

# FOUR DECADES OF LEADERSHIP

**F**orty years ago, the U.S. ethanol industry was struggling to become a stable, growing, and viable industry. In the face of oil industry resistance to a new competitor, most understood it would take consistent federal policy to enable reasonable growth in renewable fuels. In early 1981, a small group of companies, representing ethanol producers, investors, feed suppliers, engineering firms, and farmers met to form the Renewable Fuels Association, whose mission it would be to grow the industry.

From just 175 million gallons of production in 1980, the industry has indeed grown to be an essential component of America's fuel and feed complex, with a total production capacity of more than 17 billion gallons of renewable fuel in 2020. Such remarkable success was driven by decades of leadership by the members and staff of the Renewable Fuels Association.

One of the first things the RFA did was form a Technical Committee to establish standards, identify technologies, and assure the safe production, distribution, and marketing of ethanol-blended gasolines. The RFA's Technical Committee was critical to the industry's growth and lasting success. It remains so today.

In the early years, industry growth was driven by a tax incentive available to gasoline marketers, fueling the use of ethanol as a gas extender and octane enhancer, largely by independent marketers looking for a competitive edge against the major oil companies. Beginning with the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, however, renewable fuel policy was redirected to meet air quality policy goals. Initially, that meant reducing exhaust emissions of carbon mon-

oxide and ozone-forming VOCs, particularly with the use of reformulated gasoline. Later, with the passage of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, ethanol and other renewable fuels were called upon to address global climate change by, for the first-time, requiring carbon-reducing renewable fuels to be used nationally. The Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) transformed U.S. energy policy and helped create the robust U.S. ethanol industry we have today.

The RFA was the driving force behind all these foundational policies. Not only did we provide the vision and technical expertise to help formulate and design these policies, but we also provided the shoe leather and elbow grease to get them adopted. The association has evolved over the years, becoming uniquely driven by ethanol producer membership. But it is clear that, for more than 40 years, RFA has provided the consistent leadership and sound technical analysis necessary to meet its original mission—growing the U.S. ethanol industry.

## HISTORICAL BIOREFINERY COUNT & PRODUCTION CAPACITY

| Year | Installed Ethanol Biorefineries | Total Installed Production Capacity (mgy) | Average Capacity per Biorefinery (mgy) |
|------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| 2000 | 56                              | 2,007                                     | 36                                     |
| 2005 | 95                              | 4,294                                     | 45                                     |
| 2010 | 204                             | 14,073                                    | 69                                     |
| 2015 | 214                             | 15,594                                    | 73                                     |
| 2020 | 209                             | 17,436                                    | 83                                     |

Source: RFA \* As of December for each year specified

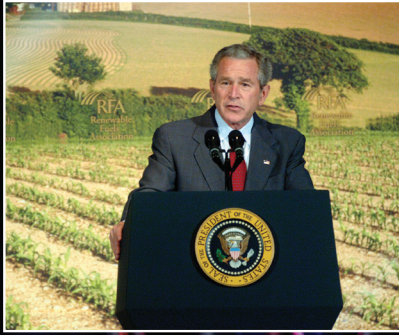
**BREAKING BARRIERS:** In October 2020, the RFA continued its leadership by electing Jeanne McCaherty, CEO of Guardian Energy LLC in Minnesota, to be its chairperson, the first woman to lead a national ethanol trade association. McCaherty reflects an evolving view of ethanol leaders who understand that future ethanol policy needs to be focused on today's pressing challenges, addressing global climate change and building new markets here and abroad to assure future growth in the U.S. renewable fuels industry.



PHOTO COURTESY BBI INTERNATIONAL



President Donald Trump visited RFA member company Southwest Iowa Renewable Energy (SIRE) in 2019 to celebrate regulations clearing the way for the year-round availability of E15, the 15 percent ethanol fuel blend. He toured the plant with SIRE CEO Mike Jerke and RFA President and CEO Geoff Cooper.



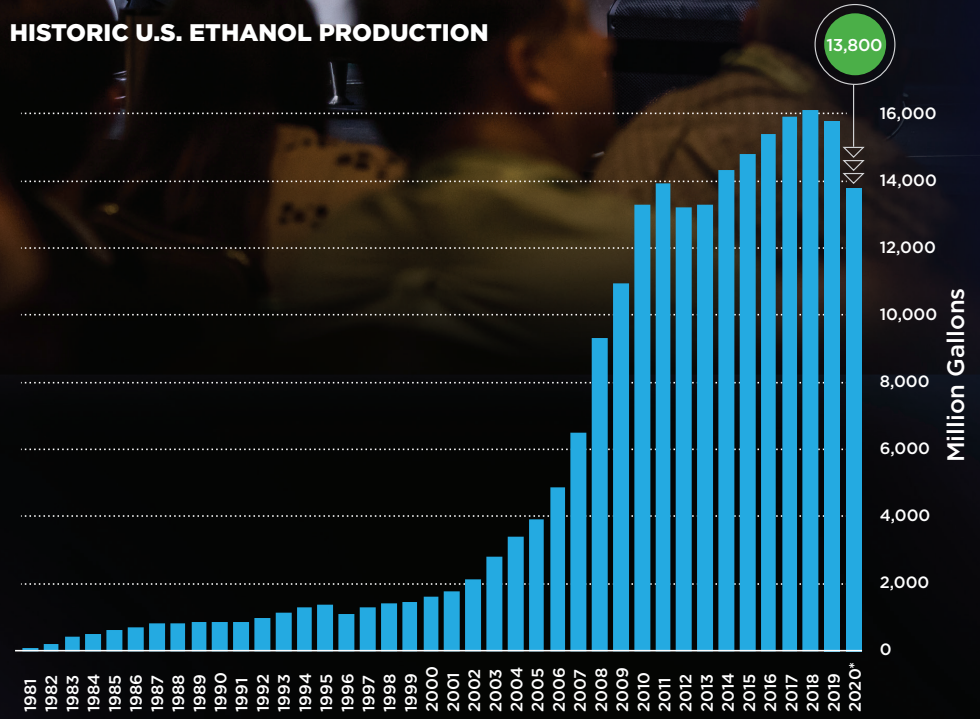
In 2006, President George W. Bush spoke at an RFA meeting in Washington. Fourteen years later, he was interviewed by RFA's Cooper at the 25th Annual National Ethanol Conference.



**Past RFA Chairmen**

- Joseph T. Elvove, 1981-1982
- Paul T. Burke, 1983-1984
- W. Robert Schwandt, 1985
- Art Stuenkel, 1986-1987
- Lauren Hill, 1988
- Linden Shepard, 1989
- Victor Shaio, 1990-1992
- Jack Huggins, 1993-1994
- Rich Jurgensen, 1995
- John Parker, 1996
- Ron Miller, 1997-2001
- Gary Smith, 2002-2003
- Bill Lee, 2004-2005
- Ron Miller, 2006-2007
- Chris Standlee, 2008-2010
- Chuck Woodside, 2011-2012
- Neill McKinstry, 2013-2014
- Randy Doyal, 2015-2016
- Mick Henderson, 2016-2017
- Neil Koehler, 2018-2019

**HISTORIC U.S. ETHANOL PRODUCTION**



Source: RFA and U.S. Energy Information Administration \* Estimated