



PilotLight

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Natural gas service built around our members

JCE Co-op President & CEO Mike Casper



At JCE Co-op, natural gas service is about more than the fuel delivered to a home or business. It is about keeping families comfortable during cold weather, helping local employers manage their energy costs and giving our communities dependable choices for the future.

As past chair of the American Public Gas Association (APGA), I have seen the value of a strong national voice for community-owned public natural gas utilities. The association works to protect consumer choice, promote safe operations and advocate for practical policies that help keep natural gas reliable and affordable.

That work matters to the people at the end of the gas line, our members. Decisions made in Washington and state capitals can affect the energy choices available to your family, your monthly bill and the cost of doing business in our community. The APGA makes sure policymakers understand that one-size-fits-all energy policies can create real challenges for local communities.

Publicly owned gas utilities are different because we are accountable to the communities we serve, not distant shareholders. Our focus is on operating safely, maintaining the system responsibly and managing costs carefully. Our employees take that responsibility seriously every day, whether they are responding to a service call, inspecting pipeline facilities or preparing the system for winter demand.

Natural gas remains an important option for many of our members. It provides dependable heat, supports local businesses and helps power the electric grid when demand is high. Protecting access to safe, reliable and affordable natural gas is part of protecting the strength of our community.

JCE Co-op will continue working with the APGA and other public gas utilities to stand up for consumer choice and practical energy policy. Most importantly, we will continue earning your trust through safe service, reliable operations and a commitment to the members we serve.

Serving new growth while protecting our members

Data centers and other large energy users are receiving significant attention. Although these projects are often associated with electricity use, some also require natural gas for space heating, water heating, backup generation or equipment that produces electricity onsite.

JCE Co-op's responsibility is to evaluate new growth while protecting the safe, dependable natural-gas service our members rely on. That responsibility is especially important during the coldest winter days, when demand for home heating and local businesses is highest.

A large facility is not treated like a standard request for new service. Before making any commitment, JCE Co-op conducts a detailed review. We examine how much gas the facility needs, whether its use will remain steady or increase sharply, and whether available gas supply, pipelines and system pressure can support the demand.

We also determine whether new pipeline, meters, regulating equipment or other system improvements would be required. Every review comes back to one question: Can this new load be served without reducing safety or reliability for current members?

During winter peak demand, current members come first. JCE Co-op will not add a large new demand unless the system has enough supply and capacity to continue serving existing members reliably.

When infrastructure is needed primarily for one project, agreements will address construction costs, ongoing operating expenses and the member's long-term service commitment. Members should not carry the cost or financial risk of facilities built mainly for a new development.

Natural-gas prices depend on many factors, including weather, nationwide demand, production, storage levels and pipeline capacity. One large facility does not automatically determine member gas costs, but potential supply and price impacts are reviewed carefully.

New development can create investment and jobs, but it can also require substantial planning and long-term utility commitments. JCE Co-op considers each request individually and keeps the same priorities at the center of every decision: safe service, reliable service and the best interests of our members.

This is an explanation of JCE Co-op's general approach to large natural-gas requests—not an announcement of a proposed project.



The work you don't see helps keep gas flowing safely.

When you turn up the thermostat, take a hot shower or prepare a meal, you expect natural gas to be there. Delivering it safely and reliably requires year-round work, much of it performed quietly in neighborhoods, along roadways and within utility rights-of-way. JCE Co-op employees regularly inspect, test and maintain the natural-gas system, even when no problem has been reported. Finding and addressing concerns before they become emergencies is critical to maintaining a safe, dependable system.

Looking for leaks

Routine leak surveys use specialized equipment to detect small amounts of natural gas along pipeline and service routes. Crews also watch for damaged equipment, unusual vegetation and ground changes. Seeing employees in your neighborhood does not necessarily mean a leak has been reported. Surveys are part of regular maintenance.

Protecting pipelines and equipment

Metal pipelines can be affected by corrosion. Employees take readings at designated locations to ensure corrosion-control systems are working properly and investigate results that may require attention. Crews also inspect and operate valves used to control or isolate sections of the system. Regulators and other equipment are checked to help maintain safe, reliable gas pressure. Members can help by keeping meters and nearby equipment clear of landscaping, fencing and stored materials.

Monitoring pressure and maintaining meters

JCE Co-op monitors system pressure, especially during severe cold when many furnaces operate at once. We may also inspect, test, repair or replace meters and regulators. Members receive notice when indoor access or a temporary interruption is needed. After certain work, a qualified JCE Co-op employee may need to relight and inspect appliances. Never turn gas service back on yourself.

Replacing and preparing

JCE Co-op evaluates the age, material, condition and operating history of pipelines and equipment to prioritize repairs and replacement. Employees also train for leak investigations, system shutdowns, coordination with first responders, member communication and service restoration.

Safety is shared

Call 811 before digging. Keep meters accessible, do not attach objects to gas piping and report suspected damage promptly. If you smell rotten eggs, hear hissing or see blowing dirt or bubbling water near a gas line, leave immediately. Do not operate lights, phones, appliances, vehicles or switches nearby. From a safe location, call JCE Co-op or 911. Most of this work never makes the news. That is the goal. The work you may not see helps keep natural gas flowing safely and reliably when you need it.

Why crews may be near your property

You may see JCE Co-op employees or authorized contractors:

- Walking along a pipeline route
- Checking a meter or regulator
- Taking readings near the street
- Inspecting a valve
- Marking underground facilities
- Performing maintenance in a utility right-of-way
- Investigating an odor or other safety concern

JCE Co-op employees and authorized contractors carry identification. When work requires access inside a home or business, we will generally contact the member or request permission before entering.



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