

Pipeline part of area's progress

To the Editor:

On behalf of Midwestern Gas Transmission Company, I am writing in response to a number of letters to the editor over the last several days. Our intent is to answer questions and address concerns to the satisfaction of all interested parties, and a public forum such as this one is a great way to get the facts out to the greater community.

Let me say first that this pipeline project is a necessity. Piedmont Natural Gas Company has made a long-term commitment to this project because they need another source of natural gas to serve the Middle Tennessee area, particularly those counties growing as rapidly as Sumner County. As much as 80 percent, or approximately 96 million cubic feet of natural gas per day, of the natural gas flowing through this pipeline will serve the residential, commercial and industrial customers of Nashville Gas, including those in Sumner and Trousdale counties.

Since the series of informational open houses were held in mid-November, we have continued to adjust the route to minimize impact, and we have been meeting with property owners and local and state officials to ensure that everyone involved is equipped with factual information as we move forward.

Survey crews have been working with landowners to complete the right-of-way analysis, and all citizens are encouraged to visit or call our Right-of-Way office at 156 N. Water Ave. in Gallatin. Supervisor Jim Ehlers can be reached toll-free at (877) 450-3206. Please know that we are sensitive to both the rights of property owners and to federal, state and local laws governing land access. I can assure you that our crews will not set foot on your land without proper approval.

As a company, we strive to meet or exceed environmental standards set by state and federal bodies, and we're confident that our attention to these issues will surpass your expectations. During all phases of construction, restoration and operation, this pipeline will prove to be a minimally invasive, environmentally sensitive project.

Safety has always been and will continue to be our primary concern, and we're proud of the fact that we have not had an incident resulting in an injury in 34 years of operation. Throughout our nation's history, pipelines have far surpassed other methods of natural gas transportation in safety.

The 50-foot permanent easement will be restored as near as possible to its original condition, including the restoration of land features and contours. That piece of the land can be farmed and pastured just as it was previously.

We understand that projects of this nature can seem complicated, and that some citizens are finding it difficult to assess the myths and realities. We believe it is crucial for all stakeholders to gain a full understanding of the elements involved, and we've found that

an open line of communication is essential to the process. To that end, we encourage you to contact us with any questions or concerns, and we will work quickly to address them.

Midwestern Gas looks forward to continuing its presence as a valuable community partner for years to come. Thank you for your consideration.

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Midwestern Gas Transmission Company