



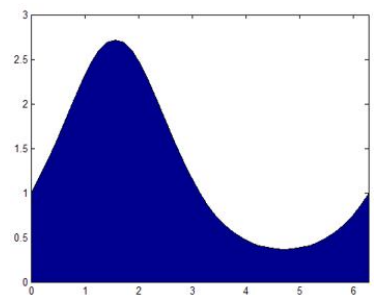
## Winter 2012 Edition

# Natural Gas TODAY



For Municipal Gas Systems

Be Sure to  
Check Out the  
Fundamental  
Snapshots on  
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## Natural Gas and the Environment

Courtesy of NaturalGas.org

Fossil Fuel Emission Levels - Pounds per Billion Btu of Energy Input

Pollutant	Natural Gas	Oil	Coal
Carbon Dioxide	117,000	164,000	208,000
Carbon Monoxide	40	33	208
Nitrogen Oxides	92	448	457
Sulfur Dioxide	1	1,122	2,591
Particulates	7	84	2,744
Mercury	0.000	0.007	0.016

Source: EIA - Natural Gas Issues and Trends 1998

Natural gas is an extremely important source of energy for reducing pollution and maintaining a clean and healthy environment. In addition to being a domestically abundant and secure source of energy, the use of natural gas also offers a number of environmental benefits over other sources of energy, particularly other fossil fuels.

### Emissions from the Combustion of Natural Gas

Natural gas is the cleanest of all the fossil fuels, as evidenced in the Environmental Protection Agency's data comparisons in the chart above, which is still current. Composed primarily of methane, the main products of the combustion of natural gas are carbon dioxide and water vapor, the same compounds we exhale when we breathe. Coal and oil are composed of much more complex molecules, with a higher carbon ratio and higher nitrogen and sulfur contents. This means that when combusted, coal and oil release higher levels of harmful emissions, including a higher ratio of carbon emissions, nitrogen oxides (NOx), and sulfur dioxide (SO2). Coal and fuel oil also release ash particles into the environment, substances that do not burn but instead are carried into the atmosphere and contribute to pollen. The combustion of natural gas, on the other hand, releases very small amounts of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, virtually no ash or particulate matter, and lower levels of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and other reactive hydrocarbons.

Natural gas, as the cleanest of the fossil fuels, can be used in many ways to help reduce the emissions of pollutants into the atmosphere. Burning natural gas in the place of other fossil fuels emits fewer harmful pollutants, and an increased reliance on natural gas can potentially reduce the emission of many of these most harmful pollutants.

Pollutants emitted in the United States, particularly from the combustion of fossil fuels, have led to the development of many pressing environmental problems. Natural gas, emitting fewer harmful chemicals into the atmosphere than other fossil fuels, can help to mitigate some of these environmental issues.

These issues include:

- \*Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- \*Smog, Air Quality and Acid Rain
- \*Industrial and Electric Generation Emissions
- \*Pollution from the Transportation Sector - Natural Gas Vehicles

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Global warming, or the "greenhouse effect" is an environmental issue that deals with the potential for global climate change due to increased levels of atmospheric "greenhouse gases". There are certain gases in our atmosphere that serve to regulate the amount of heat that is kept close to the earth's surface. Scientists theorize that an increase in these greenhouse gases will translate into increased temperatures around the globe, which would result in many disastrous environmental effects. In fact, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts in its "Fourth Assessment Report" released in 2007 that during the 21st century, global average temperatures are expected to rise by between 2.0 and 11.5 degrees Fahrenheit. A Fifth Assessment Report is expected to be released by the IPCC between 2013 and 2015.

The principal greenhouse gases include water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrogen oxides, and some engineered chemicals such as chlorofluorocarbons. While most of these gases occur in the atmosphere naturally, levels have been increasing due to the widespread burning of fossil fuels by growing human populations. The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions has become a primary focus of environmental programs in countries around the world.

One of the principle greenhouse gases is carbon dioxide. Although carbon dioxide does not trap heat as effectively as other greenhouse gases (making it a less potent greenhouse gas), the sheer volume of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere is very high, particularly from the burning of fossil fuels. In fact, according to the Energy Information Administration in its December 2009 report 'Emissions of Greenhouse Gases' in the

Continued on page 2A.

### It Is A Gas! Understanding Energy Slang

Courtesy of Nicor

Like any specialized field of knowledge, the natural gas industry has developed a variety of acronyms, slang words, and industry-specific terms that while well known to insiders, may seem unfamiliar or downright confusing to everyone else. You may find yourself talking with an energy professional and hearing terms like spot price or city gate that leave you scratching your head. The quick guide that follows contains terms that are frequently used in the natural gas industry:

**Btu ( British Thermal Unit)** -a measure of the heat value of natural gas. It actually refers to the quantity of heat required to raise the temperature of one pound of water by one degree Fahrenheit.

**Burner Tip** -the point at which natural gas is used as a fuel. It is the end of transportation of natural gas from the wellhead to the point of consumption.

**City Gate** -the place where a utility receives natural gas from the pipeline company. The city gate price is the sale price of the natural gas at this point.

**CCF** -CCF stands for 100 cubic feet and is approximately equal to 103,000 Btu. A cubic foot is a unit of measurement for gas volume and is the amount of gas required to fill a volume of one cubic foot under specific conditions of temperature, pressure, and water vapor. One thousand cubic feet (MCF) is sometimes used on commercial or industrial gas bills, whereas CCF is usually found on residential gas bills.

**Demand Charge** -a fixed charge for sales or transportation service based on estimated peak hourly, daily, or monthly gas usage of the customer.

**Fracking** -another term for hydraulic fracturing, the method used to make hard shale rock more porous thus allowing natural gas to flow through the shale to the wellbore. The process involves injecting large amounts of water mixed with sand and chemicals at high pressure to produce cracks in the shale formation.

**Futures Contract** -a standardized contract for the sale or purchase of natural gas for delivery at a future date. Futures contracts are traded on futures markets such as the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX).

**LDC** -LDC stands for local distribution company, regulated utilities involved in the delivery of natural gas to consumers within a specific geographic area. The producer of the gas, who owns the gas well, sells the gas to LDCs, who in turn sell it directly to the end user, other marketers, or LDCs.

**Methane** -natural gas is sometimes referred to as methane. Methane is actually a hydrocarbon that is the primary (but not the only) ingredient of raw natural gas. Methane is odorless and colorless and burns efficiently without many byproducts.

**Sour Gas** -natural gas containing hydrogen sulfide in significant amounts. Before raw natural gas can be used, it must be purified to remove the hydrogen sulfide to acceptable levels.

**Spot Market** -a market where natural gas or other commodities are bought with cash and for next day delivery. Natural gas market hubs exist across the country and are located at the intersection of major pipelines. The spot price is the current asking price for natural gas at these markets at any given time.

**Therm** -unit of heating value for natural gas, equivalent to 100,000 Btu.

**Wellhead** -the point where natural gas leaves the well. The term wellhead price is the sales price received by natural gas producers and does not include any further processing or transmission costs.

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**Active 2011 Hurricane Season Breaks ‘Hurricane Amnesia’**

Irene the first hurricane to hit U.S. in three years; Northeast reminded it’s also vulnerable  
 Courtesy of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

The 2011 Atlantic hurricane season officially ended November 30, having produced a total of 19 tropical storms of which seven became hurricanes, including three major hurricanes. This level of activity matched NOAA’s predictions and continues the trend of active hurricane seasons that began in 1995.

The 19 tropical storms represent the third-highest total (tied with 1887, 1995, and 2010) since records began in 1851 and is well above the average of six and two, respectively. This year’s totals include a post-storm upgrade of Tropical Storm Nate to hurricane status, and the addition of a short-lived, unnamed tropical storm that formed in early September between Bermuda and Nova Scotia. This unnamed storm, along with several other weak, short-lived names storms, could have gone undetected without modern satellite technology.

Irene was the lone hurricane to hit the United States in 2011, and the first one to do so since Ike struck southeast Texas in 2008. Irene was also the most significant tropical cyclone to strike the Northeast since Hurricane Bob in 1991.

“Irene broke the hurricane amnesia” that can develop when so much time lapses between landfalling storms,” said Jack Hayes, Ph. D., director of NOAA’s National Weather Service. “This season is a reminder that storms can hit any part of our coast and that all regions need to be prepared each and every season.”

As far as landfalling major hurricanes (Category 3, 4 or 5 with top winds of 111mph and greater) are concerned, the lull continues. 2011 marks a record six straight years without one hitting the United States. The last one to do so was Wilma in 2005. Nonetheless, wind is not the only threat with tropical systems as proven by Irene and Lee, which caused deadly and destructive flooding. On average, more than half of the fatalities related to tropical systems are due to flooding.

Hurricane Irene is an example of

increasing accuracy in forecasting storm track. Its landfall in eastern North Carolina and path northward were accurately predicted more than four days in advance by NOAA’s National Hurricane Center using information from weather satellites, hurricane models, aircraft observations, and other data. NOAA’s delivery of critical environmental forecasts provided essential advance information that allowed emergency officials to plan necessary evacuations and sparked individuals to take safety precautions. But a weaker-than-anticipated Irene at landfall also highlighted the challenges that remain in forecasting storm intensity.

“Improving intensity forecasts is a focus of ongoing research and is part of NOAA’s Hurricane Forecast Improvement Project,” said Frank Marks, Ph.D., director of NOAA’s Hurricane Research Division. HFIP bridges research and operational components to better anticipate rapid changes in storm intensity and its goal to extend track forecasts from the current five days to seven days.

“Although the 2011 hurricane season has ended, our need to prepare for disasters hasn’t,” said Craig Fugate, administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. “Being prepared for all kinds of hazards, from hurricanes to blizzards to tornadoes, is a year-round activity. We encourage all members of the team, especially the public, to continue to prepare for emergencies by staying informed of forecasted weather events, making an emergency plan, and building your emergency preparedness kit. Visit Ready.gov to learn more.

**Natural Gas and the Environment Continued**

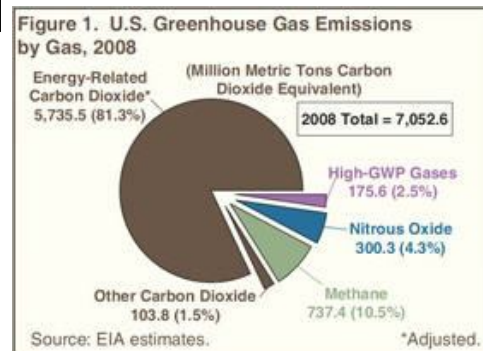
United States, 81.3 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States in 2008 came from energy-related carbon dioxide.

Because carbon dioxide makes up such a high proportion of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, reducing carbon dioxide

emissions can play a pivotal role in combating the greenhouse effect and global warming. The combustion of natural gas emits almost 30 percent less carbon dioxide than oil, and just under 45 percent less carbon dioxide than coal.

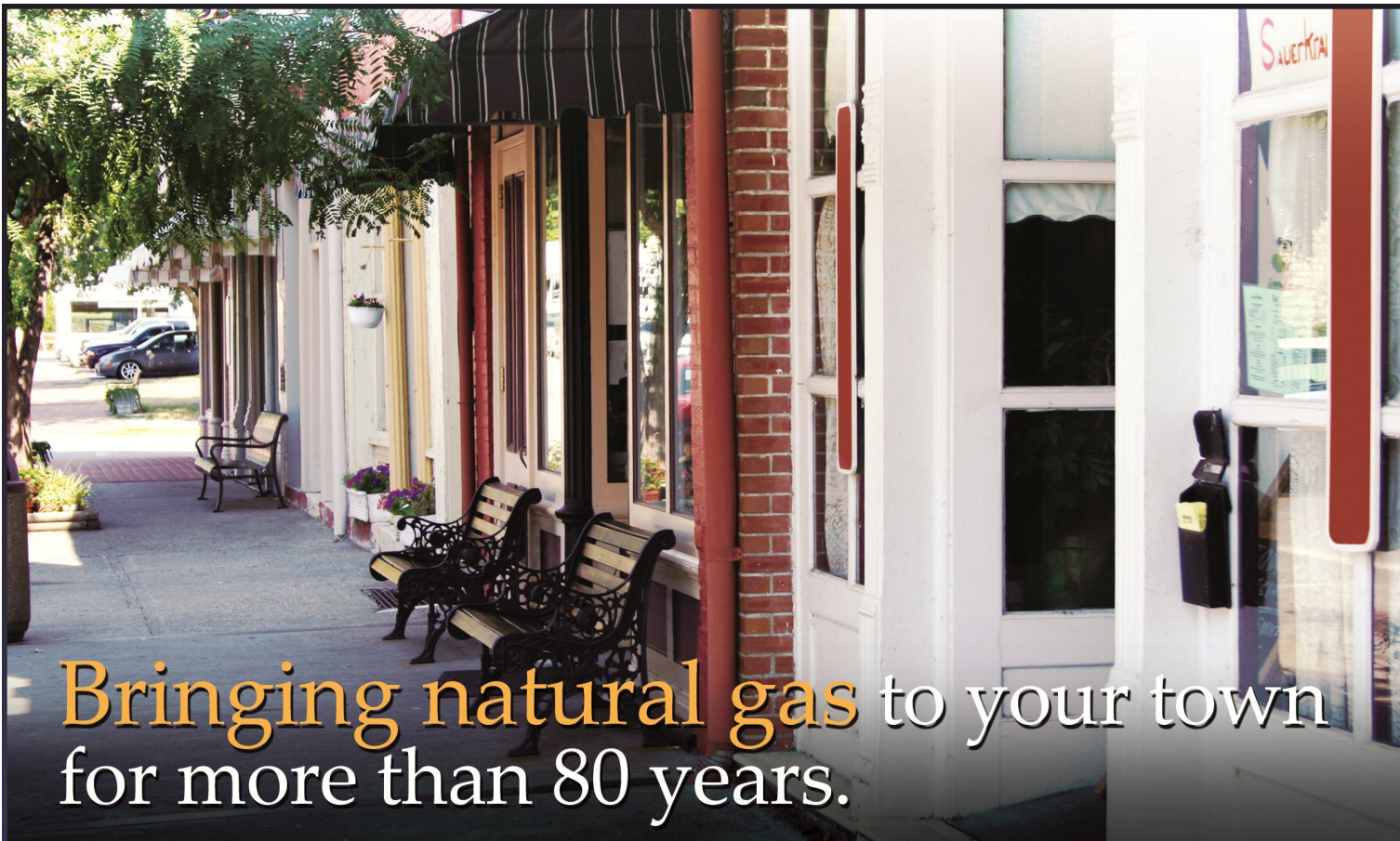
One issue that has arisen with respect to natural gas and the greenhouse effect is the fact that methane, the principle component of natural gas, is itself a potent greenhouse gas. Methane has an ability to trap heat almost 21 times more effectively than carbon dioxide. According to the Energy Information Administration, although methane emissions account for only 1.1 percent of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, they account for 8.5 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions based on global warming potential. Sources of methane emissions in the U.S. include the waste management and operations industry, the agricultural industry, as well as leaks and emissions from the oil and gas industry itself. A major study performed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Gas Research Institute (GRI), now Gas Technology Institute, in 1997 sought to discover whether the reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from increased natural gas use would be offset by a possible increased level of methane emissions. The study concluded that the reduction in emissions from increased natural gas use strongly outweighs the detrimental effects of increased methane emissions. More recently in 2011, researchers at the Carnegie Mellon University released “Life cycle greenhouse gas emissions of Marcellus shale gas”, a report comparing greenhouse gas emissions from the Marcellus Shale region with emissions from coal used for electricity generation. The authors found that wells in the Marcellus region emit 20 to 50 percent less greenhouse gases than coal used to produce electricity.

Continued on page 4A.



**Try our energy quiz!**

- The world ranks third in wind power capacity. What two countries are first and second?
  - Denmark and Holland
  - China and India
  - Germany and Spain
  - Brazil and Argentina
- How many pounds of CO2 are put into the air for every gallon of gasoline an average car uses?
  - 5 oz.
  - 2 lbs.
  - 10 lbs.
  - 20 lbs.
- Nearly half of all E85 fueling stations are in which 2 U.S. states?
  - California and Oregon
  - Minnesota and Illinois
  - Iowa and Kansas
  - North Carolina and Virginia
- Of all existing fuel types, which requires the largest amount of money to generate electricity for 1,000 households?
  - Wind
  - Nuclear
  - Natural gas
  - Solar
- What U.S. state mines the most coal today?
  - Wyoming
  - Kentucky
  - West Virginia
  - Ohio
- What percentage of electricity in the U.S. is generated by wind?
  - Less than 1%
  - 5%
  - 12%
  - 15%
- Which fuel generates more nitrous oxide emissions to produce the same amount of electricity: biomass or coal?
  - Coal
  - Biomass
- To the nearest Tcf, how much natural gas did the U.S. produce domestically in 2005?
  - 15 trillion cubic feet
  - 18 trillion cubic feet
  - 20 trillion cubic feet
  - 22 trillion cubic feet
- What does the CFTC do?
  - Regulates energy production
  - Regulates crop production
  - Regulates the buying and selling of futures contracts.
  - Regulates the buying and selling of stocks and bonds.
- Of the following modes of transportation, which is not suited to transport ethanol?
  - Pipelines
  - Truck
  - Train
  - Barge



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Answers can be found on Page 4A.

## Strong finish to 2011 natural gas storage injection season on Oct. 31

Courtesy of U.S. Energy Information Administration

Weekly working natural gas storage, Lower-48 states  
billion cubic feet



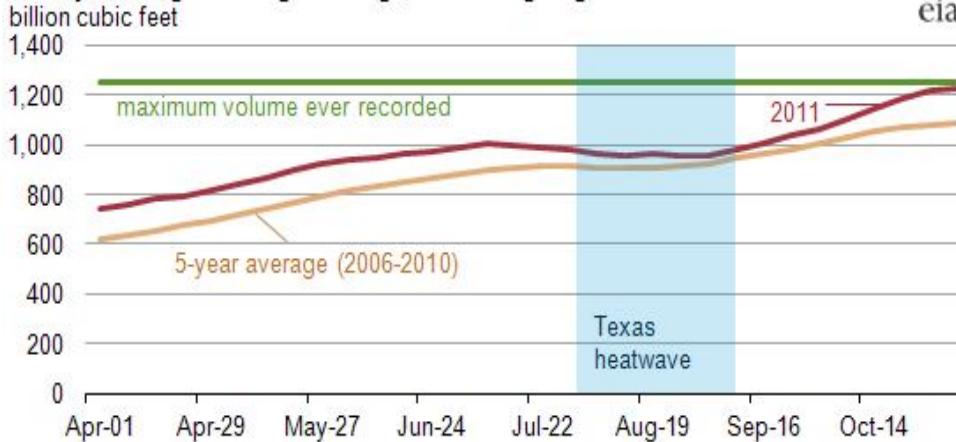
Working natural gas inventories as of October 31 were 3,810 billion cubic feet (Bcf), following exceptionally large storage builds at the end of the 2011 injection season. From September 1 through October 31, net injections into underground storage facilities totaled 858 Bcf more than 45% higher than the 5-year average injections of 591 Bcf for that same time period. The boost in injections during September and October resulted from lower demand due to mild weather across much of the United States, coupled with continued strong production. The end of October marks the traditional end of the injection season and the beginning of the winter heating season, although relatively small net injections often continue into November.

Inventories in the Producing Region were at their highest level for that time of year since the data series began; and both the East Region and West Region's inventory levels were above the 5-year average for that time of year.

The first month of the injection season saw periods of cooler-than-normal weather, which contributed to the lower level of net injections during that time. Then, an unusually warm summer in parts of the South, notably in Texas, led to increased natural gas consumption in the electric power sector. This was a factor in the six weeks of withdrawals from storage in the Producing region during mid-July through August (see chart below).

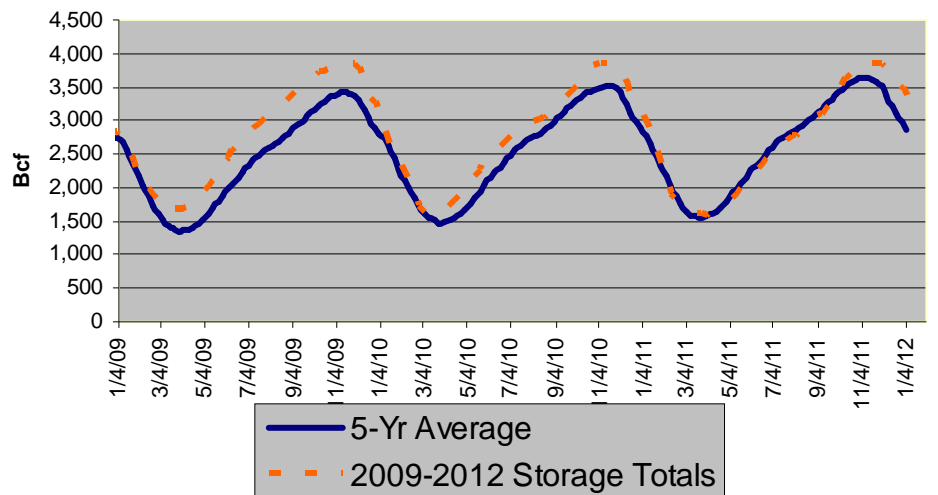
Although natural gas inventories started the injection season strong, for the total lower 48 states they were be-

Weekly working natural gas storage, Producing Region  
billion cubic feet

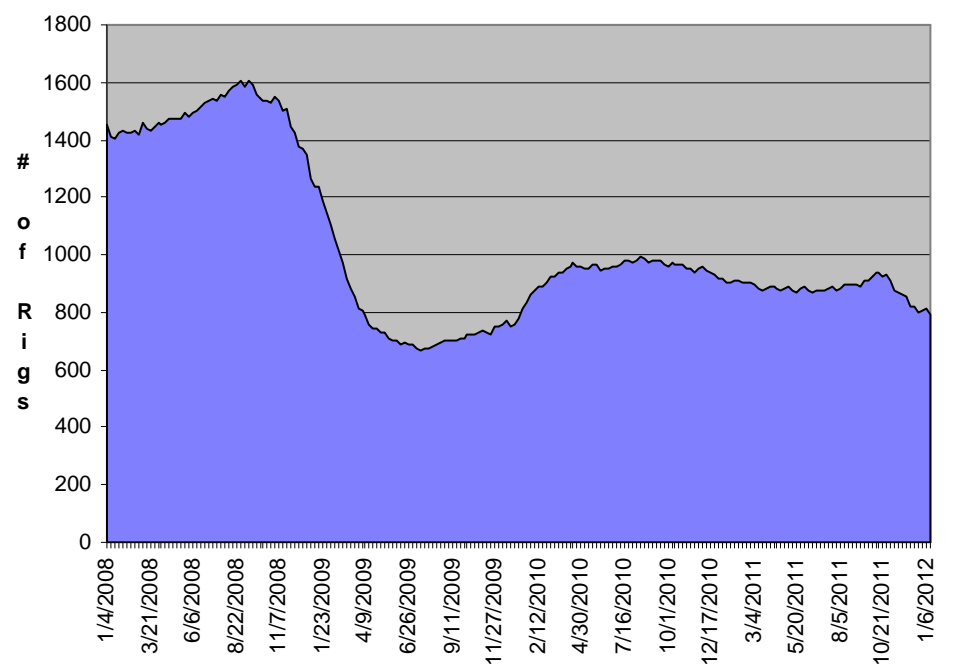


# Snapshots

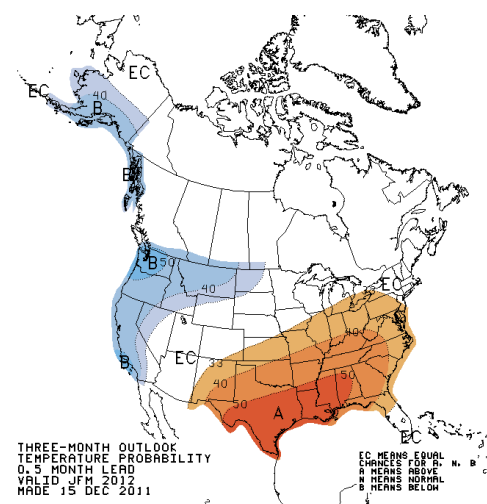
Natural Gas Storage



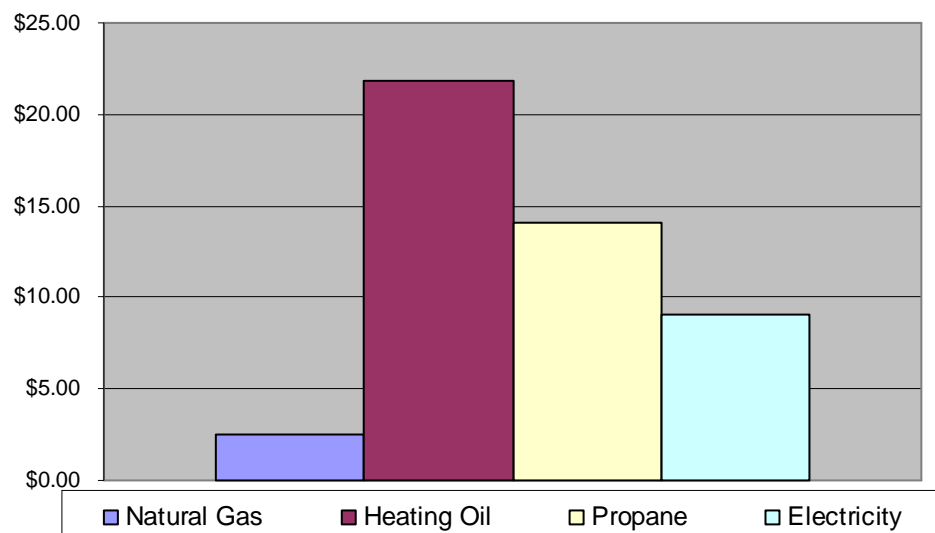
Natural Gas Rig Count



## Seasonal Temperature Outlook Jan.- Feb.- Mar.



Price Per MMBtu As Of January 17, 2012



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More unhappy with your natural gas prices?

## Natural Gas and the Environment Continued

In 1993, the natural gas industry joined with EPA in launching the Natural Gas STAR Program to reduce methane emissions. The STAR program has chronicled dramatic reductions to methane emissions, since that time:

\*EPA STAR data shows a reduction in methane emissions each year for the last 16 years

\*More than 904 Billion cubic feet (Bcf) of methane emissions were eliminated through the STAR program 1993-2009, and

\*In 2009 alone, the program reduced methane emissions by 86 Bcf.

Thus the increased use of natural gas in the place of other, dirtier fossil fuels can serve to lessen the emission of greenhouse gases in the United States.

### Smog, Air Quality and Acid Rain

Smog and poor air quality is a pressing environmental problem, particularly for large metropolitan cities. Smog, the primary constituent of which is ground level ozone, is formed by a chemical reaction of carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, and heat from sunlight. As well as creating that familiar smoggy haze commonly found surrounding large cities, particularly in the summer time, smog and ground level ozone can contribute to respiratory problems ranging from temporary discomfort to long-lasting, permanent lung damage. Pollutants contributing to smog come from a variety of sources, including vehicle emissions, smokestack emissions, paints, and solvents. Because the reaction to create smog requires heat, smog problems are the worst in the summertime.

The use of natural gas does not contribute significantly to smog formation, as it emits low levels of nitrogen oxides, and virtually no particulate matter. For this reason, it can be used to help combat smog formation in those areas where ground level air quality is poor. The main sources of nitrogen oxides are electric utilities, motor vehicles, and industrial plants. Increased natural gas use in the electric generation sector, a shift to cleaner natural gas vehicles, or increased industrial natural gas use, could all serve to combat smog production, especially in urban centers where it is needed the most. Particularly in the summertime, when natural gas demand is lowest and smog problems are the greatest, industrial plants and electric generators could use natural gas to fuel their operations instead of other, more polluting fossil fuels. This would effectively reduce the emissions of smog causing chemicals, and result in clearer, healthier air around urban centers.

Particulate emissions also cause the degradation of air quality in the United States. These particulates can include soot, ash, metals, and other airborne particles. A study by the Union of Con-

cerned Scientists in 1998, entitled "Cars and Trucks and Air Pollution", showed that the risk of premature death for residents in areas with high airborne particulate matter was 26 percent greater than for those in areas with low particulate levels. Natural gas emits virtually no particulates into the atmosphere: in fact, emissions of particulates from natural gas combustion are 90 percent lower than from the combustion of oil, and 99 percent lower than burning coal. Thus increased natural gas use in place of other dirtier hydrocarbons can help to reduce particulate emissions in the U.S. Current consequences stemming from global warming raised by the Union of Concerned Scientists can be found on their site.

Acid rain is another environmental problem that affects much of the Eastern United States, damaging crops, forests, wildlife populations, and causing respiratory and other illnesses in humans. Acid rain is formed when sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides react with water vapor and other chemicals in the presence of sunlight to form various acidic compounds in the air. The principle source of acid rain-causing pollutants, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, are coal fired power plants. Since natural gas emits virtually no sulfur dioxide, and up to 80 percent less nitrogen oxides than the combustion of coal, increased use of natural gas could provide for fewer acid rain causing emissions.

### Industrial and Electric Emissions

Pollutant emissions from the industrial sector and electric utilities contribute greatly to environmental problems in the United States. The use of natural gas to power both industrial boilers and processes and the generation of electricity can significantly improve the emissions profiles for these two sectors.

Natural gas is becoming an increasingly important fuel in the generation of electricity. As well as providing an efficient, competitively priced fuel for the generation of electricity, the increased use of natural gas allows for the improvement in the emissions profile of the electric generation industry.

According to the National Environmental Trust (NET), now Pew Charitable Trusts (PEW), in their 2002 publication entitled "Cleaning up Air Pollution from America's Power Plants", power plants in the U.S. account for 67 percent of sulfur dioxide emissions, 40 percent of carbon dioxide emissions, 25 percent of nitrogen oxide emissions, and 34 percent of mercury emissions. Coal fired power plants are the greatest contributors to these types of emissions. In fact, according to World Watch Report 184, natural gas combined cycle power plants emit half as much carbon dioxide as modern super critical coal plants.

Natural gas-fired electric generation and natural gas-powered industrial applications offer a variety of environmental

benefits and environmentally friendly uses, including:

\***Fewer Emissions** - Combustion of natural gas, used in the generation of electricity, industrial boilers, and other applications, emits lower levels of NOx, CO2, and particulate emissions, and virtually no SO2 and mercury emissions. Natural gas can be used in place of, or in addition to, other fossil fuels, including coal, oil, or petroleum coke, which emit significantly higher levels of these pollutants.

\***Reduced Sludge** - Coal-fired power plants and industrial boilers that use scrubbers to reduce SO2 emissions levels generate thousands of tons of harmful sludge. Combustion of natural gas emits extremely low levels of SO2, eliminating the need for scrubbers, and reducing the amounts of sludge associated with power plants and industrial processes.

\***Reburning** - This process involves injecting natural gas into coal or oil fired boilers. The addition of natural gas to the fuel mix can result in NOx emission reductions of 50 to 70 percent, and SO2 emission reductions of 20 to 25 percent.

\***Cogeneration** - The production and use of both heat and electricity can increase the energy efficiency of electric generation systems and industrial boilers, which translates to the combustion of less fuel and the emission of fewer pollutants. Natural gas is the preferred choice for new cogeneration applications.

\***Combined Cycle Generation** - Combined cycle generation units generate electricity and capture normally wasted heat energy, using it to generate more electricity. Like cogeneration applications, this increases energy efficiency, uses less fuel, and thus produces fewer emissions. Natural gas-fired combined-cycle generation units can be up to 60 percent energy efficient, whereas coal and oil generation units are typically only 30 to 35 percent efficient.

\***Fuel Cells** - Natural gas fuel cell technologies are in development for the generation of electricity. Fuel cells are sophisticated devices that use hydrogen to generate electricity, much like a battery. No emissions are involved in the generation of electricity from fuel cells, and natural gas, being a hydrogen rich source of fuel, can be used. Although still under development, widespread use of fuel cells could in the future significantly reduce the emissions associated with the generation of electricity.

Essentially, electric generation and industrial applications that require energy, particularly for heating, use the combustion of fossil fuels for that energy. Because of its clean burning nature, the use of natural gas wherever possible, either in conjunction with other fossil fuels, or instead of them, can help to reduce the emission of harmful pollutants.

According to the Congressional Re-

search Service's 2010 report: "Displacing Coal with Generation from Existing Natural-Gas Fired Power Plants", if natural-gas combined cycle plants utilization were to be doubled from 42 percent capacity factor to 85 percent, then the amount of power generated would displace 19 percent of the CO2 emissions attributed to coal-fired electricity generation.

### Pollution from the Transportation Sector - Natural Gas Vehicles

The transportation sector (particularly cars, trucks, and buses) is one of the greatest contributors to air pollution in the United States. Emissions from vehicles contribute to smog, low visibility, and various greenhouse gas emissions. According to the Department of Energy (DOE), about half of all air pollution and more than 80 percent of air pollution in cities are produced by cars and trucks in the United States. Currently, automobile manufacturers are under pressure to produce more environmentally friendly vehicles.

Natural gas can be used in the transportation sector to cut down on these high levels of pollution from gasoline and diesel powered cars, trucks, and buses. According to the EPA, compared to traditional vehicles, vehicles operating on compressed natural gas have reductions in carbon monoxide emissions of 90 to 97 percent, and reductions in carbon dioxide emissions of 25 percent. Nitrogen oxide emissions can be reduced by 35 to 60 percent, and other non-methane hydrocarbon emissions could be reduced by as much as 50 to 75 percent. In addition, because of the relatively simple makeup of natural gas in comparison to traditional vehicle fuels, there are fewer toxic and carcinogenic emissions from natural gas vehicles, and virtually no particulate emissions. Thus the environmentally friendly attributes of natural gas may be used in the transportation sector to reduce air pollution.

Natural gas vehicles represent a growing segment of the transportation sector. According to the Natural Gas Vehicle Coalition, the use of natural gas for vehicles doubled between 2003 and 2009. Over 100,000 natural gas vehicles are currently on US roads. A large portion of those vehicles are transit buses, which account for nearly 62 percent of all natural gas vehicles.

Natural gas is the cleanest of the fossil fuels, and thus its many applications can serve to decrease harmful pollution levels from all sectors, particularly when used together with or replacing other fossil fuels. The natural gas industry itself is also committed to ensuring that the process of producing natural gas is as environmentally-friendly as possible.

Answers for energy quiz.

1. C, 2. D, 3. B, 4. D, 5. A, 6. A, 7. B, 8. B, 9. C, 10. A.

## Stay Informed With The IMGA Evening Report

The IMGA Evening Report is an excellent way to stay up to date on NY-MEX prices, weather, gas storage, and industry news. Each issue includes the days closing market prices for natural gas futures and crude oil, as well as a short commentary on market movement and industry related news.

The IMGA Evening Report is distributed electronically daily and is com-

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