

Keeping faith, taking new opportunities

Gas Innovations Vice-President **Ashley Madray** says there have been positives and negatives during Covid-19

By Nick Parkinson

Gas Innovations is usually concerned with natural gas liquids (NGLs) as well as natural gas and hydrogen. But during the coronavirus (Covid-19) crisis, the Houston-based producer, purifier and packager of high purity hydrocarbon specialty gases has been busy with other products.

Gas Innovations' Vice-President Ashley Madray has found the coronavirus pandemic to have a negative impact on some products, but an increased demand for others.

"Our routine product line has been impacted and some more negatively than others," Madray told *gasworld*.

"This impact has not been across the board by product, but is much more related to our customer base and who have remained open or are considered

essential. Some of our new products have had a positive impact. Our abilities to package have created some short-term opportunities as we have packaged alcohols for disinfectants and sanitizers.

"It has been different and interesting. Some of these new customers are also new to what they are doing as well. The shortages related to disinfectants and sanitizer have created quite a domestic demand and those who have been able to respond are busy packaging these products. We are remaining the wholesale supplier with final packaging for retail being completed by our customers."

Gas Innovations provides hydrocarbons in the full spectrum of packages, including disposable through rail and international shipment via ISO containers to the US and worldwide.

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The company specializes in high purity refrigerant hydrocarbons for LNG liquefaction projects - both start-ups and ongoing supply, high purity hydrocarbons as diluents and co-monomers for polyethylene production, and for use in producing electronics, specialty fine chemicals, and pharmaceuticals.

Liquefied natural gas (LNG) distribution is a large part of Gas Innovations' business and Madray remains confident of its potential despite the current climate and impact of the global pandemic.

"All areas of our business are impacted to some extent by Covid, and LNG is no different. All areas of the economy are affected by this Covid," Madray said.

"Different pundits have different opinions about what is happening in LNG right now, or what is going to happen. We are continuing to move forward with our plans to distribute LNG and we are trying to be sober





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about the overall picture. If you are making price comparisons with diesel for routine applications, then now is not the time to switch to [LNG]. But on the other hand we will position Gas Innovations for this change when others may not.

“Everyone has to have energy, and regardless of the price, we have a long way to go to replace hydrocarbons.

“Our distributors have brought us opportunities for applications using up to 36 tanker loads per day of LNG. These inquiries and others demonstrate the potential of this market. As I have been quoted before, the distribution of LNG by truck belongs to our industry.

“We continue to meet with LNG suppliers about truck loading. Historically this mode of supply is handled by the peak shaving plants, much smaller than the large LNG producers along the coastal areas of the US and abroad.”

Another clean fuel Gas Innovations is involved with is compressed hydrogen, although Madray says there are hurdles to clear for wider adoption of hydrogen fuel cell vehicles and trucks.

“Fuel cells are really interesting but there are lot of trucks on the road,” Madray said. “How can we make that many high capacity battery fuel cells so quickly? We are more involved with compressed hydrogen, and will continue in the pursuit of the compressed hydrogen market. There is a growing place for independents as the

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market for fuel cells grow and their related requirement for hydrogen and services grows with this market. These opportunities are not limited to California or limited geographies, but will afford our industry opportunities in most geographies.”

Where does Madray see Gas Innovations’ position in the hydrogen economy, and what are the company’s capabilities in that space?

“As more hydrogen is required for the fuel cell industry, a greater level of services will be required,” Madray said.

“I see this as an opportunity for the independent distributors. There are many distributors who purchase their cylinder hydrogen from their suppliers versus filling for themselves. Those who fill for themselves will have an obvious competitive advantage, and should be in a position to more competitively serve the demand of the growing fuel cell market.” [gw](#)