

Officials say failure of pipe led to fatal explosion

SALINA (AP) — State regulators have ordered Kansas Gas Service to take steps to reduce the risks of pipeline failures after an investigation into a fatal explosion concluded gas had leaked from a pipe into the home caught fire.

Leo Haynos, chief of pipeline safety for the Kansas Corporation Commission, said gas had seeped from the riser pipe, which connects the underground gas pipe with the meter.

Haynos said the gas leaked into the soil and eventually into the basement of Mary Ann Schnepf's town house.

A spark ignited the gas, causing the explosion that killed Schnepf, 75, and destroyed four town houses.

Although the Kansas Corporation Commission concluded the explosion could not be attributed to safety violations by Kansas Gas Service, it ordered the company to take steps to reduce the risk of riser

pipes failing in the future.

Haynos said investigators know the riser failed because of some outside force but were unable to determine what that source was.

He said the failure could have been caused by soil around the pipeline sinking, which puts pressure on the pipe and increases the likelihood of a break at the joint.

A lawn mower or another object striking the portion of the pipe above ground also could have

caused the failure, he said.

Haynos said that while investigating the blast, he looked at training and inspection logs at Kansas Gas Service.

KCC told Kansas Gas Service, a division of Tulsa, Okla.-based ONEOK, to make changes that include identifying for meter readers lines that are more prone to failure, so they can give special attention to them. The KCC also told the company to modify its operations and

maintenance manual to include specific steps that will identify how much the soil can sink before further investigation of a pipe is required.

Haynos said Kansas Gas trains and tests its employees to identify subsidence, but more quality control is needed to reinforce that training. He said supervisors might walk with employees, pointing out when they miss cases where the soil has sunk and how to detect it.

Happenings

Share orders for January extended until Thursday

Orders for Share delivery in January will be accepted until Thursday, Jan. 15, said Gene Griffin, one of the coordinators.

The menu for January is as follows: Gorton's Crunchy Fish Fillets, Tyson's barbecue chicken breasts, lean pork chops, lean (80/20) ground beef, chicken thighs, red potatoes, cabbage, baby peeled carrots (1 lb.), lettuce, onions, Empire apples, navel oranges, Texas grapefruit, tangerines, and block of

cheese (8 oz.). In addition to the normal one share costing \$17.50 or meat only at \$10.50, there is also a Super Bowl special at \$16 which includes pizza snacks, sliced salami, cocktail franks, barbecue riblets and honey Dijon wings.

Delivery of these items will be Saturday, Jan. 24, at 10:30 a.m. in the Colby Sacred Heart School gymnasium.

For questions or to place an order either for the one share, meats only or Super Bowl special, call Griffin at 460-3579.

Ag profitability conference scheduled for Feb. 5

The 2004 Ag Profitability Conference will be from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 5, in Colby. The event begins with registration at 8:30 a.m. followed by a presentation on water issues in western Kansas, breakout sessions, lunch, a presentation on land values and cash rents.

Registration is due by Jan. 29. For information, contact the Thomas County Extension Office at 462-4582.

Muzzleloading group to hold annual meeting

The Kansas Muzzleloading Association will hold its annual convention Feb. 6-8 at the Highland Hotel in Great Bend. John Curry, a nationally-known frontier historian, will be the featured speaker.

Curry's presentation will be from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Feb. 7.

Other events include seminars on knife making, tack work, plants and artifacts. There will also be a his-

torical fashion show, a mountain man garage sale, photo contest, craftsman and artisan competition, the annual meeting, banquet, auction and dance.

The convention floor trade show is open to the public free of charge on Friday, Feb. 6 from 5-9 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 7 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 8.

Painting workshop offered this month at Hansen Museum

Barbara Schaffner, an artist from Wheatland, Wyo., returns to the Dane G. Hansen Memorial Museum in Logan to teach a four-day workshop. The workshop will run from Jan. 22-25.

Schaffner will be presenting the four-day workshop to intermediate

to advanced artists, aiming to complete three to four different paintings, Lee Favre, museum official said.

Lessons will focus on the study of sunset or sunrise to learn what happens to bright colors as they play across the landscape.

The painting of snow will also be covered and ways to create exciting color changes in the tree foliage and in shadow areas.

Students will be encouraged to stretch and challenge themselves and to strive for individuality, Favre said.

Schaffner was an honors student at West Texas State University, majoring in fine art and education. Her western scenes and wildlife paintings have hung in galleries in six western states and Canada. Success has come through top awards and honors in numerous shows. Her

most recent honor was to become a Wyoming Ducks Unlimited Artist of the Year for 2003.

She has expanded her studio into a gallery-studio combination called Wyoming Trails Gallery, 1004 16th St., Wheatland, Wyo.

Anyone interested in attending the workshop can contact Lee Favre at the Dane G. Hansen Museum, 110 W. Main in Logan at (785) 689-4846.

Baptisms

Jillian Colleen Schmidt

Jillian Colleen Schmidt, infant daughter of John and Erica (Stephenson) Schmidt, was baptized at Sacred Heart Church on Saturday, Jan. 3, with Father Dana Clark officiating.

Godparents are Roy Schmidt and Jessica Stephenson.

Stephen and Tracy (Weiland) Shull, was baptized at Sacred Heart Church on Sunday, Dec. 28, with Father Dana Clark officiating. Godparents are Travis and Lori Stickel.

Kelly Elizabeth Shull

Kelly Elizabeth Shull, infant daughter of Stephen and Tracy (Weiland) Shull, was baptized at Sacred Heart Church on Sunday, Dec. 28, with Father Dana Clark officiating. Godparents are Travis and Lori Stickel.

Karly Jo Shull

Karly Jo Shull, daughter of

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Card shower requested for 80th

Marie Edwards will be celebrating her 80th birthday on Friday, Jan. 23.

Birthday wishes may be sent to Marie Edwards, 2431 Walnut St., Goodland, Kan., 67735.

Editor's note: If you know someone who will be celebrating a birthday, either e-mail the information to pdecker@nwkansas.com, write us at: 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan. 67701 or call (785) 462-3963.

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