

LPG a cleaner fuel alternative

ONE OF the few beneficiaries of volatile fuel costs is the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) industry. The rise of pump gas prices to as high as P60 a liter opened the eyes of many energy users to LPG as the more affordable and cleaner fuel alternative.

Pump prices may have dropped since then but the keen interest in LPG-fed equipment and appliances has remained high in the rising business district of Bonifacio Global City (BGC) where a piped-in gas network is maintained by its affiliate Bonifacio Gas.

The fuel price hike has spurred large institutions like high-end residential condominiums and hotels to shift from diesel-powered boilers and other equipment to those that run on LPG because of cost savings, according to Edwin Laset, general manager of Bonifacio Gas.

He adds that as a result of residents' warm acceptance of piped-in

gas in a number of condominiums like Pacific Plaza Towers, Bonifacio Ridge, and Penhurst, developers of upcoming residential towers have also opted to offer access to the LPG network as an added benefit to buyers. Other developments offering piped-in gas include Serendra, Kensington Place, Grand Hampton and Fort Legend Towers.

Mr. Laset observes that returning Filipino residents who have lived in Singapore and Hongkong where extensive piped-in gas networks are maintained have helped spur a growing interest in the use of LPG to run appliances. In addition to gas stoves, LPG-fed appliances include water heaters, washing machines, clothes dryers, and air conditioning systems. Compared to their counterparts that run on electricity, these equipment offer households a savings of about 40%.

On their own, several local entrepreneurs have seen the wisdom in using LPG to power equipment. One

of them is Mike Hufana, who owns six laundry shops in Manila and Cavite. Because of soaring electricity costs, Mr. Hufana uses gas-fired dryers which he ordered from SM Appliance Center.

Tailpipe emissions of LPG-run cars have lower ozone-harming potential and 10% to 20% less carbon dioxide, methane and nitrogen oxide emissions. The same applies to LPG equipment in comparison to their diesel-fed counterparts.

Mr. Laset points out that should all these LPG technologies and appliances become more available in the Philippines, residents of BGC stand to benefit most because of its existing and fully-functioning piped-in gas system. Not only will BGC residents spend less on fuel and electricity costs, they are also more likely to enjoy cleaner air. "It will only be a matter of time before consumers fully appreciate the benefits of LPG and heighten the demand for it," he says.