

## **Phase One of Atmos Energy Pipeline Almost Complete**

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After months of working out easements with private landowners paving the way for an Atmos Energy natural gas pipeline to be constructed from a header near Agricola to the George County Industrial Park, the board of supervisors gave their blessing to an easement across county property. The move yesterday during the George County Board of Supervisors meeting will nearly complete the process of nailing down a route for the pipeline and securing all of the necessary easements.

“This will put us way ahead of most other industrial parks,” said county Communications Director Ken Flanagan. “Most other industrial parks can promise the ability to provide natural gas with a year or two.”

The proposed new line will be a six-inch steel line replacing three one-inch PVC lines currently supplying customers in the Industrial Park, according to Flanagan.

“ This will give us the capacity to serve current customers in the Park and for future needs for years to come,” Flanagan said. “If you asked anyone out there (at the industrial park), they will tell you the current lines are running at full capacity.”

The new pipeline will be built at little to no cost to the county, Flanagan said. Atmos Energy is absorbing approximately a third of the cost and the remainder will be paid from funds the county negotiated with Boardwalk Pipeline Partners when that company ran a transmission line through the county two years ago.

The project is being done in three phases. The first phase is determining the route and securing all the necessary easements. The second phase is building the headers or connection points to the transmission line near Agricola and in the industrial park. The final phase is construction of the pipeline.

All easements should be in place this fall, Flanagan said. Atmos Energy will then begin construction on the headers for the line. Planning for that construction is already underway.

Actual construction of the pipeline itself will not begin until the next industrial park customer determines it is necessary. That may be a business deciding to build in the park or an existing business deciding to expand.

“Atmos engineers tell us it will take about nine months to build the line,” Flanagan said. “It should be completed by the time any new facility or expansion is completed.”

The vote to give Atmos Energy the easement to cross county property and build a header near a central location in the industrial park was unanimous.