



**2024**

# Community Impact Report

Fueling the Future, Together.



**Introduction**

# Shannon O. Pierce



**Fueling the Future, Together**

At Virginia Natural Gas, we take immense pride in our 175-year history of serving southeastern Virginia. Our commitment to "be a citizen wherever we serve" is at the core of who we are. We believe in the transformative power of education and job readiness. By fostering economic growth and enhancing the quality of life, we are providing energy and community support to build a resilient future workforce for Virginia. We're also bettering the environment and helping our communities thrive.

Our charitable giving guidelines reflect our company values and those of our employees, who have shown their dedication to our community through participation in company events and by freely giving their time, talent and resources to organizations that align with these values. Through the use of non-ratepayer dollars and the Virginia Natural Gas Foundation, we invest in partner organizations that make a significant impact on the lives of our customers, neighbors, families and friends.

I am inspired by the contributions we have made this year in Workforce Development, Children and Education, Environmental Stewardship, Military and Veterans, and Community Enrichment. By combining our corporate and employee resources, we are building the future of energy and making a positive impact across our service territory, meeting the growing energy demands of our customers today and for future generations.

**Shannon O. Pierce**

*President & CEO, Virginia Natural Gas*

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Each year, we provide millions of dollars in grants to organizations that align with our values and are dedicated to enhancing the communities we serve. As an independent, non-profit philanthropic foundation, our Charitable Foundation is exclusively funded by our parent company, Southern Company Gas, through shareholder contributions. These funds support initiatives in social justice, economic mobility, environmental stewardship and community enrichment.

**Serena Levy**

*Vice President, Corporate Impact, Southern Company Gas and President, Southern Company Gas Foundation*



# Fueling Our Communities for a Brighter Future








In the first quarter of 2024, Virginia Natural Gas (VNG) announced a \$620,000 investment in workforce development across southeastern Virginia, focusing on our commitment to community growth and the future of the local workforce. The investment supports organizations recognized for impactful programs and innovative approaches to workforce development, with emphasis on young adults, veterans and students at Virginia Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). This funding will allow seven specialized entities to enhance essential job readiness programs, including interview preparation, resume writing, networking and scholarships for technical training in high-demand industries, all critical for individual success in a rapidly evolving job market.

Through this grant, the **Hampton Roads Workforce Foundation** will fund their NextGen program to prepare youth and veterans for careers or further education. The **Virginia Chamber Foundation** will use the grant to support workforce programs, including veteran employment through hiring fairs and conferences. **Norfolk State University** will enhance job readiness through workshops, mentorship and hands-on training under their Spartan Promise to Persist with Purpose program. **Hampton University** will continue their workforce development scholarship for technical training in fields like welding and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC).

This grant will allow **Bridging Communities Regional CTE Foundation** to prepare students for professional industries through career-focused education and work-based learning. **Neighborhood** will focus on personal and professional growth, providing technical training and employment connections in growing sectors. The **Accelerating Change Together Grant Program** will offer a collaborative grant to enhance workforce development, in partnership with BayPort Credit Union, Huntington Ingalls Industries and Ferguson Enterprises.

By fostering economic growth and improving quality of life, VNG is a leader in providing energy and community support, championing a skilled and resilient workforce for a thriving Virginia.

## 2024 Workforce Development Grants

 <p><b>\$250k</b> Hampton Roads Workforce Foundation</p>	 <p><b>\$50k</b> Norfolk State University (NSU)</p>
 <p><b>\$100k</b> Bridging Communities Regional CTE Foundation</p>	 <p><b>\$50k</b> Accelerating Change Together Grant Program</p>
 <p><b>\$100k</b> Neighborhood</p>	 <p><b>\$20k</b> Hampton University</p>
 <p><b>\$50k</b> Virginia Chamber Foundation</p>	

# 2024 Charitable Giving Highlights

**\$146k+**  
for Sponsorships & Other Partnerships

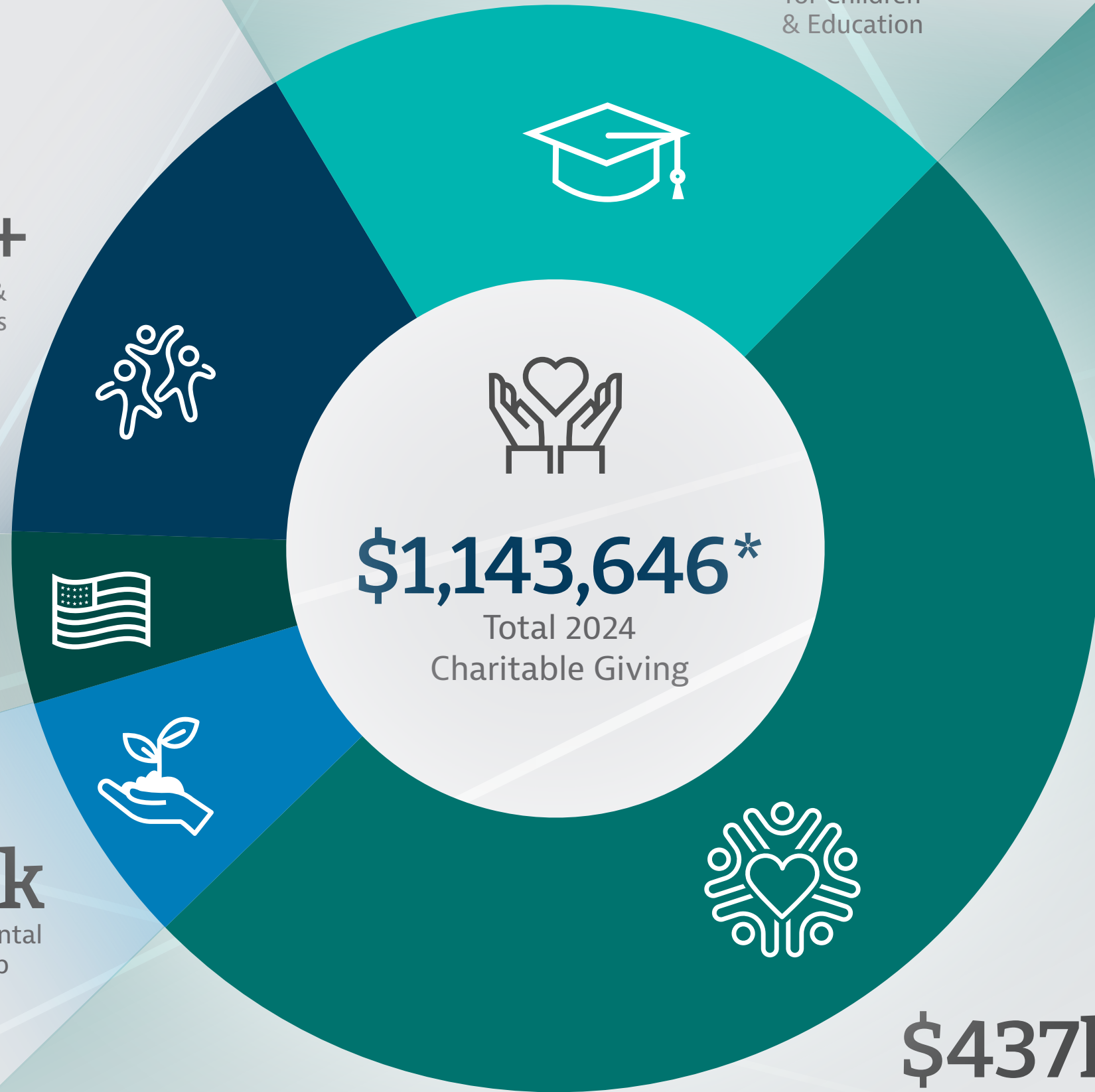
**\$81k**  
for Military & Veterans

**\$170k**  
for Environmental Stewardship

**\$309.5k**  
for Children & Education

**\$437k**  
for Community Enrichment

**\$1,143,646\***  
Total 2024 Charitable Giving



**80+**

Organizations benefiting our communities across Hampton Roads were awarded grants in 2024.

\*Includes both Virginia Natural Gas and Virginia Natural Gas Foundation dollars

# Community Impact Awards

Virginia Natural Gas was awarded the **Civic 50 Award** by Volunteer Hampton Roads for a second time for prioritizing volunteerism, civic engagement and making a positive impact on our community. The Civic 50 is a national initiative established by Points of Light that honors community-minded companies. The Civic 50 Hampton Roads program sets the standard for civic engagement and creates a roadmap for companies committed to using their time, talent and resources to serve others and improve their communities. Companies are selected based on four dimensions: investment of resources, integration across business functions, institutionalization through policies and systems, and impact measurement. VNG took first place in the medium-sized category.

Virginia Natural Gas received the Virginia Department of Energy award for **Local Distribution Company of the Year** for the sixth time. This prestigious recognition from the **Virginia Oil and Gas Association** recognizes VNG's outstanding achievements in sustainability, infrastructure investments and corporate philanthropy.

Virginia Natural Gas was also a recipient of the Hampton Roads **Top Workplaces Award** from Inside Business for going above and beyond to create a positive working environment for our employees by providing a motivational workplace that makes our employees' lives easier, allows time for fun and supports community involvement and work-life balance. This is the fourth time VNG has received this honor.





# Children & Education

## Celebrate Freedom Showcases Innovation and Career Opportunities for High School Students

Courtesy of a gift from Virginia Natural Gas Foundation, the **Celebrate Freedom Foundation (CFF)** brought its unique, STEM-centered showcase to three Virginia high schools: Hampton High School, Bethel High School and Heritage High School.

Alongside CFF's impressive fleet of military aircraft and advanced drone technology, Virginia Natural Gas was on-site demonstrating our own innovative tools and career opportunities to area students considering careers in energy. Participants had hands-on experiences with our Picarro leak detection vehicle, field service and locating technologies and the PRX live gas main inspection tool.

This event highlights our shared commitment to fostering a skilled workforce ready to meet the global challenges of the future. By offering hands-on experiences with cutting-edge technology, the CFF and Virginia Natural Gas continue to inspire students and enhance their understanding of opportunities in STEM. We reached approximately 1,500 kids and our job application site received over 600 visits in three days! We look forward to seeing how these experiences will shape their professional journeys.



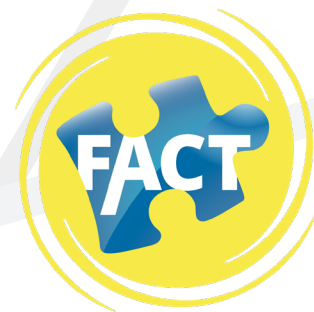
# Community Enrichment

## Helping to Create Employment Opportunities to Empower Autism Community

In 2024, Virginia Natural Gas proudly supported **FACT's (Families of Autism Coming Together)** HERO (Helping Employees Reach Outcomes) program through a community enrichment grant, helping to address a critical need in Hampton Roads. The HERO program is dedicated to creating job opportunities for youth and young adults with autism, providing them with the skills, education and hands-on training needed for long-term employment success. With a focus on building an inclusive workforce environment, HERO equips participants with essential job skills such as customer service, time and financial management.

Unemployment remains a significant challenge for individuals with autism, with national studies showing more than 66% of young adults with autism are unemployed and not enrolled in higher education after high school. FACT's HERO program aims to bridge this gap by offering a supportive work environment where participants can develop crucial skills and gain the confidence needed for future independence and success in integrated job settings.

The funding from Virginia Natural Gas will allow FACT to create more job opportunities and improve training for HERO participants, helping them gain valuable work experience, become role models in the autism community and prepare for future careers. VNG's support is reducing employment barriers for individuals with autism, promoting a more inclusive workforce in Hampton Roads.



**FAMILIES OF AUTISM  
COMING TOGETHER**



# Military & Veterans

## VNG Partners with the Tuskegee Airmen Tidewater Chapter for Black History Month

Virginia Natural Gas' chapter of EnRapport, an employee resource group, partnered with the **Tuskegee Airmen Tidewater Chapter** for Black History Month in February. VNG employees learned about the special role local airmen played in World War II through a panel discussion with some of the original airmen. The Tidewater Chapter's core values include excellence, honesty, integrity, respect, accountability and a commitment to serving youth.

The Tuskegee Airmen were the first African American military airmen in the United States, serving in the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II. They were trained at Tuskegee University located near Tuskegee, Alabama, which was chosen for its airfield, civilian pilot training program and flight aptitude exam results. The Tuskegee Airmen served as bomber escorts, navigators, mechanics, instructors, nurses, cooks and in other support personnel roles. Their success helped pave the way for the desegregation of the U.S. military after World War II.

The Tuskegee Airmen Tidewater Chapter received a \$5,000 charitable donation from the Virginia Natural Gas Foundation to support their social justice initiatives. They are currently furthering their legacy through scholarships, school visits and a commitment to upholding the history and future of African American airmen.





# Environmental Stewardship

## Helping Our Region's Sustainability Efforts

The Virginia Natural Gas Foundation once again partnered with **The Elizabeth River Project** for the second year of their Ryan Resilience Series. The first year was a success, with high attendance from diverse audiences thanks to the unique approach of connecting art and science to address climate change and resilience from a community perspective. This series aims to boost environmental stewardship and community sustainability by bringing people together to explore climate and environmental issues across the region.

The Elizabeth River Project leads efforts to restore the health of the Elizabeth River. Through the Ryan Resilience Series, they make important topics like sea level rise, climate change and environmental stewardship more accessible by providing educational opportunities through various lenses, including art, science, restoration, culture and history. The series also creates opportunities for those who have not historically had access to the water, fostering relationships of care between the people of the river and its plants, animals and data.

Through our charitable donation, VNG will help support thought-provoking programs in art, history and science that help establish the Ryan Resilience Lab as a hub for environmental justice and community sustainability, underscoring our Foundation's commitment to environmental sustainability. We look forward to an engaging lineup of events and activities throughout 2025.





# Our Employees in the Community

## Polar Plunge

Since 1999, VNG employees have eagerly braved the icy waters of the Atlantic Ocean to raise funds for Special Olympics athletes of Virginia Beach through the Polar Plunge campaign. Our longstanding partnership with Special Olympics Virginia has seen Virginia Natural Gas and our dedicated employees donate over \$600,000 to support training, competitions, leadership opportunities and health services for our local athletes. Additionally, our employees have volunteered their time, and talents, to assist with Polar Plunge activities throughout the years.

VNG committed to "Turning Up the Heat" and "Going for the Cold" at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront for the Polar Plunge in 2024, raising over \$37,000 in donations – in addition to a \$15,000 corporate donation. VNG contributed over 200 volunteer hours to set up for the fundraiser, assist Special Olympics staff with event details on the day of the Plunge and clean up afterward. Together, we are making a significant impact in our community, supporting our athletes, and fostering a spirit of unity and generosity.

## Energy to Serve

One of our main volunteer events each year is our spring 'Energy to Serve' campaign. During this year's campaign, we were back in action with nearly 50 VNG employees providing over 118 volunteer hours to support the following Hampton Roads nonprofits, schools and other charitable organizations:

- **Girls on the Run** – Passed out water and cheered on participants during the spring race
- **Butts Road Primary School** – Introduced students to STEM careers during Career Day
- **REACH Inc.** – Signed books with personalized messages to students encouraging them to read.
- **Salvation Army H.O.P.E. Village** – Pulled weeds, filled bird feeders, hung fresh flowers, clipped back rose bushes, and re-mulched the flower beds.
- **Albert G. Horton Memorial Veterans Cemetery** – Prepared the cemetery for Memorial Day flag placement.

## United Way Day of Caring

VNG employees roll up their sleeves annually for the United Way Day of Caring. This year, dozens of employees participated in volunteer activities at the Virginia Beach SPCA, ForKids and Thrive Peninsula where efforts included helping these charitable organizations clean and organize their facilities both inside and out.

The United Way has served our community with dedicated service for well over a century and its partnership with VNG has created a transformative change in our communities. This change would not have been possible without the unwavering commitment to volunteerism by our esteemed employees.



## Energy to Give

During our annual holiday 'Energy to Give' campaign, we partner with charitable organizations across our service territory to show our commitment to giving back to those in need. This year, VNG employees provided donations and volunteer hours to support these local area charities and nonprofits:

- **Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore/Virginia Peninsula Foodbank** – Hosted food drive collections as part of the Mayflower Marathon.
- **Salvation Army Angel Tree Program** – Supported 70 families with clothing and toy donations.
- **Hanover Safe Place** – Provided a memorable Christmas for a family in need.
- **Wreaths Across America** – Helped to prepare a local veterans cemetery for holiday wreath placement.



In 2024, VNG employees served our communities with **1150** volunteer hours in support of **33** company-sponsored events.



# Economic Development

## A Year at the Virginia Chamber of Commerce

Workforce development is a core commitment for Virginia Natural Gas. Recognizing its importance for economic growth, VNG prioritizes supporting workforce advancement across the Commonwealth. In 2024, Robert Duvall, VNG past president and CEO, embraced this mission by serving as Chair of the **Virginia Chamber of Commerce**. During his year of service, he helped foster business partnerships and economic development, benefiting Virginia's various talent pipelines.

Over the past year, Duvall's leadership has significantly contributed to workforce initiatives. His participation in events and partnerships aligned workforce strategies with Virginia's industries. Notably, the TEAM VIRGINIA partnership with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) addressed the skills gap by aligning training programs with job market demands. Duvall facilitated dialogue between employers and educational providers, preparing the workforce for a changing economy.

At the Virginia Health Care Conference, he addressed the need for a skilled healthcare workforce by advocating for targeted training and partnerships to support the industry's growth and patient outcomes.

In the infrastructure sector, Duvall emphasized the need for skilled workers in construction, engineering and technology at the Virginia Forum on Infrastructure. His advocacy for public-private collaboration promotes training initiatives that meet infrastructure needs, improving quality of life in Virginia.

While attending the Virginia Education & Workforce Conference, he highlighted the importance of aligning K-12 and higher education with workforce needs. By advocating for innovative educational programs, Duvall continues to advocate for a new generation of skilled workers.

Robert Duvall's dedication to workforce development has not only strengthened Virginia's talent pipelines but also fostered a collaborative environment that aligns education and industry needs, ensuring a prosperous future for the Commonwealth.

"At Virginia Natural Gas, we are privileged to serve the Commonwealth and its communities. Our partnership with the Virginia Chamber of Commerce has been instrumental as we work to support and improve our communities, create new opportunities and ready a capable and accessible workforce to meet the challenges of the future."

**Robert Duvall,**  
Past President and CEO,  
Virginia Natural Gas

## Supporting Our Local Communities

### Industry and Development Associations

- Hampton Roads Executive Roundtable
- Virginia Gas Operators Association
- Virginia Maritime Association
- Virginia Manufacturers Association
- Central Business District
- Virginia Oil and Gas Association
- Hampton Roads Alliance
- Hampton Roads Workforce Council

### Chamber Memberships

- Virginia Chamber
- Hampton Roads Chamber
- Virginia Peninsula Chamber
- Hanover Chamber
- Greater Williamsburg Chamber
- New Kent Chamber
- Virginia Asian Chamber





“The Hampton Roads Workforce Council is grateful for the continued support from Virginia Natural Gas. VNG’s contribution allows us to provide mentorships and internships to hundreds of youth in the region that may not otherwise have had the opportunity. The support of our Emerging Workforce is key to Hampton Roads’ future success and that programming would not be possible without Virginia Natural Gas.”

**Shawn Avery**  
President and CEO,  
Hampton Roads Workforce Council



“The generous support from Virginia Natural Gas significantly advanced our mission, enabling us to sustain growth during a critical period. Their investment in our vision bolstered our grassroots efforts and allowed us to expand our services. This support built our confidence and foundation, empowering us to pursue a larger vision. At the time, it was our largest gift, and it has since helped us blossom and attract other major funders.”

**Angela L. York**  
Executive Director, Thrive Peninsula



For grant applications please visit our website at  
[virginiaturalgas.com/charitablegiving](https://virginiaturalgas.com/charitablegiving).



[virginiaturalgas.com](https://virginiaturalgas.com)