



## Gas Line Rupture & Explosion Under Investigation

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By Jessica Mathews / news@whmi.com

Authorities are working to determine what caused a natural gas line break and explosion in Tyrone Township yesterday morning that sent a huge plume of brown smoke billowing in the sky.

It happened around 9:30am - blasting a crater about 20 feet deep in a farmer's field near Old US-23 between Center and Hogan Roads. Consumers Energy was said to be on site cleaning a large natural gas pipeline when an explosion occurred - causing a huge plume of brown smoke and sending dirt, rock and metal pipe debris for approximately a quarter-mile. The debris damaged several vehicles that were traveling on US-23 but no injuries were reported.



The incident shut down both northbound and southbound US-23, as well as a section of Old-US-23, until roughly 1:30pm.

Consumers Energy Media Relations Manager Brian Wheeler said they were made aware of the break just before 10am. He said it was natural gas transmission line that carries gas across the state, which is larger than the pipelines that carry gas to homes.

Wheeler told WHMI they received many reports from customers and it's understandable that people are concerned when something like this happens. He says they spent the majority of the day on scene working to make sure everything was safe and continue to assess the situation.

Wheeler said it is unclear how long repairs will take but it is possible that they'll be out there for a while to come. He said service to customers was not affected since the line was not feeding homes directly.

A shelter in place order had initially been issued due to concerns about a more severe gas leak, which was lifted in the afternoon after the area was deemed safe and secure.

Wheeler said thankfully there were no injuries or reports of property damage to homes and nothing else happened that added to the situation. Wheeler said they recognize it was an inconvenience for people in the community and those traveling on US-23, and understandably many people were concerned and heard it happening – adding when natural gas is released, that can be quite loud as well.

Wheeler said they'll be making repairs as quickly as possible while working to understand what happened in the first place.

Facebook photo.

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