FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Heating Season Bill Payment Help Begins Today

NIPSCO connects customers in need with assistance programs

MERRILLVILLE, Ind. – With enrollment for federal assistance programs for low-income households beginning on Monday, Nov. 5, NIPSCO is encouraging customers experiencing financial challenges to consider available payment assistance options for the winter heating season.

While higher usage amounts are probable this winter when compared to last year's unseasonably warm temperatures, NIPSCO is focused on keeping gas prices affordable. For 11 consecutive months, the utility has offered the lowest residential gas bills in the state (Source: Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission).

During the 2011-2012 winter heating season, 36,000 NIPSCO customers received assistance from the federal assistance program, compared to roughly 50,000 customers in previous years.

"Winter temperatures can be unpredictable in our service area, so helping our customers plan ahead for any potential bill payment challenges is important," said Cindy Jackson, manager of residential consumer programs for NIPSCO. "We partner with local agencies across the state, such as Salvation Army chapters, to help customers in need apply for assistance."

The following programs offer assistance to eligible customers on a first-come, first-served basis:

Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP support is available to households falling within 150 percent of federal poverty guidelines, and is fully funded by a federal block grant offered through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The level of assistance is based on several factors, including family size, income status and dwelling type.

Funds are administered by the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) through Community Action Agencies with outreach offices in each county.

Between December 1 and March 15, natural gas utilities in Indiana do not disconnect service to customers enrolled in LIHEAP who are delinquent on their home heating bills.

Eligibility information and a listing of agencies by county can be found at NIPSCO.com/BillingPayment, and customers are encouraged to contact the agency for a complete list of required documentation ahead of visiting in person.

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NIPSCO Customer Assistance for Residential Energy (CARE) Discount Program

In addition to the assistance available through LIHEAP, the NIPSCO CARE discount program is designed to provide further bill reductions to LIHEAP-eligible customers. Once enrolled in LIHEAP, customers are automatically enrolled in the program, and reductions range from 11 to 26 percent, depending on the same criteria used by the state in determining the level of assistance.

NIPSCO Hardship Program

For customers just outside the federal poverty guidelines for LIHEAP, the NIPSCO Hardship Program offers up to \$200 in gas bill assistance to households between 151-200 percent of the federal poverty level. Hardship funds are available through many of the same local Community Action Agencies where LIHEAP funds are distributed.

Township Trustees

A limited amount of energy assistance funds are available through local Township Trustee offices. NIPSCO customers are encouraged to contact their local Trustee to see what help is available.

For more information on all available payment assistance options for NIPSCO customers, visit NIPSCO.com/BillingPayment.

NIPSCO, with headquarters in Merrillville, Ind., is one of the seven energy distribution companies of NiSource Inc. (NYSE: NI). With more than 786,000 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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