Gasline

Faster. Cheaper. Cleaner.

The Beauty of Gas

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Welcome to Gasline, which is produced by Gas New Zealand.

Gasline is published regularly as part of the industry's efforts to encourage the direct use of natural gas and LPG into households and small businesses.

Using natural gas and LPG as a direct energy source offers numerous cost, environmental and energy efficiency benefits. Gas New Zealand hopes to educate consumers and policy makers about the many advantages of making wider use of this strategic energy asset.

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Code review heralds even greater efficiencies

Submissions have just opened to allow the public to provide feedback to the review of the National Code of Practice for Utility Operators' Access to Transportation Corridors – the code administered by New Zealand Utilities Advisory Group (NZUAG).

Chaired by former Cabinet Minister, Paul Swain, the NZUAG is a collaboration of network utility operators and transport corridor managers from central and local government and KiwiRail who have interests in how utilities, including gas, electricity, water, and telecommunications, are managed in the roading and rail corridors.

The Code, which has been in place since 2012, governs the process of, and best practice for, accessing those corridors, which include state highways, local roads, motorways and the rail network.

Mr Swain says the Utilities Access Act requires the Code to be reviewed after its first two years in operation – hence the current process which started earlier in 2014 and should be completed, with Ministerial approval, early next year.

"We will be involving all our stakeholders in the review," Mr Swain says.

"We've had a pleasing response from stakeholders in the initial round of consultation prior to the public submission process. Early indications are that the Code is working well, but there are some enhancements that can be made to it, as you'd expect."

He says the NZUAG has reviewed the initial feedback and has accepted a range of the suggestions which now form the basis of the document which is now out for public consultation.

"We see the final enhancements to the Code being evolutionary, rather than revolutionary," Mr Swain said.

Previously, gas and other utilities had to work within the parameters of the individual, localised guidelines that the various district and city councils employed.

This made it difficult for utilities, many of which operate on a national basis, and wanted some uniformity about how access to the roading and rail corridors could be managed.

"We now have standardisation and consistency across the various corridors and TLA regions around the country," Mr Swain said.

"This creates significant efficiencies for all stakeholders, which means reduced costs all around, including for consumers, however we are keen to get public feedback on how the Code is working and how it could be improved."

Submissions on the draft Code are now open and close on Friday 31st October.

The updated Code is expected to be published in the first quarter of 2015 after a legal review and Ministerial sign-off.

Gas users get safety advice

Maintaining one of the better public safety records in the world is the focus of the New Zealand gas industry's recent consumer safety initiative.

The LPG and Gas Associations, working with Energy Safety, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board, have recently run a national gas safety campaign to remind and encourage consumers to install, use and maintain gas appliances safely.

The website www.gassafety.org.nz promotes all the tips consumers need to know to use gas safely and efficiently, both in the home and while caravanning.

The site includes three humorous videos to help get the serious safety message across.

"Our industry takes very seriously the need to make sure consumers know how to use gas appliances correctly and safely and, as a result, there are very, very few incidents involving gas," said LPG Association Executive Director, Peter Gilbert.

"It's our commitment to public awareness initiatives like this that helps us to maintain that good record, but we are always focussed on reducing the number of incidents to zero."

The website explains the law around installing gas appliances and provides advice about maintaining them.

It also provides tips on how to use portable gas heaters correctly around the home and offers guidelines about using gas appliances in caravans.

Mr Gilbert said the site received 9,500 paid visits (click-throughs from associated web advertising on YouTube, Facebook and Google Adwords) and over 5,000 organic visits from consumers searching for gas safety.

The competition in which site visitors could win an iPad also received nearly 600 entries. The lucky winner lives in Christchurch.

Paul Swain heads Utilities group

Former Cabinet Minister, Paul Swain, has been appointed chair of the NZ Utilities Advisory Group (NZUAG).

NZUAG is a consultative group of network operator and transport corridor managers from territorial authorities, NZ Transport Agency, KiwiRail and industry bodies. It administers the National Code of Practice for Utility Operators' Access to Transport Corridors.

Appointed in late August, Paul Swain brings to the group a wealth of experience and understanding of utility and transport relationships through ministerial responsibilities for transport, commerce, small business and communications.

His initial focus chairing this group will be overseeing the review of the National Code (see Code review story below).

Queenstown beckons

Queenstown is proving a popular destination for the 2014 Gas NZ Industry Forum.

This year's Forum is being held at the Heritage in Queenstown on Thursday 6 and Friday 7 November. The two day event opens the night before with welcome cocktails.

Aside from an impressive range of speakers, conference delegates can enjoy an ambrose-style golf tournament at the Arrowtown Golf Club, a wine tour to two Gibbston Valley vineyards and a cruise on the SS Earnslaw and a tour of Walter Peak Station.

There are presentations from the Gas Industry Company, Concept Consulting, the Electricity and Gas Complaints Commissioner and the ANZ's Chief Economist.

The irrepressible Gary McCormick is the after-dinner speaker.

So make sure you are registered. Click here for details

Numbers look good for LPG industry

The LPG industry has one hand on the celebratory champagne after latest figures show a four percent increase in year-to-date sales compared to the same period last year.

If trends continue, year-end sales should reach 156,000 tonnes, up from a smidgen over 150,000 tonnes in 2013 and from a low of 137,000 tonnes in 2011.

The jewel in the industry's crown is the 45kg market.

Year-to-date sales in that sector are up 10 percent over the same period last year and, between January and December 2013, customer numbers rose 11 percent and 2 percent in the residential and commercial sectors respectively.

The LPG forklift market is also up five percent over the same period last year, while the bulk and automotive LPG sectors are holding steady. The only slight blip is the 9kg market in which sales are down by six percent on 2013 figures.

LPG Association President, Tony Smith, credits three factors for the improved situation.

"We're seeing more competitive pricing in the market, the product is rating very positively with consumers and the industry is providing good customer service."

Tony says the lifestyle advantages offered by LPG, particularly the benefits of gas heating and the joys of never-ending hot water, appeal to residential consumers.

On top of that, a survey by Consumer magazine indicated LPG users rate their LPG suppliers higher for customer service than any other energy supplier.

"All that helps to position LPG as a beneficial, user-friendly and cost-effective option. We are ticking all the boxes," Tony said.

He added that EECA has also recognised the advantages of LPG, featuring it as a viable consumer choice in its promotional campaigns.

"This, too, will be an influencing factor and we thank EECA for that support."

We are always looking for stories from both the natural gas and LPG worlds, as well as the wider gas community.

If you have any story ideas for Gasline please email Daniel

Gas New Zealand is published monthly by The PR Company for the LPG Association and Gas Association of New Zealand.

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the LPGA, or GANZ.

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