

NPU kicks off next phase of natural gas expansion efforts

Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) is kicking off the next phase of its efforts to expand natural gas service to more of the city, reaching out to customers in the Old Canterbury Turnpike, Rockwell Street and Cherry Hill neighborhoods. Customers living in areas where NPU currently provides natural gas are also eligible to sign up for new service.

"We have a team and a process that has proven to be very effective in converting homes and businesses to natural gas," said John Bilda, General Manager of NPU. "Over the past three years, more than 1,700 new customers have joined the NPU natural gas system, allowing each of them to save money while using a more environmentally friendly heating source."



Locations for the 2015 construction season were selected through an evaluation of three criteria: a strong interest expressed by customers in receiving natural gas, proximity to existing natural gas lines, and the ability to coordinate the work with this year's paving schedule for the City's Department of Public Works (DPW).

NPU is still offering its customers incentives of up to \$1,000 to help offset some of the cost of converting their heating equipment. There are also substantial rebates available for high efficiency natural gas heating equipment.

NPU continues to work with Smart – E Loan (www.energizenorwich.com/financing) approved contractors and local financing institutions that are offering both no-money-down and zero interest loans for qualifying households.



Call Before You Dig!

Before you start any outdoor project that requires digging, Call Before You Dig.

Do you know what may be in the ground where you are planning to install a deck, a tree or shrub, or even a new mailbox post? Did you know there could be natural gas pipelines, water lines or electrical wires buried under the surface of your yard?

Don't take chances.

Contact Call Before You Dig (CBYD) at 8-1-1 to ensure that the area you plan to dig is clear from any underground utility. By making one phone call, your local utility company, phone company and cable company will be notified by CBYD and will mark out the locations of any wires or pipelines buried in the area where you plan to work.

For more information about the Call Before You Dig program, visit www.cbyd.com/homeowners-help or call 8-1-1.

Look for the Natural Gas Pipeline Safety brochure included with your May utility statement.



The 10% for this year = \$7.8 million

NPU has a very strong bond with the customers we serve. Since 1904, we've provided essential services - gas, water, electric and wastewater that have been a part of everyday life in Norwich for more than 100 years.

Part of what makes NPU a special organization is that 10% of our gross revenues from gas, water and electric divisions are returned to the residents of Norwich each year. For the 2015 – 16 fiscal year, NPU will provide the City of Norwich with \$7.8 million, an increase of \$337,840 over this year's total.

The increase can be attributed to the very successful natural gas expansion efforts NPU has undertaken over the past three years. By adding more than 1,700 new natural gas customers, NPU has increased its annual revenues by almost \$2.5 million.

NPU's natural gas expansion efforts will continue into 2015 and beyond, contributing to our overall revenue, and the 10% we return to our customers every year.

Think Spring – Think Safety

The warmer weather finally upon us means that many people will get started on outdoor activities and projects such as getting their yards ready for spring, cleaning out their gutters, or picking up any downed limbs.

NPU is reminding residents to keep in mind a few simple safety tips when working outdoors:

- Remember to look up whenever you are setting up a ladder or scaffolding outdoors to be sure you avoid any power lines.
- Teach your children about the dangers of power lines and be sure they never climb utility poles, fly kites near utility wires and never touch a wire – attached to a pole or on the ground.
- Never attempt to trim trees near power lines – this work can be very dangerous and should only be done by certified tree-trimmers.

NPU water system stands up to brutal weather of February

Falling temperatures and extreme weather are par for the course in Connecticut. But for even the heartiest of New Englanders, the challenges of February 2015 were for the history books.

Colder temperatures in the winter mean frozen water, which is great if you like ice skating. But if you are responsible for delivering more than 6 million gallons of clean water in a safe and efficient manner, through an infrastructure of 150 miles of pipes beneath and throughout Norwich, cold weather – really cold weather – can create issues that are not held to a regular schedule.

Throughout February, crews in our Water & Gas Divisions worked long, difficult hours in the brutal elements, responding to a high volume of issues:

- NPU responded to 45 frozen services at individual residences; a typical winter might have 2 or 3; we've had mild winters without a single frozen service.
- On February 27, our crews repaired a frozen water main, which is a very unusual occurrence, on Highland Street. This required digging up a 5 x 12 foot section of the street, and repairs took almost an entire day.

- We also provided mutual aid to Windham Water three times, but only when all of the issues impacting our customers had been addressed. NPU is reimbursed by Windham Water for this work.

Let's hope by the time you are reading this, the weather is warmer, and you are enjoying spring conditions!

Below: The exceptionally cold weather in February resulted in amazing ice formations at the Occum Dam.



NPU employees commit \$31,786 to United Way of Southeastern Connecticut for 2015

In January, Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) completed a successful fundraising campaign to support the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut.

Through the generosity of 108 employees, more than 75% of the NPU workforce, the United Way will receive \$31,786 through payroll deductions and one-time contributions in 2015.

"I am very proud but not the least bit surprised with the results of our efforts to support the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut in 2015,"

said John Bilda, General Manager of NPU. "Year after year, our employees donate their time and money to organizations that are making a difference in our community."

Of the 108 participants in the United Way campaign, one employee has pledged more than \$2,000 with another 10 employees committing to more than \$1,000.

The United Way of Southeastern Connecticut has four priority areas: community wellness, thriving children, basic needs and promoting wellness.



Do you have a health or human service issue and don't know where to turn for help? Call 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org

United Way 211 was created in 1976 as a public/private partnership of United Way and the State of Connecticut. United Way 211 is a system of help via telephone – a single integrated source of information about community services, crises intervention and referrals to health and human services. It is accessed toll-free from anywhere in Connecticut by simply dialing 2-1-1, and it operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Multilingual call specialists and TDD access is available.



What's on the calendar?

NPU has an online community calendar where the community can contribute and monitor events and ideas of things to do, people to see and events not to miss. NPU is pleased to sponsor this calendar. Find the link on our web site homepage at norwichpublicutilities.com

HERE TO SERVE YOU

Visit our website for more information: norwichpublicutilities.com
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