

NPU you!



A community newsletter for the customers of

Norwich Public Utilities

Rep. Joe Courtney discusses dam repairs with NPU

As part of a regular communication on the operations and investments of Norwich Public Utilities (NPU), Congressman Joe Courtney has expressed an interest in the 8th Street Hydro Facility on the Shetucket River.

“With so much focus on federal investment in critical infrastructure, I am interested in learning more about this interesting and important component of NPU’s Electric Division,” said Courtney. “My team and I will be researching federal programs that could help NPU take better care of this unique and important asset.”

The current Greenville Dam was built in 1882 and sits on the Shetucket River, which flows downstream to combine with the Yantic River to form the Thames River, which is 15 miles upstream from Long Island Sound.



NPU’s hydro facilities are an important part of its history and connection to the community. While the technology behind the facility may seem quaint, the structure remains very reliable; newer equipment or a replacement dam would not necessarily be as effective for our operations.

This NPU hydro facility generates approximately 2.2 megawatts of electricity, which is enough to power approximately 2,000 homes for a year. By generating

this electricity on its own, NPU saves its customers approximately \$900,000 a year on energy that we don’t have to purchase.

Generating this ‘green’ energy allows us to provide our customers with a component of their energy that is renewable. When added to electricity from our solar gardens and the power we purchase from CMEEC, the electricity we provide our customers is nearly 20% renewable – and we do not charge our customers a premium for this benefit.

Given the challenges of low water levels in the summer and ice floes in the winter, the NPU hydro facility is in operations about 8 months out of the year.

The timber cribs are filled with gravel and arranged in three sections – upper, middle and low; NPU maintains and repairs approximately 1/3 of the timber gates each year, investing approximately \$150,000 - \$200,000 annually.

A major upgrade to this facility would require an investment of approximately \$2.5 million, which would allow for newer, more durable materials to be installed which would in turn reduce the costs of our regular maintenance.

NPU is committed to providing Congressman Courtney with regular updates on the hydro facility in the weeks and months ahead.

NPU is prepared for severe weather

Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) is prepared to respond to severe weather and has enhanced how it will communicate with customers during emergencies. As part of its enhanced customer communications efforts, NPU has implemented two new technologies.

First, an outage map was added to the NPU website (www.norwichpublicutilities.com) to provide customers with a snapshot of outages across the city. The map automatically updates every ten minutes and display clusters of customers out of service, not individual homes or businesses. Should a customer see that an outage is impacting their neighborhood on the outage map, a call into NPU’s Customer Service Center will not be necessary.

Second, NPU will make greater use of their ‘robo-call’ system, CodeRed, to make automated calls to customers to provide updates on outages, progress with restoration, and important safety messages. While automated calls have been used on a limited basis by NPU in the past, in a major storm, NPU will communicate with customers via CodeRed on a regular basis. NPU is encouraging customers to confirm that NPU has the most up-to-date phone numbers for these calls.

In addition, NPU’s standard preparations have been completed and confirmed, including:

- Tree trimming – Throughout the summer, NPU line crews and two contractors tree crews have been working on tree trimming and removing heavy vegetation, especially vine growth in targeted areas.
- Contractors crews – NPU has confirmed the availability of two contractor tree crews that are assigned to NPU at all times; an additional six contractor tree crews will be available to respond during a major storm if necessary.
- Mutual aid - NPU has mutual aid agreements with the Northeast Public Power Association (NEPPA) and the American Public Power Association (APPA). If a storm is localized to lower New England, crews from other NEPPA members will be able to send line crews to assist with restoration efforts in Norwich. If a storm is more wide-reaching and impacting most of New England, crews from the APPA mutual aid network would make crews from other parts of the country available to assist. NPU regularly participates in mutual aid coordination meetings with both organizations.

Six Ways...to detect a natural gas leak

Share this important safety information with all members of your household

1. **Smell.** Natural gas has no natural odor, so a chemical called Mercaptan is added which gives off an odor similar to that of a rotten egg or burnt match. This is the most common way natural gas leaks are detected. 
2. **Noise.** Escaping natural gas from pipes and appliances can produce a hissing sound. 
3. **Air bubbles.** If you see bubbles in standing water such as puddle or even mud, this may be a sign of natural gas leaking through the soil. 
4. **Dead or dying plants.** If you notice plants or shrubs dying for no logical reason, this could be an indication of a natural gas leak. 
5. **Higher than normal gas usage.** An unexplained increase in the amount of natural gas use, not due to seasonal weather or changes in the household, could indicate a leak. 
6. **Physical symptoms.** Symptom of exposure to leaking natural gas can include headaches, dizziness, fatigue, nausea, or irregular breathing. 

What to do if you suspect a natural gas leak?

First and foremost, everyone should leave the premises immediately. Do not turn on or shut off any lights, appliances, electronics or other devices that could cause a spark. Once you are a safe distance away, call 911.



From a safe distance away from the area where the leak is detected

A minute with the Mayor:

Economic development momentum continues in Norwich



Mayor Peter Nystrom

The City of Norwich is on the cusp of a series of economic development projects all coming to fruition within a relatively short period of time. This is great news for our community and our collective future.

Administration, and Norwich Public Utilities are a team, Kevin Brown and the Norwich Community Development Corporation are the captain.

Norwich is a natural fit for the burgeoning cannabis industry. As a result of a concerted marketing and outreach effort, combined with lower electric rates – including an economic development rate – along with superior customer service from NPU, Norwich will very likely be the home of more than one cultivator, bringing in skilled manufacturing jobs and ancillary industries and businesses.

Naverra (formerly known as Solar Seal), a manufacturer of large panel architectural glass, will soon be will be operating in the Norwich business park. Once in full operation, Naverra will be among NPU's largest electric customers. The company will receive a grant from NCDC for \$350,000 and two, no-interest loans for \$350,000 that will be repaid in the coming years; these funds will then be available to assist with additional economic development opportunities in Norwich. Again, more good jobs, new tax revenues, and substantial new revenues for NPU.

And the former Hale Mill is being re-born as a boutique hotel and meeting venue that will also generate new jobs, new tax revenues, and most importantly, bring visitors with disposable income into Norwich. New visitors will quickly find out that our city has so much to offer in terms of dining, the arts, history, and entertainment.

The cumulative impact of these three exciting projects will benefit our community for years to come. These projects will all have a ripple effect – individually and collectively – leading to more businesses, jobs, tax revenue, and utility revenues. Inevitably visitors will become residents, leading to further economic activity that will support all of our existing small businesses.

Even the most skeptical among us would agree that we are on the edge of a very exciting time for Norwich. And a great deal of work remains to be completed in the weeks and months ahead.

But please join me in celebrating the enormous progress we have made here in the Rose City – together.

From intense interest from the cannabis industry to the opening of a major manufacturer and the ongoing work to transform the former Hale Mill, Norwich will see many new, good-paying jobs as well as substantial new tax revenues and increased utility revenues in the years ahead.

So how did all of this come together in just the past two years?

Collaboration. Patience. Persistence. Trust. Optimism. All of these things have been brought together repeatedly over the past two years by several individuals and organizations. If my colleagues on the City Council, our City Manager and

NPU nearing the end of a productive gas construction season

The 2022 Construction Season has been very productive for the NPU Gas Division, completing a number of important projects, improving the safety and reliability of our system, and compiling a very strong safety record.

NPU crews and contractors installed 1,800 feet of new gas main, and renewed 101 gas services on Maple Street as part of the Gas Distribution Integrity Management Program (DIMP). DIMP was established by the U.S. Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), requiring natural gas distribution companies to develop and implement an integrity management program that identifies potential problems with the distribution system, evaluate and rank the risks, then identify and implement measures to address those risks. It also requires companies to monitor results, evaluate program effectiveness, and report performance results to PHMSA.

As part of NPU's gas expansion program, over 3,000 feet of new natural gas main was installed on Otrobando Avenue and Yantic Road for the Hale Mill project. Ten new gas services were also installed.

The annual Leak Survey safety program resulted in over 1,400 completed surveys. Surveying our natural gas infrastructure is a necessary component of DIMP. By using specialized equipment to detect leaks, NPU can schedule necessary maintenance before any serious problems occur.

Facility maintenance is also a component of our construction season. NPU completed a new natural gas regulator station on Otrobando Avenue, as well as completing routine maintenance on 6 of our 11 existing regulator stations. In addition, Field Service crews provide ongoing maintenance, including emergency repair service on HVAC systems on City and Board of Education buildings. This results in a significant cost savings and enhanced service to the City of Norwich.

By the end of the 2022 construction season NPU crews and contractors plan to complete the installation of the gas main to the Hale Mill Project, renew 43 services on Talman Street, renew 1,700 feet of main and 18 services in the Allyn Avenue area, finish the gas survey and repair all found leaks, and complete annual maintenance on the 5 remaining regulating stations.

What not to flush

Many consumer products, including those marked "disposable" or "flushable" can cause problems within the sewer system. These products do not break down properly and can block sewer lines. They also do not flow easily through sewer pump stations. Blockages can result in sewer backups and costly repairs and cleaning.

What's flushable? Only human waste and toilet paper. Items that should not be flushed includes:

- Diapers, baby wipes, nursing pads
- Facial wipes and towelettes
- Cigarette butts
- Dental floss and teeth whitening strips
- Paper towels and napkins
- Cotton balls and swabs
- Bandages and bandage wrappers
- Syringes and needles
- Gum
- Feminine products/Condoms
- Rags and other cloth items
- Disinfectant wipes, dusting pads and cleaning wipes of any kind
- Kitty litter and pet waste
- Bags and wrappers
- Plastics of any kind
- Hair, hair ties and rubber bands
- Paint and solvents
- Nail polish and polish remover
- Flammable or other toxic chemicals
- Grease, oil or fats
- Medications
- Toilet bowl scrub pads
- Animals: fish, snakes, hamsters, mice, etc.

HERE TO SERVE YOU

Visit our website for more information: norwichpublicutilities.com

Please call, fax or e-mail us your questions, comments and suggestions.

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