications!

By participating in this program, qualified builders and remodelers can receive compensation of up to \$1,500 per project for installing propane appliances. Participants must also submit a one-time program survey that will capture important emissions data. Learn more [here](#).

The following criteria apply:

1. Eligible builders must be a licensed U.S. builder or remodeler, and at least 18 years of age.
2. A home must include at least one of the following propane appliances: a boiler or furnace; hydronic air handler; combi boiler; tankless or storage tank water heater; a hybrid heat pump with propane gas emergency heat.
3. The home build or remodel project must be completed between January and December 2024.

Feature Your Company in DegreeDays

We are accepting advertising for the 2024 issues of *Degree Days*, the official publication of the Virginia Propane Gas Association. *Degree Days* will be published bi-monthly starting in February.

Advertising with VAPGA is an easy, valuable, and cost-effective way to get your company in front of the movers and shakers in Virginia's propane industry.

Both full and half page advertisements are available and ads may be purchased for a full year or on a per-issue basis.

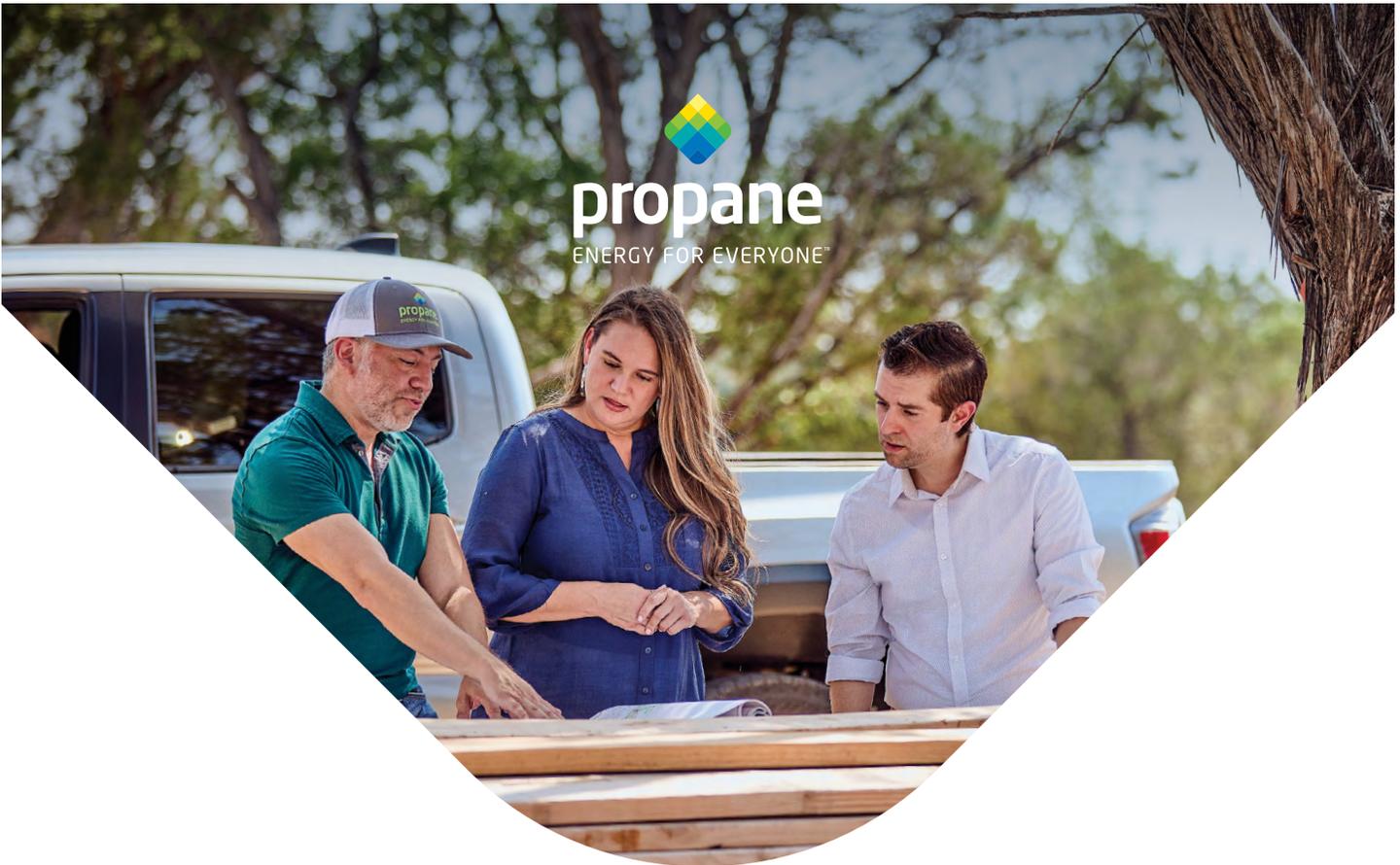
Degree Days is distributed to 300+ members across the Commonwealth and the country. Additional specifications and payment information can be found on the application.

The 2024 Newsletter Advertising Contract is included in this newsletter on the last page.

Complete the form and send it to the address provided. Contact [Lorraine Meade](#) for ad information or [Tami Rawlette](#) for payment information.



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From tankless water heaters to cooktops and ranges to indoor and outdoor fire features, homeowners love the reliability, comfort and efficiency of propane appliances. And you'll love being compensated for helping to inform research for the industry.

▶ Learn more and apply today at Propane.com/PCRP

Funds are limited and not guaranteed.

Propane Education & Research Council

5473-AD-24

Bergquist Rallies Behind Employee Fighting ALS

Wholesale propane equipment distributor Bergquist is raising funds and spreading awareness in the fight for a cure for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a progressive and fatal neuromuscular disease that gradually deprives individuals of the ability to walk, speak, swallow and breathe.

Mike Vigliotti, the company's telemetry sales director, has lived with ALS for about nine years. Next March, Vigliotti will walk in the Orlando Walk to Defeat ALS with the support of Bergquist. Anyone interested in supporting Vigliotti can donate to "Team Vigs" through the ALS Association's website to help the team reach its fundraising goal of \$10,000.

"Mike has been a key member of the Bergquist family for years, and we are inspired by his passion and commitment to assist others impacted by ALS," Lauren Clark, Bergquist president and CEO, says. "The propane industry is a tight-knit space, so I'm confident that many of his colleagues and peers across the country will step up to support him in this effort."

Following a typical ALS diagnosis, individuals face an anticipated lifespan of two to five years. Due to the slow onset of his particular condition, Vigliotti has chosen to become an advocate not only for himself but also for fellow ALS warriors whose progressive conditions make self-advocacy difficult. In addition to his fundraising efforts, Vigliotti actively engages with local and national government officials to champion the need for ALS treatments and trial drugs.

Given Vigliotti's loss of grip strength and hand motor function, Bergquist recently funded an eye-tracking



device that allows him to use his eyes to power his computer mouse.

"I feel blessed that I still lead a fairly normal life," Vigliotti says. "I still work full time, for a great company that has stood behind me and helps with anything I need to make my job easier."

Bergquist operates as a family-owned entity, providing wholesale propane equipment and appliances to companies across the U.S. and worldwide. Bergquist's staff is dispersed throughout five national sales and distribution centers.

Tell Us Your Story!

Do you have any company news to share? Big anniversaries? Success stories? Philanthropic events? We'd like to know! Please send your news to **Zach Eisenman**, Executive Director, at zach@eameetings.com. Your news may be published in a future newsletter.



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2024 Rebates



The Market Development Committee is preparing to offer some recommendations to improve the safe appliance and Autogas rebate programs this year. Those updates and applications will be sent out soon. We are also considering changes to the Duty to Warn rebate program, which will be launched once we have confirmed those.

Email **Tami Rawlette** or call **804.241.2232** for additional information or to request an application and pre-approval numbers.

2023-2024 VAPGA Leadership

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vacant

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2024 NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING CONTRACT

Degree Days is the official publication of the Virginia Propane Gas Association.

It is published bi-monthly in a digital format and has a circulation of approximately 500 members and industry contacts.

Advertising Requirements

Advertisements must be sent via email in hi-resolution PDF, JPG, EPS or TIFF format.

Full page ads are 8.5 inches x 11 inches. Half page ads are 8.5 inches x 5.5 inches.

Please send ads to lorraine@eameetings.com.

This form is an order and authorization to secure space in *Degree Days*, the official publication of the Virginia Propane Gas Association, and may be used by advertisers or their agents.

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