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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Nick Meyer NIPSCO Communications Manager (219) 647-6556

CUSTOMERS ARE NO LONGER 'LEFT IN THE DARK' IF THE POWER GOES OUT NIPSCO Announces New On-line Feature that Provides Estimated Restoration Times

MERRILLVILLE, Ind. – Why did my power go out? And, when will it be back on? Those two questions are among the most frequently asked in the event of a storm or other related electric outage. But, just in time for storm season, Northern Indiana Public Service Company is helping customers find answers to those exact questions by announcing today the expansion of its on-line outage map to now include a cause and an estimated restoration time for power outages.

"We know that interruptions of any kind to service presents an inconvenience to our customers, which is why we proactively do everything can before a storm hits, such as investing more than \$50 million over the last five years in maintaining trees along power lines, to ensure that power is there when you need it," said Tim Dehring, senior vice president of energy delivery for NIPSCO. "If an outage occurs, we want to be sure our customers know what to do, how to stay safe and where to find information about when their power will be restored."

NIPSCO launched the on-line outage map at NIPSCO.com last year as a way to provide customers with real-time updates on current electric outages, while providing helpful information to stay safe and informed when a storm hits or an outage occurs.

Now, for the first time, the outage map offers an explanation for the cause of an outage as well as when the power is expected to be back on. Estimated restoration times are calculated by taking everything into consideration such as historical data, time of day, available resources, weather conditions, the severity of an outage and more.

"This new addition is another step forward as we continue to modernize our company and its infrastructure," added Dehring. "We're investigating the next phase of this project, which will eventually offer more options to customers who may be interested in signing up to receive detailed outage information via text, e-mail or phone, as opposed to logging onto the outage map."

If customers are unable to access the outage map due to a power outage, NIPSCO suggests using a mobile device, laptop computer or reaching out to any family and friends who might have access to the internet to check the status of an outage.

The enhanced outage map may be found by visiting www.NIPSCO.com/StormCenter.

Outage Restoration Process

As a storm approaches, NIPSCO's Customer Contact Center stands ready to field calls in the event of electric outages. It's important for customers to contact NIPSCO directly to report an outage. This will improve the utility's ability to restore power as quickly as possible.

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During major outages, NIPSCO works to restore power to critical facilities such as hospitals, lift stations, nursing homes, as well as police and fire stations. At the same time, NIPSCO crews are assessing damage and restoring power to areas where the greatest number of residential customers can be brought online as quickly and safely as possible.

Storm Safety Information

One of the most important safety tips NIPSCO recommends is for customers to monitor the weather and know what type of weather is forecast for the area. Below is a general overview of what NIPSCO does – and what customers should do – before, during and after storms.

Before the Storm

NIPSCO monitors the weather 24/7 using state-of-the-art mapping technology and forecasting information. When a major storm is forecast, NIPSCO crews are put on alert and prepared to respond. Customers can also prepare for storms by following the customer safety tips below:

- Compile a storm preparedness kit, which should include essential medicines, non-perishable food items and water, flashlights, portable radios, and a manual can opener. Know the location of your emergency supply kit.
- Review your evacuation plan. Have the phone numbers of evacuation destinations with you as well as a road map. You may need to take alternate routes if major roads are closed or clogged.
- Check to see if shrubs or trees need trimming or if you have any weak limbs. Be particularly careful when working near power lines. Also, remove items near the home that could possibly become airborne (toys, trash cans, etc.).

During the Storm

NIPSCO closely monitors the storm and its electric infrastructure. Crews and equipment are mobilized to restore power. Personnel at NIPSCO's call center are answering phones to collect outage reports. Customers should:

- Listen to local radio or TV stations for up-to-date storm information, including knowing what a tornado WATCH and WARNING means.
- Pick a place where family members can gather if a tornado is headed your way. It could be your basement or, if there is no basement, a center hallway, bathroom, or closet on the lowest floor. Keep away from windows.
- Fill your gas tank before a storm arrives, as gas pumps do not work if electricity is out.
 Automatic teller machines will also be shut off if the power goes, so have cash on hand.

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Following the Storm:

NIPSCO crews will work around-the-clock to restore power. During severe storms, it may take several hours after the storm subsides before damage reports can be analyzed and restoration efforts are prioritized. Following storm activity, customers should:

- Immediately report a power outage or any power line hazards by calling NIPSCO at 1-800-4-NIPSCO (1-800-464-7726). Do not touch downed or hanging power lines or anything touching them.
- Monitor the status of power restoration activities on local radio stations, or at www.NIPSCO.com/StormCenter.
- Avoid opening the refrigerator or freezer. Food will stay frozen in a fully loaded freezer for 36 to 48 hours if the doors remain closed. If the freezer is half full, the food will generally keep 24 hours.
- Keep candles away from furniture, draperies and other flammable materials. Also, keep children and pets away from open flames.
- Disconnect or turn off appliances that were on when the power outage occurred. Leave a light on so you will know when power is restored.
- If you leave your home while the power is out, double-check that all heat producing appliances, such as stoves, irons and curling irons are unplugged before you leave.
- If there is severe damage and it appears that the outage will last an extended period of time, consider moving to an alternate location.

<u>Editor's Note</u>: Enclosed you'll find a Power Restoration Refresher graphic to accompany this release.

NIPSCO, with headquarters in Merrillville, Ind., is one of the nine energy distribution companies of NiSource Inc. (NYSE: NI). With over 712,000 natural gas customers and 457,000 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 seven states. More information about NIPSCO is available at www.nipsco.com.

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