



***For
Immediate
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Consumer's Energy to hold public meeting on expansion of natural gas for southern Lake Isabella:

Residents in southern Lake Isabella should have received an invitation from Consumer's Energy earlier this month to attend a public meeting on building out the natural gas network in that portion of the Village. The meeting, to be held on *Thursday, June 18 at 6:30 PM*, will be for residents in the proposed service area to obtain information and ask questions to representatives of Consumer's Energy.

Village Manager Tim Wolff stated "the Village of Lake Isabella is very excited at this opportunity for both Consumer's and the community. With DTE entering the village last year to provide service for most of the north and west side of the lake, we approached Consumer's again about building out the remainder of the other side of the lake."

In the mid-1990s, a group of residents came together to petition Consumer's for service on portions of Clubhouse Drive and Fairway Drive. Working together, those residents were able to get enough of their neighbors together to fund the initial service line to the community which now services about 100 homes.

When the village was incorporated in 1998, Consumer's was approached about building out the entire Village. Unfortunately, due to deregulation Consumer's was unable undertake the project. Following that setback, the Village approached Consumer's again 4 years ago about building out the entire village. At that time the project was financially not feasible due to the high cost of the needed infrastructure.

After those setbacks, the village began working with DTE about providing service to the community. Under the regulations of the Michigan Public Service Commission, utility companies are prevented from "crossing" the service line of one of their competitors. As such, DTE was limited on which areas they could service last year. Likewise, Consumer's is also limited in its service area due to DTE's recently installed service lines.

According to Wolff, about 90% of unserviced area on the south and east side of the lake will be serviced in this project. A total of 180 homes are in the project area. Wolff stated "just as was the case with DTE, Consumer's will need a commitment from half of the residents (90 homes), prior to actually breaking ground."

At the meeting on the 18th, Consumer's will also inform residents of the cost involved with the project. Wolff estimates that the total cost for residents to connect and convert will be between \$2,500 and \$3,000. He stated that most residents would be able equal that amount in savings within 3 years. In talking with residents who converted to natural gas last year with DTE, he said they saved anywhere from 40% to 70% by converting.

A map of the proposed service area, and a copy of the invitation from Consumer's can be found on the Village of Lake Isabella website, www.lakeisabellami.org.