

ROCKET-COURIER

Published in Wyalusing, PA - On Line Since 1997 - In Print Since 1887

2016-09-01 / Front Page

Natural Gas Service for Wyalusing? Maybe by 2018

— BY DAVID KEELER —



Photo by David Keeler Although Monday night's meeting at the Wyalusing Fire Hall was sparsely attended (just 22 people), it is hoped that local residents will rally and interest will increase in bringing natural gas service to Wyalusing. The meeting was organized by the Leatherstocking Gas Company.

One thing that was made clear at Monday night's informational meeting about bringing natural gas service to Wyalusing homes and businesses, was that interest from the community in making this happen needs to be significant and people need to submit applications showing their interest.

That interest was clearly lacking when a small crowd of less than two dozen people showed up at the Wyalusing Fire Hall at a meeting hosted by Leatherstocking Natural Gas Company.

The purpose of the meeting was to offer an update on the status of bringing natural gas service to Wyalusing homes and businesses, a possibility that was first proposed by Leatherstocking at a similar public meeting in 2014.

Russell Miller, vice president of gas supply and marketing for Leatherstocking, narrated a PowerPoint presentation offering the advantages and substantial cost savings the availability of natural gas would bring to Wyalusing compared to other fuels.

Miller said that a previous survey conducted in Wyalusing to gauge interest in bringing natural gas service to the community resulted in 51 applications being filed by 36 people. "This really isn't enough for us to build a very substantial system," Miller said. "We're looking at more like 200 or 300." There are approximately 300 homes in Wyalusing Borough, along with dozens of businesses, not including the 50 housing units currently under construction at Wyalusing Meadows.

Wyalusing Mayor Suky Burgess pointed out a significant change since 2014, however, and that is that Leatherstocking now owns the Pentex pipeline that provides natural gas to Cargill in Wyalusing Township. Miller said that with Leatherstocking now owning the Pentex gas line, the cost of extending service to Wyalusing would be reduced significantly.

Ideally, Miller explained a pipeline would be built from Cargill to the Wyalusing Valley High School complex, with lines extended to homes and businesses in and around the borough. But the school complex is heated by a recently-installed biomass (wood chips) plant and whether the school district would



Photo by David Keeler Leatherstocking's Russell Miller shows a sample of a six-inch natural gas main.

convert to natural gas remains to be seen. But even without the school district's participation, Miller said the project could still happen if there is enough interest shown from residents and business owners.

Miller confirmed that bringing natural gas service to Wyalusing would not result in any taxpayer expense to install gas lines. "There would be no cost to the community," Miller said, adding that Leatherstocking would cover the cost of PennDOT permits and return streets to their original condition after gas lines are installed.

Homeowners and businesses would pay to convert existing heating systems or install new units, along with paying monthly bills, Miller said.

Despite the small attendance at the meeting, Miller said he was encouraged. "I'm happy with what I see," he said pointing to the start of school and the approaching Labor Day holiday as reasons why attendance may have been low.

"We'll be back at least once and likely twice prior to 2018," Miller said, adding that future visits would include an update on the number of applications received from Wyalusing residents and business owners.

When Mayor Burgess asked what people could do to help bring natural gas service to Wyalusing, Leatherstocking's Julie Lewis said, "speak to your neighbors about this." She said in Montrose a group of people helped organize their neighbors to increase interest. Leatherstocking now supplies natural gas throughout Montrose and in other Susquehanna County communities.

Miller advised Wyalusing residents to go to Leatherstocking's website (leatherstockinggas.com) and fill out applications. The applications express interest and are not a legal agreement to purchase natural gas. Mayor Burgess has also placed applications at the borough hall and the public library.

[Return to top](#)