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Letter to the Editor: Natural gas expansion is vital for clean, sustainable growth

Guest Contributor · October 27, 2021



Reliable utility infrastructure is critical to economic and residential momentum. It guides investment into preparing sites and buildings for business recruitment and when it comes to residential developments, growth often occurs even without the necessary support infrastructure — roadway capacity, water, sewer and power — to meet demand.

That's the case with the Upstate's residential numbers. In Greenville County, 2020 Census expectations show a 44.1% increase in total housing units.

The growth goes beyond Greenville: Spartanburg County's population grew 12.5% over the past decade, bringing the total population to almost 328,000. Additionally, Anderson County's population jumped 8.4% — from just over 187,000 to 203,718. Increased demand for hot water, heated burners and running furnaces makes it even more important to maintain infrastructure capacity.

Within Greenville County, **Piedmont Natural Gas** is leading a vital project that will not only maintain, but expand, natural gas capacity and access to reliable natural gas service.

The Greenville County Reliability Project seeks to maximize benefit to the residential and business communities, and project leaders are exploring multiple routes to find the least impact to landowners and the environment. I ask you to join in supporting the project, which will meet current surges in demand and prepare for sustained business and economic growth.

How's that?



Natural gas is a key component of industrial and manufacturing infrastructure in the Upstate. The Upstate region is dominated by manufacturing, with more than 2,000 manufacturing companies and 115,000 people employed in the manufacturing sector.



The industrial sector uses natural gas as a fuel for process heating, in combined heat and power systems, and as a raw material to produce chemicals. Natural gas is also used in the manufacture of fabrics, glass, steel, and plastics, which are key industries in our region.

In 2020, the industrial sector accounted for about 33% of total U.S. natural gas consumption, and natural gas was the source of about 34% of the U.S. industrial sector's total energy consumption, according to The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). Natural gas is also significantly cleaner than coal, petroleum and other fossil fuel counterparts, producing fewer emissions of most kinds of air pollutants and carbon dioxide.

The bottom line? In addition to meeting residential gas needs, we must have a dependable natural gas infrastructure and supply to keep our economic engine running in the Upstate.

Available sites, buildings and infrastructure are a vital factor when businesses consider new locations, and a community without them is at the mercy of its competitors.

If our economic prosperity is going to continue in the next decades, we must build the infrastructure to prepare.

— John Lummus, president and CEO, Upstate SC Alliance



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