

Natural Gas

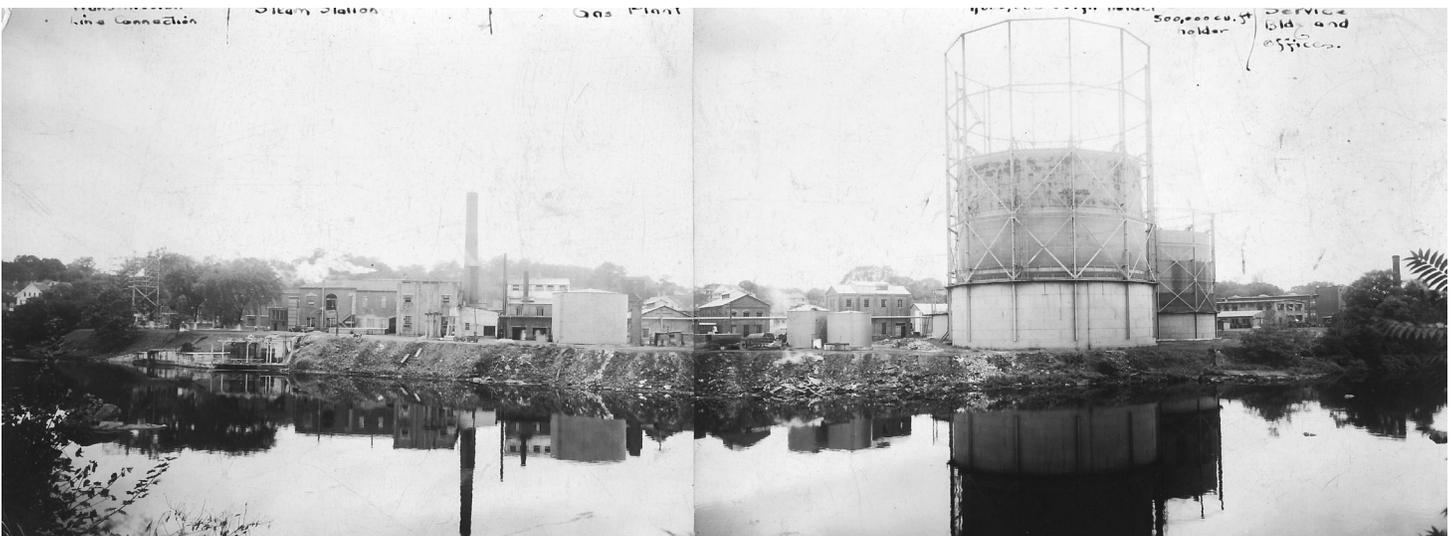
You Can Rely on Us! 2014 Marks the 110th Year Norwich Public Utilities has been providing reliable utility services to Norwich. Throughout the year in each issue of Community Matters we will be showcasing the various services that we provide to our community.

Norwich Public Utilities (NPU), the only municipal natural gas company in Connecticut, has been part of the Norwich community since 1904, but our roots go back much farther. Our gas story begins in 1854 when the privately-owned Norwich Gas Light Company was founded in the midst of the Industrial Revolution as the city was booming. The Norwich Gas Light Company was incorporated to manufacture inexpensive gas from coal to be used for lighting. Manufactured gas was stored in large holders (tanks) located at the South Golden Street facility. The holders would expand and contract as gas was manufactured and used. By 1890 electricity, provided by the newly founded Norwich Electric Light Company, began to supersede gas for lighting. In 1897, the two companies merged to form the Norwich Gas and Electric Company. By the end of the century City leaders determined it would be in the City's best interest to own the Norwich Gas and Electric Company. After a 6-year battle over franchise rights, on July 1, 1904 the City of Norwich purchased the company for \$235,000. During the Norwich Gas & Electric Department's first year of operation, there were 1,542 gas customers, gas cost 13.5 cents per Ccf (hundred cubic feet), and 428,760 Ccf of gas was manufactured throughout the year.

During the Hurricane of 1938, the gas plant located on the bank of the Shetucket River was rendered inoperable due to flooding. The first order of business once the storm resided was to provide a source of electric power to get the gas plant operating. With most of the electric distribution network destroyed, an interim solution was needed to provide power to this site. The American Thermos Bottle Company, located in Norwich, helped out by providing a way to dry out the motors needed for temporary power. Within two days the gas plant was back in operation. At that point, there was only about a 2 hour supply of gas left in the holders.

After World War II, just as Norwich experienced a building boom and gas use was expanding, a coal strike lead to restrictions on manufactured gas (coal was used in the manufacturing process). By 1953, however, manufacturing gas was no longer necessary as Norwich was able to obtain natural gas from the newly built pipeline from Texas. In addition to rendering the gas manufacturing process obsolete, natural gas -- unlike manufactured gas -- was usable for heating and cooking appliances. It was also more abundant and more affordable.

See Gas, continued on page 2



View of the Gas & Electric Plant, circa . Manufactured gas holders are in the foreground.

Gas, cont'd from pg. 1

Today, NPU provides almost 1 million dekatherms (Dth) of natural gas annually (approximately 10 million Ccf) through 146 miles of distribution lines within a 30-square mile service area to 9,400 homes and businesses.

Energize Norwich

Energize Norwich began as a simple request from customers to expand gas service. In Norwich, as well as throughout New England, #2 fuel oil is the predominant fuel choice for home heating. With oil prices climbing at record rates, Norwich residents are fortunate to have a cheaper, cleaner and more efficient alternative.

Around 2009, in the midst of a sewer expansion project, we determined that it would be economically feasible to extend the natural gas main in the trench where the sewer main was being installed. From that point, we began an outreach campaign to other neighborhoods. Based on input from residents in the various proposed project areas, it was obvious that natural gas was highly desired. What was unclear was how to pay for the cost of expanding the mains.

This problem was resolved in November 2010 when the citizens of Norwich approved a \$3 million bond issue to expand natural gas service. The increased revenues from new natural gas customers was used to pay off these bonds. Within two years 5.5 miles of new gas main was installed to approximately 450 customers and we still had a large demand for gas. In 2012, a second bond for \$8 million was again approved by the citizens of Norwich. By the end of 2013 NPU had added more than 15 miles of new gas main and over 1,000 new customers. These customers realize approximately \$1 million in fuel savings annually as a result of converting to natural gas.



NPU construction crew installs a new gas service.

Through Energize Norwich, NPU has partnered with the Connecticut Clean Energy Finance and Investment Authority (CEFIA) and Smart Power to promote the benefits of natural gas to Norwich residents through community-based initiatives, providing low-cost financing options through local lenders, and offering technical assistance. This initiative is in direct alignment with Governor Malloy's Comprehensive Energy Strategy and is one of 40 programs eligible for special financing through Energize Connecticut's Smart-E loan product.



Residents attend an informational meeting to learn more about natural gas conversion

For commercial and industrial customers, NPU again has partnered with the CEFIA and local lenders on a program called Connecticut Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE). C-PACE allows commercial, industrial, and multi-family property owners to take advantage of 0% interest financing (5-7 years) for energy efficiency and clean energy projects, including natural gas improvements. Owners are offered 100% up-front financing, and loans are guaranteed by a lien on the property.

Customers are attracted to the Energize Norwich and C-Pace programs for a variety of reasons, the most important being the immediate cost savings they realize after converting to natural gas. Currently, NPU customers will save as much as 50% when heating with natural gas compared to home heating oil. The payback on the cost to convert is reduced through several incentives NPU is offering, including installing the gas service to the home or business at no cost, waiving the standard connection fee, and providing a \$1,000 cash incentive to help with the cost of purchasing new equipment (for residential heating systems). NPU also offers a generous rebate program for customers who purchase high efficiency natural gas furnaces, boilers and water heaters.

For more information about Energize Norwich and to find out if you qualify to have a natural gas service installed to your home or business, contact Katie at 860-823-4514.

Call Before You Dig - Frequently Asked Questions

Be safe when working in your yard! If you have a project that involves digging, you must contact Call Before You Dig by calling 8-1-1 (1-800-922-4455). To help you understand more about the requirements for marking out underground utilities, we've provided these Frequently Asked Questions from CBYD. For more information, visit www.cbyd.com.

Q. Who must notify Call Before You Dig?

A. Anyone using power or mechanized equipment who disturbs the earth on or below the surface must call the clearinghouse for a location request.

Q. If I am hand digging, am I required to notify CBYD?

A. No, however, it makes good sense. Utility lines and cables can be easily broken or damaged with a spade, shovel, fence post digger or pick.

Q. If I hire someone to excavate, do I have to notify CBYD?

A. The excavator actually doing the digging is responsible for calling CBYD and obtaining a location request.

Q. How many days is my location request good for?

A. Thirty (30) days from the day notice is provided, not the start date of the excavation.

Q. What if I am digging on private property, must I still notify CBYD?

A. Regardless if the work performed is on private or public property, CBYD must be notified.

Q. Can I excavate if I haven't received all of my utility markings after receiving a location request from CBYD?

A. Should you suspect a utility company has not identified its' facility, contact the utility company directly. Remember, a phone call is much cheaper than civil litigation and more importantly, protects you and your employees from hidden underground dangers.

Q. Is hand digging required around natural gas facilities?

A. YES, it's the law. It's also a good practice to hand dig around any underground public utility facility.

Q. Should I contact the Center if my equipment scrapes, scratches, dents or breaks an underground utility pipe or cable? Also, can I try to fix it and let the utility company know later?

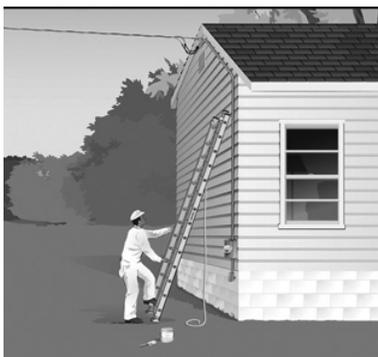
A. If your equipment comes into contact with an underground utility pipe or cable, notify the owner or operator of the facility immediately. DO NOT contact the Center. Take necessary safety precautions and keep the general public away from the facility. Never attempt to repair a pipe or cable without the utility company's authorization first.

Q. Is designating my work area in white paint or using stakes/flags really necessary?

A. Absolutely...and it's the law. Unless your work area is over 1000 feet and you have held a preconstruction meeting, your pre-marking helps the utility companies determine the extent and location of your work. This also ensures timely and accurate markings.

Q. If utility companies designate their underground facilities or notify me that no conflict exists at my work site, can I begin work prior to my start date?

A. NO. Although you may have received markings or were given an "all clear" by the affected utility companies, no excavation can begin until the legal start date indicated on your location request.



Be Safe Around Wires - Look UP and Look AROUND!

Never place a ladder or scaffolding near unprotected electric wires! NPU offers a free service to help protect you from electrical danger when working on your home or business. Before painting or siding your building's exterior, call us to cover the wires attached to the structure. This will protect you from accidentally touching wires, resulting in electrocution. Call us at 860-887-2555 to arrange to have wires covered. Please allow a minimum of two business days for this service. Covering will be removed in 30 days unless we receive a request from the property owner for an extension.

Communitycalendar

NORWICH PUBLIC UTILITIES

April 2014

April 25-27, 2014

The Friends of Otis Semi-Annual Book Sale

Early Bird Preview - Friday, April 25th:
9 - 10 AM (\$10 Admission)
Free General Admission:
Friday, April 25th: 10 AM - 3 PM
Saturday, April 26th: 10 AM - 3 PM
Sunday, April 27th: Noon - 3 PM

All proceeds from the sale will benefit the Otis Library. The community's support is greatly appreciated. Missed this sale? Don't worry, they have another one in the fall.



May 3, 2014

4th Annual Great Rotary Duck Race

The fun and festivities begin at 11:00 A.M. at the Fireman's Field, Yantic Fire Dept. The Yantic River Fire Department will be sponsoring a chicken barbecue. Come on down and enjoy food, music, games and arts and crafts for the kids. Sponsored by the Norwich Sunshine Rotary. Visit www.NorwichRotaryDuckRace.com for more information.

May 2, 2014

World Youth Celebration "Street Arts Festival"

Come Celebrate the Rich Diversity of Norwich. Sponsored by the Norwich Anti-Bullying Coalition, the Street Arts Festival takes place on Friday, May 2nd from 6 PM - 9 PM on Broadway. Enjoy performances by the youth of Norwich and come paint on a Peace Mural. Special appearance by Booglz the Clown. For more information, contact Debbie Kievits at 860-373-8630

May 4, 2014

Thames River Family Program/ Martin House Annual Luncheon and Auction

The 21st annual luncheon to benefit the programs at Thames River Family Program and Martin House will be held at the Mystic Marriott Hotel from 11:30 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. Events include a luncheon and silent auction. Tickets (\$45 pp) may be purchased online at www.trfp.org or by calling 860-887-3288.

May 10, 2014

Center for Hospice Care Walk 2014

Fundraising walk (or run!) in Mohegan Park to benefit the Center for Hospice Care (formally Hospice of Southeastern CT). Registration at 9:00 AM, Walk begins at 10:00 AM. Rain or shine. For more information, visit <http://hospicesect.kintera.org>



May 31, 2014

Riverfest Dragon Boat Races and Business Expo

Enjoy Dragon boat races at the scenic Howard Brown Park in downtown Norwich. For more information, contact the Greater Norwich Chamber of Commerce at 860-887-1647 or visit www.norwichchamber.com.

June 12 - 15, 2014

Butterfly Pavilion

Hart's Greenhouse, 43 Clinton Avenue. June 12-15, 2014. Sponsored by Chelsea Botanical Gardens. For more information, including cost and hours of operation, contact chelseagardens@gmail.com or visit www.chelseagardens.org.

July-Aug, 2014

Rock the Docks

The Annual "Rock the Docks" concert series at Howard Brown Park on the Norwich waterfront. Wednesdays, starting July 9th, from 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. For more information, contact the Greater Norwich Chamber of Commerce at 860-887-1647 or visit www.norwichchamber.com.

Local events can be found on the Community Calendar on our website, norwichpublicutilities.com, and the calendar on the City of Norwich's website, norwichct.org.

The Winter Moratorium ends May 1st. Customers protected by the Moratorium must contact NPU to avoid service termination. We are here to assist you -- please contact us at your earliest convenience. Call the Customer Service Center at 860-887-2555, Monday-Friday, 8 AM - 5 PM.



This bulletin is printed on paper with 50% post-consumer fiber, and it costs about 10 cents to print. Proudly printed in Norwich.

Here to Serve You

Visit our web site for more information:
www.norwichpublicutilities.com

Please call, fax or email us your questions, comments and suggestions.
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TEL: 860-887-2555 Fax: 860-823-4172 Email: communitymatters@npumail.com