

Facts about Natural Gas

NATURAL GAS CONSUMERS

- ✓ Natural gas serves approximately 65 million homes; 5 million businesses like hotels, restaurants, hospitals, schools and supermarkets; 193,000 factories; and 5,500 electric generating units. On a daily basis, the average U.S. home uses more than 200 cubic feet of natural gas.
- ✓ Natural gas comprises almost one-fourth of all energy used in the U.S. and is directly linked to jobs and economic health.
- ✓ Natural gas utilities do not earn a profit on the natural gas they deliver. They earn their revenues from the service and delivery fees they charge customers to transport the natural gas to them. This fee is directly linked to the volume of natural gas consumed, rather than the price of natural gas being delivered.
- ✓ In 2010 utility ratepayer assistance programs generated \$2.7 billion for low-income customers. In addition, U.S. utilities spent \$180 million on energy efficiency programs for low-income customers.

CLEAN FUEL

- ✓ Natural gas is considered the cleanest fossil fuel because it produces emissions much lower than those of other fossil fuels like coal or oil.
- ✓ Natural gas, on an energy equivalent basis, emits 50 percent less CO₂ than coal and 30 percent less CO₂ than oil, making it the best fossil fuel source available to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- ✓ Because of its environmental benefits, natural gas used for electricity generation has increased dramatically during the past 11 years – of the more than 250 gigawatts of net summer electric generation capacity added since 1999, over 84 percent has been fueled with natural gas.
- ✓ Natural gas currently generates approximately 23 percent of total U.S. electricity.
- ✓ Natural gas is a vital ingredient for production of many alternative and renewable energy sources. It is used to manufacture lightweight steel for fuel-efficient cars and trucks, to produce hydrogen for fuel cells, as a component of windmill blades for wind energy and to grow the corn needed for ethanol.

CONSERVATION & EFFICIENCY

- ✓ Natural gas is efficient: 92 percent of the natural gas produced is delivered to customers as usable energy. (In contrast, 32 percent of the total energy used to generate electricity from coal reaches consumers.)
- ✓ America's natural gas customers are leading the way on carbon reductions and energy efficiency. In fact, despite a significant increase in the number of homes using natural gas, greenhouse gas emissions have decreased 40 percent per natural gas-consuming household since 1970.

- ✓ By adopting conservation practices and converting to high efficiency natural gas appliances natural gas customers saved 81 trillion British thermal units (BTU) of energy in 2010, which is the equivalence of 4.2 million metric tons of CO₂ emissions.

SUPPLY & USAGE

- ✓ Approximately 23 percent of all of the natural gas used in the United States is delivered to residential customers for heating, cooking and other domestic needs.
- ✓ Natural gas is primarily a domestic energy source. In 2011, 89 percent of the natural gas consumed in the United States was produced in the U.S. The remaining 11 percent is imported from Canada along with a nominal amount of internationally traded liquefied natural gas (LNG).
- ✓ The domestic natural gas resource base is large, estimated to be 2,170 trillion cubic feet, enough to meet America's diverse energy needs for another 100 years.
- ✓ About 50 percent of natural gas consumption in the U.S. occurs during the traditional winter heating season (November through March) when colder temperatures increase heating load.
- ✓ Alaska holds approximately enough natural gas to support all of the United States' current natural gas needs for more than a decade.

DID YOU KNOW...?

- ✓ There are nearly 2.4 million miles of pipeline of varying sizes and pressures that transport natural gas from the natural gas wellhead to more than 177 million Americans throughout the U.S.
- ✓ According to the National Transportation Safety Board, pipelines are the safest form of energy transportation -- safer than transportation by truck or rail.
- ✓ Natural gas is naturally colorless and odorless. Mercaptan, which some describe as having the smell of rotten eggs, is added to natural gas to make it easier to detect a leak.
- ✓ Natural gas pipeline and utility companies spend approximately \$7 billion per year on safety programs to ensure the safety and reliability of the natural gas infrastructure.
- ✓ Natural gas does not spill. If an event occurs causing its release, it dissipates into the atmosphere and safely disperses.
- ✓ Fertilizer used to grow crops is composed almost entirely of natural gas components, so the price of natural gas has a tremendous effect on U.S. agricultural production.