

# Gas Line To Spur Growth South of Villages

Tampa-based natural gas distributor now installing main line along County Road 468.

By **DAVID R. CORDER**  
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## THE VILLAGES

TECO Peoples Gas System is expanding just south of The Villages to meet anticipated future residential and commercial demand.

Workers under contract with the Tampa-based subsidiary of TECO Energy Inc. are installing an 8-inch natural gas main on the west side of County Road 468 from State Road 44 to Florida's Turnpike.

The project is part of the necessary infrastructure to provide Sumter County residents and businesses with future options and opportunities, Sumter Commissioner Doug Gilpin said.

Around 10 years ago or so, the county worked with Peoples Gas to install a natural gas main down Main Street/U.S. Highway 301 in Wildwood to serve the Outokumpu steel pipe manufacturing plant just north of the U.S. 301 bridge over the CSX railroad line, he said.

"This is just a continuation of that effort," Gilpin added. "Good business follows, which leads to more good business."

The goal now is to install



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**Workers begin the early phase of installation of an 8-inch natural gas main Wednesday morning on a stretch of County Road 468 from State Road 44 to Florida's Turnpike.**

the new gas main from State Road 44 into Coleman and beyond, he added.

If all goes as planned, the line eventually would serve the commercial and industrial land platted just east of Interstate 75, where local officials are encouraging the development of a highway interchange, he said.

"We're just getting ahead of the development trend," Gilpin added.

Officials with the county and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection have reviewed the project, state and county records showed.

The local expansion occurs as the natural gas industry is producing significant supplies

at prices last seen in the late 1990s, according to the federal Energy Information Administration.

Natural gas stocks averaged 633 billions of cubic feet more than last year at the same time, the federal agency reported Thursday for the week ended June 10.

"At 3,041 Bcf, total working gas is above the five-year historical range," the federal agency advised.

This is creating new customer opportunities for natural gas providers such as Peoples Gas, which operates a natural gas distribution system that serves about 361,000 residential and business customers in Florida, according to the latest annual

report that TECO Energy filed in February with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

That system covers about 12,100 miles of mains and 6,900 miles of service lines, according to the report.

Its expansion in Sumter also comes as the parent company nears a tentative closing this month on its sale to Emera Inc., a multibillion-dollar energy services company based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, according to SEC documents.

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