

Spring | 2023



# pilotLight

A newsletter for Jo-Carroll Energy  
natural gas members

## Are emergency responders trained for gas emergencies?

Firefighters and other emergency personnel routinely respond to emergencies involving natural gas. Such emergencies can include residential fires, odors or leaks in buildings, damaged gas lines or worst-case scenario, an explosion with ensuing fire. Firefighters, police and EMTs are typically first on the scene in an emergency and face the greatest risk from natural gas and electrical hazards.

Understanding the potential dangers and learning how to deal with them correctly makes everyone safer. The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration recognizes that emergency responders may arrive on scene before operator personnel. Jo-Carroll Energy Manager of Gas Operations Pat Anderson works with local first responders to establish and maintain relationships with fire, police, and other appropriate public personnel and to conduct advance emergency response planning.

Emergency responders act as an extension of the gas operator's workforce during an emergency. Understanding the properties of natural gas can help responders act more effectively to a variety of incidents. Anderson conducts face-to-face meetings with local departments and public officials to explain proper responses to different types of emergencies. These trainings help teach emergency responders how to recognize and react to gas emergencies.

These face-to-face meetings and training courses are also a great way to provide and obtain up-to-date contact names and phone numbers that can be used in an emergency. "Building relationships such as these are beneficial not only to Jo-Carroll and local first responders, but also to the community overall" according to Anderson. These interactions are not just a one-time thing and are conducted annually at a minimum. JCE is dedicated to making all efforts as often as possible to ensure that all the necessary parties understand their roles in a gas related incident.

"Jo-Carroll would like to thank all emergency responders for their time and dedication to their communities," Anderson said. "Many of these men and women are volunteers and it means a lot that they take time out of their busy lives to not only protect the communities they live in but to further educate themselves as well."

If you are a first responder or public personnel in the JCE service area and would like to know more about this program, please contact Anderson at [panderson@jocarroll.com](mailto:panderson@jocarroll.com).

## FIRE SAFETY 5 WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR HOME



**1. INSTALL SMOKE ALARMS**  
INSTALL UL-CERTIFIED SMOKE ALARMS ON EVERY LEVEL OF YOUR HOME AND TEST THEM REGULARLY.



**2. COOK CAREFULLY**  
STAY NEARBY WHEN YOU ARE COOKING FOOD ON THE STOVETOP OR OVEN, AND USE A TIMER. KEEP FLAMMABLE ITEMS AWAY FROM THE STOVETOP.



**3. HEAT HARMLESSLY**  
KEEP FLAMMABLE ITEMS-SUCH AS PAPER AND RUGS- AT LEAST THREE FEET AWAY FROM A SPACE HEAT



**4. PLUG SAFELY**  
DON'T RUN ELECTRICAL CORDS UNDER RUGS OR CARPETS, AND CHECK THEM TO MAKE SURE THEY AREN'T FRAYED OR DAMAGED. AVOID OVERLOADING OUTLET.



**5. MAKE A PLAN**  
MAKE AN ESCAPE PLAN AND PRACTICE IT REGULARLY WITH YOUR FAMILY. IDENTIFY TWO ESCAPE ROUTES FROM EACH ROOM AND DESIGNATE AN OUTSIDE MEETING PLACE AT A SAFE DISTANCE FROM YOUR HOME

WITH SOME TIME AND EFFORT, YOU CAN HELP ENSURE THE SAFETY OF YOUR FAMILY AND PROJECT YOUR HOME FROM DAMAGE

## APGA delegation talks natural gas concerns on Capitol Hill

Jo-Carroll Energy representatives were among a delegation of members systems from the American Public Gas Association (APGA) who met recently with legislators, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Commissioners and leadership from the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA).

The Legislative Summit was held in conjunction with APGA's Winter Board and Committee Meetings in Washington D.C., Jan. 29-Feb. 1.

"The purpose of these meetings, among other things, is to gain support on legislation and regulation that impacts the cost of natural gas to you (our members)," said Mike Casper, JCE president and CEO. "For example, public natural gas systems are not-for-profit, and FERC's lack of refund authority is a significant challenge to keeping rates low for the communities we serve. In 2021 alone, seven of the most profitable interstate pipelines received nearly \$900 million above a reasonable rate of return, which should have been refunded to natural gas consumers.

"We also stressed the importance of approving needed infrastructure such as new natural gas pipelines that will help reduce the cost of energy that we pass through to you, which makes up much of your bill," Casper added.

He continued that as rolling blackouts occurred in nearby states during recent extreme cold weather, lack of new natural gas infrastructure is a driver behind higher costs, not only to JCE's natural gas members, but also electric members as more electricity is generated from natural gas.

Topics of discussion with PHMSA included pipeline safety management systems, the relationship between training and operator qualification, pipeline safety benefits of anti-drug and alcohol programs, and leak detection and repair programs.

"It was an excellent opportunity for legislators, FERC Commissioners and PHMSA's staff to hear directly from public gas systems as they make important decisions that may negatively affect your rates," Casper said.



# Why gas utility workers matter to our community

Josh Hoppman   Hunter O'Neil   Mike Hoppman   Holly Woodhurst   Michael Kusmaul   Pat Anderson

## Thank a gas utility worker!

2023 is the eighth year in which March 18 is Natural Gas Utility Workers' Day, a time when communities such as ours give recognition to the employees who provide one of their most valuable assets—their natural gas utility.

March 18 is the date of the New London, Texas school explosion in 1937 that led to the widespread odorization of natural gas and an increased emphasis on safety. Safety is a vital aspect to natural gas distribution and the employees of distribution companies endeavor to make natural gas delivery as safe as possible.

We are dedicating March 18th to celebrating the hard work of natural gas utility employees in addition to their accomplishments

in our community. Our customers recognize the need to access reliable, affordable, safe energy and depend on the service of the natural gas utility employees for that need. This year, our natural gas utility workers have accomplished a lot including, replacing one mile of 4" and one mile of 2" high density plastic main along with 27 services. They installed 15 new services and retired 20 services and replaced a rectifier and ground bed for cathodic protection of steel mains. Along with countless compliance tasks.

We are here for our community and invite you to join us in celebrating your local natural gas utility workers. If you have any questions regarding your public natural gas utility or your upcoming energy needs, please feel free to contact Patrick Anderson 800-858-5522 Ext 1502.

## Natural gas rates increase

Effective in March, Jo-Carroll Energy is adjusting both electric and natural gas rates to members in response to inflation and continued regulatory pressures. The increases will be reflected in bills in April.

A natural gas bill is broken in four components: the monthly facility and member services charges, the per therm delivery charge and the energy charge that varies monthly. A residential or farm member will see an increase in the delivery charge of \$0.04 per therm.

A member with a general gas service will see an increase of \$.032 per therm while a large general gas service will have a \$.0224 per therm increase in the delivery charge.

The charts to the right provide more information on the rate increases.

JCE President and CEO Mike Casper wrote about the rate increase in his column in both the February and March issues of the cooperative's monthly newsletter, Hi-Lines inside of the Illinois Country Living magazine. Casper noted that for much of 2022, inflation ran at a 40-year high.

The Energy Information Agency in its February Short Term Energy Outlook is projecting Henry Hub prices to average \$3.40 in 2023 (compared with \$5.23 in their prior projection) and \$4.04/MMBtu in 2023. To put these values in perspective, the average price in 2020 was \$2.02/MMBtu. JCE continues to advance purchase and store natural gas to reduce your exposure to potential future volatile market prices.

### Natural Gas Rates 42- Farm and Residential Gas Service

	Rate	Current	Revised	Change
<b>Distribution</b>	Facility Charge	\$20.00	\$20.00	<b>No Change</b>
	Member Service Charge	\$5.00	\$5.00	<b>No Change</b>
	Delivery Charge per therm	\$0.405	\$0.445	<b>\$0.040</b>
<b>Purchased Energy</b>	Energy Supply Charge	Varies monthly	Varies monthly	

### Natural Gas Rates 43-General Gas Service

	Rate	Current	Revised	Change
<b>Distribution</b>	Facility Charge	\$26.00	\$26.00	<b>No Change</b>
	Member Service Charge	\$5.00	\$5.00	<b>No Change</b>
	Delivery Charge per therm	\$0.355	\$0.387	<b>\$0.032</b>
<b>Purchased Energy</b>	Energy Supply Charge	Varies monthly	Varies monthly	

### Natural Gas Rates 44- Large General Gas Service

	Rate	Current	Revised	Change
<b>Distribution</b>	Facility Charge	\$20.00	\$20.00	<b>No Change</b>
	Member Service Charge	\$5.00	\$5.00	<b>No Change</b>
	Delivery Charge per therm	\$0.405	\$0.445	<b>\$0.040</b>
<b>Purchased Energy</b>	Energy Supply Charge	Varies monthly	Varies monthly	

The Energy Supply Charge is a per therm charge that varies and could change each month based on the monthly cost of purchased natural gas.



## STAY IN TOUCH



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