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Georgia Public Service Commission

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Docket No. 37054

DOCKET# 37054
DOCUMENT# 219971

Fort Valley Utility Commission
P. O. Box 1529
Fort Valley, GA 31030

REF: DIMP Inspection # JJ24-006

☐ Certified Mail ☐ Regular Mail ☒ Email

Attention: Mr. Clay Walker

On January 18, 2024, a representative of the Georgia Public Service Commission Pipeline/Facilities Safety Office conducted an inspection of your gas system. The enclosed inspection report numbered JJ24-006 is provided for your information and file.

In conjunction with this inspection report, Staff has recommended the following enforcement(s):

Enforcement Action:

- ☐ Notice of Probable Violation
- ☐ Notice of Probable Violation with Proposed Civil Penalty
- ☐ Notice of Amendment

Enforcement Letter:

- ☐ Warning Letter
- ☒ Letter of Concern

Enforcement Notification:

- ☐ Observed Issue
- ☐ No Violation

Please review and respond to this report in accordance with the attached Instructions for Responding to Enforcement Actions, Enforcement Letters, and Notifications Issued by the Georgia Public Service Commission. Please refer to Docket No. 37054 in your response.

Please let me know if there are any questions concerning this report at (404) 985-4271 or mthebert@psc.ga.gov. Thank you for your continuing contribution toward increased pipeline safety.

Sincerely,

Michelle Thebert

Michelle L. Thebert
Director, Office of Pipeline Safety/Facilities Protection

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REPORT OF NATURAL GAS SAFETY

INSPECTION NO: JJ24-006

OPERATOR: Fort Valley Utility Commission

INVESTIGATOR: Joe Jones

INSPECTION DATE: January 18, 2024 REPORT MAILED DATE: September 17, 2024

Any questions concerning this report may be directed to the above address or by telephoning (404) 463-6526.

1. PURPOSE OF INSPECTION

To conduct an inspection of the Operators Distribution Integrity Management Program (DIMP) for compliance with the minimum federal standards in 49CFR Part 192, SubPart P.

2. CONTINUING VIOLATIONS

Violation	Description	Inspection#	Date
Consent Agreement Pending	Operator is negotiating Consent Agreement with the FPU Director	JJ23-008	1/30/2023
192.465(d)	Each operator shall take prompt remedial action to correct any deficiencies indicated by the...	JS23-013	3/27/2023
192.553(a)(1)	At the end of each incremental increase, the pressure must be held constant while the entire...	JS23-013	3/27/2023
192.479(a)	Each operator must clean and coat each pipeline or portion of pipeline that is exposed to the...	JS23-013	3/27/2023
192.181(b)	Each regulator station controlling the flow or pressure of gas in a distribution system must have...	JS23-013	3/27/2023
192.721(b)(1)	Mains in places or on structures where anticipated physical movement or external loading could...	JS23-013	3/27/2023
192.481(a)	Each operator must inspect each pipeline or portion of pipeline that is exposed to the atmosphere...	JS23-013	3/27/2023
192.467(c)	Except for unprotected copper inserted in a ferrous pipe, each pipeline must be electrically...	JS23-013	3/27/2023
192.553(b)	Records. Each operator who uprates a segment of pipeline shall retain for the life of the segment...	JS23-013	3/27/2023
192.553(d)	Limitation on increase in maximum allowable operating pressure. Except as provided in §192.555(c)...	JS23-013	3/27/2023
192.353(a)	Each meter and service regulator, whether inside or outside a building, must be installed in	JS23-013	3/27/2023
192.727(d)	Whenever service to a customer is discontinued, one of the following must be complied with:	JS23-013	3/27/2023

3. CLEARED VIOLATIONS

4. NEW VIOLATIONS

5. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS/COMMENTS

On March 23, 2021, Commission Staff reported to the Fort Valley utility Commission to conduct an inspection of the Operators Distribution Integrity Management Program (DIMP) for compliance with the minimum federal standards in 49CFR Part 192, SubPart P.

During the inspection the Operator was represented by:
Robbie Johns – Operation Manager
Wade Sharpe – SRCS Consultant

Commission Staff was represented by:
Joseph Jones – Lead Inspector
Brant Sweat – Pipeline Safety Inspector

At the time of this inspection, the Fort Valley Utility Commission was under 11 previously existing probable violations. The Operator is also negotiating a consent agreement with the Director for a violation and proposed civil penalty which was cited in Inspection Number AT20-001. Because the Operator had not yet received the written report for Inspection Number JS23-013 Staff did not review these items.

NO VIOLATIONS FOUND

During this inspection (JJ24-006), Staff reviewed the Fort Valley Utility Commission Gas Department Distribution Integrity Management (DIMP) plan and procedures which includes all previous document versions of the plan and the changes that have been implemented since the initial version. Staff documented the findings on the applicable PHMSA form. No deficiencies were noted by following guidance on the form.

During this inspection, Staff conducted three (3) Protocol nine inspections:
Jose Ochoa, Gas Service Technician, performed:
- Task #0001 – Measure Structure to Electrolyte Potential, qualified 08/11/2023 through 08/11/2028
Dontavious Elliott, Gas Service Technician, performed:
- Task #1231 – Inside Gas Leak Investigation, qualified 05/19/2023 through 05/19/2026.
James Pittman, Gas Service Technician, performed:
- Task #1291 – Locate Underground Pipelines, qualified 01/12/2024 through 01/12/2025.
Staff verified Mr. Ochoa, Mr. Elliott and Mr. Pittman performed these covered tasks according to the procedures and were able to identify generic and task specific abnormal conditions and define the applicable actions. All tasks were successfully performed according to the operator's procedures.

LETTER OF CONCERN

§192.614 Damage prevention program
(a) Except as provided in paragraphs (d) and (e) of this section, each operator of a buried pipeline must carry out, in accordance with this section, a written program to prevent damage to that pipeline from excavation activities. For the purposes of this section, the term "excavation activities" includes excavation, blasting, boring, tunneling, backfilling, the removal of aboveground structures by either explosive or mechanical means, and other earthmoving operations.

STAFF'S CONCERN: Staff noticed that in 2022 Fort Valley had a moderate spike in excavation damage due to fiber optic cable installation with multiple contractors throughout Peach County. The Fort Valley Utility Commission stated that the slight trend upward was due to not marked and located pipelines, as well as incorrect facilities records. According to the Operator these lines were installed prior to the requirement for traceability. Gas employees continue to conduct excavation inspections to educate excavators on proper practices. Gas employees are instructed to meet with the contractor prior to excavation to ensure the protection of underground facilities. Existing procedures with accelerated actions in place are managing this risk as much as possible.

As a result of this inspection, Staff noted no probable violations of the minimum federal safety standards.

Please review and respond to this report in accordance with the attached Instructions for Responding to Enforcement Letters Issued by the Georgia Public Service Commission.

BEFORE THE GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN THE MATTER OF:	)	
	)	
DIMP Inspection	)	**DOCKET NO. 37054**
Fort Valley Utility Commission	)	
Inspection JJ24-006 on January 18, 2024	)	
	)	

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I have caused to be served a copy of the foregoing, and a copy of same was served upon all parties and persons listed below via electronic mail as indicated by an asterisk. I further certify that the *Fort Valley Utility Commission* was served a hard copy of the above-stated document by U.S. Mail, certified/return receipt requested.

*Sallie Tanner, Executive Secretary
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

*Clay Walker, General Manager
Fort Valley Utility Commission
P.O. Box 1529
Fort Valley, GA 31030
cwalker@fvutil.com

*Michelle Thebert, Facilities Protection Unit Director
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

Respectfully Submitted this 24th day of September 2024:

Cathy Nesbitt

Cathy Nesbitt, Administrative Assistant
Georgia Public Service Commission
Facilities Protection Unit
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334