



BUSINESS

Connections

GU earns high marks in latest customer survey

The results are in for the customer survey conducted for us this winter by the Center for Research and Public Policy. GU earned high marks from most participants, who awarded the best across-the-board positive ratings in the areas of reliability and quality of service.

We sincerely thank all customers who took the time to participate in the telephone survey, which included some 80 businesses. Your candid responses will help us to maintain our high quality service as we plan for the future.

Here are some highlights of the results:

- ◆ The majority of all customers report to be either a satisfied customer, a loyal customer or an advocate for Groton Utilities.
- ◆ More than 94% of all customers believe the quality of service has either improved or remained high over the past 12 months.

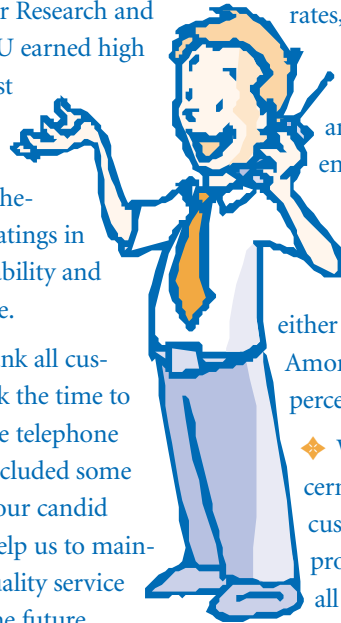
◆ The top five service expectations identified by participants are good rates, prompt service, good quality service, uninterrupted service/reliability and courteous employees/staff.

◆ The clear majority report that GU meets their service expectations either all or most of the time. Among business customers, the percentage is 92%.

◆ When asked how concerned GU is about satisfying customers with the service it provides, more than 90% of all respondents suggest GU is either very concerned or somewhat concerned.

◆ The majority of customers gave this newsletter average positive ratings of at least 88% when considering how easy it is to read and understand, along with its content and appearance.

Look for more survey results in the fall *Business Connections*.



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Business leader profile

Stapleton Steel finds new home in Groton

Mark O. Stapleton is president of Stapleton Steel, Inc. Sounds like a big corporation, but Mark owns and operates what makes the American business engine run—a small business.



Mark O. Stapleton

Facing cost pressures after doing business in Great Neck, Long Island for 20 years, he searched for a new location for his metal fabrication business. He ended up on Leonard Drive in the Airport Business Park at Groton-New London Airport.

Despite the fact that most of his customers are on Long Island, Mark has a thriving business. He continues to serve many of his old customers, who tend to come back for the quality of Stapleton Steel's workmanship and customer service.

Mark and his two-man crew custom fabricate stock mill steel, stainless steel and aluminum into such end products as columns and beams, stairways and railings for buildings, houses, new construction and renovation. Nothing is too small. The company also does custom fabrication and welding. While Mark does the hands-on part of the business, his wife, Maria, takes care of the administrative side.

Move took several months

To relocate here, Mark and his employees had to disassemble the entire shop in Long Island, transport it to Connecticut, and yes, reinstall it in the new building, which is leased from Chris McLaughlin of Terra Firma LLC. This process took from December until the end of March. By mid-April, Stapleton Steel was back in business.

Mark and his crew did all the fabrication in the new building, including the construction of a steel mezzanine for storing stainless steel and aluminum, all the iron framework for two 2-ton cranes and one 5-ton crane, which they also installed, and storage racks for the stock mill steel pieces.

Customer service comes first

Mark emphasizes that his company is customer service oriented, one of the firm's best attributes. "We concentrate on smaller, profitable jobs," he added. He hopes to grow his business by expanding his customer base to Connecticut. In the meantime, Stapleton Steel meets the needs of its customers by fabricating in Connecticut and delivering the final work to Long Island.

"I am looking to hire more good people in the future," he says. Pressed for what kind of skill sets he will be looking for, he answers welder/fabricator.

From the high seas to dry land

Mark graduated from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, Long Island in 1981 with a bachelor of science degree in marine engineering and was commissioned an ensign in the U.S. Naval Reserves. He then sailed the high seas on commercial ships for five years, earned his chief engineer's license, and also started the steel business part-time.

Now his business keeps him on the land, leaving him with only memories of his time on the high seas nearly 20 years ago. He has adjusted to a life of small businessman, an entrepreneur in the competitive world of business, and he's doing it all now in Groton, Conn.



Annual water report mailed

Quality water plus reasonable rates equals happiness! Groton Utilities' Water Division mailed our annual water quality report to all water customers at the end of June. If your business did not receive it, you can get one at our Customer Care Center at 295 Meridian St. in the City of Groton.

The report details the water quality test results for calendar year 2004, as required by law of all public water supply systems. We are pleased to report that we continue to meet all federal and state standards.

The “Energizer bunny” has left after 60 plus years of service to public power

The “Energizer bunny” has decided to stop. After more than 60 years of tireless service to public power, Julio H. Leandri has resigned as a member of the City of Groton Utility Commission. His departure from the Commission ends a long and illustrious career in the municipal electric arena, including many years as a manager and a distinguished career as a utility policy maker.



Julio H. Leandri

Highly respected and beloved on his own home turf, Leandri gained similar respect as a policy maker and as a Board member of the Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative (CMEEC), Groton Utilities’ wholesale electric supplier. He was honored nationally for his distinguished career by the American Public Power Association (APPA) in 2002, when he was selected as APPA’s Spence Vanderlinden Public Official award winner.

Leandri, 82, won the praise and respect of customers, employees and

colleagues both as a utility manager, longstanding member of the Utility Commission and the CMEEC Board of Directors. He was a member of the Commission since June 2, 1986.

He was appointed clerk of the Commission on November 20, 1986, a position he held until he resigned in April. He served 10 terms as chairman of the CMEEC Board. He also served as secretary of the Board of Directors of the Thames Valley Communications, Inc. Board of Directors.

Julio was a dedicated and important member of the Board of Directors of the Northeast Public Power Association (NEPPA) for many years and served as its executive director for a short time during a transition in leadership. NEPPA is the association of municipally owned and operated electric utilities in New England.

Locally, the City Utility Commission and the City Council have decided to honor him by naming the electric and water operations complex, The

J. Leandri Operations Complex.

Leandri has an outstanding record of volunteerism and community service. He was on the Board of Directors of the Visiting Nurses Association, and also served as its president. He served a term as president of the Alumni Association of the University of Connecticut, and was president of the Groton Lion’s Club. He was a trustee of the Groton Lodge of Elks, commander of American Legion Post 114 in Groton, and served on the School Board of the Norwich Diocese. He also served on the President’s Athletic Advisory Committee of the University of Connecticut.

During World War II, Leandri served in the Navy Amphibious Force in the Pacific. He was a lieutenant in the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict. He earned a bachelor of science degree from the University of Connecticut. Julio lives at 334 Tyler Ave. with his wife, Frances, and is a lifelong resident of the City of Groton.

Many people remember their work and civic colleagues, but, more significantly, the many will not forget Julio H. Leandri.

GBA sets summer schedule

The Groton Business Association of the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce will kick off its “Summer on the Road Business Tour 2005” with a July 21 meeting at 7:30 a.m. at the North End Deli in the Groton Shoppers Mart. Groton Utilities will host the August 17

meeting at its Electric and Water Operations Complex on Poquonnock Road, which was recently named The J. Leandri Operations Complex after GU’s longtime manager and commissioner. The September 15 meeting is available for a business to sponsor.

All members of the business community are welcome, whether or not they are a Chamber member. Bring a friend and let them network and experience the advantages of joining this active group of business men and women from the Greater Groton area.

Holiday Closings

Our offices at the City Municipal Building, including Customer Care and Thames Valley Communications, our Cable Television Division, and our operational sections, located at The J. Leandri Operations Complex on Poquonnock Road, will be closed for these upcoming holidays:

Monday, September 5
Labor Day

Monday, October 10
Columbus Day

Our operations crews for both water and electric are available on an emergency basis during holidays. If you experience an electrical outage or a water main break, call us at 446-4000, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Normal business activity for all three Groton Utilities, Divisions, including electric, water and cable television, is conducted Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Customer Care is open until 7 p.m. on Thursdays and 8 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. The office is closed on Sundays and holidays.

Groton Utilities hopes you and your family have enjoyable holidays. But, please drive safely. **And, yes, don't forget to buckle up!**



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Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) statement
Federal and State law prohibits employment discrimination. It is the policy of the City of Groton to comply with the laws which prohibit discrimination as to race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status, national origin, ancestry, veteran status, history of mental disorder, mental retardation or any other legally protected class.

Businesses embrace TVC

Since going live more than a year ago, Thames Valley Communications (TVC), Groton Utilities' broadband division, has found strong acceptance for its new services in the local business community.

TVC offers reasonably priced and high quality Internet connections, music for your business, and cable television connections.

"Our response from the local business community has been greater than initially expected," said David Lee, TVC's Chief Operating Officer. "Businesses are interested not only in price, but also in

quality of service," he explained.

To see how TVC broadband can work for your business, call 446-4009 and speak with a TVC Customer Care representative.

They're available weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Thursday evenings until 7, and Saturday mornings from 8 a.m. to noon.



New electric rates in effect

The third phase of a three-year electric rate increase is now in effect. Medium General Service and Residential customers will see a 3.5 percent increase with all billings on and after July 1.

The Small General Service and Industrial rates remain the same. If your business has special energy needs, please contact Donald L. Conner, General Manager, Major Accounts, to discuss your needs.

Following a seven-year period of no rate increases, the Utility Commission approved a three-step rate increase in the fall of 2003. Throughout that seven-year period we held the line on our non-power costs, which increased less than one percent a year. However, purchased

power costs increased steadily during the period.

Under the new rate, the purchased power adjustment became part of the monthly bill and began to appear on bills on December 1, 2003.

Essentially, this adjustment reflects the variable cost of power, resulting from deregulation that changed the wholesale power market. This power cost volatility, which was present in the recent past, has continued to this day and is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

Groton Utilities will mail a copy of the applicable rate to customers on request. Call Customer Care at 446-4000. Customers can also obtain a copy of the rate at www.grotonutilities.com.

