

GAS

Continued from 3A

Despite January being 8 percent colder than a year ago, the average residential bill for CNG customers was 10 percent lower than January 2010.

According to New York State Public Service Commission filings, CNG currently has the lowest cost for natural gas among all major utilities in the state.

CNG spokesman Jerry Sleve said CNG has the potential to deliver more locally produced gas than it did Monday, but he said there's "no way to predict" whether that will happen.

CNG serves approximately 15,000 customers in the Southern Tier and central New York regions.

GILLIBRAND

Continued from 1A

critical investments in small businesses and economic development.

She said the House GOP plan is "irresponsible and would cut vital services for veterans, reduce the number of police on the streets and eliminate funds to help seniors heat their homes ... I don't think we should balance the budget on the backs of seniors who cannot afford the rising costs of heating their home."

Arizona might check citizenship at hospitals

BY MICHELLE PRICE
Associated Press

PHOENIX | Republican lawmakers want to widen Arizona's illegal immigration crackdown with a proposal to require hospitals to check on whether patients are in the country legally, causing outrage among medical professionals who fear becoming de facto immigration agents under the law.

The medical industry ripped the bill Monday as it was scheduled for a hearing by the Senate Judiciary Committee. Doctors envisioned scenarios in which immigrants with contagious diseases such as tuberculosis would stay home from the clinic or hospital and put themselves and the public at a grave health risk.

"This is making us into a

police state that will try to catch people when they are sick," said George Pauk, a retired doctor with an organization called Physicians for a National Health Program. "Do we want to stop sick people from coming in for health care?"

Arizona is the first Legislature to take up such a measure amid a national push in conservative states to crack down on illegal immigration, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Arizona lawmakers ignited the debate a year ago when they passed a bill that required local police, while enforcing other laws, to question the immigration status of those they suspect are in the country illegally. A judge later put that provision on hold.

STABBING

Continued from 1A

occasions - Jan. 13 and Jan. 23.

In the first incident, Boskett allegedly threw Cassetta to the ground and punched her in the face and the chest. In the second incident, he allegedly punched her in the nose and grabbed her neck.

Boskett, 37, of East First Street, was charged with

misdeemeanor assault, second-degree unlawful imprisonment and criminal obstruction of breathing. He was jailed on \$1,500 cash bail and ordered to stay away from Cassetta.

Cassetta, 32, was charged Friday with second-degree criminal contempt for violating Boskett's order of protection - the one issued after he was stabbed. The contempt charge is a misdemeanor.

REED

Continued from 1A

"To see increased spending proposed for 2012 is a non-starter and a denial of the perilous state of the nation's finances."

The president's proposal represents a 24 percent increase in non-defense discretionary spending since 2008, before the stimulus, Reed said.

Reed also reiterated opposition to tax increases. "The economy in upstate New York contin-

ues to lag. Tax increases on businesses and entrepreneurs are the last thing that will help small cities and rural areas recover."

The president's budget proposes more than \$1.6 trillion in new income, death and transportation taxes over the next 10 years.

The White House claims the budget would cut the federal deficit by \$1.1 trillion over the next 10 years and that spending in the fiscal year is \$90 billion smaller than the budget Obama proposed last year.

BROADBAND

Continued from 1A

In exchange for their investments, the three counties will use it to improve their own communications systems, particularly for public safety. For example, it will connect the 911 centers in Steuben, Chemung and Schuyler.

Corning Inc.'s \$10 million share will cover the design, materials and construction costs of the network.

Beginning in June, 235 miles of optical fiber will be installed in the tri-county region by a yet-to-be-chosen contractor, mostly along existing utility/communications lines. The project is targeted for completion by the end of 2013.

As the fiber optic cable is installed, telecommunications providers - companies such as Time-Warner and Verizon - will be able to tap into the network in order to expand high-speed services to their customers, which should particularly benefit rural homes.

Local governments, educational institutions, health care organizations and other commercial/industrial businesses also stand to benefit greatly, said Marcia Weber, Southern Tier Central executive director.

Possible applications include "distance learning" between college campus branches and "telemedicine" between rural clinics and major hospitals, Weber said.

One major local business that is interested in the network's potential is Watkins Glen International, which hosts huge crowds for its events and recently built a state-of-the-art media center.

Even very small businesses now rely greatly on high-speed Internet, Weber added.

The project has been a top priority for Southern Tier Central in recent

years. Weber, who called it "her passion," was very disappointed when a major federal stimulus grant was narrowly missed last year.

The counties' share (Steuben, \$1.23 million; Chemung, \$790,000; Schuyler, \$188,000) will fund a non-profit, to be called Southern Tier Network, that has been created to oversee and maintain the network.

The county funding will last until Southern Tier Network becomes self-sustainable in 2014. Fees collected by leasing access to the new network will be reinvested.

The non-profit's board will include the top executives for all three counties, as well as representatives from Corning Inc., Southern Tier Central, Guthrie Healthcare and Greater Southern Tier BOCES.

Such public-partnerships are "essential to expand regional economic development," said Kirk Gregg, Corning Inc. executive vice president and chief administrative officer.

"The region's telecommunications services must be competitive and robust for all segments of our economy to thrive," Gregg said.


The technical adviser for the project is ECC Technologies, which led the recently completed fiber ring project in nearby Ontario County. That network was hailed by U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., as a model in the statewide and national push to expand broadband access.

Ontario County's fiber ring has already paid dividends in attracting high-tech businesses and bringing services such as 4G wireless, said Joe Starks, ECC Technologies president.

The Southern Tier Network could do the same here, Starks said.

"It could have an even bigger impact on business than I-86," he said.


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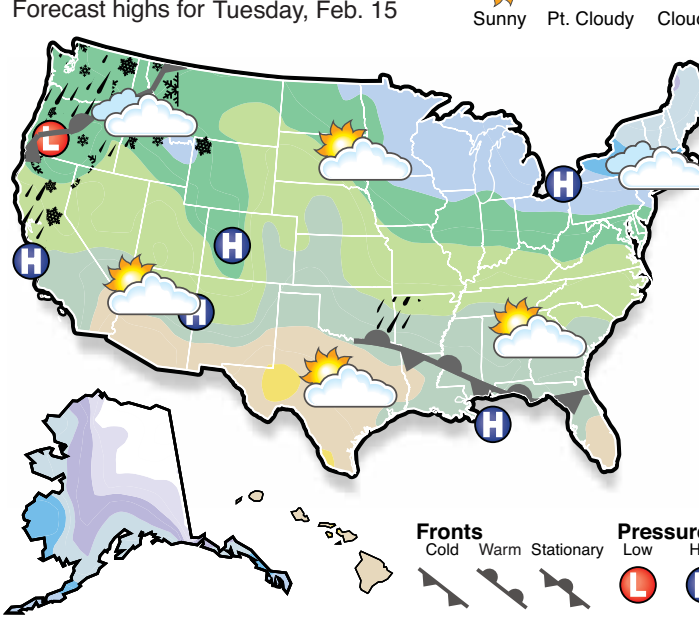
SEVEN-DAY FORECAST

Today	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Less windy, m. sunny and colder	Partly cloudy	M. cloudy, a few sprinkles	Mild, sct. rain showers, windy	Windy, flurries or wet snow	Partly cloudy	Cloudy, rain showers, breezy
High 24 Low 12	High 42 Low 10	High 49 Low 32	High 52 Low 38	High 31 Low 24	High 29 Low 17	High 35 Low 12

National forecast

Forecast highs for Tuesday, Feb. 15



Fronts: Cold, Warm, Stationary
Pressure: Low, High

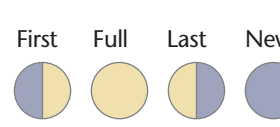
Temperature Scale: -10s, -0s, 0s, 10s, 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, 100s, 110s

WEATHER HISTORY

In 1936, the temperature at Parshall, N.D., plunged to 60 degrees below zero to establish a state record.

MOON PHASES

First Full Last New




MARCH 12 FRIDAY FEB. 24 MARCH 4

SUNRISE | SUNSET

Sunrise today	7:05
Sunset today	5:41
Sunrise Wednesday	7:03
Sunset Wednesday	5:42

O'Mara reacts to plan



State Sen. Tom O'Mara, R-Big Flats, released the following statement in response to Southern Tier Central's announcement:

"The availability of high-speed Internet has become the gateway to economic and educational success for communities across the nation and around the world. So this state-of-the-art expansion and enhancement of our region's telecommunications infrastructure is fabulous news."

"It arrives at a time when the competition to attract new businesses and industries, and to create high-tech jobs, is tougher than it's ever been. This exciting public-private initiative promises a major boost to the educational quality, economic competitiveness, and overall strength of many local communities."

O'Mara represents the 53rd Senate District, which includes Steuben, Chemung and Schuyler counties.