

## in this issue

Your Natural Gas Bill

Managing Your Gas Bill

Construction Projects

Billing Information

Company Information

Safety Tips

# your pipeline newsletter

## St. Lawrence Gas

An **ENBRIDGE** Company

Spring 2004

For 24 hour emergency service call: 1-800-673-3301  
For non-emergencies call: 769-3516, 322-5792, 1-800-454-2201  
P.O. Box 270 • Massena, NY 13662 • [www.stlawrencegas.com](http://www.stlawrencegas.com)

## Your Natural Gas Bill

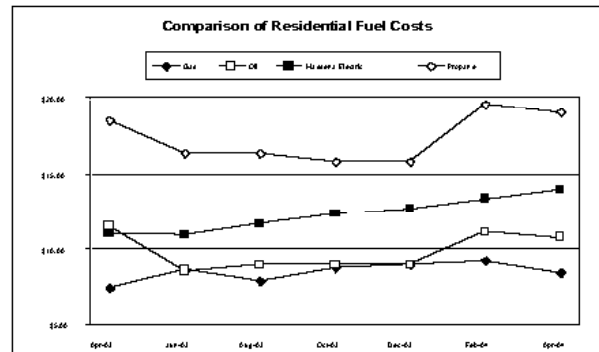
### Winter is Over!

With higher gas bills for most customers, this past winter was another difficult one. The weather was colder than the 40 year average and as a result, gas consumption was higher. In addition, the cost of gas, which is determined by supply and demand across North America, increased from last year. Since gas costs are a "pass through" to our customers, St. Lawrence Gas does not profit from increases in gas prices. Unfortunately, it appears that higher gas prices are here to stay, at least for the next year or so, based upon predictions by industry experts. However, St. Lawrence Gas will continue to manage its distribution costs and work hard to maintain its position as the lowest cost distributor of natural gas in New York State.

### Natural Gas: The Price Advantage

Despite increases in most natural gas bills, our customers still enjoy price advantages over other fuel types, even when compared to the inexpensive electricity provided by Massena Elec-

tric. The chart below compares residential fuel costs for this past year. The costs for oil and propane are based on quotes from local dealers. Massena Electric costs are based on actual rates. Over this period, the cost of natural gas has generally been as low, or the lowest, compared with other fuels:



## Managing Your Gas Bill

### Use Efficient Equipment

Natural gas equipment that is more than 15 years old is normally less efficient than equipment that can be installed today. By replacing older and inefficient equipment, you can reduce your consumption. You might be able to save as much as 15% on your bill, depending upon the age and performance of your old equipment.

### Check Your Water Heater

About 25 to 30% of energy used in your home goes for heating water. Water heaters consume much of their energy just to keep a supply of hot water ready and waiting in the tank. Reducing your water use in general saves energy and saves you money. Here is some energy saving tips:

- Insulate hot water pipes to minimize heat loss
- Lower the temperature on your water heater to 120 – 130° to reduce usage
- Run dishwashers and washing machines with full

loads. Rinse clothes in cold water

- Install "low flow" plumbing fixtures
- Replace your old water heater with a new, higher-efficiency model

### Budget Billing Plan

We realize that mid-winter gas bills can be tough on the pocketbook. By signing-up for our Budget Billing Plan, you can be billed the same amount each month, with periodic adjustments if necessary. Take comfort in knowing your bill ahead of time and avoid the big heating bills that come right after the holidays, when gas use is typically at its highest. It's easy and convenient. Call us or visit our web site ([www.stlawrencegas.com](http://www.stlawrencegas.com)) to sign-up. Our friendly representatives will calculate your budget amount and answer any questions that you may have.



## Construction Projects

### Call Before You Dig

Are you planning to fence or landscape property, dig a garden, excavate a patio or swimming pool area, or add a room to a house? Digging in the wrong spot could cut off essential services not just to one home but to an entire community. Damage to our gas lines can create a hazard to you and others. Before you start digging, call Dig Safely New York at least 48 hours in advance to arrange for free underground pipe location at your site.

Dig Safely New York will also notify telephone, electric, cable TV and water and sewer utilities for location of their facilities. The toll-free number is: **1-800-962-7962**



## Billing Information

### Automatic Debit Plan

Now you can have your natural gas and rental equipment bills deducted from your checking account automatically. Forget about check writing, stamps, mailing and due dates! Call us and we can mail you an enrollment form today, or visit our website at [www.stlawrencegas.com](http://www.stlawrencegas.com) to download the form.

### Cashpoint No Longer Available

#### Company Information

About two years ago, St. Lawrence Gas entered into an agreement with Cashpoint Network Services, to handle St. Lawrence Gas payments at the Potsdam IGA, on 27 Elm St. This service is no longer available since the New York State Banking Department has suspended Cashpoint's license to operate, pending an investigation. All payments that have been made to date have been recorded and fully credited to the customer's account. Until further notice, customers who have used Cashpoint in the past should now mail their payments to us. We regret any inconvenience.

### Summer Locks

If you call to have your gas service shut off for the summer, the Company is now requiring a five business day notice to unlock the meter and restore service. Unfortunately, the fall is our busiest time of the year and we can no longer handle the unlock requests on the same day or next day. Thanks for your understanding.

### Satisfaction Surveys

How well are we serving you? If you had recent contact with St. Lawrence Gas, you might receive a phone call from an independent company who will be conducting surveys four times a year on our behalf. The goal of these surveys is to identify your level of satisfaction. Your feedback will provide us with valuable information on what we are doing well and where we need to improve. We encourage you to participate.



### Meter Changes

St. Lawrence Gas, in its agreement with the New York State Public Service Commission, must exchange all meters that are 20 years old. In addition, the Company must exchange a sample of other meter types to test their accuracy. Any meter exchange we perform will require access into your home to check your gas lines and ensure the safe operation of your equipment.

### Check Your Barbecue

Start this spring with a clean barbecue! Critters may have taken up residence in your barbecue, so before you actually start the grill, be sure to check the metal tube under the burner(s) for spider webs, earwigs, nests and other debris that could block gas flow, causing a fire. Check your manufacturer's instructions to see if your barbecue has "spider guards" to prevent this problem. If your appliance does not have "spider guards", you should check and clean the metal tube under each burner throughout the season. Before cleaning gets underway, take a moment to either turn off or disconnect the barbecue. Then, use a small flexible brush to clean the tube out. Using a thin wire, gently probe into the burner holes, or

### Attention Landlords

Tenants call us throughout the year to discontinue their gas service. By completing a **Landlord Agreement Application**, you can specifically instruct us to either leave the gas on or turn it off. If we keep service on, you are responsible for the bill. You can also designate different choices for summer or winter. This flexibility might avoid some problems, especially in the winter if we disconnect service and pipes freeze, exposing your property to significant damage. Please call our office and we will mail a form to you or download the form from our website.

### Tech Prep Program

St. Lawrence Gas, along with Clarkson University and several other industry partners, has been a strong supporter of the Massena Central High School "Tech Prep" program. This program, which was initiated in 1995, gives high school juniors an opportunity to gain experience working on real life business issues or problems identified by the industry partners. St. Lawrence Gas takes pride in its involvement in this program and helping to prepare our youth for the transition into today's workforce. This year's team of students worked on a Public Awareness Program, to educate residents, businesses, and public officials about natural gas safety. The team did an excellent job and offered some creative solutions.

## Safety Tips

ports. Be gentle with models that have built-in "spider guards" – a wire or brush could damage them. If you have a natural gas barbecue with a snap-in, snap-out coupler, or quick disconnect, make sure the connection is secure before turning your barbecue on.



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