



Chelsea Aiken, General Manager High Grade Propane (left) and **Nelson Aiken**, Former Owner High Grade Propane

High Grade Gas Service was founded in 1957 by the Aiken family and was run as a family operation for the next 65 years. Through the family's commitment to taking exceptional care of its customers – plus its reputation for providing safe, reliable propane service – High Grade continued to grow at a very steady pace.

In fact, its growth in recent years was so strong, Nelson Aiken and his family members were having a difficult time finding and training enough qualified personnel to staff the operation.

According to Nelson, the family had considered the company's transition for many years but had kept the idea on the back burner. Then, in 2022 – given the continued growth and challenge of staffing the business – they decided to explore a sale transaction. "Once we decided it was time to take steps to support our growth, we consid-

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Nelson shared that once they began talks with EDP, the whole process only took about 10 weeks, with the transaction closing in November of 2022. Nelson said the sale process went smoothly and the entire integration has gone well, too. He said everyone at EDP has been really good to work with.

Upon closing, all High Grade employees remained with the company, including third-generation family members Chelsea Aiken and Ryan Aiken. Chelsea – who has been recognized as a Rising Leader in the propane industry – was named General Manager. Chelsea had been actively involved in the business from a very young age and officially joined High Grade after graduating from Wesleyan University. “I was surprised and grateful that EDP trusted me enough to name me General Manager,” said Chelsea. “They continue to provide me with guidance and support.”

Chelsea added, “The big reason we chose EDP was because of their business model. We knew they would keep our company’s name and take good care of our customers and our employees. In fact, our employees now have better benefits than we could provide them.”

Chelsea said one of her main goals at the company is to continue to embrace technology to make the business more efficient. Another goal is to continue to provide the kind of high-touch personal service High Grade customers have come to expect. “My dad was incredibly dedicated to building the company and providing exceptional service while balancing his work with spending time with our family,” said Chelsea. “I am committed to continuing his legacy and – with the support provided by EDP – I know the company will continue to grow.”

