

PRESS RELEASE

Southdowns Estate trips the Light Fantastic

In yet another pioneering real estate innovation, Southdowns Estate in Centurion is set to supply the entire complex with natural gas courtesy of its own gas pipeline at the end of May.

Southdowns Management Services has undertaken a ten year contract with Sasol to provide all of its residents and end users with natural gas, the management of which has been undertaken by The Gas Company. In addition to maintaining the pipeline, The Gas Company will also take on an educational role through promoting the safe use of gas to all Southdowns residents.

The development spans approximately 200 hectares and comprises a residential estate, a Sport and Arts Exchange (SAX), the Southdowns College and the Southdowns Shopping Centre. The Irene Dairy Farm is also directly linked to the estate.

The pipeline was designed by gas engineering company VGI Inc, two kilometres of which has been installed from the precinct and connected to Sasol's main gas pipeline. A further 10,5km's of pipeline have been installed throughout the estate. Southdowns is the first residential development in South Africa to make available such a facility which cost approximately R11m to install.

Sasol produces natural gas and methane rich gas. Gauteng receives its supply of natural gas from the gas wells in Mozambique. This gas is harvested at a Central Processing Facility after which it makes its way to South Africa where the pressure is regulated to 50 bar at a Pressure Protection Station in Secunda. The natural gas is then transferred through a high pressure transmission line spanning 865km's in length and 66cm's in diameter.

From here the pipeline gas is channelled into various distribution lines throughout South Africa. Every area has a designated Pressure Reducing Station that supplies a specific distribution network. The gas then arrives at a Customer Meter Station on the designated property, available for use to each household. The impact on the environment though the installation of the pipeline has been minimal.

"Natural gas is a reliable, 'clean' energy source and is instantaneously available," says Jack Prentice, Managing Director of Southdowns Management Services. "Unlike other fossil fuels natural gas emits lower levels of potentially harmful by-products into the air. It's also cheaper and safer than say for example liquid petroleum gas which is linked to the oil price, is heavier than air and thus is more prone to igniting.

"Southdowns residents won't have to order, store and change gas bottles and at current prices, natural gas costs almost half that of bottled gas. Each home is fitted with a gas meter which will be read every month and residents will be charged accordingly. Residents can also 'power up' safe in the knowledge that they are no longer subject to escalating electricity tariffs which are set to increase by as much as 35% in the near future".

Residents at the estate have a wide variety of gas products from which to choose spanning radiant heaters, braai's, cookers, fire places, lighting, under-floor and water heating options. Product benefits include the fact that gas geysers can't be switched off by the supplier as is the case with electricity. Radiant heaters also don't dry out the air.

"Southdowns residents aren't the only ones who will benefit from the gas installation," adds Prentice. "The use of gas in residential applications assists Eskom in controlling maximum demand on the grid as residential homes generally peak demand during this period."

For more information contact:

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