



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Tom Cuddy**

NIPSCO Communications

219-647-6556

## **HEATING BILLS PROJECTED TO DECLINE THIS WINTER**

### *Natural Gas Prices Moderate on Wholesale Market*

**MERRILLVILLE, Ind.** – If the Midwest sees normal temperatures this winter, home heating bills could decrease by as much as 30 percent, Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) announced today.

The decrease can be attributed to a number of factors. The price of natural gas on the wholesale market has fallen precipitously due to last winter's warmer-than-normal temperatures and this year's quiet hurricane season in the Gulf of Mexico, where much of the nation's natural gas is produced.

"This is good news for our customers that we're happy to deliver," said NIPSCO President Mark Maassel. "Even though prices have moderated, it's important for our customers to keep in mind that the wholesale natural gas market is still volatile and prices, as well as bills, could increase if the Midwest experiences a colder-than-normal winter."

Last winter was one of the warmest on record and the average heating bill for a NIPSCO customer last January was \$187. If temperatures are normal in the Midwest this winter, the cost to heat a home this January could be approximately \$115. If temperatures are colder than last winter, the cost to heat a home most likely will be higher as customers will be consuming more gas. Over the entire winter heating season – Nov. 1 to March 31 – the average residential customer could pay approximately \$600 to heat their home, which represents a 30 percent decrease when compared to the same period last winter.

"We have access to a safe, secure and reliable supply of natural gas to meet customer demand and the cost to deliver the gas to our customers has been flat since 1991," said Maassel. "Our focus right now is providing customers with the tools and resources to stay warm and be safe in their homes this winter heating season."

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Earlier this year, NIPSCO submitted a plan with the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) to renew its Winter Warmth program, which has directed more than \$10 million in assistance to 24,000 low-income customers. In addition, NIPSCO is partnering with community groups across its service area to host an Energy Fair. The first Energy Fair will be held in partnership with the Lake County Energy Task Force on Oct. 14 at the Genesis Center in Gary.

“Partnering with reputable community groups to teach our customers how to use energy wisely and safely is the right thing to do,” said Maassel. “Proper insulation, installing a programmable thermostat and other simple steps are easy ways to save on winter heating bills.”

For customers who want consistent monthly payments, NIPSCO’s BudgetPlan allows customers to spread gas costs over an entire year, and the Depend-a-Bill program provides a fixed monthly bill with no annual true-up. NIPSCO’s Price Protection Service option allows customers to fix or cap their per unit cost of natural gas. Also, the NIPSCO Choice program gives customers an opportunity to choose an alternative natural gas supplier.

*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](http://www.nipsco.com).*

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