



Keeping community leaders informed

Community Link is created for community leaders like you. At CenterPoint Energy, we pride ourselves on being good corporate citizens and work closely with the communities we serve to enhance the quality of life through community development, health and human services and education. Read on about important natural gas safety information, our volunteer involvement and much more.



News you can use



CenterPoint Energy urges customers to call if they cannot pay their utility bill

Our customers are important to us. That's why we urge them to call us if they experience financial hardship. "We want our customers to contact us right away if they anticipate they will have difficulty paying their natural gas bill to learn how to apply with local agencies for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Programs (LIHEAP)," said Steve Greenley, division vice president of Regional Operations in Louisiana and Mississippi.

The federal government has proposed drastic cuts that will impact the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding, so it is important for qualified customers to apply for LIHEAP grants as soon as funds become available in their area. Funds become available in Louisiana from Oct. 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012, and in Mississippi from Oct. 1, 2011 to April 30, 2012.

"We know many of our customers are struggling through these difficult economic times," said Robin Ferrary, director of Credit and Collections. "Please encourage customers in your community to contact us before they receive a shut-off or disconnect notice to discuss payment options and to see if they are eligible for help."

Energy assistance is a call or click away

When customers call us early, they have several natural gas payment assistance options. Visit our Payment and Assistance page or CenterPointEnergy.com/selfservice for options. Qualified customers can get information about:

- Payment arrangements
- Payment extension for 30 days
- Energy Assistance programs - In Louisiana and Mississippi, the United Way's 2-1-1 Helpline can help direct customers
- LIHEAP - Find more information and how to apply for LIHEAP at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap/index.html>

State assistance:

- Louisiana 1-888-454-2001
www.lhfa.state.la.us/programs
- Mississippi 1-800-421-0762
www.mdhs.state.ms.us/cs_info.html

Scan the QR code on your smart phone.



Louisiana



Mississippi

Someone you should know

Charles (Charlie) Campbell
Senior Marketing Consultant
Ridgeland, MS

Charlie Campbell is passionate about telling audiences about the benefits of clean-burning, efficient natural gas. He travels throughout CenterPoint Energy's service areas to share with businesses that are considering large construction projects about the way the company can help them reduce energy for greater savings when they consider natural gas.



Charlie, who has been with the company for 37 years, also travels throughout Mississippi promoting the benefits of natural gas vehicles (NGVs), which run on compressed natural gas (CNG). "There are no CNG stations in Mississippi yet, but we're doing everything we can to promote natural gas as an environmentally-friendly and cost-effective alternative fuel," said Charlie. "I recently hosted a seminar on NGVs in Mississippi that was well-received by local businesses and government officials." His goal is to help get a CNG fueling station in the state by the middle of 2012.

Charlie makes it his job to find out about projects ahead of time by building relationships with developers, engineers and architects in CenterPoint Energy's service areas. "I like to be proactive so we can be competitive with the power company. Once people understand the benefits of natural gas, we have a chance to extend natural gas service to more communities," said Charlie.

Away from the office, Charlie enjoys woodworking and volunteer work. Charlie was one of many CenterPoint Energy volunteers who helped citizens by hauling supplies after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast. A local church has also benefited from one of Charlie's framing and construction projects. He has a passion for overseas mission work and has traveled to Costa Rica, Mexico and Nicaragua. "I still carry a cross that was given to me as a gift of appreciation by a child in a country I visited," said Charlie. "That priceless gift probably cost the family an entire week's pay."

Best way to contact Charlie:
Email: Charles.Campbell@CenterPointEnergy.com
Cell: 601-720-9821

News you can use

Natural gas vehicles (NGVs) are good for the environment and your budget

Our customers may want to know more about Natural gas vehicles (NGVs) as they gain popularity across the country. There are about 112,000 NGVs on U.S. roads today. Dedicated NGVs are equipped to run exclusively on compressed natural gas (CNG), but there are also bi-fuel NGVs that run on either natural gas or gasoline. "As Shale plays (or areas found to be favorable for exploration) across the United States have sparked renewed interest in natural gas as an alternative transportation fuel, the options and choices on the market for CNG vehicles are rapidly growing," said Steve Greenley, division vice president of Regional Gas Operations in Louisiana and Mississippi.

In the United States, about 30 different manufacturers produce 100 models of light, medium and heavy-duty vehicles and engines. There are also conversion kits available for the most popular cars and trucks. Natural gas costs, on average, one-third less than conventional gasoline at the pump. "Natural gas can play a key role in enhancing national and energy security, improving air quality, and providing our customers with a more affordable and secure transportation fuel," said Greenley. With an over 100-year supply (and increasing daily) and natural gas price stability, business owners can lock in fuel contracts and low prices, and consumers can save on personal vehicle fuel costs.

There are more than 1,100 NGV fueling stations in the U.S. – and about half of them are open to the public. To learn more about natural gas vehicles, visit CenterPointEnergy.com/ngv. You may be interested in knowing and sharing the following Fast Facts about NGVs.

Fast Facts

Q. Are NGVs safe?

A. NGVs are as safe as any gasoline-powered vehicle. There are over 13 million NGVs in use around the world, and the safety record is excellent. NGVs meet the same safety standards as gasoline and diesel vehicles and their fuel tanks are puncture resistant.



Q. What is the price point of NGVs?

A. Light-duty NGVs, such as a car or pick-up truck, cost from \$5,000 to \$7,000 more than comparable gasoline vehicles. Heavy-duty NGVs, like garbage trucks or buses, can cost \$30,000 or more than comparable diesel vehicles. The price depends on the fuel-tank capacity and whether the vehicle is equipped by the manufacturer or converted to run on natural gas. However, government incentives are available to offset NGV costs.

Natural gas lights and logs add comfort and style to familiar holiday traditions

Natural gas lights or logs can help customers add simplicity and convenience to the busy holiday season. They are stylish, reliable, environmentally friendly and easy to use. In the front yard or when entertaining around the patio or pool, natural gas lights can enhance the beauty of a home and offer security for family and guests by illuminating dark areas of the property.

Natural gas logs and fireplaces allow customers to relive the time-honored tradition of gathering around the fireplace to share hot cocoa and other holiday treats. They are easy to use and they require relatively little maintenance.

This winter, it's easy for customers to capture the stylish look they've always wanted for their home. They can simply call their nearest dealer today for information on natural gas lights and logs.



News you can use *(continued)*

Q. What are the environment benefits of NGVs?

A. NGVs received some of the highest rankings for environmental performance. Using natural gas is one of the best ways to reduce harmful air pollutants. That's because natural gas burns cleaner than gasoline and other alternative fuels, reducing tailpipe emissions by up to 95%.

Additional environmental benefits of NGVs:

- Reduces carbon monoxide emissions 70-90%
- Reduces carbon dioxide emissions 20-30%
- Reduces nitrogen oxide emissions 75-95%

Source: *Natural Gas Vehicles for America and Department of Energy*

Q. What's the availability of fueling stations?

A. There are currently two stations open and operating in Bossier City, La., that are operating as well as a station with SPORTRAN, the public transit system for Shreveport and Bossier City. Several more stations in North Louisiana are in the design and construction phase and are expected to be open in 2012.

Q. Where can I get more information about rebates and future plans?

In Louisiana, there is an Alternative Fuel Vehicle (AFV) and Fueling Infrastructure Tax Credit. A tax credit of 50% is available on the cost of converting a vehicle to operate on an alternative fuel, 50% of the incremental cost of purchasing an original equipment manufacturer AFV, and 50% of the cost of constructing an alternative fueling station. Only vehicles registered in Louisiana may receive the tax credit. Alternatively, a taxpayer may take a tax credit worth 10% of the cost of the motor vehicle or up to \$3,000, whichever is less.

For additional information on the tax credit, customers can contact the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, 225-342-1399 or the Louisiana Department of Revenue and Taxation, 225-219-2200.

SAFETY FIRST!

CO Safety is paramount

Customers should:

- Never operate an automobile, lawn mower or any combustion engine, barbecue grill or similar equipment in an enclosed area such as a house, garage, tent, trailer or fish house, even with the door open.
- Never leave a fire smoldering in the fireplace.
- Make sure to have a carbon monoxide alarm(s) installed in the home.
- Never try to heat a room with a gas range, oven, clothes dryer, combustible gas generator or portable fuel-burning heater.

Additional safety tips are available at CenterPointEnergy.com/safety

Preparing for winter with energy efficiency, payment options and more



Natural gas is an excellent value this winter and customers can stretch their energy dollars when they choose natural gas, rather than other fuel sources, for heating, water heating, cooking and clothes drying. CenterPoint Energy offers a variety of efficiency tips and payment options to help customers seal in savings and comfort this heating season.

Saving energy and money

- Doors to unheated areas, such as a garage or attic, should remain closed.
- Customers should set thermostats to 68° degrees during winter and to 58° when away from the house for four or more hours or at night. (Warmer temperatures are recommended for elderly residents or small children.) Programmable thermostats offer even greater temperature control.
- Homeowners should insulate shades or hang liners behind drapes to conserve warm air inside the home.
- When trying to stay warm around the house, individuals should wear several layers of medium weight clothes rather than one heavy layer.

Levelized billing

This winter, customers can spread natural gas costs more evenly throughout the year by choosing Average Monthly Billing. This program offers predictable monthly payments. Customers only pay for the actual amount of natural gas used.

Enrollment is easy. Customers can call the customer service number listed on their monthly bill or enroll via My Account Online at [CenterPointEnergy.com/myaccountonline](https://www.CenterPointEnergy.com/myaccountonline).

Customer Care Fund helps neighbors in need

CenterPoint Energy invites customers to donate to the Customer Care Fund, a community service that provides natural gas payment assistance for local families who are going through financial hardships and are unable to pay their heating bills.

When customers give to the Customer Care Fund by conveniently adding a donation to their monthly bill, they help neighbors stay warm during the challenging winter months. The generous donations CenterPoint Energy receives are given to area social services agencies that qualify and approve awards for CenterPoint Energy customers.

Customer contributions are always appreciated. They can submit a tax-deductible gift to a neighbor in need by having the donation billed to their natural gas account. Visit CenterPointEnergy.com/carefund for details.



Searching for better ways to cure, better treat and prevent type 1 diabetes

CenterPoint Energy proudly supports Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International (JDRF), the worldwide leader for research to cure type 1 diabetes. In November, company employees will participate in the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's Virtual Walk. Funds raised will support juvenile diabetes research and research-related education.

Type 1 diabetes affects as many as 3 million Americans and is most often diagnosed in childhood. This chronic disease strikes suddenly and carries a constant threat of deadly complications including heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney failure and amputation.

Join the fight against juvenile diabetes at www.jdrf.org.

CommunityLink

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In the Community



Explore teacher/ student natural gas safety website

CenterPoint Energy sponsors an interactive natural gas education site CenterPoint.EnergyUnderground.com with point-and-click access to the most up-to-date information about energy related topics for elementary, middle and high school students. The site has been recently updated, enhanced and expanded to include valuable career information for students and teachers. Teachers can download videos directly from the site. Lesson plans and lesson extenders are part of the site.

Visit CenterPoint.EnergyUnderground.com to learn more.



Important phone numbers

**Report a
Gas Leak Emergency** **911 and
888-876-5786**

Call Before You Dig **811**

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Louisiana (North) **866-275-5252**
Louisiana (South) **800-477-0177**
Mississippi **800-371-5417**

ACCOUNT AND OTHER ONLINE SERVICES

CenterPointEnergy.com/selfservice

PAYMENT ADDRESS

Louisiana customers:
CenterPoint Energy, Inc.
PO Box 4583
Houston, TX 77210-4583

Mississippi customers:
CenterPoint Energy, Inc.
PO Box 4981
Houston, TX 77210-4981

WEBSITE

CenterPointEnergy.com