



2016 Membership Dues Mailed!

Invoices for the 2016 membership dues have been mailed out. If you did not receive your invoice or it was sent to you in error, please let Diane know at 763-424-1841 or dswintek@blueflame.org

Membership benefits include: New website "Product Sort" feature on the website that helps connect customers looking for natural gas products to members that have that product! Networking opportunities, member rates to association events, advertising opportunities, opportunities to promote at the Minnesota State Fair in the Blue Flame Lodge or at seminars, etc.

Please renew! Our members are our strength! Your dues enable the Minnesota Blue Flame to continue to support the natural gas industry in Minnesota. Thank you!



Get Your Ballot In!

Ballots were emailed to members to vote for three directors to fill the three open positions on the board of directors. Please get them in by Thursday, December 31, 2015!

Winter Forecast

Natural Gas Price & Supply Update

At the Minnesota Blue Flame Commercial/Industrial Fall Conservation Conference on September 22nd, the breakfast keynote topic was the Natural Gas Price & Supply forecast for this winter. Special guest speaker, Mike Boughner with Xcel Energy, Denver, CO, came to speak to attendees.

Near Term Outlook

Supply:

- Drilling is down due to low oil and gas prices
- Production costs have dropped significantly
- Storage inventory is back to normal

Demand:

The forecast in September-this winter could be the strongest El Nino since 1997.

- This could mean below normal demand this winter.

Winter 2015/2016 Price Outlook

Average: \$3.16 per million Btu

Longer Term Outlook

- Higher demand is coming – due to electric generation with natural gas and reduction of coal usage, LNG exporting, etc.

Conclusions:

- Demand has not yet caught up to the prolific year over year production increases.
- Storage expected to be above normal heading into the winter.
- Prices for this coming winter trading near fifteen year lows.

Mike's full presentation is on the Blue Flame's website (www.blueflame.org) under "Membership", "Committees", "Commercial/Industrial Committee", "Breakfast keynote – Natural Gas Price & Supply Update" or click the following link <http://blueflame.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Mike-B-Xcel-Price-and-Supply-Presentation2015.pdf>

Natural Gas News

Blue Flame Recruitment Program Coming in 2016!

EARN \$\$ AND HELP OTHERS BECOME A PART OF THE MINNESOTA BLUE FLAME!

Members are vital to the success of an Association and in 2016, the Blue Flame will be having a member recruitment incentive program! It will run from January 1, 2016 to May 31, 2016. Members recruiting a new member (must be approved by the Board and paid) will receive a \$50 gift card (choose from a list of stores – i.e. Cabela’s, Target, etc.).

Program details will be emailed to all members in January after the holidays.

Start making your list of companies to recruit and we’ll kick off the New Year in style!!

A Unique Agreement

City and utility collaborate to deliver natural gas

American Gas, November 2015

Grand Rapids – In a pioneering effort to help residents of certain neighborhoods save on energy costs, the city of Grand Rapids has teamed up with Minnesota Energy Resources Corp. to extend natural gas to neighborhoods on opposite ends of town.

As part of the deal, the city is financing the customers’ portion of the connection cost. Those who connect to the natural gas system will have five years to pay back their share to the city.

We’ve been trying to get alternative fuel sources out to these neighborhoods. In an overall average, we’ve been able to show a reduction in monthly energy costs by converting from fuel oil or propane to natural gas,” Grand Rapids City Engineer Julie Kennedy told American Gas.

“With this project, the city of Grand Rapids was in a unique position, offering to finance what would be considered the customer’s portion of the natural gas expansion cost. We had to be creative and came up with an agreement that met the city’s governances as well as public utility regulations for our company.” Pamela M. Sarvela, external affairs leader for MERC, told American Gas. “Was this unique for our company? Absolutely, I don’t know of any other agreement like it. In the end, the goal was the same – provide residents with safe, reliable, affordable natural gas.”

Residents can expect to save between \$300 and \$900 annually by switching to natural gas, Kennedy said.

For the complete article, visit www.aga.org





By the Numbers : Natural Gas Generators

American Gas, August/September 2015

Major power outages caused by severe weather increased tenfold from 1984 to 2012. In response, Americans are increasingly weathering the storms by turning to natural gas residential standby generators for emergency power.

Some of the increase in major power outages in Climate Central's 28-year analysis was driven by improved reporting. Yet even since 2003, after stricter reporting requirements were widely implemented, the average annual number of weather-related power outages doubled and accounted for 80 percent of all major outages.

Annual sales of residential natural gas standby generators have climbed steadily from 94,000 in 2010 to 110,000 in 2014, a growth of about 4 percent a year, according to growth consulting

firm Frost & Sullivan. That same growth is expected to continue through 2020. "Natural gas generators are gaining momentum, with residential end users as the main adopters," Frost & Sullivan Research Manager Lucrecia Gomez said. "The U.S. gas standby generator market is one of the fastest-growing markets among developed nations."

Standby generators are rated by kilowatts, a measure of the machine's strength and endurance. Most average single-family homes can rely on a system that's 30kW or less, a trend that's expected to continue, even as more consumers invest in generator sets. "The demand for natural gas gensets is expected to increase consistently in the U.S.," Frost & Sullivan's Gomez said.

Did You Know?

The Blue Flame Lodge at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds has backup power provided by a natural gas generator. If the power goes out, we don't have to worry, the generator kicks in and we have power. This is especially important to the Blue Flame in the winter when we need to have power for the heat tapes that keep the drains on the roof of the Lodge from freezing. Blue Flame member, Midwest Generators, installed and maintains the Lodge's generator. For more info., visit www.midwestgenerators.com

FOR THE COMPLETE ARTICLE, VISIT WWW.AGA.ORG

Member News

MEi's 68th Year in Business!

MEi (Minnesota Exteriors, Inc.) was founded in 1947 and is a family-owned company that has served the Twin Cities for 68 years! They are Minnesota's oldest, most trusted home exterior improvement company.

Blue Flame Lodge Drawing Winners!

Two members exhibiting in the Blue Flame Lodge at State Fair had drawings:

MEi (Minnesota Exteriors, Inc.) had a drawing for \$6,800 in MEi products to celebrate their 68th year! The winner was Cheryl Szabo of Maplewood.

Minnesota Gas Grills & Fireplaces had a drawing for a Broilmaster Natural Gas Grill on a portable cart – the winner was John Harris of Bloomington.

A big THANKYOU to MEi & Minnesota Gas Grills & Fireplaces for having these great drawings that encouraged fair goers to come to the Lodge! Also congratulations to the lucky winners!

Upcoming 2016 Shows:

Energy Design Conference & Expo

February 22-24, 2016 at the DECC (Duluth Entertainment Convention Center). For more information go to www.duluthenergydesign.com Early bird registration ends January 29, 2016.

Home & Garden Show

February 26–28 & March 4-6, 2016 at the Minneapolis Convention Center. For more information go to <http://www.homeandgardenshow.com/MHGS/EventsHome.aspx>

Mark your 2016 Calendars:

Blue Flame Fishing Event
Tuesday, June 7

Blue Flame Golf Event
Cannon Falls Golf Club
Thursday, June 16

Minnesota State Fair
August 25-September 5

Commercial/Industrial Fall Energy Conservation Conference
Tuesday, September 20

QUOTE OF THE QUARTER

"We need to maximize our time here – not by worrying about all the stuff we have accumulated, but by staying healthy and doing great things every day."

Joe DeSena, Spartan Up!

INTERESTED IN JOINING THE ASSOCIATION?

Contact Diane at dswintek@blueflame.org or visit our website at www.blueflame.org
Associate memberships are \$200 per year.

Join the team now!

Benefits to joining:

Website exposure on Blue Flame website (Natural Gas Product Finder), Networking Opportunities, Industry Contacts, Advertising Opportunities, Member rates (reduced rates) for Association events, seminars, etc., Increased Company Visibility (via our website & our Member Directory, etc.), and many more.

Have something to submit?

E-mail change?

If you would like to submit information to be considered for the next member newsletter or have an e-mail change, contact Diane at dswintek@blueflame.org



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