

creates a type of flameless oxyfuel without the need to replace existing air-fuel burners. As no alternative or additional burners are required, minimizing installation downtime, the legacy air-fuel system can also be re-instated at any time. This mitigates potential risk associated with the implementation and allows for optimal and flexible operations in response to fluctuating fuel costs and production requirements.

NuCO2 and Praxair Form Alliance

NuCO2 (www.nuco2.com), the largest supplier in the US of beverage carbonation services for the restaurant and hospitality industry, owned by Los Angeles-based private equity firm Aurora Capital Group, has formed a strategic alliance with Praxair, Inc. (www.praxair.com). The alliance includes a long term supply agreement for NuCO2's

purchase of bulk CO₂ and beverage carbonation-related high-pressure cylinder gases from Praxair.

In addition, NuCO2 has acquired certain of Praxair Distribution Inc.'s retail beverage carbonation business assets in the US, which include approximately 7,500 customer locations. This alliance boosts the number of NuCO2's total customer locations throughout the US to approximately 141,000.

"This alliance with Praxair complements our business and provides NuCO2 with an important supply relationship for raw materials," said Michael E. DeDomenico, NuCO2's Chairman and CEO. "The acquisition of approximately 7,500 Praxair customer locations is a sizable addition to NuCO2's existing business. This is an excellent fit overall, as NuCO2 shares the same high quality and service standards that Praxair Distribution Inc.'s beverage carbonation customers have enjoyed. We are planning for a smooth and seamless integration of the business into NuCO2's existing service platform."

Tiger Optics Adds Distributors

To keep pace with soaring demand, Tiger Optics, LLC (www.tigeroptics.com) has formed new partnerships with eight distributors in Europe and the US to facilitate sales and support of its laser-based trace gas analyzers. The move significantly expands the manufacturer's global reach and enhances its ability to serve customers.

"Our newest distributors deliver solutions for critical applications ranging from industrial process control to ambient molecular contamination monitoring," said Lisa Bergson, Tiger Optics' Founder and Chief Executive. "By partnering with Bernt Messtechnik GmbH, S.E.C. Scientific Equipment Co. Ltd., A&LCO Industries, APT, SPA, OmniProcess AB, Instrumentación Analítica, and Flowmaster, we are well positioned to support our customers' gas analysis and clean-room monitoring needs."

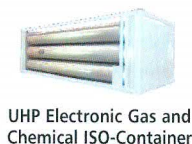
Tiger Optics introduced the world's first commercial "Continuous Wave Cavity Ring-Down Spectroscopy" (CW CRDS) analyzer in 2001. Today, more than 800 robust Tiger units are at work in places like semiconductor fabrication plants, gas manufacturers, chemical companies, and metrology institutes. Returning customers account for more than 65 percent of the company's sales. ■

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