LEAK ASSESSMENT, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Overview of Prestonsburg City’s Utilities Commission, Our Community, and Our Planned Use of the TAG Grant
PRESTONSBURG CITY’S UTILITIES COMMISSION AND OUR COMMUNITY

- Prestonsburg City’s Utilities Commission is a small utility provider in Prestonsburg, Kentucky.
- The Commission provides water, sewer and gas services to clients within the City of Prestonsburg and also to many parts of Floyd County and some parts of Johnson, Martin and Knott Counties.
- The City of Prestonsburg has a population of approximately 3,700 people and Floyd County has a population of approximately 42,441.
PHMSA’s Technical Assistance Grants to Communities

- Prestonsburg City’s Utilities Commission was interested in upgrading and enhancing their gas leak detection and gas line safety programs by purchasing a Remote Methane Leak Detector (RMLD) and a HEATH Detecto Pak – Infrared (DP-IR™).

- We hope that this equipment will provide us with a more accurate and safer means of detecting gas leaks in transmission lines, our distribution lines, meters and the customer’s lines.
In 2004, a transmission line that was installed in the 1950’s destroyed a subdivision in our county (Floyd) and injured nine people and dislocated 22 families. Our community has become more concerned about pipeline safety as a result of this explosion.

The following slides are some photos taken from that incident.
REGIONAL CONCERNS AND/OR PROBLEMS

During the past several years, the Commission identified several key challenges regarding leak detection and pipeline safety in our service area.

- Geographical
  - Our service area consists of narrow watersheds and steep highly vegetated hills.
  - Our customers (commercial and residential) are typically located along the watersheds. As you saw from the previous slides many parts of the transmission lines are located in this area as well.
  - A number of customers (mainly residential) have located on the hillsides and on top of hills.

- Economical
  - The area median income for our county is $21,168. Many people live below the poverty level. This creates a number of issues that when blended with the geographical and cultural issues can create situations that could prove tragic.
REGIONAL CONCERNS AND PROBLEMS (CONTINUED)

- Cultural
  - Many people located within our service area are very serious about keeping any and all people off of their property. This can be for a number of reasons, but the result is the same. We may send our employee out to investigate a reported leak and discover that it is coming from the ground of another person’s property. Many times this person has blocked access to the property has posted threatening signs. If they are manufacturing crystal meth, or using the property to harvest marijuana, the threats may be very serious.

- It is our hope that we can address many of these issues with the utilization of this new equipment. We also hope that this will give us some additional opportunities to work with other agencies within our service area that may not have access to this type of equipment and to increase our customers awareness of pipeline safety.