Last Spring, the OPGA Board created a task force to explore an Ohio State Propane Checkoff. For the last several months, the OPGA task force has been hard at work. The task force concluded that not only was a checkoff program worthwhile for the membership to consider, the task force believes that 2018 is the right time to pursue the legislation to create a state checkoff IF the OPGA membership approves. Both the task force and the OPGA Board of Directors believe that a decision to pursue a state checkoff program should be a membership decision. Therefore, the OPGA has called for a membership vote at the upcoming February meeting.

The next quarterly OPGA Board of Directors and Membership Meeting will take place on Wednesday, February 21, 2018 in Columbus. This is an official OPGA Membership Meeting which will include the membership vote.

During the meeting, a panel of OPGA leaders will be available for a question and answer session. Following that session, the OPGA leadership intends to request a formal vote of the OPGA membership. If the OPGA membership votes to approve the measure to move forward, the OPGA Government Affairs Committee will work with the OPGA lobbyists on legislation to create a state checkoff for Ohio. If the membership votes to not approve the measure, then the OPGA will not pursue a checkoff at this time.

Be sure to mark your schedule to attend the OPGA Membership Meeting on February 21st in Columbus.

GET OUT AND VOTE!
WHEN: February 21, 2018
WHERE: Columbus, Ohio
WHAT: Ohio State Propane Checkoff
WHO: OPGA Members
A lot of change is happening at PERC and it's because of the feedback I've received from propane professionals like you during my first 100 days as CEO. I want to make sure we keep the conversation going — listening to you, and sharing how we're accomplishing our objectives set by the Council.

That's why I am starting a new quarterly report that will include a video, a podcast, and a written summary designed to keep you informed about key initiatives we're working on in the strategic plan. This quarter's report goes into more detail on the results of my recent meetings with marketers and what's ahead for PERC in 2018.

Thank you for helping shape a better future for PERC and our industry. Let's keep talking!

NOTE: ON THE PERC WEBSITE (WWW.PROPAWCOUNCIL.ORG/QUARTERLY-CEO-REPORT/) YOU CAN FIND SEVERAL NEWS WORTHY ITEMS FROM PERC CEO, TUCKER PERKINS. OPGA RECOMMENDS YOU TAKE A LOOK AT A VIDEO SHARING MARKETER THOUGHTS TO TUCKER, A Q&A WITH TUCKER ABOUT PERC STAFF REORGANIZATION, A PODCAST TUCKER'S CONVERSATIONS WITH MARKETERS, AND PERC'S PLANS FOR 2018.
OPERC ANNOUNCES 2018 PROJECT PLANS

For 2018, OPERC plans to pursue a budget of $280,500 in available OPERC funds plus $49,000 in partnership with state funds from national PERC. These funds will provide education and training for industry personnel; propane emergency training for first responders; autogas education and on-road consumer incentive rebates; duty to warn safety communication rebates to Ohio marketers. A summary of the funding requests follows.

EDUCATION
Industry employee training will continue and will be budgeted at $128,000. Mike Fisher and the Education Committee will be responsible for this project. The project includes the support for training, testing and materials, hiring of a new instructor, and a budget to allow the OPERC instructor, Bob Herron, and Mike Fisher to attend the Industry Training Conference, a national meeting for all industry trainers to benchmark, share knowledge, and learn best practices.

WEBSITE
The OPGA website, maintained by Josh Greene and Propane Awareness Committee, have a budget of $2000 for hosting and website maintenance.

PROPANE EMERGENCY TRAINING
Will be budgeted $15,000 for OPERC and $7,500 in Partnership funds. Bob Herron will be responsible for this project. This project will continue to train Ohio’s heroes in our local communities – our local first responders – on how to safely handle propane emergencies should they be encountered.

AUTOGAS
OPERC will continue its work with Ohio Clean Fuels, but funding will be $11,500 from OPERC and $11,500 in Partnership funds. OPGA will be seeking a proposal from Ohio Clean Fuels on what they suggest for the Ohio propane industry at that funding level. Eric Sears and Alternative Fuels Committee will be responsible for this project.

AUTOGAS INCENTIVE REBATES
After a great deal of success in its first year of offering incentives, OPERC agreed to increase the budget for this project in hopes of growing more gallons for the Ohio propane market. Under the funding, OPERC will continue to offer rebates to consumers up to $1000 rebate as an incentive for the purchase of a new autogas vehicle or new propane mower. This project will be funded at $55,500 from OPERC and $34,000 in Partnership funds.

DUTY TO WARN
OPERC will encourage the purchase and distribution of Duty to Warn materials by offering a $500 per plant reimbursement (up to $2000) to any marketer that purchases Duty to Warn materials from PERC. Marketers that choose to participate will purchase the Duty to Warn materials they need, have them shipped to their plants, and submit a receipt or proof of purchase to the OPGA. OPGA staff will then reimburse up to $2000 ($500 per plant) to the marketer. Additionally, OPERC will offer another reimbursement up to $500 to any Ohio marketer that purchases the qualified Duty to Warn materials from national PERC. This project will be budgeted at $65,000 from OPERC. Jarrod Bowers and Code & Safety Committee will oversee this project.

REALTOR EDUCATION
OPERC is optimistic about a new project. For 2018, OPERC will create a project to educate Ohio realtors about the propane industry with specific targets to educate realtors about propane tank ownership. The project is funded at $6000 from OPERC, and Josh Greene and Propane Awareness Committee will oversee this project.
OPGA president, Frank Edwards, represented the association in a live broadcast during the November Muskingum County Parade. The show featured the county sheriff’s autogas fleet of cruisers.

The Muskingum County Sheriff said, “These cruisers save tax payers money and are clean burning,” and County Commissioner, Mollie Crooks said, “More of the region’s vehicles will be using propane from the region’s local gas wells.”

Visit the OPGA Facebook page to view the broadcast.

Additionally, the OPGA exhibited at the Buckeye Sheriffs Association conference where Frank Edwards, Bob Herron, and Mike Walters represented the OPGA.
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(about your tanks)

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As a business owner, the hope is that someday, there will be a pot of gold at the end of your rainbow. Not a small pot, but a REALLY big pot of gold. This pot of gold comes on the day you sell your business. Selling your business, and the underlying structure of that sale, may be one of the most important financial decisions of your life.

Selling a business comes with many inherent risks. What will it be worth? Will someone want it and have the money to buy it? How large will my tax bill be? The key to selling any business successfully is making sure you have more than one option. More than one option? But what other options could there be? I either sell or I don’t? The taxes will be what they’ll be, right? Not necessarily. It isn’t that simple, and you don’t want it to be that simple, because if it is, I can almost guarantee you will have left money on the table, which is money not in your pocket. There ARE more options to consider, and worse yet, most people don’t even know it.

Imagine this: you build the business of your dreams, but doing so didn’t allow you to really save much for retirement along the way, because your retirement plan is to sell your business. This is often very common with business owners I meet. Selling your business could end up being the financial windfall that sets you sailing into retirement just as you planned. It could also be a nightmare of epic proportions. A nightmare? How could it be a nightmare? In today’s high-tech age, none of us know if we are next. Next for what? Becoming obsolete. Rapid technological advances and an ever-changing landscape of business models can capsize your business in a heartbeat. The scariest part about this isn’t just the idea of your business losing its usefulness and bringing its value to ZERO, it’s the idea that it could also take your entire retirement plan with it. This is a very scary thought. All the blood, sweat, and tears poured into a business—gone in the blink of an eye. THIS is why I say you need options. To avoid this worst-case scenario, I offer the following options:

- **Option one:** Build a reservoir of capital that is available to you and your business during its entire life cycle, where at the end of that cycle, it can provide you a sustainable retirement income. With the right structuring, this income can likely be mostly tax free or even 100% tax free.
- **Option two:** Structure the reservoir to serve as an additional unfilled holding tank where excess funds created later in life can be used to fill this tank to its FULL capacity, like when you sell your business for a lump sum of cash.
- **Option three:** Keep the IRS out of your pockets for as long as humanly possible, backed up with an iron-clad plan for paying your taxes when they eventually come due. How do you know when they will come due? That can depend on how you structure your reservoir. This can be either at the end of your retirement years, or possibly long after you have fulfilled a long happy, tax-free retirement. Again, you have options!

Let’s recap: why do we want options? The main reason is to make sure you have a retirement income even if you cannot sell your business for one dollar. You could simply walk away with zero in proceeds from the sale of your business, and still know you have a hopefully tax-free income to provide for you and your family in retirement. In my mind, this option is non-negotiable. The remaining options simply add value on top of a solid foundation for your retirement income. If the best of what we want to happen, happens, and you are able to sell your business, your retirement only gets better, or as I like to call it, you begin living an optimal retirement. The other part of an optimal retirement plan is tax minimization. I believe you and most other business owners would agree, that you have paid your fair share of taxes along the way. Unfortunately, we can’t avoid taxes at the sale of your business but we can do one better. We can make Uncle Sam wait by deferring those taxes, so that your money can work the best and the hardest for you, before he gets his hands on any of YOUR money. When you combine the strategy of tax deferral, alongside the option to fill your reservoir of capital to its maximum, you now have a plan to assure those taxes will eventually be paid when they come due, hopefully long after you lived out your retirement life fully.

As you can see, the worst case scenario when you have options, is only utilizing your first option strategy, where you establish a
dollar amount of partially or completely tax-free income you can count on for retirement. If you are so lucky to capitalize on option 2 and option 3, then your retirement income scenario only gets better.

With a plan such as this, that incorporates several options, along with the potential combination of our three best options, you, the business owner, will never be in a position where you are left with ZERO upon exiting your business. You have worked way too hard to allow that to happen. Plan now to provide yourself options and you will clearly know what your minimum and potential maximum level of retirement income may be. Living an optimal retirement is a choice, but without an options-based plan, it may be no better than throwing the dice at a craps table.

What's the catch? Isn't there always a catch? Not always, but there are requirements. You must qualify for these strategies in a number of different ways. Thankfully, in order to determine if you qualify, there is simple and small investment of your time and effort, but it will cost you zero dollars to determine that qualification. In all of my dealings with business owners, the most frequent statement I hear, riddled with regret, is “Why hasn’t someone told me this sooner?” Don’t leave this to wonder or, even worse, find yourself in a situation where it’s just a little too late to start this plan. “If only we had done this 5 years ago” is not an emotion or feeling you want to experience as you get closer and closer to retirement.

I will offer this final thought: when dealing with the government, none of us know what the future holds. For example, will the top tax bracket ever return to 70% like it was in 1980? Or 91% like it was in 1963? I don’t know if it will, but I know if it does, I want options. The power of options will allow YOU to control your financial outcomes and not the government. Without options, you will have to sit back, strap in, and go along for the ride, and that ride may not be the ride you would ever have chosen, or even thought you would be on.

MATTHEW RZEPKA, CPA, CFP® IS AN AFFILIATE OF MICHIGAN WEALTH AND RISK MANAGEMENT, LLC AND IS THE OWNER OF VALLEY OAK FINANCIAL, LLC PART OF OPGA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS. YOU CAN REACH MATT AT 1-844-368-6554.
JURY AWARDS $3M IN DAMAGES TO PLAINTIFF INJURED ON PROPANE MARKETER’S PROPERTY

BY KATY REGIER, ATTORNEY
SANDBERG, PHOENIX & VON GONTARD, P.C.

The jury in the Sysak v Western Propane Services Inc. case, filed in the Superior Court of Orange County, California, awarded over $3,000,000 in damages to a plaintiff injured on the propane company's premises during a cylinder refill.

BACKGROUND/UNDERLYING INCIDENT
Michael Sysak, a 36-year-old diesel mechanic, headed to Western Propane Services, Inc. (Western Propane) on July 3, 2015 to have his barbecue cylinders refilled, presumably for use over the Fourth of July holiday. A Western Propane employee started filling the cylinders from a large propane storage tank on the property. Unfortunately, during the filling process there was an accidental release of propane right in the area where Sysak was standing. A “plume of gas” ignited causing a flash fire. Sysak sustained second and third degree burns to his legs and arms which required skin grafts.

THE LAWSUIT
About seven weeks after the flash-fire incident, Sysak and his wife filed a lawsuit against Western Propane. Sysak asserted a number of liability-based claims against Western Propane including that the company and/or its employees negligently maintained, entrusted, repaired, controlled and/or operated the propane storage and dispensing equipment on its property/premises, including the propane storage tank, hoses, fittings, and valves.

In addition to the physical damages Sysak claimed for his burn injuries, he also asserted emotional distress damages based on experiencing the shocking and dangerous incident, including specifically Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Additionally, Sysak claimed that experiencing the flash fire incident and the resulting physical injuries, aggravated his pre-existing anxiety condition. Sysak’s wife also made a loss of consortium claim.

After discovery in the case, Western Propane determined as part of its trial strategy, that it would not contest the negligence claim for the flash fire incident involving the accidental release of propane during the cylinder refilling process. However, Western Propane did contest certain aspects of Sysak’s damages claims. In other words, the case was not tried on the negligence claims as liability was not contested. Instead, the jury heard evidence and made its determination on the damages claims only. The jury verdict information for this case indicated that there were at least nine experts designated on damages issues – five for plaintiff and four for the defendant including experts in plastic surgery (burn specialty); psychiatry; life care planning; and economic damages.

THE JURY’S VERDICT
After hearing the evidence in the case on the damages claims, the jury awarded Sysak $2,500,000 for pain and suffering; approximately $500,000 in past and future medical expenses; approximately $42,000 in past lost wages and $63,000 in future lost wages. His wife was awarded $25,000 for her loss of consortium claim.

KATHRYN A. (“KATY”) REGIER IS AN ATTORNEY WITH THE SANDBERG, PHOENIX & VON GONTARD, P.C. LAW FIRM IN ITS KANSAS CITY, MO OFFICE. SHE CAN BE CONTACTED AT KREGIER@SANDBERGPHOENIX.COM.

NO FURTHER INFORMATION WAS READILY AVAILABLE AS TO HOW OR WHY THE PROPANE RELEASE OCCURRED DURING THE FILLING PROCESS, PROBABLY BECAUSE THE CASE WAS NOT TRIED ON LIABILITY BUT ONLY ON DAMAGES. HOWEVER, THE UNDERLYING INCIDENT IN THIS CASE UNDERSCORES THAT AS PART OF ONGOING RISK MANAGEMENT EFFORTS, PROPANE MARKETERS AND THEIR EMPLOYEES SHOULD CAREFULLY AND CONSISTENTLY FOLLOW ALL TRAINING AND PROCEDURES WITH RESPECT TO ALL SERVICES PROVIDED AT BOTH CUSTOMER AND COMPANY LOCATIONS, INCLUDING EQUIPMENT USED IN REFILLING PROPANE CYLINDERS.
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OPGA COMMITTEE PARTICIPATION

Committees are the key to any volunteer organization. Successful committees lead to a thriving association; a thriving association is a growing association; and a growing association is an influential association. Please consider joining one or more committees that interest you.

Name

Company

Phone

Email

Address

- **Autogas & New Technology** – To focus on the propane autogas industry and related new technology.
- **Code & Safety** – It is the responsibility of this committee to keep abreast of changes in the Code, to review and make recommendations for possible changes in the Code, maintain communication with Ohio regulatory agencies and assist in interpreting regulations, and respond to members’ questions regarding specific sections of the Code.
- **Convention** – This committee plans the annual convention and decides upon future meeting locations.
- **Education** – It is the responsibility of this committee to consider and develop industry training schools.
- **Governmental Affairs** – This committee is charged with becoming actively involved in all legislation and regulations, which affects the propane gas industry in Ohio.
- **Membership Services** – The major function of this committee is to respond to requests for membership Information, to enlist new members of the association, and provide membership value for the industry. Membership services committee members contact new members and call and invite marketers to quarterly meetings.
- **Ohio PERC Projects** – This committee is charged with developing the strategy, plans and programs that receive and distribute national PERC money to deserving Ohio projects.
- **OPGA PAC** – Administers and operates Ohio propane industry political action committee, including fund raising, record keeping and reporting to appropriate state agencies regarding receipts and contributions. Decides upon recommended contributions to Ohio legislators and policy makers from the OPGA lobbyist professionals. Attends legislative receptions and functions under the direction of the OPGA lobbyists. Supports the OPGA Government Affairs Committee as needed.
- **Propane Awareness** – This committee is charged with developing a solid working plan to increase propane Awareness throughout Ohio.
- **Scholarship** – Establishes guidelines for granting scholarships and recommends funding mechanism for the association's scholarship program.
- **Transportation** – The two major functions of this committee concern involvement with the general efficiency and economy of transporting propane gas, and to provide technical input to communities where HAZMAT transportation ordinances are being considered.

RETURN TO OPGA VIA FAX (517) 485-9408 OR VIA EMAIL TO DEREK@KINDSVATTERASSOCIATES.COM.
The OPGA provides members with a wide range of benefits. First and foremost, OPGA provides members with exceptional representation at our state capitol so that state lawmakers, regulators and policy leaders are made aware of the concerns and issues that affect the propane industry.

- The OPGA and OPERC proudly offer our members numerous training and safety resources throughout Ohio.
- The OPGA provides digital newsletters to keep you and your employees up to date with propane industry and OPGA news.
- The OPGA and OPERC provides quality education workshops, conventions and membership meetings at reduced costs to members.
- Additionally, the OPGA is proud to bring you the following additional membership benefits to bring value and savings to you and your business as an OPGA member.

### ACCOUNTING & TAX SERVICES

Valley Oak, is a CPA Firm that has a specialized tax practice. We care about lowering your tax liability just as much as you do. We believe that the power of a dollar is best utilized in the hands of the business owner or entrepreneur and we work with clients to help them determine how best the tax code can serve our clients and their businesses. Our business model is focused on getting the best results (the lowest possible tax liability) for our clients, and we assure those results are in alignment with our clients individualized goals. Our mission is improving lives, one small business at a time. Contact us at 844-368-6554.

As an OPGA member, you receive our 2 times guarantee on tax planning; meaning whatever fee is paid, you receive double the fee in returned tax savings; also, if you hire us for ongoing administration services, such as tax preparation and bookkeeping, you will receive a 10% discount on those services for life.

### CREDIT CARD PROCESSING SERVICE

Quantus Solutions has designed a group benefit programs for the MPGA that provides aggressive solutions and reduces your bottom line with excellent customer support. Choose the right solution for your business. Our program options include: 1.00% qualified rate for Visa, MasterCard and Discover or Interchange Plus. American Express offers their latest program called Opt Blue. Receive Next Day funding of your deposits, Free desktop terminal; Gateway/ Virtual Terminal; Mobile Solutions as well. All solutions are EMV and PCI compliant. ZERO start up fees to enroll and MORE. For more information call (800) 698-5150 or visit at quantussolutions.com.

### DEBT COLLECTION

TekCollect specializes in accounts receivable management, collections operations and customer retention services to the propane industry. Their industry-leading approach reduces the number of accounts ever requiring formal recovery efforts by focusing on early intervention. Programs include custom verbal and written contacts, electronic database skip tracing, and credit bureau reporting, plus optional advanced recovery efforts for hard-to-collect accounts. Their service is securely web-based, giving you access to every collection effort plus up-to-the-minute reports. And TekCollect is committed to non-alienation. Every effort is designed to preserve the integrity of your customer relationships. TekCollect’s fees are typically less than 10% - the lowest cost per dollar in the collection industry. Best of all, results are guaranteed! Contact Lance Rhutasel at 314-308-6853 ext. 1411 or at lrhutasel@tekcollect.com.

### FINANCIAL PLANNING

Michigan Wealth & Risk Management is able to provide you with all of the financial planning tools you and your company need. From investment advice to financial planning to estate planning and accounting services, Michigan Wealth & Risk Management can meet your needs. Their financial professionals specialize in providing customized plans for commercial clients.

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Gasaway Investment Advisors, Inc. is an investment advisory firm with a unique expertise in working with small and medium sized companies on qualified retirement plans for their employees. Our team of experienced professionals will work with your company’s leaders to develop a plan that is tailored to meet your company’s goals and then periodically review the plan to make sure that it continues to meet the needs of your company. This benefit provides discounted third party administration fees. Contact us at 844-368-6554.

HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Our agency has put together a team of Insurance, Human Resources and Technology professionals to provide our clients with the necessary resources to survive in today’s world of Employee Benefits. Our background, education, knowledge and experience puts us in a unique position to suggest solutions that are proven to work. Contact us at 844-368-6554.

HUMAN RESOURCES 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.

INSURANCE PROGRAM

The OPGA has teamed with Beckwith Financial Group to offer you complete insurance coverage and financial planning services. From personal lines to life, health, commercial and everything in between, Beckwith Financial Group can help any OPGA member with their insurance needs. Simply visit them online at www.beckwithgroup.com and find out how “the big B” can help you enjoy exclusive benefits offered only to OPGA members. Contact us at 844-368-6554.

LIABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM

The General Agency Company provides standard and specialty insurance coverages. From homes and autos to large businesses, from general liability and worker’s compensation, to retirement and long term care plans, we cover your commercial, personal or employee benefit needs. The General Agency, in partnership with EMC (Employers Mutual Companies) is pleased to offer an exclusive “niche” program to MPGA members. Contact Dan Scully at dscully@ga-ins.com or call 989-773-6985 x 4246.

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Primary Residential Mortgage, Inc., the Smithville Ohio division, is a licensed lender in 49 states. Our division is a full service operation with all the aspects of the loan process being handled by our staff. Thus eliminating the loan package being distributed to other location for final approval. Through this benefit you will receive a $1250 discount on your closing costs. Contact us at 844-368-6554.

WORKER’S COMP

Join the OPGA Worker’s Compensation program to improve safety, lower your costs and enjoy significant annual savings on worker’s comp premiums. For a no-cost, no-obligation analysis of your potential savings, visit CareWorksComp online at www.careworkscomp.com/groupratingapplication/opga to complete an authorization form. For employers not qualifying for group rating, CareWorksComp can still evaluate your best premium discount options. To learn more, contact Andrew Frank at 800-837-3200 ext. 52325 or andrew.frank@careworkscomp.com.
It is time again for OPGA dues renewals. Notices have been mailed. Be sure to look for them and a letter from OPGA President Frank Edwards. If you have any questions, please contact the OPGA office.

NOT RECEIVING INFORMATION FROM THE OPGA?

As a reminder, the OPGA database is dependent upon information provided in the annual dues notices. When dues are returned to the OPGA, please be sure to include everyone from your company that should receive emails from the OPGA; should receive the Buckeye Bulletin digital newsletter from the OPGA; and should receive this OPGA Newsletter.

This information also helps produce the OPGA Membership Directory. With the new OPGA website up and running, look for a digital OPGA Membership Directory to be added to the website very soon.

If you believe you are not receiving all the information from the OPGA, please contact the OPGA office. We will happily add you to the OPGA database!
OPGA REPORTS FROM THE STATE HOUSE

BY ALEX BOEHNKE, OPGA LOBBYIST

OPGA SIGNING ON TO EFFORT URGING FMSCA TO CHANGE CRASH INDICATOR STANDARDS

The OPGA Board of Directors recently endorsed HCR 20, a resolution authored by State Rep. Tim Schaffer (R-Lancaster), urging Congress to request that the Director of the FMSCA revise the Crash Indicator Standards so commercial drivers can only be penalized when an accident has been deemed their fault. Currently, company drivers can be designated as high risk and even face forced termination in incidences where an accident occurs and it is NOT their fault. This nonsensical provision can force companies to pay more to insure drivers and even worse, force them to layoff good employees. Making this change would benefit propane marketers by giving them certainty when handling issues with their commercial fleets.

OPGA TESTIFIES ON INDUSTRY’S BEHALF FOR OHIO EPA GRANT PROGRAM

Members of OPGA’s government affairs committee provided testimony and comment on the Ohio EPA’s Alternative Fuel Vehicle Grant Program. The grant provides a one-time $5 million allocation for conversion or replacement of class 7 and 8 trucks to CNG, LNG and propane. During testimony, OPGA members touted the benefits of propane autogas and requested the rules fairly reflect opportunities for propane marketers. Formal comment was submitted Oct. 19th and in-person testimony was provided on Oct. 26th. Final rules outlining the program should be available by year’s end. Please stay tuned for updates.

OHIO EPA RELEASES DRAFT VW MITIGATION PLAN

Last week the Ohio EPA released their first iteration of the Volkswagen Emissions Settlement Mitigation Plan. The plan will outline how the State of Ohio will invest $75 million over the next 10 years in an effort to reduce nitrogen oxide (NOx) pollution from transportation. The settlement stands as a fantastic opportunity for the propane industry to grow in the state through the distribution grants allowing school districts and local governments to convert their fleets to propane autogas. OPGA has provided formal comment during the stakeholder outreach that has occurred during the last year and will remain in close contact with the Ohio EPA throughout the process. Moving forward, there will be three regional public information sessions scheduled for January 2018 to explain how the plan was developed and to answer questions. Sessions will be held at the following times and locations:

• Thursday, January 11 (10 a.m. to noon) Auditorium, Ohio Department of Transportation, 1980 West Broad Street, Columbus
• Thursday, January 18 (1 p.m. to 3 p.m.) Estabrook Recreation Center, 4125 Fulton Rd., Cleveland
• Monday, January 22 (10 a.m. to noon) Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI), 720 East Pete Rose Way, Suite 420, Cincinnati.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION ON THESE ISSUES, PLEASE CONTACT ALEX BOEHNKE AT ALEXB@OHIORETAILMERCHANTS.COM OR CALL 614-221-7833.
For the last several months, the OPGA has urged members to prepare for Winter deliveries and have plans in place. Plans should include both propane inventory and arrangements with propane transports.

While we all welcome the first blast of Winter temperatures, the OPGA has already heard of some delays from propane transport companies. We believe these delays are primarily the result of new regulations in place affecting transport companies across the country. With these new regulations in place, all propane marketers need to make sure they are prepared, their suppliers are prepared, and schedules are in place.

The OPGA does not believe current concerns justify calls for hours of service waivers. Instead, the OPGA firmly believes that calls for hours of service relief should be reserved strictly for true emergencies.

Our industry cannot afford a repeat of the delivery concerns from just a few winters ago. The OPGA continues to encourage all propane marketers to have solid delivery plans in place to limit surprises and concerns. All Ohio marketers are strongly encouraged to get ahead of the new regulations on transport drivers by meeting with their propane wholesalers and propane transport companies NOW to schedule upcoming deliveries well in advance. Plan now, and save yourself logistical nightmares throughout the heating season.

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**INDEPENDENT TECHNOLOGIES PURCHASES ENERTRAC FROM SENET**

**Acquisition Expands Availability of High Value, Low Cost Tank Monitoring Solutions**

Hank Smith, President and CEO of Independent Technologies, Inc. announced the acquisition of EnerTrac Tank Monitoring from Senet today. The contract and resulting partnership is considered by both companies to be a positive move that will deliver a unique and complimentary technology to a growing market. “We are very excited about bringing the best of our two companies together,” Smith said.

The acquisition will allow the WESROC division of Independent Technologies, Inc. to expand its product line while also enhancing its communication solutions capabilities. “This is an exciting move that lets us significantly expand our hardware solutions, and on the communications side, we are able to offer a monitoring solution for any need or budget,” Smith said.

For Senet, the acquisition allows them to focus on the company’s core network connectivity platforms and services for the build-out and management of the Internet of Things (IoT) network. The purchase is a proof point of the maturing LoRaWAN solutions market, illustrating the growth of a high volume, and proven value low power wide area IoT solution.

The exact terms of the deal are not being disclosed, with the exception of Senet providing critical network connectivity and build-out services to WESROC on an exclusive basis. Plans for integration are currently underway. WESROC and Senet are currently reaching out to respective customers, many of which already use both WESROC and EnerTrac tank monitors, and key partners to communicate this exciting news and to put any required action plans into place.

“We’re happy to welcome all EnerTrac customers to WESROC. They can rest assured that WESROC’s customer and technical support teams will provide uninterrupted assistance during this transition,” said Boyd McGathey, WESROC Chief Operations Officer.

McGathey emphasized, “With the addition of the Senet LoRa low-power wide area network to the existing WESROC cellular, satellite, and other communications methodologies, WESROC will be developing new monitoring hardware and services that will benefit both EnerTrac and WESROC customers.”

WESROC Monitoring Solutions is the industry leader in providing monitoring and business solutions to fuel, propane, and energy suppliers. WESROC is a division of Independent Technologies, Inc.