



Press Release
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**Central Hudson Propane Plant Utilizes New “Thermablok Aerogel® Insulation,
Saving Money and Surpassing Government Regulated Fire Codes**

Poughkeepsie, New York – Faced with a failing fire protection system at eight, 30,000-gallon above-ground propane storage tanks, Central Hudson engineers have designed a new system using Thermablok aerogel insulating material to restore safety features to the tanks that actually surpass the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) requirements.

The propane tanks, required to run Central Hudson’s two massive propane/air mixing plants, are critical components to the area’s gas distribution system. According to Central Hudson Gas & Electric, both plants are used to supplement the natural gas system during peak loads by creating a propane-air mixture with comparable characteristics of natural gas. By using this supplementation system, Central Hudson’s Operation Services can lower the expense of natural gas during the peak winter months and pass the savings on to customers.

Central Hudson Gas & Electric Assistant Engineer Jeff Doane began to research alternatives for the system’s 15-year-old aluminum-jacketed fiberglass insulation system which had deteriorated to the point of leakage, permitting water to penetrate and saturate the insulating, fire-retarding aspect of the system. Doane set out to design a replacement system that would comply with NFPA requirements and solve the ever present water leakage issue.

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In his research, Doane learned about a product called Thermablok, an insulating material that uses the same recently discovered aerogel technology used by NASA on the space shuttle and Mars missions. In fact, aerogel is the highest insulating material known to exist, Thermablok was recently named to NASA's 2009 Top 49 Product Spin-off list.

Tampa-based Acoustiblok Inc., Thermablok's parent company, received international attention for Thermablok's role in the prestigious 2009 Solar Decathlon competition, in which the energy-conserving house built by architectural students at California College of the Arts (CCA) and Santa Clara University (SCU) won first place in the Architecture division with its state-of-the-art *Refract House*. Thermablok was featured in the Refract House, chosen for inclusion because of its incomparable insulating properties, the highest in existence.

Doane pointed out Thermablok's Class A fire rating, 10.3-per-inch R-value, and hydrophobic properties that lead him to single out Thermablok as the best solution for the propane tank insulating problem. Additionally, its weightlessness and thin formation offered significant cost savings and longevity for this type of installation over other options. No prep work was necessary on the Central Hudson tank before the Thermablok installation, and, since only two, 10mm layers were needed – a far cry from the four-inches of fiberglass insulation used on the previous, unsuccessful application, Thermablok turned out to be the perfect solution for the propane tank project.

Made in the USA, Thermablok is 100-percent recyclable, impervious to moisture and mold and unaffected by age. "Green" energy-conscious architects may soon be incorporating this latest answer to energy conservation and reducing CO₂ emissions. Just one, ¼-inch x 1½-inch (6.25mm x 38mm) strip of Thermablok added to only one edge of each stud before hanging drywall breaks the *conductive* "thermal bridging" and can increase the overall wall R-factor by more than 40 percent (US Department of Energy/JM Laboratories.)

The remaining tanks at both propane-air plants remain covered in the old, deteriorating insulation, but the long-term plan is to cover all the tanks with Thermablok insulation followed by an aluminum clad jacket system, a combination that is expected to withstand the severe environmental elements of the area and last for decades.

For more information about Thermablok and its parent company Acoustiblok, Inc., contact sales@thermablok.com, visit our website at www.thermablok.com, or call us at 813.980.1400.

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