

Eastern Liquids LLC

Targa rail terminal operator targets fast, efficient and safe loading of LPG

BY BRIAN RICHESSON | Senior editor

Eastern Liquids LLC has teamed with Targa Midstream Services for the past three years to operate a major wholesale terminal in the Northeast. And it continues to grow.

The Sparta Junction Terminal expansion opened on Dec. 16, 2005, in Sparta, N.J., for three main reasons: to expand Targa's footprint in the region, fill a supply/distribution void and meet increasing pressure from retailers for reliable supply. Targa markets and sells the propane, which comes primarily from Canada for this region, while Eastern operates the railroad terminal on Targa's behalf.

"The terminal allows for fast, efficient, safe and easy loading of the cargo tank vehicles that frequent the facility," says Robert Nicholson III, president and CEO of Eastern Propane Corp. and Eastern Liquids LLC. "The delivery truck drivers are very complimentary toward the ease of loading at the facility."

Eastern Propane's 17-acre rail facility has received, stored and distributed propane and industrial gases via rail and truck from this location since 1966. This part of the terminal's expansion, however, encompasses 5.6 acres and features state-of-the-art equipment, Nicholson notes. The equipment used includes OPW Engineered Systems loading arms, designed to improve the safety and ease of unloading LPG railcars.

The propane is unloaded into fixed storage and then into a cargo tank vehicle (although railcars can unload directly into transports). The water ca-

capacity of the terminal's fixed storage is 240,000 gallons, but siding space that can inventory about 50 railcars brings total storage to about 1.7 million gallons.

"The feedback from drivers has been rewarding to the terminal operators and management," Nicholson says. "We consistently hear that the terminal is easy to load and fast. It is not unusual for transports to enter and exit the terminal in less than a half-hour."

Since opening, the Targa terminal has handled 30 million gallons and processed 1,000 railcars. Volume has increased on an annual basis as the region learns about the location, dependable supply and fast loading of trucks, Nicholson says. The facility is designed to accommodate about 30 million gallons and 1,000 railcars annually; once those numbers are reached, Eastern will look to expand its operations.

Terminal hours are 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and are extended during peak periods. Most of the propane unloaded from there is used for home heating.

"We are currently designing the entryway to accommodate the ensuing growth," Nicholson says. "We also have plans to automate the terminal to run 24/7 in order to offer the highest level of convenience to the terminal customers so they can, in turn, offer the best service to their customers." **LPG**



Robert Nicholson III, president

LOCATION: Sparta, N.J.

FAMILY FOCUS: Eastern Liquids is the terminal operating sister company of Eastern Propane (Oak Ridge, N.J.)

FOUNDED: Robert Nicholson Sr. founded Eastern Propane in 1938; his four grandchildren operate the business today. Robert B. Nicholson, Eastern Propane's current chairman, purchased the Sparta Junction terminal property in 1966. Eastern Liquids was formed in 2004 for the construction and operation of the Targa rail terminal.

EMPLOYEES: Eastern Liquids utilizes subcontracted employees from Eastern Propane.

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www.easternliquids.com
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