

New Propane Gauge Evolution & Innovation

Recently, at the World Propane Convention held in Houston, Texas, many new innovative solutions for the propane industry were unveiled. As our industry has been around for many decades, it is always exciting to see how we are finding ways to simplify and streamline. Getting a chance to speak with the industry leaders who create the tools we use on a regular basis and occasionally discover how they continue to push the envelope and dare to create the “next thing” is one of the reasons many regularly attend these shows. At this year’s World Expo, one impressive company showed up with technology that is poised to serve the industry for decades to come. Something that our industry uses every single day is the propane gauge. Be it on a bobtail, a bulk tank, or a tank in the field, we have gauges everywhere, and we use them constantly. We see and use these gauges so much that they almost become mundane and part of the landscape. Fortunately for us, the engineering teams that build them are quietly taking them to the next level in a way that will benefit us all.

Rochester Gauges, a well-known and established name here and abroad, with offices and manufacturing around the globe (Texas, Europe, Mexico, and China), has been making reliable, accurate, and easy to read gauges for our industry, and many others, for decades. Around 20 years ago, they reinvented their gauges, so tank monitoring companies could snap



Bill Stomp is a partner along with 5 other consultants in PropaneQuarterback.com, who specialize in the propane industry, as well as a partner with TankSpotter.com, this sector’s first and only complete propane app.

on a device that reads the gauge, sends that reading by a wire to a transmitter, broadcasts the same out to a cloud database, and remotely tells us the fluid level inside fuel tanks located anywhere on the planet. Their foresight to imagine, create, test, develop, and provide the industry this “connected” gauge has helped eliminate potentially millions of deliveries, reduce the cost of running propane companies globally, and significantly helped birth the remote tank monitoring industry worldwide.

In speaking with the dozen or so tank monitoring companies at the show, every one of them refers to Rochester Gauges as the staple of the industry and the “go-to” gauge for tank monitoring in every corner of the world. With such market dominance and penetration, one might wonder if this company should risk the further development of new products with the ever-present potential for failure. That is where the story gets interesting. It’s been said that the speed of the leader is the speed of the team, and that innovation follows on the heels of great leaders. Recently, Rochester Gauges changed ownership and handed their reins to Ben Lease, a long-time engineer who has spearheaded other inventions during his career and is skillfully combining the best of Rochester Gauges - their reliability and ease of use - with the best aspects of today’s technology. Lease and his top-notch team of engineers, led by Sam Fung and Hovik Chibukhchyan, have carefully developed a new way to connect to their gauges in a way that eliminates the wires and clips presently used by tank monitoring companies to connect and read tank fluid levels. They have, in essence, replaced the wires and clips with tiny reliable low energy Bluetooth transponder technology. This



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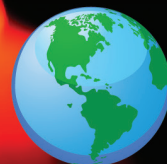
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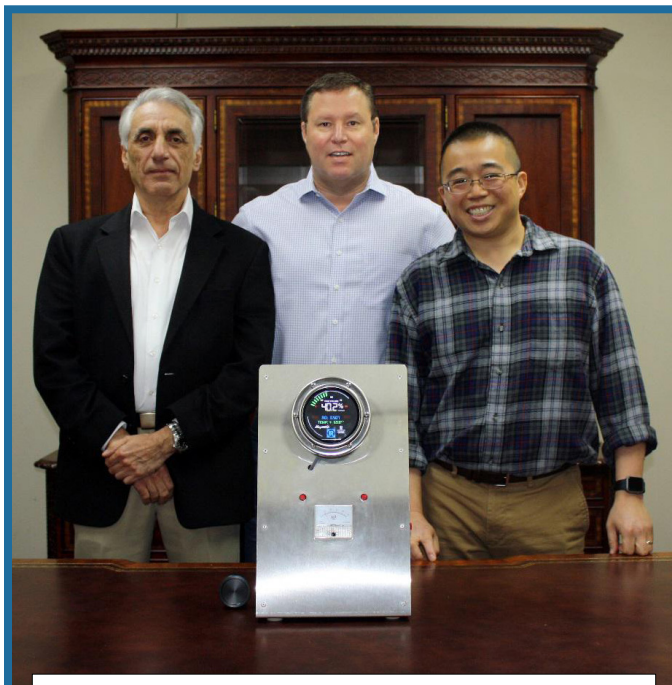


The Original Propane Additive Line

can allow drivers to see the fluid level in their truck without leaving the cab or allow the office to get the liquid inventory of all trucks in the yard remotely. Eventually, this could mean that remote tank monitoring companies will no longer need wires and clips, thereby making installations simpler, faster, and easier and increasing the accuracy of the gauge reading. That is great, but it does not stop there. The Rochester Gauges team then connected wirelessly to the temperature probe on that same bobtail, so now the driver can see, via an easy to use smartphone app, the temperature compensated (or non-compensated) liquid level in his tank and set alarms to alert him of low level or high-level situations. These innovations will initially allow drivers and companies to have a more accurate and instant reading of the fuel in their trucks. Eventually, Rochester Gauges sees this technology allowing the industry (via the tank monitoring companies already in the market) to more easily and affordably see the

volume of fuel in every tank they have in the market. Rochester Gauges first grew to market dominance via their reliable and affordable gauges, then furthered their use via the remote ready gauges. The wireless innovations now being rolled out by this cutting-edge company will no doubt increase the benefit and ease of use associated with their gauges, thereby serving our industry's demand for simple to use, reliable, and affordable tools that help us all to reduce operating costs and increase bottom line profits. Lessons learned... In today's marketplace, it is essential to continue innovation based on industry-led demands. Companies who listen to their customers and develop new innovative tools that serve them well will provide a win-win gain with benefits all around. Dreaming big and creating unprecedented solutions will prove to have lasting benefits for everyone.

Customer-centric innovation wins yet again.



Rochester Gauges lead team (left to right): Hovik Chibukhchyan, engineer, Ben Lease, president and CEO, and Sam Fung, product manager.