

the Pilot

A newsletter for customers
of Clearwater Gas System **FALL 2003**

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Modern Gas Appliances Offer Modern Comfort

*By Eric Burgis, Director - Commercial and Residential Markets
The Energy Solutions Center*

Let's face it. We all know that natural gas is the best choice for heating, boiling water, cooking, and drying clothes. As a matter of fact there are a myriad of gas appliances that can add to your comfort and convenience, while providing just the right touch of ambiance.

From the technologically advanced tankless gas water heater to the charm of a gas fireplace, you will find that gas appliances come with a wide variety of features and designs to help make life easier and more enjoyable.

Let's consider the following gas products that can positively affect your quality of life and the resale value of your home. A gas fireplace or space heater may be just what you need to take the chill off your family room on a crisp winter night. Ever run out of hot water and have to wait to take a shower? Now you can install a continuous gas water heater that never runs out of hot water and is much more efficient than conventional water heaters, saving you money. Natural gas air conditioners cool efficiently and offer the unique ability to create different zones within each room that allows for different temperature settings.

Natural gas and your backyard are a perfect match for relaxation and recreation. In fact, you can't beat the elegance of gas lighting to add charm and character to your home. Wouldn't it be nice to have a natural gas barbeque that never needs refueling? Or how about a patio heater to extend your evenings during the cool weather season? Imagine sitting around a gas fire pit while sharing a glass of wine with your friends and neighbors. Or why not invest in a pool or spa heater to extend your swimming season?

When you choose gas as your primary energy source, you open the door to many exciting possibilities. Decorative, recreational or just plain convenient and comfortable – today's advanced gas appliances add a whole new world of comfort and convenience to improve your overall quality of life.

For more information about modern gas appliances, please call Clearwater Gas Sales at (727) 669-1958.

Affordable Natural Gas - Congress holds the key

By Chuck Warrington, Managing Director and Executive Officer, Clearwater Gas System

Over the past five years, obtaining natural gas supply at low cost has been extremely difficult for local energy providers. Wild price spikes and an overall increase in utility bills have put an undue burden on the nation's natural gas customers. However, 92 percent of those customers are served by for-profit corporations. The other 8 percent of natural gas users are served by public gas systems. Public gas systems, like Clearwater Gas, operate for the benefit of their customers, who are also the gas systems' owners. As a result, public gas systems are uniquely focused on maintaining low and stable natural gas prices and passing the savings on to their customer-owners.

Twice in 2000 - before any real problems were acknowledged by the mainstream of the energy industry - a group of nearly 600 public gas systems, represented by the American Public Gas Association (APGA), asked both the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to look into the then-historically high natural gas prices.

The regulators assured us that the market was working its magic and the high prices were just a result of "supply and demand." When the APGA

suggested that market manipulation might be a problem, Congress was busy passing legislation making it easier for energy commodity traders to operate without regulatory oversight. APGA allegations proved true in the end, but the belated response by government officials didn't help customers, who saw massive increases in their monthly gas bills. Even today, with mountains of evidence of misconduct, Congress seems unwilling to pass meaningful legislation to correct the situation.

Public gas systems are now raising the profile of two new issues that do not bode well for natural gas prices: 1) our nation's over-reliance on natural gas for electric generation, and 2) DOE's counterproductive energy efficiency requirements for appliances.

There has been too much emphasis on relying primarily on natural gas for electric generation. Most new electric generation facilities added since 1998 are fueled by natural gas. This over-reliance by the power industry on natural gas is certain to drive up prices. Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan testified a few months ago that there is a clear and direct link between increased demand for natural gas and the price of the commodity. Congress must

address the relationship between gas prices and the increasing dependence of electric generators on natural gas to fuel new generation facilities. This policy must recognize that our nation's future electricity needs cannot be met almost exclusively with natural gas, but rather with a reasonable and workable combination of conservation efforts, renewable energy, clean coal technology and safe nuclear power.

Public gas systems, like Clearwater Gas operate for the benefit of their customers, who are also the gas systems' owners.

Amazingly, the DOE's appliance efficiency proposals discourage the use of natural gas, principally as a result of extensive lobbying by the powerful electric industry. Congress also needs to address its counterproductive energy efficiency programs for appliances, which have driven builders and homeowners away from natural gas appliances. Even though natural gas appliances consume less source energy and cause fewer emissions than the generation of the electricity needed to run a similar electric appliance, DOE's program ignores the total energy and emissions necessary to operate an

appliance and simply fixates on the use of "energy at the outlet." The efficiency improvements imposed by DOE on gas appliances raised the purchase price of these appliances far beyond that of their electric counterparts. As a result, DOE's program: (1) has made gas appliances more expensive; (2) has moved consumers away from natural gas appliances to electric appliances; (3) will result in our nation consuming even greater amounts of natural gas for electric generation; (4) will cause higher levels of emissions; and (5) will cause our nation to make less efficient use of our finite reserves of natural gas.

Congress must ensure that DOE's appliance efficiency standards will result in the consumption of less source energy and generate lower emissions. Lawmakers must seize this opportunity to reform energy markets to ensure their fairness, transparency and openness in order to provide adequate, reliable and affordable natural gas for American Consumers.

Chuck Warrington is also the Chairman of the American Public Gas Association representing 600 local energy companies that serve more than 53 million homes, businesses and industries throughout the U.S.

A Winning Combination

Louis Pappas' Riverside Restaurant on the corner of Dodecanese Boulevard and North Pinellas Avenue (Alt U.S. 19) in Tarpon Springs has been the gateway to the sponge docks since 1975.

While the restaurant has changed hands lately, the new ownership has plans to continue the Tarpon Springs Legend. Last year, the restaurant was sold to three families, who cherish their Greek Heritage and culture and want to share it with others. Although the restaurant name remains the same, the change in ownership brought about a change in equipment - gas equipment that is.

For many years Pappas' Riverside Restaurant used propane to prepare its signature dishes. While

propane is an alternative where natural gas is unavailable, the older kitchen equipment and the close proximity of Clearwater Gas natural gas mains made the time right for Pappas' to convert to natural gas.

As a result, the new owners contacted Clearwater Gas System and on August 24, 2003, the Clearwater Gas Team converted Pappas' equipment to a more efficient and dependable natural gas system. The Clearwater Gas crews worked throughout the night replacing the interior and exterior gas piping in addition to installing new energy efficient kitchen appliances.

The switch from propane gas to natural gas allows for a more efficient method of

cooking. "Natural gas has always been our first energy choice for many reasons, such as exact temperature control and even heat distribution," says Pappas' General Manager, Yanni Pardalis. In the restaurant business natural gas is a necessity, specifically in a high-volume kitchen like Tarpon's Louis Pappas' Riverside Restaurant.

Not to be confused or connected with the Louis Pappas Market Café in Clearwater which is also served by Clearwater Gas, Louis Pappas' Riverside Restaurant caters to casual fine dining and can accommodate up to 1,000 guests in its sprawling facility. The new upscale menu selections include lamb, seafood, and a



Pappas' has long been a landmark dining location in historic Tarpon Springs

variety of classical Greek dishes. Louis Pappas' Riverside Restaurant is located in Tarpon Springs at 10 West Dodecanese Boulevard in Tarpon Springs and is open seven days a week, Monday through Sunday, From 11 am to 10 pm.

For more information on making the switch to natural gas, please call Clearwater Gas Sales at (727) 669-1958.

Hot Fun in the Wintertime

If you're like many Suncoast homeowners, you've probably invested in a pool or spa addition and look forward to years of outdoor enjoyment. Now is the time to consider an energy efficient gas pool or spa heater, which can easily double your season of outdoor pool and spa use.

Today's gas-fueled systems are a homeowner's preferred choice for a number of reasons. They are the least expensive way to heat your pool or spa. Gas heaters also offer a wide selection of models in a broad variety of

sizes and heating capabilities, compared to electric heat pumps that are limited in size, selection, and efficiency.

Plus, today's highly advanced gas technologies provide temperature control and higher efficiencies than ever before. In fact, some heaters are over 75 percent efficient, with electronic ignitions that activate the pilot light when necessary. These units offer substantially lower operating costs for outdoor installations.

Another benefit to gas pool and spa heaters is that they offer

easy installation, with universal plumbing connections, well suited to either indoor or outdoor applications. New venting options make installation easier yet, with power-vented blowers to make downdrafts a thing of the past, even if the heater is installed in an area with frequent high winds.

Gas heaters range in heat output from 125,000 to 400,000 BTU per hour. Most are contained within a weatherproof solid-state galvanized steel jacket. No other outside shelter is

required. The heater is simply attached to existing pool and gas lines.

When selecting a heater, remember that size is important and the Clearwater Gas experts will be happy to advise you on choosing the right system for your pool or spa. So why not invest in a gas pool or spa heater to extend your swimming season? With Clearwater Gas the water's fine!

For more information on gas pool or spa heating, please call Clearwater Gas Sales at (727) 669-1958.

Tahitian Resort takes Water Heating Efficiency by Storm

Using energy efficiently has become increasingly important to businesses in the past decade. Rising energy prices, along with an increasingly competitive marketplace and environmental regulation of harmful pollutant emissions, have all encouraged commercial and industrial energy users to search out the most efficient and cleanest ways to use energy.

Which is why the Tahitian Resort called upon the efforts of Roger Harris, Clearwater Gas Commercial Sales Representative. The Tahitian Resort, formerly named Best Western Tahitian, regularly accommodates large groups that look forward to a pleasant and enjoyable stay in sunny Florida. "On average we lodge approximately 42,000 guests a year," says Dick Hamilton, General Manager. That equates to 22,000 room reservations or 1.9 persons per room per day, which requires the Resort to meet an unpredictable hot water

demand at a reasonable cost. This demand includes the laundry facilities as well as the guest rooms.

Compared to traditional hot water tanks that heat water from the bottom up, the Cyclone XHE heats water from the inside out by sending a swirling tongue of flame through a combustion chamber that descends through the center of the tank while hot gases are propelled through a heating coil circulating through the tank. The heating coil's large surface area maximizes the heat transfer between the hot gas and the water, giving the Cyclone XHE 94% thermal efficiency, compared to 78%, or less, of traditional water heaters. By heating the incoming water faster, the Cyclone XHE also decreases the chance of running out of hot water, which is extremely important for the Tahitian Resort and its guests. "Dependability is key and since the installation of the Cyclone water heaters, we have not had any hot water complaints," explained Hamilton.

Indoor air quality matters, too. The Cyclone XHE is a mechanically vented, sealed-combustion unit that can be placed virtually anywhere. An automatic electric blower eliminates the need for drafting and venting, and expels exhaust gases through conventional roof or wall vents.

Until now, high prices have put the vast majority of high efficiency commercial water heaters out of reach for many commercial companies that operate on limited budgets. But thanks to the Cyclone water heating application, many small to midsize companies are able to enjoy the many benefits of the Cyclone XHE commercial water heater.

The Tahitian Resort is located in Holiday and neighbors Tarpon Springs, a historic town of Greek origin also known as the sponge capital of the world.

For more information on how the Cyclone gas water heater can work for your business, please call Clearwater Gas Sales at (727) 669-1958.

Roger Harris recently received an official letter of commendation acknowledging his achievement and certification as a Certified Foodservice Professional (CFSP). Roger has been employed with Clearwater Gas for 8 years and will serve as next year's Chair of the Gas Foodservice Equipment Network (GFEN).



Poolside view of the Tahitian Resort

Help Us Serve You Better

Every month our meter readers read over 17,500 gas meters. To do so *safely and accurately*, we need your help:

Please keep the area near your gas meter clear of obstructions.

A clear view of the meter dials helps to secure an accurate reading, and an uncluttered meter location allows ready access to the disconnect stop in case of emergency.

Please restrain your pets.

We know Fluffy and Fido are just doing their job. Please help us do ours by allowing animal-free access to read your meter. You can call Clearwater Customer Service at (727) 562-4600 for the date when your meter is scheduled to be read.

Concerned about who is on your property?

We share your concerns about safety & security. All City of Clearwater meter readers wear City uniforms and have a City of Clearwater photo ID which they will gladly display when asked.

If you have any questions regarding our meter readers or need additional information, please call Clearwater Customer Service at (727) 562-4600.

Clearwater Gas System - Working to Ensure Reliable Service

For over 10 years Clearwater Gas System (CGS) and Peoples Gas System (PGS) have maintained an emergency inter-connection station to link the systems in case of pressure losses. This tie-in site has been used on two occasions to back-feed PGS during pressure loss situations on St. Petersburg Beach.

With the continuing growth of our service area, CGS has recognized the need for additional interconnection stations to ensure reliability of natural gas service to our customers. To that end, CGS has recently concluded an agreement with PGS that provides for additional interconnection stations to assist both systems in the event of low pressure and back-up situations. The interconnection agreement is an example of improvements made by Clearwater Gas System to ensure continued reliable natural gas service delivery to our customers.

Currently, CGS provides gas service to over 17,500 customers throughout northern Pinellas County and western Pasco County, maintaining 685 miles of underground gas main in 17 municipalities.

The primary goals of the CGS and PGS partnership are a) to ensure service reliability to our loyal customer base and b) to provide gas energy in the most safe, reliable and economical manner possible.

This partnership also reinforces the Clearwater Gas System commitment to provide uninterrupted gas

service to our customers 365 days per year. On average, service from Clearwater Gas is interrupted only one-half a second per year, per customer. This is expressed as a 99.99999% reliability rate.

Compare this to your electric service. Florida Progress reports that its average customer outage is approximately 1.2 hours per year. Overall, Clearwater Gas has an exceptional record of service reliability and we will continue our efforts to improve the quality of service delivered to you, our valued customers.

gotGAS?

Now is the time to schedule your yearly gas appliance maintenance to prepare for the upcoming winter season. For \$59.00 a certified gas technician will perform a safety check, adjust pilots and ensure your gas appliances are operating efficiently. Call Clearwater Gas today at 727-562-4900, x7419 to schedule your annual maintenance. Additional parts and installation charges may apply.

contact US

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(727) 669-1958, Clearwater
(727) 816-1253, Pasco

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industry news

Florida ranks eighth in the nation for overall energy consumption (3.8 percent).

Florida is the nation's largest consumer of petroleum and third largest consumer of electricity and ranks twelfth for natural gas consumption.

Good news for owners of natural gas homes.

The National Association of Homebuilders found that

natural gas homes command a four percent price premium over similar electric homes. This amounts to an \$8,600 price premium for natural gas homes for builders.

More than 56 million homes, or 55 percent of all U.S. households, use natural gas.

Of the roughly 102 million households in the United States, more than 56 million are served with natural gas.

Honda to expand natural gas vehicle sales.

Honda announced it would sell its natural gas powered Civic GX to the general public in late 2004, which could be good news for local distribution systems. Honda has been selling the Civic GX to government and business clients for over 5 years. The car will retail around \$20,000.

Propane inventories top 60 million barrels.

As of August 15, U.S. inventories

of propane totaled 60.6 millions-barrel (MMB), the highest level since November 2002 when inventories measured 61.8 MMB. Imports, which totaled 1.3 MMB, continued to play a major role. Since the beginning of August, stockholders have added nearly 4.4 MMB to the nation's stockpile of propane.

Sources: National Propane Gas Association, American Public Gas Association, and Fueling the Future.



CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS APPLY. Coupons are valid only at the Clearwater Gas Showroom and must be presented at time of purchase. This offer may not be combined with other promotional offers. Call Clearwater Gas at (727) 669-1958 for further details. Prior sales excluded.

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