

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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NIPSCO to Begin Cleanup of Former Gas Plant Property in Rochester

Merrillville, Ind. — Starting Monday, August 19th, NIPSCO will be expanding an environmental study and addressing some on-site issues at its vacant property located at the northwest intersection of 8th Street and Indiana Avenue, one block west of downtown Rochester.

In an effort to ensure the protection of the environment, NIPSCO has an ongoing program to study former sites where gas was historically manufactured to learn what environmental impacts may have occurred. Based on available historical site information, a manufactured gas plant (MGP) operated on 8th Street from around 1906 until 1930.

“We are coordinating our environmental study in consultation with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and the City of Rochester,” said NIPSCO Project Manager Sidney Wuellner-Rice. “We look forward to cleaning this site up and preparing it for potential redevelopment down the road.”

The first stage of work involves digging out the below ground contents/rubble of a former manufactured gas holder and replacing this area with clean fill. This will allow for the installation of a new natural gas main at the site. During the second phase of work, NIPSCO will retire an old gas main and remove remaining contaminated soils and replace them with clean soils. In addition, the company will be collecting more soil and groundwater samples. The results will guide decisions on the need for further investigation and/or additional cleanup. NIPSCO will be working at the site and in adjacent, city-owned, right-of-way areas through the remainder of 2019, weather permitting.

The company will try to minimize construction impacts to the neighborhood during this work. Neighbors will still notice an increase in noise and truck traffic weekdays between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. local time. People in the area may also notice an occasional odor of tar or mothballs. Air monitoring will be conducted during work activities to ensure the safety and protection of the workers and surrounding community. The site is already surrounded by a fence with a locked gate and this will not change. Construction trucks will enter and exit the site from Indiana Avenue.

About NIPSCO: Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO), with headquarters in Merrillville, Indiana, has proudly served the energy needs of northern Indiana for more than 100 years. As Indiana’s largest natural gas distribution company and the second-largest electric distribution company, NIPSCO serves approximately 835,000 natural gas and 473,000 electric customers across 32 counties. NIPSCO is part of NiSource’s (NYSE: NI) seven regulated utility companies. NiSource is one of the largest fully regulated utility companies in the United States, serving approximately 4 million natural gas and electric customers through its local Columbia Gas and NIPSCO brands. More information about NIPSCO and NiSource is available at NIPSCO.com and NiSource.com.

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Rochester MGP

Former Manufactured Gas Plant Site



Introduction

As part of its commitment to protect the environment and be a good neighbor in our communities, Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) has a program to study its former sites where gas was historically manufactured to learn if they might have impacted the environment.

NIPSCO will be expanding its environmental study and addressing some on-site issues on the property located at the northwest intersection of 8th Street and Indiana Avenue, one block west of downtown Rochester. Based on available historical site information, a manufactured gas plant (MGP) operated there from around 1906 until 1930. Today, the site is owned by NIPSCO and is vacant.

What is a manufactured gas plant?

Between the mid-1800s and the mid-1900s, manufactured gas was used throughout the U.S. in homes and businesses as a fuel source for use in heating, lighting and cooking. The gas was captured and cleaned of impurities before being stored in large round structures known as gas holders. These gas holders are prominent features in historical pictures of our communities (see below). As natural gas became more available, the plants that produced manufactured gas were closed. Often, these sites were then sold and used for other purposes. In 1930, this site was converted to the production of propane-air to supply gas to the City of Rochester.



Example of Gas Holder at an MGP Facility

Why is NIPSCO studying this site now?

NIPSCO has been reviewing this site for several years. We want to learn more about the current environmental conditions at the former Rochester MGP site as well as in the immediate vicinity. Although this MGP is believed to have been operated in keeping with the standards and practices of its time, today we know more about potential impacts to the environment. The company has an overall cleanup (remediation) program for its former MGP sites. This program makes sure an organized approach is used to prioritize projects, such as the Rochester MGP, and then study the environmental conditions. If needed, the company then takes appropriate action to manage impacts to the environment and ensure the safety of the community.

How can former gas operations impact the environment?

An MGP produced "town gas" by burning coal, coke, and/or oil in a closed vessel. Tar is the primary manufacturing byproduct associated with these sites. When the MGPs were operating, the tar was sometimes sold for use in roofing and as road tar. When these plants closed down, the tar was often left on the property in underground structures. Over the years, the tar and other residues may have impacted soil and groundwater depending on the quality of the underground storage structures they were stored in.



Location of former Rochester MGP

Are government agencies involved with the investigations?

We are coordinating our environmental study in consultation with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and the City of Rochester.

Are gas manufacturing byproducts considered a risk to health and the environment?

Coal tar contains chemical compounds, some of which are considered hazardous and may be a health concern in certain circumstances. These compounds are a common component of asphalt products, including roadway materials. They are only a human health risk if people directly touch, eat or breathe them in high levels over a prolonged period of time. NIPSCO needs to complete additional study of the environmental conditions at and around the former Rochester MGP site before it can determine whether there is a potential risk to human health or the environment.

What are the next steps for the former Rochester MGP site?

NIPSCO will be working at the site and in adjacent, city-owned, right-of-way areas through the remainder of 2019. The first stage of work involves digging out the below ground contents/rubble of the former gas holder and replacing this area with clean fill. This will allow for the installation of a new natural gas main at the site.

During the second phase of work, NIPSCO will retire an old gas main and remove the remaining contaminated soils and replace them with clean soils. In addition, they will be collecting more soil and groundwater samples to determine if any off-site properties have been impacted by historic operations. NIPSCO has employed an engineering firm with extensive experience in this type of work.

Workers will collect soil samples using small-diameter probes, while a drill rig is used to install groundwater

monitoring wells. An independent certified laboratory then performs chemical analyses on the samples. The results guide decisions on the need for further investigation and/or off-site cleanup (remediation).

What is your experience with MGP site cleanup?

The Rochester MGP site is one of several dozen MGPs the company owns or used to own in our operating areas. Cleanup has already been completed at many of these sites and is underway at several additional sites.

How long will it take to complete the on-site cleanup and off-site investigation?

We do not know yet. We know that the first stage of remediation will begin in August. Generally speaking, the additional on-site remediation and off-site testing may take another few months. The evaluation phase can take several months. Additional off-site testing may be necessary based on the initial sampling results. After that, a remediation plan is prepared based on any necessary off-site clean up. Once the remediation plan is complete and approved, actual remediation can take from a few months to several years.

How will the work affect the neighborhood?

NIPSCO will implement procedures designed to minimize construction impacts to the neighborhood during this work. Neighbors will notice an increase in noise and truck traffic weekdays between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. The site is already surrounded by a fence with a locked gate and this will not change. People in the area may notice an occasional odor of tar or mothballs. Air monitoring will be conducted during work activities to ensure the safety and protection of the workers and surrounding community. In addition, we have submitted the investigation reports to IDEM staff and are keeping them informed as we work to bring the site up to current environmental standards.

Where can I get more information?

NIPSCO wants to keep you informed about our environmental study at the former Rochester MGP site. For questions or further information you may contact:

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