Natural gas service infrastructure upgraded by Mike Vandersteen, Mayor

Gas service infrastructure is being upgraded in many of the older Sheboygan residential neighborhoods. This upgrade of the gas delivery system to residential homes is being conducted in Sheboygan, Kohler, Sheboygan Falls, Elkhart Lake, and Howards Grove. I recently received calls from residents who live along South 17th Street in Sheboygan wondering why the street that was resurfaced last year is now being cut up to allow for these gas service line replacements.

Since Wisconsin Energy Group acquired Integrys Energy, the parent company of Wisconsin Public Service (WPS), about two years ago, their capital improvements budget has increased fourfold and they have been much more proactive by aggressively scheduling replacement of the gas lines that serve residential homes in Sheboygan. WPS has started to replace many more of the old meters and gas services in the City. This year in Sheboygan they will be replacing 301 gas services. WPS has contracted with Meade Construction to accomplish the required work. Their plans for the next several years call for at least 300 services per year to be replaced in the City.

There is a city ordinance for a Right of Way Excavation Permit for each street opening for such utility work. The permit is $100 each along with a $5,000 performance bond. The contractor is also responsible for restoring the street surface with similar materials to the original. They are also responsible to restore the surfaces disturbed in the right of way such as curb, gutters, sidewalk and grass with a minimum 18 month guarantee.

The City Engineering Department has given WPS the schedule for the next several years of Sheboygan street resurfacing projects so that they can plan their work to be completed prior to or during forthcoming resurfacing work. The work on South 17th Street needed to be done this year or next. It's unfortunate that the city was not aware of the need for the gas utility work that was required on South 17th Street prior to the resurfacing that was completed in 2016.