



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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**NIPSCO ENCOURAGES CUSTOMERS TO PREPARE NOW  
FOR WINTER HEATING BILLS**

*Nationwide Trend in Natural Gas Prices Prompts Alert*

**MERRILLVILLE, Ind.** – Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) is encouraging its customers to prepare now for natural gas prices, which are higher this year than in 2004. Nationwide, prices are at record levels and expected to remain so as the Midwest heads into the winter heating season. The cost of natural gas is passed directly through to customers, at no profit to NIPSCO. Prices for natural gas, like prices for gasoline, have risen dramatically over the past few months.

“We continue to see dramatic and significant changes in the wholesale natural gas market and our customers will see high natural gas prices through the winter heating season,” said NIPSCO President Mark Maassel. “Our message to our customers is simple, yet critical. You can better manage your energy costs if you take steps now.”

- **Sign up now for NIPSCO’s BudgetPlan.** NIPSCO’s BudgetPlan provides an average monthly bill based on past energy usage and estimated future prices. Customers pay an equal amount each month.
- **Schedule a furnace inspection.** Contact a registered heating, ventilation and air conditioning contractor to inspect your home’s furnace. Filter cleaning and upgrades could be completed now before evenings and mornings turn cool.
- **Take a look at your registers and duct work.** Registers and ductwork trap dust, lint and other debris and can reduce the efficiency of your furnace. An inefficient furnace is more expensive to run.
- **Inspect caulking and weather-stripping.** Inspect the caulking on your outdoor windows. Is it cracked and peeling? Is the weather-stripping on your doors wearing away? If so, take the time now to replace it.
- **Install storm windows** if your home has them.

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- **Use energy wisely.** A brochure called “99 Ways to Conserve Energy” is available to NIPSCO customers by visiting [www.nipsco.com](http://www.nipsco.com) or by calling 1-800-4-NIPSCO (1-800-464-7726).

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 3.7 million natural gas and electric customers primarily in nine states. More information about NIPSCO is available at [www.nipsco.com](http://www.nipsco.com).

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