

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Kathleen Szot

NIPSCO Communications

1-219-314-3801

NIPSCO to Fly the 811 Hot Air Balloon along I-65

Spreading awareness on the importance of safe digging

MERRILLVILLE, Ind. — To spread awareness about safe digging practices, NIPSCO will fly the 811 hot air balloon on May 26 at the utility’s Merrillville headquarters, and then along I-65, from 8 to 11 a.m. CDT, weather permitting.

The 811 hot air balloon was created to stress the importance of calling 811 at least two business days before starting any projects involving digging. 811 is a free national service. Professional utility locating technicians are sent to the location to identify and mark the approximate location of the underground lines with spray paint or flags. After the lines have been marked, the individual can dig around, not on, the marked lines.

According to data collected by Common Ground Alliance (CGA), an underground utility line is damaged every six minutes. This may result in death or injury, repair costs, and inconvenient outages. Moreover, anyone who plans to dig more than 12 inches into the ground is required by law to call 811 and get the lines identified and marked.

“Many people think they know where their underground power, gas and water lines are, so they don’t make the call to 811,” said Rick Smith, manager of pipeline services for NIPSCO. “All too often, they get it wrong, and it can result in a very dangerous situation. One free call can help ensure you don’t endanger yourself, your family and your neighbors.”

There are more than 20 million miles of underground utilities in the United States, according to data collected by CGA, from various industry groups. That figure is equivalent to more than one football field’s length (105 yards) of buried utilities for every man, woman and child in the United States. Whether you are planting a tree or installing a mailbox, NIPSCO urges you to know where the gas, power, water, sewer and telecommunication lines are located.

When calling 811, homeowners and businesses are connected to the local call center, where a representative is notified about the caller’s planned dig site. There is also the option of entering a request online at www.811NOW.com.

For additional information on 811 visit NIPSCO.com/811.

About NIPSCO: Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO), with headquarters in Merrillville, Indiana, has proudly served the energy needs of northern Indiana for more than 100 years. As Indiana’s largest natural gas distribution company and the second-largest electric distribution company, NIPSCO serves approximately 810,000 natural gas and 460,000 electric customers across 32 counties. NIPSCO is part of NiSource’s (NYSE: NI) seven regulated utility companies. NiSource is one of the largest fully regulated utility companies in the United States, serving approximately 4 million natural gas and electric customers through its local Columbia Gas and NIPSCO brands. More information about NIPSCO and NiSource is available at NIPSCO.com and NiSource.com.

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