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Georgia Public Service Commission

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DOCKET# 37093
DOCUMENT# 221699

Docket No. 37093

Tri-County Natural Gas Authority
P. O. Box 247
Union Point, GA 30669

REF: Operator Qualification Inspection # JS24-040

☐ Certified Mail ☐ Regular Mail ☒ Email

Attention: Mr. Lanier Rhodes

On November 26, 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 JS24-040 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. 37093 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: JS24-040

OPERATOR: Tri-County Natural Gas Authority

INVESTIGATOR: Jason Smith

INSPECTION DATE: November 26, 2024 REPORT MAILED DATE: February 26, 2025

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 Operator's operator qualification (OQ) program for compliance with the minimum federal standards in 49CFR §192, SubPart N.

2. CONTINUING VIOLATIONS

Violation	Description	Inspection#	Date
192.619(a)	No person may operate a segment of steel or plastic pipeline at a pressure that exceeds a maximum...	JS18-042	12/17/2018
192.181(a)	Each high-pressure distribution system must have valves spaced so as to reduce the time to...	JB22-001	3/7/2022

3. CLEARED VIOLATIONS

4. NEW VIOLATIONS

5. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS/COMMENTS

On November 6, 2024, the Tri-County Natural Gas Authority provided Pipeline Safety Staff with a copy of their Operator Qualification Program, version 3.1, and on November 26, 2024, Staff began reviewing it.

On December 11, 2024, Staff reported to Tri-County Natural Gas Authority to perform an Operator Qualification inspection.

During this inspection, the Operator was represented by:
Denise Channel - Regulatory Compliance Administrator
Wendell Mathews - Gas Superintendent
Lori Lamberth - MGAG/SRCS (consultant)

Commission Staff was represented by:
Jason Smith - Lead Inspector
Glen Murphy - Pipeline Safety Inspector

At the time of this inspection, Tri-County Natural Gas was under two previously existing probable violations; §192.619(a), which was cited under #JS18-042 and §192.181(a) which was cited under #JB22-001. Staff did not perform a follow-up inspection at this time because Tri-County Natural Gas had not yet received the previous Follow-Up Inspection #RS24-008.

NO VIOLATIONS FOUND

During this inspection, Staff reviewed Tri-County Gas Authority's Operator Qualification Program version 3.1, utilizing PHMSA's OQ Plan Review Inspection form 14 to record the findings. Staff examined supporting records/documentation to verify compliance with the minimum safety standards, and how the Operator ensure their contractors Operator Qualification programs are kept up.

While on site Staff performed Operator Qualification Protocol 9 field validation inspections on gas department personnel to ensure that covered tasks are being performed in accordance with appropriate operator-approved procedures. The Operator provided qualification records for Joshua Campbell, a Service Technician; for Pipeline Safety Staff to examine prior to observing performance of the tasks. Staff verified that qualification records for this individual was current.

Joshua Campbell performed the following covered task:
Task #0141 'Visual Inspection of Atmospheric Corrosion' - His qualification is good through May 24, 2028.
Task #0301 'Manually Opening and Closing Valves' - His qualification is good through November 9, 2026.
Task #0301-B 'Manually Opening and Closing Service Valves' - His qualification is good through May 24, 2026.

Staff verified Joshua Campbell was able to perform the covered tasks according to the procedures and was able to identify generic and task specific abnormal conditions.

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:	)	
	)	
Tri – County Natural Gas Authority	)	**DOCKET NO. 37093**
	)	
	)	
	)	

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, hereby certify that I have this day served a copy of the within and foregoing document on the following persons via email and/or United States Mail as follows:

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

*The Honorable Lanier Rhodes, Mayor
Tri-County Natural Gas
P.O. Box 247
Union Point, GA 30669
mayorlrhodes@gmail.com

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

Respectfully Submitted this 5th day of March 2025:

Cathy Nesbitt

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