

BPN 2026 INDUSTRY INNOVATORS

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Innovation can feel like an abstract concept. It encompasses all types of action and ideation, from big moves that cause an industry-wide stir to small changes that fix a localized issue. Regardless, it can feel difficult to nail down the meaning, but the six individuals we've selected as our 2026 Industry Innovators finalists have found concrete ways to demonstrate innovation in the propane

sector. Each of our finalists have unique stories and contributions to share, but all of them personify how creative thinking, hard work and dedication strengthen the future of the propane industry. Learn more about our finalists on the pages ahead and join us in saying congratulations on all they've accomplished.



M. DOUGLAS DAGAN

Senior Vice President of
Renewable Energy
Suburban Propane

"I came into the propane sector after more than two decades working across science, policy, law and finance on clean energy," said M. Douglas (Doug) Dagan, senior vice president of renewable energy at Suburban Propane L.P. Advising public and private entities on how to accelerate practical clean energy solutions with a focus on clean energy policy, finance and project development were key roles at that point in his career.

"That work led naturally to helping companies turn policy ambition into executable projects, which is what ultimately brought me to Suburban Propane in 2021 to build and lead its dedicated renewable energy platform," Doug said. Now, as senior vice president of renewable energy, Doug continues to translate the company's nearly 100-year distributed energy legacy into a diversified, lower-carbon future.

Doug's nomination from Suburban Propane explained that he's helping to redefine the future of the propane industry through his leadership. "Charged with leading the company's growing renewable energy portfolio, he has successfully positioned a nearly century-old, traditional energy provider at the forefront of lower-carbon innovation," the nomination said.

"The propane industry sits at the intersection of legacy infrastructure and emerging low-carbon technologies," Doug added. "It has a lot to gain from both fresh and seasoned perspectives."

Doug believes industry veterans understand system reliability, safety and customer expectations in a way that's hard to replicate, while newer voices often bring cross sector experience in biofuels, hydrogen, renewable natural

gas (RNG) and data-driven analytics that challenge fuel industries to rethink what's possible.

"When you put those perspectives in the same room, you get innovations like renewable propane that use existing appliances and distribution networks, or RNG projects that leverage proven operations but apply new financing and regulatory structures," Doug said.

A major initiative has been converting agricultural waste into renewable energy. "Our RNG portfolio focuses on anaerobic digestion of agricultural waste — primarily dairy manure and organic residuals — to produce biogas that is upgraded into pipeline-quality renewable natural gas," Doug said. "In practice, manure and other organics are collected and fed into sealed digesters where microbes convert volatile solids into biogas; that biogas is then cleaned of impurities and conditioned into RNG that can displace fossil natural gas while also generating valuable environmental credits.

"These projects benefit the industry and farmers simultaneously," Doug continued. "They reduce methane emissions, create a new revenue stream from gas and credits, improve nutrient management through digestate and provide a scalable, drop-in renewable molecule that can support both utility and downstream propane-linked applications.

"Beyond RNG, we're advancing renewable propane and lower-carbon intensity propane blends that can function as drop-in fuels in existing propane infrastructure, as well as exploring hydrogen pathways that leverage propane and RNG as feedstocks and carriers," Doug said. "Our commercial propane renewable dimethyl ether (rDME) blend — the first and, so far, only product of its kind in North America — shows how we can lower carbon intensity while still using the same trucks, tanks and burners."

"My ideal future is one where the propane industry is recognized as a leading platform for low-carbon molecules and distributed resilience," Doug concluded. He sees a future where traditional propane, renewable propane, rDME, RNG and hydrogen coexist in a portfolio that serves customers reliably with progressively lower carbon intensity. "I envision propane companies as bioeconomy and clean fuel hubs, partnering with farmers, technology providers and communities to turn waste into energy and to deliver sophisticated, data-informed solutions rather than single-product commodity sales."



TODD JONES
Director of Education
Illinois Propane Gas Association

Todd Jones' entry into the propane industry is a familiar one for many: He was looking for a full-time job with a good company. This led him to a role with Ferrellgas as a cylinder driver, and after 14 years of hard work, he worked his way up to an operations manager. Eventually, he moved on to service technician and service manager roles at Prairieland FS, until one day a former manager asked if he'd like to be director of education for the Illinois Propane Gas Association (IPGA).

Todd's nomination demonstrates that industry members have noticed he stands out from the crowd in his approach to teaching. "When members come to him for guidance, if he hasn't seen it, he knows exactly who has," the nomination stated. "Todd is not 'just a propane teacher.' He is a mentor, an innovator and a trusted resource in the industry."

Todd has worked to support Illinois companies in many ways, including planning bulk plants, leading dispenser training programs and introducing experienced technicians to new products and best practices. "He played a key role in bringing a mobile dispenser training trailer to IPGA, allowing for hands-on, real-world training anywhere in the state," the nomination said.

"I think the use of newer technologies such as iPads, cellphones and real-time documentation gives the industry the capability to be safer and more efficient," Todd said. "At the same time, there is a lot that can be learned from us old-timers that can't be taught in a classroom."

Todd feels his availability to the industry is important. "I've made myself accessible, day or night, to all members with questions, concerns or even just friendly advice. I believe the IPGA over the last few years has tried to make every aspect of the association more accessible for our members."

As for brainstorming and assessing new ideas, Todd says he has a time-tested process. "My process normally involves looking at every situation from all sides of the spectrum to be able to come out with the safest and most efficient results for everyone."

"In class, I always try to keep participants informed about new industry products to make their jobs safer and relay to them that there is a difference between the classroom and the real world," Todd continued. "Things don't always go as planned. That's why my door — and phone — are always open."

Todd added that hands-on training has always been and will continue to be a vital part of the learning process. "Any opportunity we get to have those defective parts, cut-aways, neglected hoses for a visual reference, and leak checking/system testing training boards, the better off the new generation will be. We need to keep in mind that this industry is not a one-size-fits-all," he said. "Things are constantly changing, whether it be codes, technology, trucks or people. What works in one region doesn't necessarily mean that it will work in another. I'm always tasked with new training ideas and implementing company-specific training. Once an industry becomes stagnant, it becomes irrelevant. Hopefully, as an industry, we can get the push we need to be recognized as a safer, more efficient and renewable fuel source for years to come."



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CHRISTIAN LEVAC

President

Propane Levac

"Today, I'm proud to serve as president of Propane Levac, but I've never lost sight of where I came from," said Christian Levac. "I believe the best leaders stay connected to the day-to-day realities of the business and continue listening to the people closest to the work."

With a family-owned propane company, Christian believes he has the privilege of thinking in decades rather than quarters, allowing him to invest in projects that prepare the company for the future while remaining true to its mission: to offer comfort with exceptional customer service.

"Our vision is to become a benchmark in innovation and energy transition, and that vision influences every major investment we make," Christian said. "I've always believed that if we don't continue challenging ourselves and reinventing our business, someone else eventually will."

Curiosity has always driven Christian, according to his Industry Innovators nomination. He has served in almost every possible role at the company his father started, and as president of the company now, that experience gives him a deep understanding of every part of the business.

"He wants to understand how everything works, how people are doing and why things are done a certain way," the nomination stated. "One thing

he does not accept is hearing, 'We've always done it like that.' He puts the right people in the right roles and gives them the space to succeed."

One way he does this is by focusing on renewable energy. "Receiving Canada's first railcar of renewable propane was an exciting milestone for our company and for the industry," Christian said. "It demonstrated that renewable propane is no longer just a future concept. It's a practical solution that can help reduce emissions while utilizing much of the infrastructure already in place. We're also closely following the development of renewable DME and other emerging renewable fuels. While these markets are still developing, we believe they have tremendous potential to complement propane and provide customers with additional renewable energy options in the years ahead."

"Re-Tank Expert is another project that reflects ... innovation," Christian added. "We built the facility to safely extend the life of propane cylinders and tanks through proper inspection, reconditioning and quality control. We're now looking at ways to further modernize and automate parts of the operation to improve consistency, efficiency and throughput."

Christian is also proud of the work done with LGP Energy on a rail terminal in Prescott. "That project strengthens regional supply infrastructure, improves storage and logistics flexibility, and helps position us for future renewable fuel opportunities as the market evolves."

"I'd like to see our industry recognized not only for its strong safety culture and reliability, but also for its leadership in innovation and the energy transition," Christian said. "I believe independent, family-owned companies have an important role to play because we can think beyond the next quarter and invest for the next generation. ... If, over time, [Propane Levac is] recognized as a company that helped improve customer service, strengthened our industry's infrastructure and contributed to a more sustainable energy future, I'll be very proud of what our team has accomplished."



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JEN O'BRIAN
Director of Innovation
Worthington Enterprises

Jen O'Brian's career has taken her from biofuels research and pipeline integrity to helping shape new products and development initiatives at Worthington Enterprises. Along the way, she has developed a philosophy centered on listening to customers, drawing ideas from different industries and bringing diverse perspectives together to solve problems.

She had a strong role in establishing innovation laboratories at Worthington Enterprises, Voice of Customer events across the country and new product launches, including the Smartlid remote tank monitoring system, for which she holds two patents.

Although her 14-year career has not been exclusively in propane, it has remained focused on the pressurized energy sector. After earning a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Ohio Northern University, Jen joined Battelle, where she worked on biofuels before transitioning to oil and gas pipeline integrity. Five years later, she joined the Corporate Innovation and Strategy Team at Worthington Enterprises before becoming the first product engineer in the company's Building Products segment.

Today, Jen believes the best solutions begin by bringing together

different perspectives. "Seasoned perspectives are dynamite. They are full of lessons learned we can build upon," she says. "New perspectives are magic keys. They contribute fresh concepts and energy we can equally build upon."

In 2024, she helped lead the company's transition to a five-stage product development process designed to balance speed with thoughtful risk management. As the team built that framework, they also reimagined how ideas are generated, captured and prioritized across the organization, resulting in a tenfold increase in idea intake within a single year. Today, engineers, operations, commercial teams and customers all contribute ideas as projects move from concept to development.

Jen is also credited with helping bring Worthington's innovation laboratory from concept to reality. Opened in 2024, the lab focuses on functional prototyping, product testing and customer interactions. Jen's nomination highlighted her leadership and team contributions to developing and leading Voice of Customer events held at customer sites, industry trade shows and other settings.

"One of the biggest lessons I've learned is that the best innovation rarely happens behind a desk," she says. "We have to get out of the building."

This has led her team to ride with bobtail drivers, tag tanks in a Minnesota winter, observe tank refurbishment and spend time with customer service representatives. She also looks beyond the propane industry for ideas, drawing from markets such as refrigerants, water systems, adhesives and other building products to identify technologies, materials and practices that can be adapted for propane applications.

While Jen recognizes the industry's emphasis on safety and regulation can make change more deliberate, she remains optimistic about its future.

"This industry is impactful, highly driven and deeply values people, from our collective employee base to the communities we serve," she says.

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ARTHUR RAVO

Director
Synergy Commodity

Arthur Ravo has devoted his career to mastering fuel procurement at the highest level. After the acquisition of his father's industrial gas business by Paraco Gas in 1989, he spent 32 years there, the final 25 of which were devoted to leading their procurement and supply team. He's now brought his decades of experience to independent and regional fuel marketers in his role as director with Synergy Commodity.

"His expertise in supply strategy, pricing, logistics and relationship management has helped small and mid-size family-owned companies operate with greater confidence in increasingly volatile markets," his nomination said. "Art stands apart in his ability to create solutions that work for all parties involved — suppliers, retailers and customers alike. Widely respected across the supply chain, he is known not only for his technical expertise, but for his integrity, collaboration and commitment to strengthening the industry. His career has been defined by reliability, fairness and results."

What are some ideas and solutions Arthur has implemented to improve the efficiency of Synergy Commodity? "We started out standardizing

customer files to ensure everyone in the organization would understand what we were doing," Ravo said. "We are now automating administrative work and non-added value processes that will allow us to scale up our ability to help more customers ... and give us the needed redundancy we require as we grow."

Arthur believes this will also allow them to spend more time with each client helping them in areas where they have expertise.

"In my previous role, I was tasked with creating an invoice workflow," Arthur said. "After an initial failure, we found the right fit and were very successful. We were able to add 30% more work to the accounts payable group without adding any additional personnel." He added they were able to create transparency to their procurement process that they never had prior. "This led to a reduction in nonessential purchases."

Arthur believes innovation is important in managing supply lines across a large network. "Ensuring supply security requires real-time flexibility and a need to plan for multiple contingencies, sometimes months in advance," he said. "As suppliers and terminal asset ownership changes, it becomes essential to continually reassess customer supply plans year-round, not just at contract signing time.

"Some years bring bigger and [more] new challenges than others," Arthur continued. "This past winter in the Northeast/mid-Atlantic, we experienced one of the coldest winters we've had in a while. Additionally, there were multiple terminal outages, the pipeline went on severe daily allocation and terminals that usually allowed for nonratable liftings were insisting on daily schedules. All this stretched supply lines to the breaking point."

Arthur was able to preemptively find new sources of supply, along with additional trucking help to mitigate local supply shortages, allowing them to keep customers fully supplied. Through nimble work during difficult challenges, Arthur demonstrates how innovative thinking and proactive planning can improve the lives of propane customers.

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BRIAN RAYGOR

National Autogas
Business Manager
Ferrellgas

Brian Raygor describes his contributions to the propane industry as just doing his job and enjoying what he does — trying to make things better for his company and his customers. But those who see him in his element know there's much more to it. The nomination submitted on Brian's behalf describes how he's distinguished himself in the autogas sector through hands-on leadership in transitioning fleets to autogas solutions.

"When Brian joined Ferrellgas in 2017, propane autogas was still a hard sell for most fleet operators. Today, school districts and transit agencies across the country seek him out by name," the nomination said.

Brian came to Ferrellgas with plenty of fuel industry experience under his belt (30 years as of 2026). He had worked previously for another company to boost its autogas footprint, which set him on the path to do the same for Ferrellgas on a larger scale. In his role as national autogas business manager, he brings innovative ideas to address equipment needs in all regions of the country.

"Things are different up north versus down south. You've got to pay attention to how it works and the different variables," he explained.

A key part of his job is assessing how equipment is being used and how easy it is to work on. Most importantly, he says, is determining how easy it is to use as a consumer. "I deal with a lot of school districts ... and many school bus drivers have years of experience. So, to make equipment that works easily for them, that is reliable, that is a good price and has all those features, to me is important," Brian said.

Brian also pushes for autogas dispensers to meet customer needs. He worked with one dispenser manufacturer to address challenges like regional climate. "The company that built [the dispenser] had never envisioned all the different things we're doing. And I just keep pushing them. ... The great thing is they've never told me no. They just say, 'OK, give us a minute,' and they come back and find ways to make it happen. All these things that I keep pushing them for are really to make the customer experience easier."

Brian also knows the importance of putting your money where your mouth is. He's personally owned and driven an autogas vehicle, demonstrating through everyday choices why autogas makes sense.

One such demonstration was his decision to drive his autogas vehicle for a cross-country road trip. Brian said, "Well, I'm taking my propane vehicle — why wouldn't I? [It took] a little bit of work ahead of time to know where to fuel up. But some people caught wind of it and were like, 'Oh, that's crazy. We didn't you know you could do that.' Well, I actually do it all the time, and there's a lot of people who do it."

"To me, that's just normal," he concluded. "Why did I have a propane vehicle? Because I believe in it. And if I'm going to sell it, why not use it myself?"



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