

[Date]

[Recipient's Address]

Dear [Honorable *politician's name*] or [Public safety official's name]

The [System Name] in accordance with federal regulations is required to periodically communicate with its customers, constituents, government leaders and public safety personnel about our system's purpose, reliability, associated hazards, and damage prevention, as well as emergency preparedness measures.

Demand for natural gas in the United States continues to grow. That's because, dollar for dollar, natural gas provides more heating value than heating oil, propane, or electricity. Residential consumers as well as commercial, industrial and electric generation customers know that it's safe, reliable and efficient. Our community is a member of the Illinois Municipal Gas Agency, which works with communities around the state to provide reliable, economical gas supply.

Today nearly three out of five U.S. homes are heated with natural gas. Domestically produced natural gas is transported to 160 million customers through a 1.6 million mile pipeline system, and in our community [*system name*] maintains the pipeline infrastructure that serves their more than [*customer number*] customers.

Main gas lines branch into household service lines. The pipes are typically made of "caution yellow" plastic or tar-coated steel which helps prevent corrosion. As an industry steel pipes are being replaced with the more durable plastic piping. The main lines are typically 2-inches in diameter and are located roughly two-feet below the surface, while service lines are typically half-inch to three-quarter-inch in diameter and buried 12- to 18-inches below the surface.

This is why we work to educate our customers, residents and contractors about the importance of complying with the national "Call Before You Dig" requirements. When citizens or contractors consider digging or moving earth, they must simply call the JULIE program at 1-800-892-0123 at least two days prior to their excavation. JULIE staff will locate all buried utility lines on the property, in order prevent a potentially hazardous condition. In 2004 the Federal Office of Pipeline Safety recorded 48 cases of third party excavation damage to distribution lines nationwide resulting in more than \$10 million dollars worth of property damage and four injuries.

In addition, our education efforts include leak recognition and response. We explain to our constituents that natural gas is a colorless, odorless gas; however, a chemical

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that smells like rotten eggs is added to help detect a possible leak. If the smell is present, we remind them to leave the area immediately, call 9-1-1 or our system at [*Phone number here*] from a neighboring home or business. We go on to explain the hazard of turning on or off any switches in the home or the use of a flashlight or phone in the presence of the gas smell can create an electric spark that could ignite the gas and cause an explosion.

We welcome the opportunity to further discuss our efforts to keep our various constituent groups apprised of our safety measures and response plans, and we appreciate your support in providing the highest level of service to our community. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

[*System Administrator and/or Public Awareness Program Administrator*]