
# CONNECTIONS

Spring 2007

published for the customers of Greenville Utilities


## Greenville Utilities

"Connections" is our customer newsletter, which we publish periodically to keep you informed about issues, activities and services at GUC.

If you have suggestions for topics or questions you'd like to see answered, please call our Public Information Office at 551-1522 or write to Connections, P.O. Box 1847, Greenville , NC 27835.
**www.guc.com**

We look forward to hearing from you!

### For Your Convenience

You can pay your bill using one of these methods:

- Online at www.guc.com
- By mail to: P.O. Box 1847, Greenville, NC 27835
- In person at our Main Office or GUC Express
- By EZ Pay, our automatic bank draft program
- At many local banks before the due date
- By credit card by calling: 1-800-722-8203

For more information, please call 551-3312.

# Operation Spring Clean

## *Ensuring High Quality Water*

Greenville Utilities will soon begin "Operation Spring Clean" a preventive maintenance program to ensure that our customers continue to receive high quality water. Operation Spring Clean will begin April 1st and continue through June 8th. During the 10-week program, all 580 miles of GUC's water distribution system will be cleaned. The program involves opening fire hydrants and allowing them to flow freely for a short time.

"To minimize inconvenience to customers, cleaning will be conducted Sunday through Friday from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.," said Randy Emory, GUC's Director of Water Resources. "Water service will not be interrupted because of Operation Spring Clean; however, we advise customers to avoid using water (if possible) when their lines are being cleaned. Although there is no health risk, the cleaning process involves flushing the pipes with high velocities of water. As a result, water may be discolored for a short period of time. GUC advises customers to avoid washing clothes until the water is clear."

If customers experience any air or discolored water in their water lines as a result of Operation Spring Clean, GUC recommends turning on the cold water faucet in the bathtub and running the water for 5 to 10 minutes.

In addition to the list at right, weekly notices will be published in the Daily Reflector and posted on GUC's website, www.guc.com, to identify areas scheduled to be cleaned. GUC will attempt to contact all businesses known to be open during 10 p.m. - 6 a.m. to advise them when cleaning will be done in their vicinity.

Customers may call GUC at 551-1551 from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. or 752-5627 after hours for further information on the Operation Spring Clean schedule.

| WEEK | DESCRIPTION OF AREA TO BE CLEANED |
|---|---|
| **April 1 to 6** | NW of the Tar River and Memorial Dr. to the end of GUC's water distribution system. |
| **April 8 to 13** | NE of the Tar River extending from Greene St. and Memorial Dr. to the end of GUC's water distribution system. |
| **April 15 to 20** | Between Stantonsburg Rd. and Hwy. 43 to Greene St. and south of the Tar River. |
| **April 22 to 27** | East of Greene St. between East Fifth and south of the Tar River. |
| **April 29 to May 4** | Between Dickinson Ave. and Stantonsburg Rd. to Evans St. and to the end of GUC's water distribution system. |
| **May 6 to 11** | Between Dickinson Ave. to Charles Blvd. and south to Greenville Blvd. |
| **May 13 to 18** | South of E. Fifth St. between Charles Blvd. to Greenville Blvd. |
| **May 20 to 25** | From Greenville Blvd. between 264 Alt to Old Tar Rd. to the end of GUC's water distribution system. |
| **May 27 to June 1** | From Greenville Blvd. between Old Tar Rd. to Charles Blvd. to the end of GUC's water distribution system. |
| **June 3 to June 8** | From Greenville Blvd. between Charles Blvd. to Hwy. 33 East to the end of GUC's water distribution system. |

# Lead Levels Comply with EPA

Latest water sample results indicate that, for the first time since 2004, GUC is in compliance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's regulations for lead. Samples collected from customers' taps in October/November 2006 were well within EPA limits. Federal regulations require that no more than 10% of the tap samples collected can exceed the EPA "Action Level" of 15 parts per billion (ppb) for lead. Only 6% of recent samples were more than 15 ppb.

We are encouraged that the latest lead samples continued to show improvement, and we anticipate further improvements in lead levels at the customers' taps during the next sample period.

Indications of a problem surfaced in 2004 when 22% of samples exceeded the EPA Action Level. As a result, GUC was required to implement a public education program, complete a corrosion control study, and increase sampling frequency from once every three years, to every six months. We also began offering free lead testing to all water customers.

Follow-up samples in 2005 and early 2006 also exceeded the EPA Action Level. Prior to 2004, in testing since 1992, only 2% of homes sampled for lead content exceeded the Action Level. Samples are collected from "worst-case" homes built between 1983 and 1988 and considered to be at risk for lead leaching from pipes joined with lead solder, which was banned in 1986.

"This has been a challenging issue to resolve," said Barrett Lasater, GUC Plants Manager. "There are no detectable levels of lead present in the water supplied to GUC customers when it leaves the Water Treatment Plant, and none of the 580 miles of GUC-owned water lines that carry water to homes are made of lead. If drinking water contains any lead, the most likely source is the home's plumbing system. The most common cause is corrosion, a reaction between the water and lead pipes or solder."

Since the early 1970s, we have maintained a continuous program to minimize the amount of lead present. Our corrosion control program involves adding a protective coating inside customer-owned pipes. Even with the most effective corrosion control program, detectable levels of lead may still be present in tap water.

GUC staff has been involved in multiple research projects over the past two years designed to identify factors contributing to increased lead leaching from home plumbing materials as well as water treatment practices that would minimize the leaching of lead.

What was in the textbooks, in our case, did not apply. We had to go outside of the textbooks and look at some new research in order to determine the cause of the problem.

A recent study showed that the combination of minerals in GUC drinking water could be part of the problem. Initial laboratory results that indicated up to 50 times more lead leached from lead solder joined to copper pipe when Tar River water was treated with polyaluminum chloride versus aluminum sulfate.

As a result of these findings, GUC switched from polyaluminum chloride to aluminum sulfate on April 4, 2006. Although there was a minimal amount of time between the coagulant change and the collection of the compliance samples in May/June 2006, sample results indicated a significant improvement as fewer homes exceeded the EPA Action Level. The latest samples, collected in October and November 2006 are now in compliance. The next compliance sample results are expected in April 2007.

A Pitt County Health Department drinking water lead advisory will remain in effect until two consecutive sampling events meet the EPA Action Level requirement. The advisory states that, as a precaution, pregnant women, breastfeeding women and children under six, should not consume their tap water until it is tested.

GUC will continue to offer free lead testing for all customers. Since testing was offered in 2004, more than 1,300 customers have taken the opportunity to have their water tested.

For further information, call GUC at 551-1551 or visit www.guc.com.

## Safe Water Tips for All Water Users ...

- **Run water through your faucet each day before drinking it or using it for cooking. After water has been sitting in the pipes for more than six hours (usually in the morning), run your cold water for two to four minutes before using it to drink or cook. Throughout the day, run the water for a minute before drinking the water.**
- **Boiling your water will not get rid of or reduce the amount of lead in your water.**
- **Use only water from your COLD water faucet for drinking and cooking. Hot water can have more lead in it than cold water. If you need hot water, heat cold water on the stove.**
- **Remove and clean strainers from your faucets/spigots several times a year.**

# Partnership Benefits Heart Institute

University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina, East Carolina University and private-practice physicians are joining forces to build a comprehensive cardiovascular center called the East Carolina Heart Institute, scheduled to open in 2009. The new Heart Institute includes two buildings that together will encompass more than 500,000 square feet. One building is a $150 million, six-story patient tower, currently under construction, that will be attached to the east end of Pitt County Memorial Hospital (PCMH). The other component of the project includes a $60 million research facility under construction near ECU's Brody School of Medicine, on the west campus of ECU.

GUC has played an important role in meeting the utility needs of the new Heart Institute. Working closely with PCMH, GUC personnel provided design and engineering services for a substation that will feed into PCMH's new Central Utility Plant (CUP). The plant, which will generate steam and chilled water, will provide electricity to the patient tower. GUC is also involved in construction of the CUP Substation, which is scheduled to go online in May 2007. For future load requirements of the Heart Institute, GUC has purchased a parcel of land for the Dickinson Ave. Substation. Construction on the substation is anticipated to begin in August 2007.

"We're pleased to have been able to work with them on this project," said Roger Jones, Director of Electric Systems at GUC. "This kind of partnering in our community makes eastern North Carolina a better place for all of us."

"For many years GUC and PCMH have periodically examined the current and future needs of the hospital," said Lowell J. Speight, PE, Administrator for Plant Operations and Biomedical at PCMH. "Because of this close working relationship, discussions about the needs of the new Heart Institute began early in this project."

GUC has also been working closely with the university to ensure our distribution system will be ready for the needs of the research facility when it is completed. No construction has been required for that project at this time.

"GUC and PCMH are working closely together not only to provide the people of eastern North Carolina a Heart Institute with reliable and cost effective utilities, but a foundation we can expand on for future hospital projects," said Mr. Speight.

# Boost Your Natural Gas Know-How

Ever wonder how the natural gas you use to heat your oven and dry your clothes gets to your home? The answer lies underfoot, where over two million miles of pipeline safely transport and distribute natural gas to millions of homes and businesses.

Carrying one of the safest, most reliable and environmentally-friendly fuels in use today, this pipeline system is buried underground not only for safety reasons, but also to protect it from the weather and ensure uninterrupted service. Natural gas utility companies like Greenville Utilities work hard to keep this delivery system safe for everyone by sponsoring public education programs, meeting regularly with public and emergency officials and performing system inspections using sophisticated leak detection equipment.

While leaks and incidents are rare, it's still important for individuals to educate themselves about natural gas safety. "Our employees are neighbors and community residents too, and they do everything in their power to prevent emergencies," said Anthony Miller, Director of Gas Systems. "But we also count on members of the general public to recognize the signs of a gas or pipeline leak."

Here are a few safety precautions to keep in mind:

- You've probably seen pipeline markers along major roadways. Take time to familiarize yourself with any of these markers in your neighborhood. If you knock over a marker, contact GUC at 551-1567, 752-5627 or NC One-Call at 1-800-632-4949 right away so it can be replaced.

- Remember the three ways to recognize a gas leak:

  **LOOK.** Near a gas leak, you may notice blowing dirt, bubbling creeks or ponds, dry spots in moist areas or dead plants surrounded by live, green plants.
  **LISTEN.** An unusual hissing sound near a natural gas appliance or line may indicate a leak.
  **SMELL.** Natural gas utility companies add a harmless substance to the normally odorless fuel to create a rotten-egg-like smell.

- Contact NC One-Call by calling 1-800-632-4949 at least two working days before starting any type of digging project—large or small. Lines have been hit digging fence post holes, anchoring supports for decks and swing sets, planting trees, removing tree roots and driving landscaping stakes into the ground. By not calling, you are breaking the law and risking injury to yourself and your family.

- Keep GUC emergency contact information on your list of important phone numbers (e.g. fire, police, etc.).

- If you spot or smell a leak, don't try to stop it or use anything that could create a spark—not even a cell phone, flashlight, etc. Instead, **LEAVE THE AREA** and call GUC's Emergency Hotline at 551-1567 or 752-5627.

By keeping these simple tips in mind, you can make a significant contribution to the safety of your community. For more information about natural gas safety, pipeline markers and proper digging practices, call 551-1587 or visit our website at www.guc.com.

# LNG Facility Expansion

Because of an increase in customer demand for natural gas, we recently completed an expansion of our Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Facility. A second vaporization unit was added, along with control system upgrades. One of 40 satellite facilities in the U.S., our LNG plant is the only municipally-owned and operated facility in North Carolina. The use of LNG has environmental and economic benefits. It is part of our overall strategy to reduce our dependence on one supplier for peak day volumes, reduce purchased gas costs, delay system enhancements, and increase gas system reliability. These cost-saving measures are passed along to our customers.

We are extremely pleased with the operation of the facility and its low maintenance costs. Even though stringent regulations require many inspections and maintenance functions, the LNG plant continues to be a low-maintenance and low-cost facility to operate.

LNG is natural gas that has been super chilled (-260 degrees F) to a liquid state. It is re-gasified when needed by heating it until it returns to its natural state. The converted natural gas is then odorized and injected into the distribution system at a compatible temperature and pressure.

This expansion was necessary to meet projected customer demand on peak days and also to provide redundancy and reliability of our delivery system. The LNG facility's control system was upgraded as part of the expansion project as well.

# EnergyWise Money Saving Tips

*There are a number of things we all can do to reduce energy usage and lower bills.*

- Check and clean or replace your central heating filter(s) once each month. Keeping clean filters in the system can save as much as 10-15% of the operating costs.
- For all heating systems - every degree you lower the thermostat below 68, can save you around 7% (per degree) of the operating costs. Every degree above 68 degrees will increase your costs by about 7% per degree.
- If you have a heat pump with auxiliary electric heat "strips," do not adjust the thermostat daily. Find your lowest comfortable setting and set it and forget it. The Department of Energy recommends 68 degrees or lower.
- Weather-seal window air conditioners for better efficiency. When possible, remove them in the winter, or at least cover to prevent cold air transfer.
- In the winter, turn the thermostat down anytime you are leaving for more than two hours. (This is not true for heat pumps with auxiliary heat "strips." Leave it alone unless you are leaving for more than two days.)
- A central, forced air heating system operates more efficiently if you keep the pathway between the supply and return vents open and clear. Do not close off rooms which you are not using, and do not close or block off any registers.

Our Main Office

# How To Reach Us

**It's our pleasure to serve you. If you have any questions regarding your electric, gas or water/sewer service, feel free to call Customer Service at 752-7166, weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please have your account number ready for faster, efficient service.**

**For billing inquiries or service questions, you may visit us weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at GUC Express, 509 SE Greenville Blvd. or weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at our Main Office, 401 S. Greene St.**

**For power outages, downed power lines, possible gas leaks or other utility emergencies, call our 24-Hour Emergency Line at 551-1567 or 752-5627. For water leaks or sewer stoppages, call 551-1551.**

## Online Applications

Job seekers can now apply for jobs online at www.guc.com. From the "Employment" link of the site, you can view available positions, create and submit applications. You can still mail your completed application to P.O. Box 1847, Greenville, NC 27835 or bring it to the Human Resources Office at 801 Mumford Road. The option to apply online adds to our current web services, including online bill payment and managing account information. Customers can also make requests to connect, transfer or disconnect services. The site also includes safety information, money-saving tips and a Kids' Corner section with fun, interactive information about utilities.

## Priority Customers

GUC's Priority Customer Program identifies customers who use life support equipment at their residences. These customers are provided special consideration in the event of power outages or during routine maintenance of electric service lines. During power outage situations beyond GUC's control (hurricanes, ice storms, etc.), we recommend priority customers have alternate plans for continuing life support treatment. If you would like to be considered a priority customer, please contact us at 551-1581.

# Water Transmission Project Completed

**GUC's transmission main project included underwater construction on the Tar River in 1996.**

Greenville Utilities' water distribution system is highly reliable. Having and maintaining a system we can depend on doesn't just happen – it's the result of a lot of effort and advance planning by our Water Resources team of professionals who are dedicated to making sure our system is the best it can be to meet our customers' needs. The water transmission main project that was completed recently is an example of that kind of planning and dedicated work.

The project took 12 years and was completed in three phases. It involved constructing 11 miles of new transmission main from the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) to the southwestern portion of the distribution system.

This project has significantly enhanced system reliability in a number of ways. We now have an additional major water transmission main which enhances our capacity to serve increasing demand in the rapidly growing southwest portion of the system. It also provides a more direct connection between the WTP and the Southside Elevated Water Tank which allows us to more readily replenish the water tank when successive daily flows approach the maximum day demand. In addition, it enhances system pressures and fire flow capabilities.

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