

Meritorious Action Award

This year, we recognize all individuals who have displayed courageous actions to save or attempt to save lives.

All nominees in this category will be honored at Natural Gas Connect.

Entry Requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This award for individuals will not be considered for industry employees while acting as members of rescue or fire squads, ambulance teams or paramedics at the time of the courageous or Good Samaritan act. • Any employee of an SGA member company is eligible to be nominated for this award. A representative from a member company must submit a written application recommending the award. A narrative describing the event must accompany an application.

Submissions Overview

Meritorious Action Award Submissions – 12 Nominees		
Company Name	Program Name	ID Number
Summit Utilities Inc.	Houston Sutherland - Meritorious Action	MA-1
Virginia Natural Gas (VNG)	Customer Convenience 2- Hour Appointment Windows	MA-2
Atmos Energy	One Man. Incredible Hero.	MA-3
Southern Star Central Gas Pipelines	Southern Star team member carries safety culture beyond the workplace	MA-4
ONE Gas	Heroic Employee Saves Three Lives from Burning Vehicle	MA-5
TECO Peoples Gas	Heroic Event: Michael Herrera	MA-6
Miller Pipeline	Catch ONE Program: Brian Orcutt	MA-7
BGE	Gas Construction & Maintenance	MA-8
Miller Pipeline	Catch ONE: Logan Workman, Matt Keith, Bailey Borgeld, Karl Schultz, Don Barber	MA-9

Meritorious Action Award Submissions – 12 Nominees		
Company Name	Program Name	ID Number
Miller Pipeline	Catch ONE: Charlie Nickles, Ray Philo, Nathan Nickels, Mike Huber	MA-10
Miller Pipeline	Catch ONE: Frank Wilson and James Lauffer	MA-11
Kinder Morgan	Marshall Delk	MA-12

Nomination MA-1	
SGA Member Company Name	Summit Utilities Inc.
Program Name	<i>Houston Sutherland - Meritorious Action</i>
Program Description	Houston Southerland is the Supervisor of Corrosion Control Pipeline for Summit Utilities, Inc's subsidiary Arkansas Oklahoma Gas. In 2022, Houston was working in Fort Smith when a car went off the road and overturned into a concrete ditch. Houston saw the accident and immediately ran to the scene to help the mom, who was driving the vehicle, and two children who were passengers, out of the vehicle and to safety. Another bystander noticed smoke coming from under the car hood during that process. Houston went and retrieved his fire extinguisher and put out the fire. He then helped the mother climb out of the car to a safe area. Houston demonstrated an act of kindness and willingness to help a family in trouble. He also used his training to make sure the surrounding area was safe.
Results of/Response to the Program	Houston's action were nothing short of lifesaving. Seeing a team member react so quickly, go above and beyond his call of duty and to come to the aid of a community member makes all of us proud to be on the same team as Houston. Because of his efforts, Houston was awarded a PEAKS Award through Summit's Peer Recognition Program. PEAKS stands for Summit's Core Values: Pioneering, Excellence, Agility, Kindness, and Safety. Houston was nominated for and won the award for Kindness in the second quarter of 2022.
Contribution to "Connecting People,	Houston's efforts demonstrated the strong commitment to safety, community, and those we serve. He went above and beyond to

Ideas & Information”	protect lives. His recognition through Summit's PEAKS award program helps elevate Summit's commitment to Kindness and Safety.
SGA Membership Category	Distribution

Nomination MA-2	
SGA Member Company Name	Virginia Natural Gas (VNG)
Program Name	<i>Customer Convenience 2-Hour Appointment Windows</i>
Program Description	<p>This past year, Virginia Natural Gas successfully piloted a program aimed at making scheduled appointments easier and more convenient for our customers. One of the operational challenges we face in this industry is ensuring that we consider the customers’ schedule as opposed to our own while adhering to our operational safety and readiness and making it a top priority.</p> <p>Traditionally, Virginia Natural Gas offered 4-hour, 8-hour and all daytime appointment windows for customers looking to activate their gas service. We typically have provided this service to customers Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., and customers would need to take time off from work or school to sit home and wait for our field technician to arrive and active their service. We consistently heard from customers the challenges they faced to meet “our schedule”. We needed to meet the customers where they are.</p> <p>In today’s world of immediate service from everything from food delivery, online shopping and other utilities, our customers expect the same sort of service from their natural gas provider. We listened to the voice of the customer and learned that we needed to develop a customer-centric model to better serve them.</p> <p>We began to pilot 2-hour appointment windows for customers between the hours of 8 -10 a.m. to gauge customer response. The appointments became extremely popular and were generally booked daily leading us to expand the program to allow for additional 2-hour appointment windows options from 8 a.m. -4 p.m. Monday through Friday. The program continued to see success, and we decided to branch out to truly meet the customers where they are and expanded the service to include after-working hours when our customers were home for the day. This expansion led to us offering 2-hour windows from 4 p.m. daily until 8 p.m., giving customers more options and a better</p>

	<p>overall customer experience.</p>
<p>Results of/Response to the Program</p>	<p>The pilot proved to be very successful, not only providing customer convenience via shorter appointment windows but we also had an extremely high success rate of 98.85% appointment attainment for these orders. The initial concerns that this tighter service window would negatively impact our flexibility to provide emergency service response proved false because during this pilot, VNG posted our fastest leak response time ever. To achieve this, we worked with resource management to efficiently use the resources we currently had in the field and were able to avoid adding additional field resources to meet the new demand. Of the 23,444 appointment orders in 2022, we completed 11,215 2-hour appointments (47%) and only missed our window 129 times (a 98.85% success rate). So how did our customers respond to the new windows? We learned that customers are more likely to be home during their windows after 4 p.m. when they are typically arriving home from work and that less than 230 of the 11,215 appointments obtained were missed due to the customer not being home. In our service territory that spans between central Virginia to the Oceanfront we are privileged to serve more than 300,000 commercial, government and residential customers and we want them to choose natural gas not only as a clean, safe, reliable, and affordable energy choice but also because of the great service we provide to them.</p>
<p>Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”</p>	<p>By utilizing our own customer survey data, third-party survey results, and feedback from our field and call center employees, we knew this more customer- focused solution needed to be adopted. The energy and enthusiasm from our VNG leadership team helped drive the results and change the culture all the way from the president of Virginia Natural Gas to the field service technician knocking on customer doors. The VNG team was fully engaged and embraced the new customer-centric model. As an operator balancing compliance tasks, customer service and emergency response, we had to work through the full development of the program bringing in partners from our Technology Operations, Customer Care Center, Resource Management team and our Operations staff to be able to meet the demands of the day while meeting these enhanced customers appointments. These four departments needed to work in unison to develop the program and change the way we think about the customer. In today’s world with a multitude of energy options and circulating negative opinions about our industry, we needed our service to meet and/or exceed our customers’ expectations and not be the excuse to replace us with an alternative option for their home’s comfort.</p>

Supporting Documents	Click to view.
SGA Membership Category	Distribution

Nomination MA-3	
SGA Member Company Name	Atmos Energy
Program Name	<i>One Man. Incredible Hero.</i>
Program Description	The day started out like any other in Coffeyville, Kansas. But it was about to change for one couple. The homeowners could not have foreseen approaching events. Their curious, four-week-old puppy was sniffing around outside when it came across a hole. Only that hole turned out to be a massive ditch. Moments later, the newborn dog fell into a 50-foot sewer ditch. When the homeowners realized what had happened, they knew it was a matter of time before the puppy fell deep into the main sewer line and was lost forever. As the couple struggled to get help from local authorities, one neighbor who witnessed the event called a friend for assistance.
Results of/Response to the Program	Atmos Energy employee Chris Main was the friend who was called, and he soon arrived at the scene. His quick and heroic actions saved the puppy from an early death, and his co-workers and the Coffeyville community consider him to be a humble hometown hero.
Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”	There are many roles and responsibilities that contribute to operating efficiently, effectively, and reliably, and many factors that our leadership and all Atmos Energy employees consider when performing their jobs. However, none is as important as safety. Our focus on Employee Safety, System Safety, and Public Safety is what drives our procedures, practices, training, oversight, and assurance activities. Safety isn’t just what we do, it is who we are. Chris Main demonstrated how our employees do not hesitate when it comes to helping the communities we serve
Supporting Documents	Click to view.
SGA Membership Category	Distribution

Nomination MA-4	
SGA Member Company Name	Southern Star Central Gas Pipeline
Program Name	<i>Southern Star team member carries safety culture beyond the workplace</i>
Program Description	<p>Safety is the top priority for Southern Star. To promote high accountability and eliminate incidents across our entire company, we urge our team members to stay safe at work, at home, and all points in between. Thanks to this continual emphasis, that focus on safety extends to wherever they may find themselves - in this case, on vacation.</p> <p>While visiting New Braunfels, Texas, Southern Star team member Adam Mathes was relaxing on the bank of the river with friends when he noticed two adults and their three boys enjoying the outdoors nearby. Distracted by some activity downstream, the parents didn't notice when one of the boys left the beach and waded out into the water, where he lost his footing.</p> <p>Luckily, Adam was keeping a close eye on the situation.</p> <p>"I have two daughters. I've always been leery of letting them near water by themselves. They're all grown up now and it still makes me nervous," Adam explained.</p> <p>Jumping into action and prepared to use his CPR training, he made his way to the boy who was struggling to keep his head above water. Adam made it to the boy just in time. He was weak and limp, nearly out of energy. The boy spit out water and was breathing without trouble. Fortunately, resuscitation was not required. Adam says that if he'd have been any later it could have been a very different situation.</p> <p>Adam may already have some concerns with children playing in the water unsupervised, but he credits Southern Star with his increased awareness and vigilance.</p> <p>"The safety culture here has taught me to keep my eye out for a lot of things," he said. "For instance, when I see my neighbors doing yard work without hand or eye protection, I'll run to my truck to offer up a pair of gloves and glasses."</p> <p>"I feel like anybody would have done the same thing," Adam said. "It makes you feel good that you're able to help someone."</p>

Results of/Response to the Program	A potentially tragic accident was avoided, and a thankful family was able to enjoy the rest of the trip.
Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”	Not only did he help to potentially save a life, but Adam’s efforts are exemplary of the natural gas industry’s extensive safety training and its application in any circumstance. This is a teaching moment to bring those safety practices with us to work each day and home each night.
SGA Membership Category	Transmission

Nomination MA-5	
SGA Member Company Name	ONE Gas
Program Name	<i>Heroic Employee Saves Three Lives from Burning Vehicle</i>
Program Description	At the end of a workday, Shane Richardson, a Pressure and Measurement Foreman for Oklahoma Natural Gas, a division of ONE Gas, was driving on a highway and noticed a vehicle accident. He could see debris and flames and knew he needed to pull over to help. With his experience as a volunteer firefighter and the fire safety training he received at ONE Gas, he was prepared and ready to help. Shane followed three important, sequential steps: 1. Locate the injured 2. Call 911 3. Try to put out the fire. After closer inspection, Shane located three injured individuals – one partially ejected from the vehicle’s sunroof with major trauma and two others lying in a field nearby. After a second person stopped to help, Shane stepped away to retrieve his fire extinguisher in his company vehicle while the other person called 911. Then, Shane used his company fire extinguisher to hold back the flames enough for the other person to remove the injured person from the vehicle, and together they pulled them to a safe area.
Results of/Response to the Program	Richardson’s quick reaction and commitment to safety helped save three lives from a burning vehicle. His heroic actions kept them safe and the fire contained until local fire departments arrived.
Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”	ONE Gas provides employees fire safety training, including how to use a fire extinguisher. This training aligns with ONE Gas’ number one Core Value of safety. Prioritizing safety and utilizing

	the equipment and training provided by ONE Gas prepared Shane to respond to the vehicle accident quickly, effectively, and safely.
Supporting Documents	Click to view.
SGA Membership Category	Distribution

Nomination MA-6	
SGA Member Company Name	TECO Peoples Gas
Program Name	<i>Heroic Event: Michael Herrera</i>
Program Description	<p>I would like to recognize Michael Herrera, Utility Coordinator for a Heroic event that took place at 7:45 PM on January 17,2023 at 2154 MW Flagler St, Miami FL.</p> <p>Michael responded to a gas odor call and was able to identify the inside leak source and make it safe. While Michael was outside the customers apartment explaining to the customer important details for repairs, a tenant in the adjacent apartment ran outside holding her one year old son crying and screaming.</p> <p>Michael realized she was crying because her son was choking. He immediately dropped everything and started performing the infant Heimlich maneuver on the child. The child did cough up the item that was lodged in his throat and was able to continue to breath safely on his own.</p> <p>Michael was able to perform the Heimlich due to taking a course in the Heimlich maneuver prior to his own child's birth last year.</p>
Results of/Response to the Program	Peoples Gas Operations field employees are required to maintain certification in First Aid through classroom training provided at PGS locations or approved alternate training sites, and/or a hybrid approach of classroom and on-line training.
Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”	First Aid Trained Personnel
SGA Membership	Associate Member

Category	
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Nomination MA-7	
SGA Member Company Name	Miller Pipeline
Program Name	<i>Catch ONE Program: Brian Orcutt</i>
Program Description	The Catch ONE program is an employee recognition program where big or small, are given recognition for going above and beyond. It is a space where peers can acknowledge others for their efforts and actions and for employees to feel appreciated by Miller Pipeline. All submissions are reviewed by a committee and we have a diverse spread of employee viewpoints and representation.
Results of/Response to the Program	Every year we receive 700-800 nominations across our footprint of employees recognizing their peers. They are recognized in safety meetings, company newsletters, and social media platforms.
Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”	Early in February, we received this nomination for an employee, Brian Orcutt. Orcutt, a Welder out of Lancaster, PA, was driving to a job site when he noticed a cloud of smoke coming from a residence and decided to check it out. When he arrived at the scene, the house was engulfed in flames. Brian did not hesitate and immediately took action. He identified three elderly individuals inside and reacted quickly to get them out. One after another, Brian ran in and out, one by one, to ensure each person made it out. Brian was transferred to the hospital and was treated for smoke inhalation. He is doing good, and so are the people he rescued. We are very proud of Brian and happy to have a hero work at Miller Pipeline.
SGA Membership Category	Distribution

Nomination MA-8

SGA Member Company Name	BGE
Program Name	<i>Gas Construction & Maintenance</i>
Program Description	<p>The BGE GCM&R Hot Tap Team was working a gas abandonment in Baltimore Maryland. While performing the abandonment the technicians noticed the odor of burning rubber which prompted them to look up and see smoke coming from a customer driveway down the street. The crew immediately called 911 then grabbed a fire extinguisher to investigate what had occurred.</p> <p>The team recognized a vehicle had crashed into a tree and ignited. The vehicle was still running and there was an unconscious occupant in the vehicle. The technicians attempted to secure the driver and move them to a safe location; however, the doors to the car were locked. The team quickly decided to break the back window of the vehicle and unlock the door. As the team pulled the driver from the vehicle other technicians used the fire extinguisher to suppress the flames to allow a safe recovery.</p> <p>The injured driver was transferred across the street away from the incident. The crew noticed the driver’s eyes roll back and then he stopped breathing. A technician stabilized the driver and began chest compressions until the driver began to breath on their own.</p> <p>The Hot Tap crew remained with the driver until EMS and the Fire Department arrived and took control of the scene.</p>
Results of/Response to the Program	Life Saving Event
Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”	All Field Personnel are trained on CPR and Fire Extinguisher usage. On This day this training made all the difference.
Supporting Documents	Click to view.
SGA Membership Category	Distribution

Nomination MA-9

SGA Member Company Name	Miller Pipeline
Program Name	<i>Catch ONE: Logan Workman, Matt Keith, Bailey Borgeld, Karl Schultz, Don Barber</i>
Program Description	A Catch ONE is an action going above and beyond our daily job functions, resulting in a positive outcome in the project, team, or community. Co-workers and contractors can nominate Miller personnel for a Catch ONE to receive one of three tiers: On the Spot, Breaking Ground, and Digging Deeper. A committee of employees from all regions and jobs determines which award tier the nominations receive. On the Spot is given to all nominees, Breaking Ground is given to nominations that the committee warrants extra recognition, and Digging Deeper is the highest recognition for heroic acts.
Results of/Response to the Program	The Catch ONE program engages employees in ways to go above and beyond in the workplace as well as outside of it. It regularly keeps employees focused on our core values of Safety, Quality, Commitment, and Reputation.
Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”	While working on the intersection of port Sheldon and 48th ave in Holland, Michigan, the crew (Logan Workman, Matt Keith, Bailey Borgeld, Karl Schultz, Don Barber) heard first responder sirens approaching the worksite. 48th northbound was closed due to our scope of work being performed. The crew quickly took action to move barriers out of the way for first responders to go through the closed intersection. The fire chief stopped by the site this morning to thank the crew on site. The fire chief from South Blendon Fire Department stated that if they would have not taken quick action and moved the barriers to allow the fire truck to pass through the intersection, it would have taken another 15 minutes to get to the scene of the crash of a nine-month pregnant woman who had been involved in a severe accident just up the road. He stated that those 15 minutes probably saved the infant's life.
SGA Membership Category	Associate Member

Nomination MA-10	
SGA Member Company	Miller Pipeline

Name	
Program Name	<i>Catch ONE: Charlie Nickles, Ray Philo, Nathan Nickels, Mike Huber</i>
Program Description	A Catch ONE is an action going above and beyond our daily job functions, resulting in a positive outcome in the project, team, or community. Co-workers and contractors can nominate Miller personnel for a Catch ONE to receive one of three tiers: On the Spot, Breaking Ground, and Digging Deeper. A committee of employees from all regions and jobs determines which award tier the nominations receive. On the Spot is given to all nominees, Breaking Ground is given to nominations that the committee warrants extra recognition, and Digging Deeper is the highest recognition for heroic acts.
Results of/Response to the Program	The Catch ONE program engages employees in ways to go above and beyond in the workplace as well as outside of it. It regularly keeps employees focused on our core values of Safety, Quality, Commitment, and Reputation.
Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”	<p>EOur customer Columbia Gas wrote an excellent excerpt detailing a potentially catastrophic situation and the chain of events in which one of our Foreman (Charlie Nickles) and Crew (Ray Philo, Nathan Nickels, Mike Huber) were involved that very likely saved lives and property by their quick actions.</p> <p>Here is the excerpt below:</p> <p>Familiar odor puts Ohio contractor on high alert, revealing a dangerous situation.</p> <p>Working on a gas line along Decatur Street in Sandusky, Ohio, Miller Pipeline Foreman, Charlie Nickles, caught a whiff of something very familiar. As an odor of natural gas permeated the air, Charlie realized the smell wasn't coming from the pipeline his crew was working on. Thinking he was likely smelling gas from a nearby leak, Charlie decided it was time to investigate his surroundings.</p> <p>Charlie walked around the area and quickly discovered that the odor was coming from a neighboring four-unit apartment building. After knocking on the building's door and speaking with the building's maintenance manager, Charlie learned that a gas house line had snapped off when the manager was replacing a stove in one of the apartments. Attempting to "fix" the blowing gas, the manager used a household fan to remove the gas from the building - blowing the gas toward Charlie and his crew.</p>

	<p>"When the building's maintenance manager told me what had happened and that he had everything under control, I was in shock," said Charlie. "In my mind, I was thinking, 'I don't think you do.'"</p> <p>Immediately following his discovery, Charlie and his crew went to work. First, they shut off the gas and ventilated the building until they obtained zero-gas readings. Then, in addition to making the situation safe, Charlie notified Columbia Gas and helped schedule a service line replacement for the next day. As part of the replacement process, the crew would also test all house lines to ensure service could safely be restored.</p> <p>"This could have been a complete disaster if Charlie hadn't reacted as quickly as he did," said Construction Coordinator Matt Catri, who oversees the Miller Pipeline crew. "He always goes the extra mile to do a good job for us and absolutely saved the day in this case."</p> <p>Dave Musser, COH Director of Construction, agrees.</p> <p>"Situational awareness is often discussed and should be at the forefront of our minds, no matter the task. Charlie did a great job recognizing the hazard and taking immediate action to prevent a potentially hazardous situation," said Dave. "We are grateful for our partners from Miller Pipeline and their commitment to safety and customer service."</p>
<p>SGA Membership Category</p>	<p>Associate Member</p>

<p>Nomination MA-11</p>	
<p>SGA Member Company Name</p>	<p>Miller Pipeline</p>
<p>Program Name</p>	<p><i>Catch ONE: Frank Wilson and James Lauffer</i></p>
<p>Program Description</p>	<p>A Catch ONE is....an action going above and beyond our daily job functions, resulting in a positive outcome in the project, team, or community. Co-workers and contractors can nominate Miller personnel for a Catch ONE to receive one of three tiers: On the Spot, Breaking Ground, and Digging Deeper. A committee of</p>

	employees from all regions and jobs determines which award tier the nominations receive. On the Spot is given to all nominees, Breaking Ground is given to nominations that the committee warrants extra recognition, and Digging Deeper is the highest recognition for heroic acts.
Results of/Response to the Program	The Catch ONE program engages employees in ways to go above and beyond in the workplace as well as outside of it. It regularly keeps employees focused on our core values of Safety, Quality, Commitment, and Reputation.
Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”	On January 11th, after working their regular hours for UGI, Frank Wilson and James Lauffer were called back to work by UGI management and asked to mobilize to a trench collapse in the Allentown, PA area. Once on-site, they assisted the fire rescue personnel with removing the dirt that had one person trapped to their upper torso, which took almost six hours. I want to thank and recognize Frank and James for their efforts in helping save this person's life and their commitment to representing Miller Pipeline so well.
Supporting Documents	Click to view.
SGA Membership Category	Associate Member

Nomination MA-12	
SGA Member Company Name	Kinder Morgan
Program Name	<i>Marshall Delk</i>
Program Description	Kinder Morgan Employee: Marshall Delk Corrosion Tech 4 13391 State Highway 115 Mountain View, OK 73062 W: 580-347-2718 C: 500-374-3996
Results of/Response to the Program	Lifesaving Situation

<p>Contribution to “Connecting People, Ideas & Information”</p>	<p>7/18/2022 6:30am This morning I was headed over to the plant via highway 9, between Carnegie and Mountain View OK. 3 miles west of town I noticed an individual lying in the bar ditch with a backpack on the south side road. My instinct, because of the extreme heat we have been experiencing in the area prompted me turn around and do a wellness check on this individual. (Stop work) I turned on my emergency flashers and completed a U-turn. I pulled past the individual and then parked on the shoulder of the highway with my flashers still on. As I approached the man I noticed that he was unconscious. I woke him up by calling to him, telling him my name, and told him that I was trained and could provide him with assistance if needed. He responded to me by saying he was walking to Carnegie this morning and must have passed out. As he began to gather his thoughts and try to set up, he began dry heaving. I had already suspected heat exhaustion and what I was seeing now confirmed it. I quickly dialed 911 and ask that an ambulance be dispatched to my location. Once I knew that the EMTs were in route I began trying to cool him down. I ask him if could stand and walk the short distance to my truck so he could lie down on the tailgate. He could not get there unassisted and when I got him on the tailgate of the company truck, I felt a slight breeze in air that was for sure not taking place lying on the ground in tall weeds. I gave him a bottle of water and asked if he would just take a few sips and see if he could keep it down. Next,I said David I’m going to pour a couple of these warm bottles of water over your clothing to start cooling you down; his words were “Go for it please.” As soon as I got him all wet down, cooling through evaporation started taking place and I could tell he was responding in a positive way to the treatment. He continued to sip water and was able to keep it down until the ambulance arrived. He was transported to the Carnegie hospital. I live in a small community so finding out information is fairly easy. David is in the ER and being given IV fluids for severe dehydration. I spoke with his aunt this morning and she said he was very sick the other day after mowing some yards. I suspect that he never fully recovered from that episode and got rehydrated. In my mind that’s why I found him in the condition he was in this morning. Take away, right place, right time, aware of my surroundings, being observant, well trained by my company and willing to get involved.</p>
<p>SGA Membership Category</p>	<p>Transmission</p>