

# PIPELINE



## Longtime Employees Lead the Way Throughout Pandemic

When you contact the DeKalb-Cherokee Counties Gas District office for assistance, a dedicated, seasoned team responds to your needs.

In fact, the women who make up the front office staff bring a combined total of 80 years of experience to their posts.

That experience paid off last year. During the pandemic, the seven office employees in Fort Payne and single employee in Centre didn't miss a beat. They responded with the same quality service customers have come to expect from DC Gas.

Billing clerk Aletha Coffman said it's been a team effort. "We've all worked together, and worked over if necessary," said Coffman, who celebrates her 17th year with the company in February. "Several employees have covered for others when they were out. We worked together to make it through."

One of those longtime employees, accounts payable clerk Deb O'Connor, retires Feb. 1 after 17-and-a-half years with the company.

"Deb was in customer service for more than 10 years and provided excellent customer service to her customers," office manager Michele Presley said.

O'Connor took over accounts payable in 2013, continuing to serve the District while in that role.

"She has been a great employee and friend, and will be greatly missed," Presley said.

LaShae Stopyak is stepping up to take over as accounts payable clerk and has been training with O'Connor since this past summer.

While the lobby has been closed, business is being conducted in the drive-through, said office manager Michele Presley.

"The wait times may be a little longer, but we are striving to provide the same level of service as before," Presley said.

Customers who are establishing service are allowed in the lobby if they prefer, she said. For more information, contact the Fort Payne office at 256-845-8932.



### FORT PAYNE OFFICE

Back Row: LaShae Stopyak (Accounts Payable), Donna Wilson (Customer Service), Deb O'Connor (Accounts Payable), Angela Richey (HR/Payroll), Front Row: Sha Green (Billing), Aletha Coffman (Billing), Paige McElroy (Customer Service)



**CENTRE OFFICE**  
Regina Sonaty  
(Customer Service)



## NEW Centre Office Opens!

DeKalb-Cherokee Counties Gas District moved into its new Centre Customer Service Center on Dec. 7, but the lobby remains closed due to COVID-19. The 2,500-square-foot facility replaces the old office at 1111 W. Main St.

"We're thrilled to see this project realized," said Jayson Higdon, DC Gas general manager. "This new facility gives us the opportunity to better serve our customers in Cherokee County."

City officials and DC Gas board members attended the official groundbreaking on the office in May.

## Product Spotlight: Vent-free Gas Heaters

A vent-free heater makes a room warm and cozy without requiring a chimney, flue or fixed vent. Because all the usable heat energy goes into your space, no heat is wasted. That means you can save a bundle on heating costs during the winter.

**The HearthRite Blue Flame Vent-Free Gas Heaters** we sell range from a \$159 model that heats up to a 200-square-foot space to the \$309 unit that heats 1,000 square feet. The heaters come in blue-flame and infrared models, and all have a warranty.

### Check out these benefits:

- Vent-free heaters are compact and can be installed almost anywhere in the home.
- Vent-free heaters offer low operating costs, saving you money on utility bills.
- Our indoor gas heaters are 99.9 percent energy-efficiency.
- They work during a power outage, ensuring you stay warm and cozy.
- Vent-free heaters localize comfort to rooms that are sometimes hard to heat.



## Start the New Year with a Safety Check

Natural gas appliances provide efficient operation and energy savings to heat your home, prepare your food and even dry your clothes. But, like all appliances, they should be installed and operated safely. Get the New Year off to a healthy start with this checklist:

- **Follow the manufacturer's instruction** on the care and use of appliances.
- Have a Certified Contractor or a technician **inspect your gas heating system at least once a year** to make sure it's working properly.
- **Never heat your home with an oven, range or outdoor grill.** These appliances are not designed for home heating and put your home and family at risk when used this way. Use an appliance only for its intended purpose.
- **Change your air filters regularly** for best air flow and efficiency.
- **Never store anything near your gas appliances** that might block normal appliance airflow.
- **Never store anything combustible near your gas appliances.** Combustible products include gasoline, aerosol cans, paint, newspapers, gas powered tools, etc.
- Keep **flammable items** such as bedding, clothes, curtains, rugs, candles and paper products away from space heaters. This is true for both gas and electric space heaters.
- **Do not make extensive repairs to your natural gas appliances yourself.** Instead, call our service personnel at 256-927-5925 or 256-845-3731 to assist with these repairs.
- **If you smell natural gas, leave the area** and dial 911 to report an emergency or call DC Gas at 256-845-3731 or 256-927-5925 to report a possible natural gas leak.

## 7 TIPS for Carbon Monoxide Safety

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that is colorless, odorless and tasteless. This gas is kept to safe levels when natural gas equipment is properly installed, operated and maintained. Maintaining proper ventilation is essential so carbon monoxide does not accumulate indoors and create a risk of illness or death. Fuel-burning appliances, such as wood-burning stoves, fireplace inserts, fireplaces, space heaters, gas and charcoal grills, furnaces, water heaters, and ranges produce carbon monoxide.



### Protect yourself and your family from carbon monoxide build-up with these tips:

- Natural gas should burn with a clear blue flame. Yellow or orange flames could indicate a problem that should be checked by a DC Gas technician.
- Regularly inspect your equipment for visible signs of problems. Don't let soot collect near a vent or burner.
- Make sure that all required vented appliances are properly vented to the outdoors.
- Never use a gas-powered lawn mower, grill or vehicle in an enclosed area including your garage, home, business, tent or trailer. An open door or window is insufficient to prevent carbon monoxide build-up.
- Get your fuel-burning equipment checked annually by a qualified service technician. DC Gas provides a complimentary annual service check-up each fall and will provide similar system checks throughout the year for a nominal fee.
- Go to our website, [DCGas.org](http://DCGas.org), for more carbon monoxide facts, including physical symptoms of exposure.



## Safety First

At DC Gas, the No. 1 priority is the safety of our employees, customers and residents in the communities we serve.

With that in mind, DC Gas is working throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to provide our same level of quality service to customers with a safety plan in place.

DC Gas employees adhere to health and safety protocols for service calls. Customers are asked whether anyone in the home has been ill, had a fever or tested positive for COVID-19. If so, the service call will be rescheduled, unless it is an emergency. In addition, employees wear PPE gear when they go into a home.

Let's all do our part to keep our community safe during this pandemic.