



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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**NIPSCO Partners with Middlebury on  
Community Bike Trail Project**  
*Company donates 27 low growing trees to be planted along trail*

**MIDDLEBURY, Ind.** — The residents of Middlebury will soon have a new tree-lined, fully landscaped trail on which to walk and ride bicycles, thanks to a \$150,000 state grant awarded to the town by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the donation of 27 trees by Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) to help beautify the trail.

At a news conference held this morning at the trail site, which is located adjacent to Railroad Street, NIPSCO announced its donation of 27 trees to Lowell Miller, Middlebury Town Manager, who said construction of the trail is scheduled to begin within the next several months and completed on or around Aug. 15, 2005. Three trees were planted today by NIPSCO and its contractor, Davey Tree Expert Company, to kick-off the project in honor of Arbor Day. The remaining 24 trees will be planted by the spring of 2006.

“On behalf of the residents of Middlebury, we thank NIPSCO for graciously purchasing and planting the trees along the trail, which will go a long way toward beautifying this area,” said Miller. “We initially thought we would have to raise additional dollars for landscaping since the grant did not include funding for that portion of the project.”

According to Jason Lietz, NIPSCO Forestry Operations Supervisor, the decision to donate the trees for the project was an easy one. “It makes sense for NIPSCO to be involved in a project like this. Tall growing trees near overhead power lines are the leading cause of power outages. By participating, we are able to demonstrate the value of planting the right tree in the right place, where it won’t interfere with the reliable delivery of power.”

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Lietz worked with Greg Yoder of the Middlebury Tree Board, and Mark Salee, President of the Park Board, to design the project. The master plan calls for planting 11 different varieties of trees, all of which will grow to low heights so as not to impact overhead power lines. In addition, the name of each tree along with its mature height and spread will be shown on information markers near the trees, once they are planted.

NIPSCO has been recognized as a Tree Line USA Utility for 12 consecutive years by the National Arbor Day Foundation for its commitment to practices that enhance and protect urban forests through tree planting, public education and worker training. NIPSCO joins one other utility in the nation for the distinction of receiving a Tree Line USA award for 12 consecutive years.

NIPSCO, with headquarters in Merrillville, Ind., is one of the 10 energy distribution companies of NiSource Inc. (NYSE: NI). With nearly 700,000 natural gas customers and 440,000 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 3.7 million natural gas and electric customers primarily in nine states. More information about NIPSCO is available at [www.nipsco.nisource.com](http://www.nipsco.nisource.com)

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