

## **Propane Tanks Fuel “Underground Movement” Among Builders**

A survey released by the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) found that 34 percent of homes built by surveyed builders over the last 12 months in locations with partial or no access to natural gas feature an underground propane tank. The survey also uncovered that while access to natural gas plays a role in influencing a decision to use underground tanks, outdoor rooms and stand-by generators are also driving builder interest.

According to the survey, once builders understood the benefits of underground propane tanks, their intention to use propane in the next 12 months jumped from 18 to 29 percent in homes they intend to build. Underground tank installations are strongest among builders in the Northeast followed by builders in the Midwest and West regions.

Two completed developments fueled by underground tanks were recently named PERC's *PROPANE Exceptional Energy*® Award Winners for 2007. Lana'i Developers, LLC was awarded for its utilization of propane to fuel luxury homes. Lana'i Developers' luxury project, The Palms at Manele in Hawaii, consists of 38 ocean view residential condominiums which will feature a centralized underground propane tank and services lines serving outdoor spas to water heaters.

Outlook Construction of Hawley, PA was also selected for its development of *Energy Star* homes in StoneField Estates & Commons. These 116 homes use propane to fuel appliances such as cooking ranges, dryers and water heaters. The combination of these appliances allows homeowners to experience significant energy savings and have the flexibility of installing additional appliances to enhance their home's beauty.

According to Chuck Skowronski, Chairman /CEO of Outlook Construction, “Underground tanks allow my homebuyers to have the benefits of saving energy by installing high-efficiency propane furnaces and water heaters; enhance the beauty of their homes with gas lights, logs, and

fireplaces; and enjoy the flexibility of adding luxury items such as pool and spa heaters and backup generators for comfort and recreation.”

High-efficiency hydronic heating systems such as radiant floor heat also appear to be adding to builder interest in using propane, with builders saying they would install radiant floor heat in 13 percent of their homes in the next 12 months, an 11 percent increase over current usage of just 2 percent.

And custom builders are far more likely to use underground propane tanks, with outdoor living spaces playing a large role in driving use – 60 percent of the homes built by the custom builders surveyed feature propane by preference, and 44 percent of their homes feature an underground storage system to fuel outdoor room applications.

“As builders work with homebuyers to design cost-effective homes that deliver added value, homebuilders can count on their local propane retailer to help them understand the benefits of building a home that maximizes the benefits of an underground storage system,” said Jim Hitzemann of Ray Murray, Inc., Huntersville, NC. “Propane-fueled appliances such as tankless water heaters and high-efficiency gas furnaces help to fuel interest in propane, but the added value propane delivers for outdoor rooms and stand-by power-generation are also important drivers.”

### **About the Survey**

The Web-based survey was conducted by the NAHB Research Center on behalf of the Propane Education & Research Council in March 2006. A nationally representative sample of 294 builders participated in the survey. The NAHB Research Center promotes innovation in housing technology to improve the durability, affordability, and environmental performance of homes and home building products. *For additional information about building with propane, please visit [www.usepropane.com](http://www.usepropane.com). For more information regarding the survey, please visit [www.propanecouncil.org](http://www.propanecouncil.org).*