



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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**NIPSCO REMINDS LOW-INCOME CUSTOMERS WITH OUTSTANDING
BALANCES TO UTILITIZING HOME HEATING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

State Moratorium on Disconnects Ends March 15

MERRILLVILLE, Ind. – Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) today reminds low-income customers with outstanding balances that less than 30 days remain until the statewide moratorium on service disconnections is lifted. There are a number of assistance programs that can help customers who are finding it difficult to pay their heating bill.

“We want to remind our low-income customers that the end of the moratorium is fast approaching and that we’re prepared to work together to get customers the assistance they need,” said NIPSCO President Mark Maassel. “Our goal is to keep our customers connected so they can stay warm and be safe in their homes.”

Between Dec. 1 and March 15, natural gas utilities in Indiana do not disconnect service to customers enrolled in the state Energy Assistance Program (EAP) and who are delinquent on their home heating bills.

“For the second half of winter, home heating bills will be high, due to the extreme cold we experienced in late January and early February,” said Maassel. “We want to work with our customers to address payment issues. It’s vitally important that any customer, regardless of income, call us at the first sign of bill-payment trouble so we have an opportunity to work together to get the customer the assistance they need or see if they qualify for a payment plan.”

Among the programs available to help customers are:

- **State Energy Assistance Program** – provides qualifying families with bill and crisis assistance. The maximum amount a household can receive is \$535, including a \$200 crisis grant. Household income must be at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

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- **Winter Warmth Program** – provides qualifying customers with bill and deposit assistance. The maximum amount a customer can receive is up to \$450. Household income must be at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level, although there is a “hardship” provision for certain customers – such as those that are temporarily out of work or experiencing a medical issue – who fall out of the established income guideline.
- **Help Thy Neighbor Fund** – provides eligible low-income households and Senior Citizens (60 years or older) who are within 151-200 percent of the federal poverty level with heating assistance to prevent the disruption of gas utility service or assist in the reconnection of gas service. Eligible households may receive a one time benefit up to \$200 in immediate utility bill assistance.
- **Gift of Warmth Fuel Fund** – provides eligible low-income customers whose incomes are at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level, and who have receive a disconnect notice, with heating bill assistance. NIPSCO matches agency contributions dollar for dollar.
- **Township Trustees** – provides customers with home heating bill assistance. Customers are encouraged to contact their local Township Trustee to see what help is available.

A complete listing of in-take sites for the state Energy Assistance Program, Winter Warmth Program and Gift of Warmth Fuel Fund can be found on NIPSCO’s Web site at www.nipsco.com by clicking “Energy Assistance Programs” on the home page.

NIPSCO, with headquarters in Merrillville, Ind., is one of the 10 energy distribution companies of NiSource Inc. (NYSE: NI). With over 712,000 natural gas customers and 445,000 electric customers across the northern third of Indiana, NIPSCO is the largest natural gas distribution company, and the second largest electric distribution company, in the state. NiSource distribution companies serve 3.8 million natural gas and electric customers primarily in nine states. More information about NIPSCO is available at www.nipsco.com.

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