



In addition to growing the family business, ThompsonGas, Randy Thompson can be seen working on a new venture with his wife, Jennifer: Big Cork Vineyards.

Fueling Success

For More Than Six Decades, ThompsonGas Has Served the Community's Propane Needs.

by Ann Davis + photo by Mary Pat Kelley, Photography by Dale

At the ripe old age of 26, Randy Thompson found himself at the helm of his family's propane business. But Randy didn't intend to follow in his family's footsteps. In high school he was very active in the arts and leaned toward attending music school. During a tour in the Marines, he decided to study business instead. After his service, he went to his father's alma mater, Shepherd University.

When Randy joined the business 15 years ago, ThompsonGas had just one store, three delivery trucks and 8-10 employees serving three states. The business now boasts a whopping 30 branches, 300 vehicles and 320 employees in nine states. Randy's grandparents Lloyd and Dortha Thompson began the company in Boonsboro in 1946, and ThompsonGas was a feature of the community for 50 years before Randy took over. So, what finally led to such exponential growth?

"I believe people are gifted with certain things," says Randy, "one such gift is drive or ambition. There is something in me that drives me to do what I do" — continually building on what his family gave him, making acquisitions of competitors to grow the business and, with added size and resources, providing a better value to customers. "We

always try to have a fair price, which isn't always the lowest," Randy admits. But, "we provide top-notch service for the price people are paying — from equipment and supplies to working out various payment plans... And that's what people want, a fair deal."

TAKING THE REIGNS

Randy says what surprises him most since he took control of ThompsonGas are the new and creative ways his employees find value for their customers. "I've gotten a number of great ideas from people in every aspect of the business, from drivers to customer service," says Randy. "Even customers have come up with ways to improve our business models." Randy strives to surround himself with employees who keep generating these good ideas, many of whom have been with the company since before he became president. "My ambition doesn't necessarily mean that I'm the smartest guy in the room, but that drive pushes me to find people to complement the weaknesses that I have."

Besides a growing customer base, ThompsonGas has been recognized by *LP Gas*, a national magazine for the propane industry. Ten years ago, the company ranked in the magazine's Top 50 businesses. This past year, they nearly broke the Top 20, and they aim to reach the Top 10 by 2015. Also by 2015, the company intends to serve every state east of Michigan. Randy strongly believes this success is not just for him, his family and employees. "Success allows you to be a productive member of society. Our success allows us to be involved in a number of community scholarships, as well as the American Cancer Society, working for breast cancer awareness and the Wounded Warrior Project. ♡

ThompsonGas
'Think Outside the Tank'

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