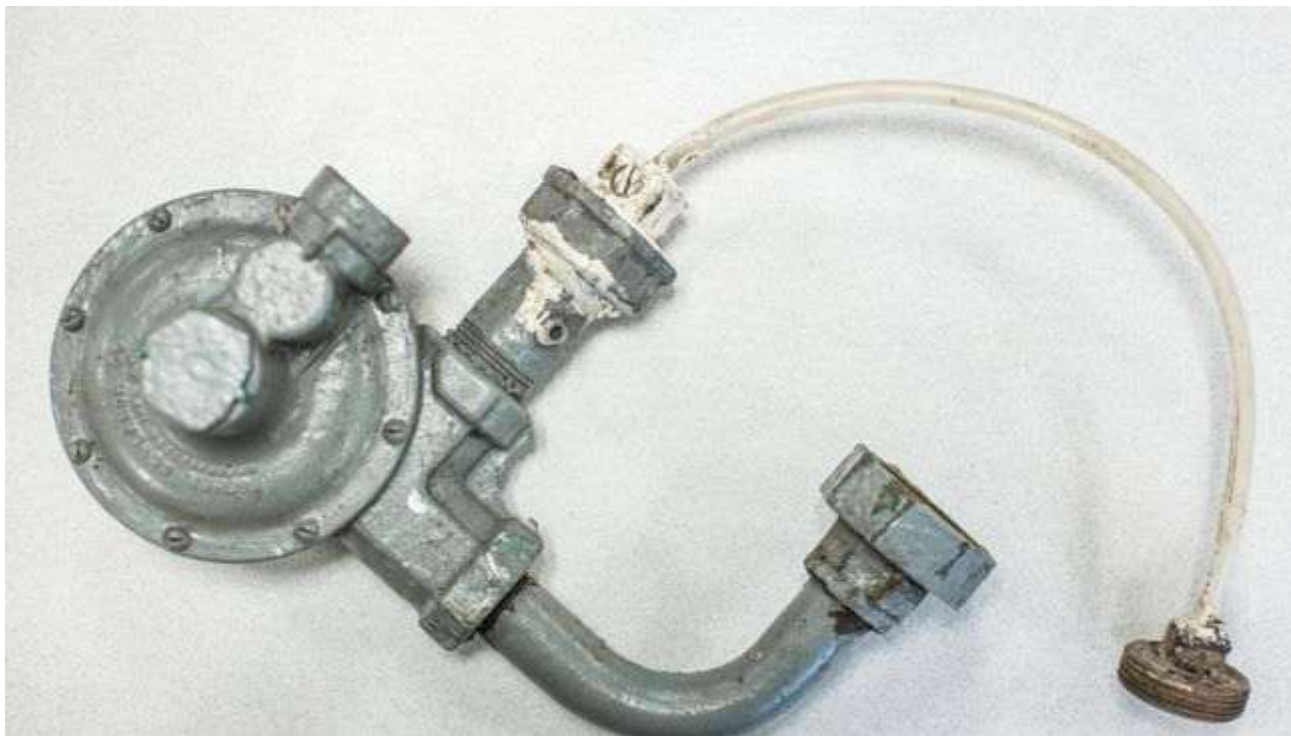




Piedmont Natural Gas winning battle against natural gas thieves

🕒 August 16, 2017

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- **Technology, training, legal action slash cases of theft 61 percent in 4 years.**
- **Piedmont calls for community's help to stop illegal and dangerous activity.**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- Piedmont Natural Gas announced today that an aggressive program to identify and stop natural gas theft has achieved dramatic results, but the company is asking for the community's help to further curtail the illegal and dangerous practice.

Piedmont's anti-theft team slashed the number of identified cases of theft 61 percent from 2012 through 2016. Cases of theft identified in the first six months of this year are down 32 percent from the first half of 2016.

"Stealing natural gas is not only a crime, it also puts innocent lives at risk and results in higher rates for all of Piedmont's customers," said Keith Napier, director of gas operations for Piedmont Natural Gas. "While we are pleased with the progress we have made, we want to make the public aware of the vital role it can play in reducing theft."

Natural gas theft takes several forms, including:

- Turning on the natural gas at a property without an active customer account – called unauthorized use – is the most common form of stealing, accounting for more than two-thirds of all known cases of theft last year.
- Tampering with meters so they don't accurately record the volume of natural gas being used.
- Stealing meters associated with one account and installing them at another property.
- Connecting makeshift piping using garden hoses or even bicycle inner tubes to bypass the meter.

Piedmont is fighting theft with new technology that allows the company to locate stolen meters and data analysis to detect fluctuations in meter readings that could be a telltale sign of tampering. The anti-theft team also has improved training of service technicians and contact center employees and stepped up enforcement and prosecution by building stronger relationships with law enforcement and the court system. The company now prosecutes all cases of theft involving \$1,000 or more in stolen natural gas.

Piedmont has identified several professional "fixers" in Charlotte and other markets who charge homeowners a fee to supply them with "free" natural gas obtained by illegal methods. Outfitted in bulletproof vests and badges, the anti-theft team calls in local police when it's ready to take enforcement action.

Piedmont encourages people who see anybody other than a Piedmont Natural Gas employee working on a natural gas meter to report it anonymously by calling 1-800-752-7504. Only Piedmont Natural Gas employees are legally authorized to turn natural gas on or off at the meter or adjust the meter in any way.

Meet Debbie Hauliska and José Estela of the Piedmont Natural Gas anti-theft team and watch a video of them in action in [this article](#).

About Piedmont Natural Gas

Piedmont Natural Gas, a North Carolina corporation, is an energy services company whose principal business is the distribution of natural gas to more than a million residential, commercial, industrial and power generation customers in portions of North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. Piedmont provides a foundation for establishing a broader strategic natural gas infrastructure platform within Duke Energy to supplement and complement the previous natural gas pipeline investments and the natural gas business located in the Midwest.

Duke Energy is a Fortune 125 company traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol DUK. More information about the company is available at [duke-energy.com](https://www.duke-energy.com).

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Media contact: Jennifer Sharpe

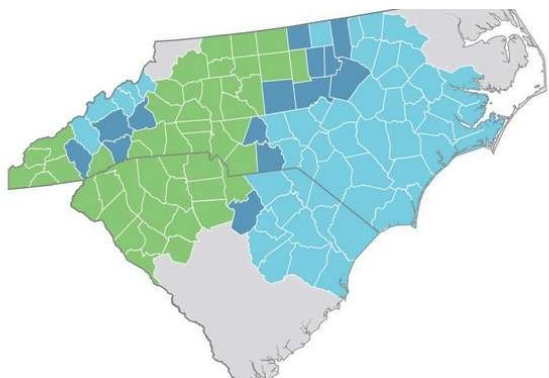
Piedmont Natural Gas

704.731.4108

jennifer.sharpe@duke-energy.com

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