In March, as part of their continuing Commitment to Enhancing Safety, the American Gas Association and its member companies successfully completed a groundbreaking, voluntary effort to advance the safety, reliability, and quality of natural gas delivery for customers and utility employees alike. Ten AGA member companies from throughout the United States and Canada volunteered to participate in a pilot peer-to-peer safety and operational practices review program, drawing on the experience and expertise of fellow natural gas operators to help the participating companies determine what is working well, as well as to identify opportunities for improvement. The insight gained by sharing information and leading practices and evaluating safety initiatives will help to further raise the performance of the natural gas industry as a whole and help continue the industry’s record of safe, reliable delivery of natural gas to homes and businesses.

“The significant time and resources invested by each of the pilot participants is a testament to their commitment to the safety of the industry, their dedication to the success of the peer review pilot, and the value they believe the program can deliver,” said Sames. “The nature of the program allowed participants to build a strong level of trust, which, in addition to their deep industry knowledge, led to an honest, open, and productive process. Executives and participants alike touted the success of the reviews and expressed a sincere belief that the findings would help improve operations.”

In addition to offering immediate valuable insights that will serve to shape upcoming AGA initiatives and advance the entire natural gas industry, the experience granted participants the opportunity to form relationships with peers that will facilitate information sharing and trust across the industry. Reviewers benefited from the opportunity to learn from the programs they observed, gaining a deep understanding of fellow companies’ practices that could guide their own efforts to enhance safety.

“As an industry, we are only as strong as each of our individual companies,” said Sames. “This program will help build valuable connections between industry peers—lasting relationships that will encourage continued communication and learning, ultimately helping to ensure that local natural gas utilities throughout the nation can continue and enhance their record of excellent, safe, and reliable service.”

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