

City of Independence Utilities Newsletter

February 2023: What
are combustion turbines?



INDEPENDENCE
★ UTILITIES ★

What are combustion turbines?

Combustion turbines are designed to meet peaks in power demand very quickly. They operate much the same as a jet engine, drawing in air at the front of the unit, compressing it, mixing it with fuel and igniting it. Through this process, combustion occurs immediately, allowing gases to expand through turbine blades connected to a generator to produce electricity. Most cities use combustion turbines to operate utilities — including the City of Independence!

The City of Independence has six combustion turbines that serve three main purposes: capacity, energy and system reliability. The goal of reliability is to ensure city residents have fewer outages, outages affect fewer customers and power is restored more quickly.

So, how do combustion turbines benefit you? There are several benefits to having our own power generation resources:

- In the event of a large-scale power outage, the City of Independence has the capability to start our generators and begin restoring service to critical customers while we wait to get reconnected with Evergy and the surrounding region.
- When there is a problem that threatens to overload a segment of our system, we can start one of our generators to help maintain balance.
- When the wind suddenly dies or skies are overcast, Southwest Power Pool can call on us to fill that gap instead of relying on a coal plant somewhere else in the region.

How does the City of Independence decide which water main lines to replace?

The City of Independence is currently in the process of replacing a number of water lines across the city. The

Independence Water Department prioritizes water main replacements using specialized data analysis based on a number of factors but beginning with three important categories: **likelihood of failure, consequence of failure and benefits of replacement within the system.**

Within those three categories, the number of breaks on the water mains, impacts on customers served, and possible system improvements are all considered and given different weight values to effectively rank which water mains are in need of replacement urgently.

The mains are then scored from one to five, with one being least favorable for replacement and five being the most favorable.

Occasionally, the Water Department will deviate from their prioritization list to replace water mains in areas where construction projects led by other departments are taking place to be as minimally invasive to those areas as possible. These replacements are often due to storm water projects, sanitary sewer projects and street improvements. But for the most part, the Water Department has used the data system for the last three years — prior to that main replacements were based primarily on break rates.

A complete list of current water main projects can be found here: indep.us/waterprojects.

New 'Caring Contact' program launched

Have you heard about our new Caring Contact Program? The program is a free service that provides extra peace of mind for customers who may face discontinuance of utility services.

City of Independence residents who are elderly, have a disability, long-term illness, mobility issues, or often travel can designate a trusted third party as their Caring Contact. In the event the City of Independence Utilities must notify a customer of a potential discontinuance due to past-due bills, the Caring Contact would be notified by phone and email. The contact can then help bring this to the attention of the account owner and perhaps offer aid or advice.

Note: The Caring Contact will not be held financially responsible for the overdue bill, nor will the notification of this individual prevent the disconnection of service.

More information on the program can be found here: indep.us/caringcontact.

Energy saving tips

Even though we have seen a few unseasonable warm days this month, we are still in the middle of the winter season. One way to save money on your energy bills is to check for drafty windows. About 30% of a home's heating energy is lost through windows. Consider these energy saving tips:

1. Be sure windows are weatherstripped to protect from leaking air. Weatherstripping, like caulking, is a simple, cost-effective way to stop air leaking from windows. You can buy weatherstripping at your local hardware store and install it yourself.
2. Window covering can also help reduce energy loss through windows. Consider investing in curtains or blinds.

Seasonal energy saving tips



Closure notice:

The City of Independence Utilities Customer Service department will be closed on Monday, February 20, in observance of President's Day. The department will resume normal operations on Tuesday, February 21.

Where do you think funds should be focused?

Complete a quick survey to show where you think the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year budget should focus at indep.us/budgetsurvey2324





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