

## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 15, 2022

# Southern Gas Association Announces Winners of the 2022 SGA Awards

Dallas, TX – The Southern Gas Association is honored to announce the winners of the 2022 SGA Awards across seven categories:

- **Atmos Energy**, Community Service
- **Boardwalk Pipelines**, Corporate Communications
- **Xcel Energy**, Emergency Management
- **Duke Energy**, Engineering Innovation
- **Southern Company Gas**, Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG)
- **Summit Utilities**, Safety & Health
- Meritorious Action, *List of individual winners listed below*

The winners were selected from **68 submissions** with **more than 2,000 votes** cast from Southern Gas Association members.

For decades, the Southern Gas Association has been an important forum for recognizing leading natural gas companies across the United States and Canada. SGA Awards recognize members who are advancing the natural gas industry. Our aim is to support and showcase the great work of companies who have achieved real, measurable business outcomes in their organizations.

SGA Awards recognize individuals and teams for their technical contributions, professional excellence, career achievement, service to colleagues, industry leadership and community service.

## THE WINNERS

### COMMUNITY SERVICE

#### **Atmos Energy** — Fueling Safe and Thriving Communities: Promoting Childhood Literacy Program Description

We believe in making a difference in the lives of children by collaborating with local school districts and education foundations to provide resources to help students read at grade level by third grade. Third grade marks the shift from “learning to read” to “reading to learn,” which means deficient readers are at greater risk of falling behind. According to research, kids who enter school ready to learn are more likely to read proficiently by third grade. Furthermore, according to research, students who read on grade level by third grade are five times more likely to graduate ready for success in college or career. Children in underserved school districts are more vulnerable to falling behind in grade-level reading proficiency and remote and hybrid

learning necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these vulnerabilities to an even greater degree.

To improve third-grade literacy scores, Atmos Energy partners with United to Learn, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, and many other nonprofit organizations dedicated to this cause. Atmos Energy also partnered with local education foundations to provide book vending machines to local school districts. Book vending machines hold up to 300 books and provide a variety of different types of books from beginner to advanced reading elementary levels. In addition to providing students easy access to literature, they also serve as a great reward system for kids for good behavior, good grades, and good attendance.

### **Results/Response to the Program**

Among our many partnerships to promote childhood literacy, our support for United to Learn provides one tangible example of the impact we're making. Since 2020, Atmos Energy has partnered with United to Learn to sponsor its annual Learning Launch program. Learning Launch equips teachers in 47 Dallas ISD elementary schools with critical learning resources that are not addressed through limited public school budgets, including physical objects that aid understanding of writing, books organized in levels of difficulty for an emergent reader, tables, and rugs. At this year's kickoff event at Harlee Elementary School, we presented United to Learn with a \$50,000 donation to benefit Learning Launch, which will help support 26,100 students and more than 2,100 educators. We will also offer our employees volunteer opportunities to help United to Learn with their childhood literacy efforts.

## **CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Boardwalk Pipelines — Coffee with Stan**

#### **Program Description**

Every month, Boardwalk's CEO, Stan Horton, hosts a virtual coffee chat with a group of employees to discuss company culture and initiatives. Boardwalk's first Core Value is People. We prioritize the employee experience and are committed to investing in the success of our employees. A key part of that strategy is our open-door policy, which means that employees can always voice their questions, issues, or suggestions to Stan or any member of his management team. As a way to open up the lines of communication between employees and Boardwalk's CEO, employees are asked to bring a question with them to ask Stan during the meeting.

### **Results/Response to the Program**

This program initially began as Lunch with Stan in August 2011 but was adapted during the COVID-19 pandemic to a monthly virtual coffee chat. Stan has connected with hundreds of employees throughout the course of this program. This program is well received by employees, and they appreciate how dedicated Stan is to getting to know everyone at the company.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

### **Xcel Energy — Marshall Fire Emergency Response**

#### **Program Description**

In a matter of hours, the Marshall Fire burning south of Boulder destroyed more homes than any wildfire in Colorado state history. Highwinds pushed the flames east, engulfing entire subdivisions and forcing tens of thousands of Coloradans to leave their homes. Emergency response and restoration efforts for the community were an essential part for Xcel Energy and their customers. Xcel Energy's emergency response and operational excellence were key to our employees, contractors, mutual aid, and customers during the Marshall Fire.

### **Results/Response to the Program**

Due to the wildfire, we were asked by local emergency managers to turn off natural gas service to customers in the towns of Superior, Louisville, Boulder, and Broomfield Colorado. Close to 13,000 customers lost gas service. We worked with city officials and the Red Cross to find ways to support those customers and are offering electric heaters to help them keep their homes and businesses warm. Getting natural gas service restarted for 13,000 customers was extremely challenging and time-consuming with weather conditions and home loss. We requested mutual aid from American Gas Association, Southern Gas Association, and our industry partners to assist in that endeavor which we had many companies support the overall restoration and relight response which included:

1. Southern Company Gas
2. Atmos Energy
3. Black Hills Energy
4. LG&E
5. CenterPoint Energy
6. Piedmont Natural Gas
7. Duke Energy
8. ONE Gas
9. Colorado Natural Gas
10. Colorado Springs Utilities
11. KS Energy Services

Total Premise Count: 12,894 – Total Loss: 956 Resources: 1,009

- 450 Internal, 170 Mutual Aid, 389 Contractor

### **Region Updates**

- Region 1 – 1,860 Customers – Total Loss: 95
- Region 2 – 2,560 Customers – Total Loss: 292
- Region 3 – 776 Customers – Total Loss: 340
- Region 4 – 1,986 Customers – Total Loss: 89
- Region 5 – 2,900 Customers – Total Loss: 0
- Region 6 – 344 Customers – Total Loss: 0
- Region 7 – 1,393 Customers – Total Loss: 0
- Region 8 – 150 Customers – Total Loss: 0
- Region 9 – 786 Customer – Total Loss: 140

Within five days of the impact to the fires, the response team had made 100% of relight attempts to homes that were lifted from evacuation orders and customers that were able to go back to their homes. The wildfire also impacted one of our natural gas compressor stations that supports the gas system in Summit and Grand counties. To decrease the amount of natural gas being used by furnaces in the area and keep the system up and running, we needed to implement controlled power outages for approximately 27,000 customers last night. Fortunately, crews were able to access that compressor station last night and we have been able to fully restore all those customers.

## ENGINEERING INNOVATION

### **Duke Energy — PAR tool for Emission Control for Duke Energy Natural Gas Business Unit Program Description**

The NGBU has started the process and development work to be the first Natural Gas LDC to achieve and prove Net Zero Methane Emissions using measurement rather than desktop calculations that is the current industry standard. The NGBU is utilizing satellite, among other advanced methane detection technologies, to detect methane emissions on the natural gas distribution system. The NGBU has partnered with Accenture and Microsoft to develop a product that will establish a platform that ingests and measures baseline emissions, prioritizes methane emissions detected via leak detection technology, and enables field response and data capture to identify and repair leaks to reduce fugitive emissions. The PAR Tool (pinpoint, assess, repair) is a work order management tool in which prioritized plumes identified by satellite are dispatched to field technicians for validation. If a leak is found, technicians are providing details to PAR as well as creating conditions in ARM, which is the leak system of record. The PAR tool will expand to provide alerts for a variety of emission-type events, such as, leaks on LNG facilities and regulator stations.

### **Results/Response to the Program**

Duke Energy NGBU team's efforts are helping the company achieve its overall environmental safety and net-zero emissions goals — specifically by using satellite technology to identify, measure and mitigate natural gas leaks that occur within our overall system. This effort is groundbreaking — it's a first-in-the-industry leak detection program designed to "find it, fix it faster," clear existing leak inventories, and keep them at low- to near-zero levels to reduce our overall methane emissions.

## ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL & GOVERNANCE (ESG)

### **Southern Company Gas — Next Generation Natural Gas Initiative (NextGenGas)**

#### **Program Description**

(NextGenGas) strategy, a key component of our Net Zero Pathway, focuses on leveraging our company's market influence, collaborative drive, and low-carbon ambitions to accelerate meaningful emissions reductions across the natural gas value chain. At its core, this strategy focuses on supporting and accelerating the market for low-emissions, differentiated natural gas products (what we have termed NextGenGas) in order to advance our sustainability goals while delivering clean, reliable, and affordable energy to our customers.

As part of our 2021 efforts supporting our NextGenGas strategy and to advance what we believe to be a critical solution for achieving industry-wide emissions reductions, we stood up a collaborative of likeminded local distribution companies – (the NextGenGas Coalition) – to share best practices and knowledge in pursuit of advancing the NextGenGas marketplace.

Since formation in early 2021, the NextGenGas Coalition has convened monthly for members companies to share current experiences, market updates, and identified best practices in the NextGenGas marketplace. In addition, members of the Coalition have worked both individually and collaboratively to share their perspectives on NextGenGas with external industry and regulatory groups, providing educational opportunities to key stakeholders in the marketplace on relevant benefits, barriers, and efforts underway.

### **Results of/Response to the Program**

With the NextGenGas market continuing to quickly evolve, the creation of the NextGenGas Coalition has been well received by a wide variety of participating gas utilities as they work to advance their individual ambitions related to NextGenGas adoption and navigate the commercial and regulatory barriers and opportunities presented by this nascent market.

Since the creation of the NextGen Gas Coalition, membership has grown to a total of eleven member companies represented by over 40 individuals.

Throughout 2021 and to date in 2022, the Coalition has presented the topic of NextGenGas to six major industry organizations: The American Gas Association, Edison Electric Institute, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, One Future, and The Energy Solutions Center.

### **SAFETY & HEALTH**

#### **Summit Utilities — VIDEO: Parking Safety and Completing a 360-Degree Walk Around Program Description**

At Summit Utilities Inc. (Summit), the safety of our team members and our communities is a top priority. Summit recognizes that operating vehicles may be one of the most hazardous routine tasks we perform. How we park our vehicles is an important part of safe driving. While analyzing our safety data, we discovered trends regarding backing and parking-related motor vehicle accidents. To prevent further incidents and to educate our team, Summit worked with our Operations Teams to develop a [safety video](#). This video demonstrates our three different parking options and explains the significance behind the 360 Walk Around procedure. The 360 Walk Around procedure requires team members to completely walk around their vehicle prior to use. During this walk around, team members look for unsafe driving conditions, clear paths of travel, and make sure that the vehicle is in safe operating condition. Most importantly, the 360 Walk Around represents the idea that safety should be considered from all levels and angles—360 degrees. Our team members spend a lot of time on the road and this helpful video helped remind everyone that completing a 360 Walk Around inspection to check for unsafe conditions is just one of the many proactive tools we use to prioritize a safety-first culture.

## **Results of/Response to the Program**

This safety initiative has benefitted Summit team members, our customers, and members of the public. We used this video to educate 184 team members on the 360 Walk Around practice. Since the training, we have had 0 employee backing accidents. Educating team members, as well as the public on the 360 Walk Around practice, proved to reduce accidents that could have potentially damaged personal or company property and vehicles.

## MERITORIOUS ACTION

### **Meet the Honorees**

SGA's Meritorious Action Award celebrates individuals who have displayed courageous actions to save or attempt to save lives. SGA salutes individuals who have displayed heroic action or quick thinking to save the lives of others. All nominees in this category were honored at the 2022 Awards Ceremony. You can read their heroic stories at

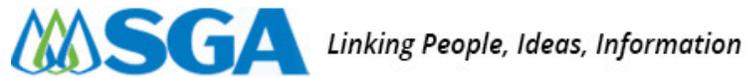
<https://awards.southerngas.org/merit22>

James Craig, *Atmos Energy*  
Bill Stanley, *Atmos Energy*  
Darrel Smith, *Atmos Energy*  
Joey Fontenot, *Atmos Energy*  
Alex Washington, *Atmos Energy*  
Calvin Caesar, *Atmos Energy*  
Justin Wilhelm, *Miller Pipeline*  
Don Saff, *Miller Pipeline*  
Roger Fleming, *Miller Pipeline*  
Dakota Powell, *Miller Pipeline*  
Michael Shuttleworth, *Miller Pipeline*  
Dustin Stapleton, *Miller Pipeline*  
Benjamin Sparks, *SEC*  
Henry Regalado, *SEC*  
Ryan Nottingham, *SEC*  
Emilio Amaya, *SEC*  
Daniel Murillo, *SEC*  
Lane Ewing, *Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline*  
Shane Newby, *Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline*  
Tyler Ashline, *Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline*  
John Kearse, *Virginia Natural Gas*  
Seth Sneller, *Xcel Energy*  
Sam Tellechea, *Xcel Energy*

View all submissions and the winners at <https://southerngas.org/sga-awards>

## **About Southern Gas Association**

Founded in 1908, the Southern Gas Association is the leader in natural gas training and professional development. SGA is a community of natural gas professionals across the U.S.



and Canada. Representing the industry from drill bit to burner tip, SGA's membership comprises more than 200 operators across the distribution, transmission, and gas supply marketing sectors and more than 350 industry partners. Through digital and in-person engagement, SGA members share ideas, resources, and best practices to develop people, relationships, and solutions.

Contact

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