

# Gas geyser disrupts Island

## 30 homes emptied; road shut

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A 60-foot geyser of high-octane gasoline erupted yesterday morning in Willowbrook after a backhoe accidentally struck a valve on a pipeline, forcing the evacuation of 30 homes and bringing scores of firefighters, police and emergency cleanup crews.

Fire officials estimated that up to 35,000 gallons of fuel spilled, much of it entering storm sewers and winding up in a creek in Travis a little more than a mile away. Despite the risk of explosion, no serious injuries were reported during the mishap.

Workers were still mopping up the spill today, and police closed off a three-quarter-mile section of Victory Boulevard, from Wyona Avenue to Richmond Avenue in Bulls Head. The road was not expected to be reopened before noon today, according to police Capt. Joseph Lehan.

The 30-mile-long pipeline, owned by Buckeye Pipe Line Co., of Linden, N.J., runs from Carteret, N.J., to LaGuardia and Kennedy airports in Queens, supplying fuel for small airplanes, according to a Port Authority official who asked that his name not be used.

The line, which runs alongside a second pipe carrying jet fuel, parallels the Staten Island Expressway for much of its course through Staten Island. The jet fuel line did not rupture.

The 9:15 a.m. mishap occurred on South Gannon Avenue, a service road of the expressway, near the highway's Victory Boulevard exit, while workmen tried to repair a faulty valve on the pipeline. The leak, caused by a one-inch gash in the line, was plugged three hours later.

Police officers on the scene prevented pedestrians from crossing into the cordoned off area for fear that a careless match or cigarette could ignite the fumes. As an added precaution, Brooklyn Union Gas workers shut off the supply of methane gas to 29 homes on the perimeter of the accident site. At the re-

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