



**For Immediate Release**  
October 5, 2009

**AGA Media Contacts**  
Chris Hogan, 202.824.7027  
Lauren Blossé, 202.824.7204

## **Natural Gas Utilities Winter Outlook: Lower Bills Likely**

*Washington, D.C.* – The American Gas Association (AGA), the national trade association for 202 local natural gas utilities across the United States, today held a press conference announcing that natural gas customers can expect lower bills on average this winter compared to last year. Plentiful domestic natural gas supplies and lower wellhead prices will drive bills down this winter and provide relief for natural gas customers struggling in a troubled economy.

“With natural gas storage at all time highs and prices well below past years, homeowners across the nation are in for some well-deserved relief from high energy costs when heating their homes this winter,” said David Parker, AGA president and CEO. “Natural gas is the affordable choice to cleanly and efficiently heat our homes now and for years to come.”

The Potential Gas Committee, a volunteer group of scientists and energy experts, reported in June that there is enough natural gas in the United States to supply the country for at least a century. New and advanced exploration of shale basins and other gas sources has led to an unprecedented amount of natural gas available on the marketplace.

Some factors, particularly severe weather, could affect the demand for, and price of, natural gas. But because utilities purchase natural gas from suppliers throughout the year and store it in underground facilities for winter delivery, barring extreme temperatures for extended periods natural gas prices will likely remain low this year.

“When utilities were purchasing gas to put into storage during the spring and summer months of 2009, wellhead prices were way down, so it makes sense that natural gas customers will reap the benefits of those unusually low prices this winter,” said Parker.

According to AGA, most local natural gas utilities offer billing plans that help spread the winter heating costs over many months. For those most in need and vulnerable to the high costs of heating, utilities also encourage income-eligible customers to sign up for bill payment assistance. And with historic funding approved by Congress for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), more elderly and low-income citizens will not have to choose between buying groceries and heating their homes this winter.

In addition, homeowners can take simple, inexpensive steps such as caulking around doors and windows and installing a programmable thermostat to reduce their monthly home heating bills.

“We’re pleased to report that customers will have ample access to natural gas when the weather grows cold,” said Parker. “Its abundance in the United States, as well as its cleanliness, makes it the reliable choice for home heating.”

For more information on energy-saving tips and home-heating assistance provided to consumers by local natural gas utilities, please visit [www.aga.org](http://www.aga.org).

###

*The American Gas Association, founded in 1918, represents 202 local energy companies that deliver clean natural gas throughout the United States. There are more than 70 million residential, commercial and industrial natural gas customers in the U.S., of which almost 93 percent — more than 65 million customers — receive their gas from AGA members. Today, natural gas meets almost one-fourth of the United States' energy needs.*