

1844 Ferry Road Naperville, IL 60563

630 983.8676 phone www.nicorgas.com

October 13, 2014

Dear Bloomington Residents and Officials,

This month Nicor Gas will resume activities on an environmental project at the Nicor Gas property at 1201 W. Washington St. in Bloomington. A former manufactured gas plant (MGP) operated at this location between 1883 and 1951. The project is a continuation of the investigation and cleanup of this and adjacent locations and is being conducted in cooperation with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) through its voluntary Site Remediation Program.

A fact sheet is attached to this letter to provide you with a brief summary of the site's history, the historical significance of former MGP plants and an overview of the upcoming work.

If you would like more information about this project, please feel free to contact me, Bernard Anderson, at 309.261.4155 or by email at <a href="mailto:bander3@aglresources.com">bander3@aglresources.com</a>. For questions about the State's oversight of this project, you may contact Mara McGinnis at the Illinois EPA at 217.524.3288 (<a href="mailto:mara.mcginnis@Illinois.gov">mara.mcginnis@Illinois.gov</a>).

Sincerely,

Bernard Anderson

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Manager Community Relations and Economic Development

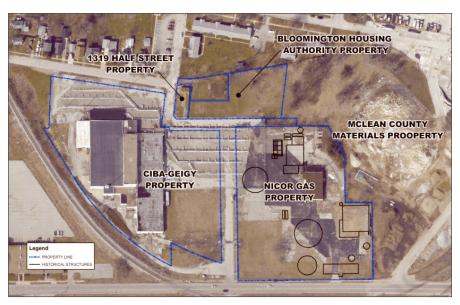
Enclosure



## **Bloomington Manufactured Gas Plant Environmental Project Update**

October 2014





Aerial photo of the Bloomington MGP site and surrounding properties

Nicor Gas will soon resume activities on an environmental project in your neighborhood. Between 1883 and 1951, a plant manufactured gas from coal at the Nicor Gas property at 1201 E. Washington St. Between 1995-1997, coal tar and other residuals from the manufactured gas production were excavated at the Nicor Gas property and a portion of the Bloomington Housing Authority (BHA) property located on the north side of the Nicor Gas property. In 2004 piping was installed on the property west of Gas Avenue that was used to make the residuals easier to remove from below ground in that area. The project is being conducted in cooperation with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) through its voluntary Site Remediation Program.

## THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT

Nicor Gas has contracted with Burns & McDonnell, an environmental engineering firm, to perform the next phase of the project. Beginning this fall, this new work will involve installing a concrete barrier wall underground to support future additional excavation below the BHA property planned for 2015. The barrier wall will remain in place after the excavation is completed.

The underground wall installation will take up to eight months to construct and cure. During the construction of the wall, you may notice occasional odors similar to mothballs or paving materials if residuals are uncovered at the site. Although odors may become noticeable, they are not considered a health risk. An air monitoring program will be used to confirm that there are no adverse impacts to air quality in the area. All trucks will enter and exit the work area from Washington Street.

The work plan for the underground wall installation has been placed in the information repository for public review. More information will be provided in advance of the next phase, which will be one more step in efforts to bring the site up to current environmental standards.

An information repository containing a collection of documents about the project has been set up at the Bloomington Public Library, 205 E. Olive Street.

## MANUFACTURED GAS PLANT BACKGROUND

Before interstate pipelines made natural gas available in this area, gas was manufactured using a variety of raw materials, most commonly, coal and oil. Manufactured gas or "Town Gas" provided energy for cooking, lighting, heating and industrial processes. At one time, up to 3,000 plants operated in the United States. Manufactured gas ceased to be a major energy source in Illinois by the 1940s.

Residuals from the gas manufacturing process such as ashes, cinders and tar were sometimes left on-site after the plants closed. These can contain polycyclic aromatics hydrocarbons (PAHs) and volatile organic chemicals (VOCs) such as benzene and toluene. PAHs are commonly found as a result of combustion and VOCs readily vaporize into the air and are often found in fuels and solvents. Potential environmental effects of tar and other residues were not a concern when these plants closed. However, today steps are being taken to investigate and clean-up these former sites to protect the environment.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Nicor Gas is committed to keeping the community informed about this project.

If you have questions at any time during this project, please contact Bernie Anderson, Nicor Gas Community Relations & Economic Development Manager, at 309.261.4155 or via email at BAnder3@aglresources.com.

If you would like information about the Illinois EPA's role in the project, you may contact Mara McGinnis at **217.524.3288** or by email at mara.mcginnis@illinois.gov.

For more information on PAHs and VOCs, refer to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry web site:

atsdr.cdc.gov/toxFAQs/index.asp



6900

Monday, October 20, 3-6PM Holton Homes parking lot/basketball court

Nicor Gas invites you to drop by our tent any time between 3PM and 6PM and learn about the environmental clean-up planned for the Nicor Gas property, Bloomington Housing Authority property south of John Kane Homes, and Half Street.

Nicor Gas representatives and engineering firm representatives will be on hand to answer questions.

There will be food and drinks as well as activities for children. We look forward to seeing you!