

# ENERGY NEWS AND NOTES

## Homegrown Fuel Helps Energize U.S.

(NAPSA)—When it comes to one energy source, the U.S. may be more self-sufficient than some might expect. The majority of natural gas consumed in America is produced in America. In fact, natural gas is abundant in the U.S.—enough to cover American needs for years to come—and experts say it's safer, less expensive and better for the environment than many other sources.

They argue that natural gas has a proven record of safety and reliability. It's been used to heat American homes and generate power for years. Every day in the U.S., several million cubic feet of natural gas travel through a high-tech underground pipeline delivery system to more than 64 million customers. Here's a closer look:

### The Delivery System

Natural gas flows from deep inside the earth into producing wells. From there, it enters gathering pipelines and then large transmission pipes that crisscross the nation. After traveling up to 700 miles in a day, the natural gas arrives at the local utility. Some of the gas is stored underground for later use. The rest is sent through a network of pipes to homes or businesses. The American Gas Association says the normal pressure for sending the natural gas through these pipes is less than the pressure created by a child blowing bubbles through a straw in a glass of milk.

### Safety Record

The natural gas pipeline infrastructure, which includes 1.4 million miles of pipeline, is the nation's safest energy delivery system, according to U.S. government statistics. One reason may be that gas utility and pipeline companies



**The majority of natural gas consumed in the U.S. is produced in the U.S. and in nearby Canada.**

spend close to \$7 billion annually on safety measures. Experienced personnel routinely inspect and maintain natural gas service lines and service crews are available to respond to emergencies 24 hours a day. The groups have also sponsored "Call Before You Dig" programs and they've installed above-ground natural gas markers (now required by federal law). The pipelines themselves are mostly made from high-tech plastics that are corrosion resistant and flexible.

### Stability

Natural gas is produced in 20 states. High-strength pipelines act like interstate highways, moving huge amounts of natural gas thousands of miles. Computerized systems tell pipeline companies where gas is needed most, then find the most efficient way to get it there. To help avoid interruption of service, pipelines are equipped with shutoff valves that let companies reroute gas to other lines, while a specific line is being serviced. In addition, many gas companies store natural gas during warmer months to help ensure that home-heating customers can depend on the fuel in colder months.

For more information, visit [www.aga.org](http://www.aga.org).