

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New subscription service successfully launched —Gas Operations Innovation Monitor—to help gas distribution utilities stay on top of technology innovations worldwide.

(Chicago) - The Gas Operations Innovations Alliance (a strategic alliance of Utilivate Technologies, North Star Energy Group, and npb Associates) announced today that the Gas Operations Innovation Monitor subscription service was successfully launched. The subscription service secured 11 subscribers representing fifteen gas distribution utilities on five continents, serving over 11 million customers in North America.

The subscription service will monitor worldwide developments in new products, innovative maintenance and repair techniques and research progress; and develop insights on market readiness, impediments to adoption, and successful implementation strategies. The subscription service will assist gas utilities in sifting through a vast array of information and keeping abreast of new developments in distribution operations products and services. The new service is being led by a veteran team of gas industry technology experts: Marlon McClinton, President of Utilivate Technologies, LLC, Nicholas Biederman, Principal Consultant, npb associates, and Jim Fay, President of North Star Energy Group.

The subscription service will capture the following benefits on behalf of its subscribers:

- Track new products and techniques for distribution operations
- Capture business insights on the implementation and cost of new products and technology
- Enhance the coverage and resources of gas utility staff via independent, timely, accurate, and hard-hitting analysis
- Obtain “case studies” of real experiences with any new product or technique...both good and bad
- Track relevant gas distribution operations RD&D activities at various US organizations (e.g., NETL, GTI, NYSEARCH, university labs) and worldwide (e.g., British, French, Japanese)
- Track relevant topics at major gas industry and other related industry conferences
- Share ideas, experiences, and concerns with a broad-based network of other LDC subscribers
- Track global developments in underground electric, telecom, sewer, water, and highway industries which may impact natural gas operations

Subscribers will receive monthly briefings via a *Technology Market Watch* publication on several innovation-related topics with critical analysis and a twice quarterly, in-depth analysis via a *Gas Distribution Innovation Insights* publication on a selected high-priority, high-impact issue in gas distribution innovation. Both information products will be delivered online. A quarterly webcast/

conference call will provide additional information and chance to interact with other subscribers. An annual review of innovations at a full-day summit conference will provide perspectives on past year developments and an outlook on developments "on the horizon"

Lori Traweek, Vice President of American Gas Association, stated "The subscription service...being offered...addresses an important and growing need for independent and timely analysis in this area." Steve Troch, Technology Manager of Baltimore Gas and Electric, added "We anticipate that this service will provide insight into RD&D activities worldwide and be an excellent complement to GTI/OMD and NYSEARCH programs."

Marlon McClinton, Member of Gas Operations Innovation Alliance, emphasized "We are committed to helping subscribers identify and implement new product and technology solutions that will significantly reduce gas distribution operating costs and enhance system safety. The annual subscription price of \$8,250 can extend a utility's coverage of technology developments and add depth of analysis; and will also provide an expert, independent third-party opinion."

The Gas Operations Innovation Monitor subscription service remains open to new subscribers through 2005.

Utilivate Technologies, LLC provides actionable, energy management and strategic management/marketing services to businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and government agencies. Utilivate's management/marketing solutions target new product, service, and business development. Utilivate also manages ongoing programs, projects, and other strategic initiatives for clients.

North Star Energy Group delivers critical insights and analysis to energy utilities and related companies through information products and consulting services. Areas of research include new product business opportunity analysis and market research, energy customer utilization trends analysis, and strategic business analysis.

Npb associates operates internationally and provide technical and economic evaluations, new products, and concepts in natural gas production, transportation/distribution and end-use; energy market evaluation and forecasting; strategic planning and analysis; and environmental impacts of fuel switching.

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