

COMPANIES TO WATCH

LPG spotlight

Campora Propane

CALIFORNIA RETAILER FUELS COMMUNITY BREAKFAST FOR 10,000-PLUS ATTENDEES

BY CARLY MCFADDEN //

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Out West, Campora Propane runs the rodeo – literally.

Retailer Campora Propane, which serves residential, agriculture and commercial customers from 15 locations in Northern California and western Nevada, partners with the Asphalt Cowboys of Redding, California, during the community's Rodeo Week each year.

The nonprofit Asphalt Cowboys hosts Rodeo Week, a multi-day event chock-full of a cowboy's favorite activities – quick-draw shootout, line dances and even a mock hold-up that the public is given clues to solve – that culminates at week's end with the Redding Rodeo.

Of the week's events, a fan favorite is the Asphalt Cowboys pancake breakfast. While the event was canceled last year due to the pandemic, the pancake breakfast was back full swing in 2021. This year's event was held May 14 at the Redding Civic Center.

About 23 years ago, Campora Propane acquired Redding-based propane retailer Frambes. Frambes had donated propane

tanks to the pancake breakfast since the 1950s, and Campora Propane decided to carry on the tradition.

"It's always important to be heavily involved in the community," says John Dutra, general manager of Campora's Redding and Yreka locations. "Especially an organization like Asphalt Cowboys – it has a great tradition in Redding for supporting charities and supporting the rodeo. The rodeo is a big deal here, especially in Northern California. So, we just want to continue that tradition of community support and helping them out any way that we can."

The Asphalt Cowboys pancake breakfast served about 700 people when it was founded in 1954. As of 2019, the event served more than 10,000 hungry attendees. Campora donates all of the propane required to fuel the event's griddles, which run from about 4 to 10 a.m. the day of the event. To feed that many people, the retailer donates five 420-pound DOT propane containers that hold about 100 gallons each.

Campora's Redding location promotes the breakfast by hanging posters and selling tickets at \$5 each. The day before the event, a few Campora employees fill

up the five upright tanks and head to the breakfast site to set them up, along with all of the required piping. Safety is key, Dutra notes, and says the employees ensure the equipment meets code and works properly.

"It's almost like setting up a restaurant outdoors," he says.

The event this year was a success, Dutra says. While Campora has donated to the breakfast every year for the past two decades, this year was especially well received as people were eager to gather again while the nation slowly returns to normalcy post-pandemic.

In addition to the pancake breakfast, Campora donates propane to local Boy Scouts and fire teams fighting wildfires throughout the year. The retailer was acquired by Energy Distribution Partners in December 2020. Dutra says that since the acquisition, Campora has sustained its company culture of treating each other and the community as family.

"I think we have a different frame of mind of how we treat customers in the propane business," says Dutra. "We develop a great relationship on our customer service side of things, trying to help people in any way we can." **LPG**

COMPANY PROFILE



CAMPORA PROPANE

YEAR FOUNDED // 1946

FOUNDER // Dominick Campora

OWNER // Energy Distribution Partners

HEADQUARTERS // Stockton, California

EMPLOYEES // 95