

M. Carol Fox
President

November 21, 2011

Chairman Robert F. Powelson
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Commonwealth Keystone Building
3rd Floor, Room N-304
400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's "Prepare Now" Campaign

Dear Chairman Powelson:

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. ("Columbia") applauds the Commission's continuous efforts to promote beneficial customer outreach programs through its "Prepare Now" campaign. Through this letter, I am providing a response to the Joint Commissioners' letter asking that we inform the Commission of the actions that Columbia plans to take to assist in the "Prepare Now" campaign.

Although natural gas prices continue to remain low, many customers continue to face financial challenges as they approach the winter heating season. Columbia offers a myriad of programs to assist all customers - including those whose incomes are slightly above the Universal Service Program income guidelines - and who are therefore ineligible for assistance benefits. As described below, Columbia addresses this concern through programs targeted to this and other customer populations.

Without question, Columbia embraces its responsibility to reach out to all of its customers and help connect them with the tools and resources they need to stay safe and warm in their homes during the winter heating season. Columbia's various customer assistance programs are outlined below.

Employee Outreach Connection

Columbia sees the value of preparing its employees to be ambassadors for customer programs in the communities it serves. Prior to each heating season, all employees who interact with

customers on a regular basis receive updated information on assistance programs to bridge customers to the help they need.

To expediently assist customers with getting the help they need, Columbia has a specialized group of employees at its call center available to handle all Universal Service inquiries and to refer customers to multiple programs including the Low Income Usage Reduction Program, Customer Assistance Program and Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program ("LIHEAP"). To provide easy access to this specialized call group, Columbia created and advertises a separate toll-free number for the Universal Service programs.

Community Outreach

A critical step in connecting with customers is to reach out to the communities in which they live. Columbia is proud to partner with many community-based organizations across Pennsylvania that help deliver assistance programs to its customers. Columbia's Universal Service employees frequently serve as representatives at numerous community outreach events, providing both general information and specific program referral information. Most recently Columbia conducted three regional community outreach workshops to inform social service agencies and legislative offices of Columbia's customer assistance programs. All three workshops were well-attended.

LIHEAP and "Partners for Warmth"

Columbia continues to dedicate resources to promote the LIHEAP program. For more than 20 years, the three western Pennsylvania natural gas companies have been collaborating together to promote LIHEAP, most recently through their "Partners for Warmth" campaign. "Partners for Warmth" kicked off the 2011-12 LIHEAP program through an advertising campaign and a press conference that featured former Pittsburgh Steeler and LIHEAP spokesperson Franco Harris. Columbia appreciates the Commission's support and would like to thank PUC Vice Chairman John Coleman Jr. for his participation at this event.

Columbia also operates a LIHEAP hotline to help customers complete their LIHEAP applications. Additional outreach activities include bill inserts, community events and news releases distributed throughout the heating season.

To ensure that Columbia's contact center representatives are referring all eligible customers to LIHEAP, Columbia conducts an internal awareness campaign that includes a kick-off breakfast reminding representatives of the program guidelines and promotional activities encouraging appropriate referrals. In addition, as a continual reminder of the need to refer eligible customers, representatives are given a LIHEAP tee shirt and are encouraged to wear it throughout the heating season.

Hardship Funds

Columbia recognizes the need for appropriate funding for the Hardship Funds and continues to support fundraising activities. Again this year, Columbia co-sponsored the Dollar Energy Fund's annual "Warmathon," which is designed to encourage the public to donate to the Hardship Funds. Economic conditions continue to make it difficult for our customers to contribute despite the growing need for additional funds. Columbia recognizes this challenge and continues to look for creative ways to help fund this important program. For example, Columbia has once again partnered with the Trans-Siberian Orchestra through which it contributes a portion of its ticket proceeds to the Dollar Energy Fund. Columbia directly matches those contributions. In addition, Columbia applies the Tennessee Pipeline Settlement Refund to its Hardship Funds. Columbia recognizes the growing need for this funding and appreciates the Commission's support for this program.

Security Deposit Assistance Program (Is there a cap on this program? YES.)

In an attempt to assist customers who are without natural gas service, Columbia will again offer its Security Deposit Assistance Program to customers who are not eligible for Universal Service programs due to their income level. The Program is funded annually at \$50,000. Columbia will pay the security deposits for those customers between 151% and 250% of the Federal Poverty Level so they can obtain or re-establish gas service.

As in the past, Columbia will limit the combined reconnection fee and security deposit amount to \$150 and also incorporate any available energy assistance grants in order to reduce up-front monies being requested by the company. When a customer or applicant is identified as low-income, the customer will be referred to Columbia's Customer Assistance Program ("CAP"). If accepted, all security deposits and reconnection fees will be waived. As in previous years, Columbia will continue to accept available energy assistance grants to offset missed CAP payments in order to restore service for those customers removed from the CAP.

Cold Weather Survey

Columbia continues to focus its efforts to reach customers without service as part of the 2011 Cold Weather Survey. Columbia's outreach activities include phone calls, certified letters and field visits intended to advise customers of available programs to assist in getting their service reconnected. In addition, Columbia employs customer outreach coordinators who will contact social service agencies throughout the winter to facilitate service restoration for all customers. Although still in the process of completing this year's survey, Columbia is pleased to report that as of November 14, 2011, there are *fewer* customers without gas service than there were last year at this time. Since the implementation of the Responsible Utility Customer Protection Act in December 2004, Columbia has experienced a steady increase in the percentage of customers restoring their natural gas service.

Budget Billing and Payment Options

Columbia is committed to keeping gas service connected and bill payment easy for all of its customers by encouraging the use of the budget billing program, affordable payment plans and referrals to Columbia's network of customer programs. For its more vulnerable and senior customers, Columbia recommends the use of the third-party notice to provide that extra layer of protection in avoiding termination of service.

Emergency Repair Program

Columbia also provides an "Emergency Repair Program," which offers financial assistance to eligible homeowners for the repair of gas lines and heating equipment. After some difficulty, Columbia was able to convince the parties in its 2010 rate case that increased funding was required for this program. Columbia is now pleased to report that the Emergency Repair Program is funded at \$500,000 each year. Unfortunately, even with that funding level, many eligible customers cannot receive benefits from the program because the program is fully subscribed early in the year. Columbia continues to see the growing need and appreciates the Commission's support to continue to fund this vital program.

Efficient Delivery of Customer Programs

Columbia looks for ways to coordinate the referral and intake processes for all assistance programs in order to leverage the value of multiple benefits. This one-stop-shop approach helps address all customer concerns with one phone call. Likewise, Columbia looks for ways to coordinate programs with other utilities in order to provide customer convenience and reach ultimate program efficiencies. An example of this cooperation is the "Joint Utility Usage Management Program" ("JUUMP"). Under JUUMP, Columbia and Allegheny Power combine their resources to address both gas and electric weatherization needs for eligible customers simultaneously.

Low Income Usage Reduction Program ("LIURP")

Columbia has a long and successful history providing weatherization programs to low-income customers. For more than two decades, Columbia has been paying the costs to insulate customers' homes and install high-efficiency furnaces to help customers reduce their consumption and lower their bills. Columbia weatherizes about 480 homes each year through its LIURP, and Columbia's LIURP customers have seen average annual reductions in gas consumption of 25%. In Columbia's most recent base rate case, Columbia agreed to increase the funding of its LIURP from \$3,000,000 to \$4,000,000 annually. This means Columbia will be able to weatherize an additional 200 low-income customer homes every year.

Energy Efficiency Education and Assessments

Columbia offers to all customers educational materials to help them improve energy efficiency and manage their gas bills. Upon request and at no charge, Columbia will send customers information on no-cost or low-cost weatherization actions, materials and resources.

In addition, Columbia issues "Cold Weather Minute" press releases to promote energy efficient messages. The "Cold Weather Minute" messages are also posted on the Columbia Web site as additional resources. Samples of the Cold Weather Minute press releases are attached.

Throughout the winter months Columbia will also be promoting energy efficiency through two radio sponsorships: the 2011-2012 StormCenter on NewsRadio 1020 KDKA and the Cumulus Media "Christmas on Us" campaign. Beginning in November, commercials will air across Columbia's service areas, providing customers with tips on ways they can save energy and heat their home safely this winter. These commercials will also direct customers to the Columbia Web site for more energy-saving tips.

For those customers with incomes between 151% and 250% of the Federal Poverty Level, Columbia provides an Income Qualified Energy Efficiency Program ("IQEEP") to help them use energy more efficiently. Columbia provides eligible customers with a free energy audit performed by a "Building Performance Institute" ("BPI")-certified auditor. The BPI auditor will make recommendations for an energy efficiency plan, and Columbia will provide financial incentives such as up-front rebates for measures that the customer chooses to implement. Columbia is in the process of conducting 22,000 outbound calls and distributing 55,000 direct mail postcards to potentially eligible customers to inform them of the program's benefits.

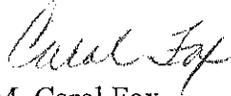
Beyond the existing efforts to communicate information about the IQEEP program, Columbia is partnering with community outreach projects to increase awareness, help promote the increased program benefits for eligible customers and in some cases leverage additional funding for customers. As an example, Columbia is partnering with the Fayette County Commissioners as part of their Better Building Initiative to combine resources, outreach and funding that will help Fayette County customers receive additional energy efficiency benefits. Fayette County is one of 22 counties in the nation that received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act ("ARRA") funding to implement this energy efficiency program. In addition, this month Columbia will be hosting an open house so media can witness first-hand the benefits and potential savings resulting from an IQEEP audit.

Once again, Columbia is pleased to join the Commission in this important outreach opportunity and is proud to offer its portfolio of assistance programs and outreach initiatives to assist customers this winter.

Chairman Robert F. Powelson
November 21, 2011
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Should you have any questions, or need additional information, do not hesitate to give me a call at 724-416-6331.

Sincerely,



M. Carol Fox
President

Enclosures

cc: Vice Chairman John F. Coleman Jr. (w/encls.)
Commissioner Wayne E. Gardner (w/encls.)
Commissioner James H. Cawley (w/encls.)
Commissioner Pamela A. Witmer (w/encls.)
Grace McGovern, Bureau of Consumer Services (w/encls.) (also via E-mail)

Columbia GasSM
of Pennsylvania

Columbia GasSM
of Maryland

NiSource Companies

Southpointe Industrial Park
121 Champion Way Suite 100
(724) 416-6300
(724) 416-6382 Fax



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

For Immediate Release

Feb. 10, 2011

Contact: Mike Marcus

724-416-6333

mmarcus@nisource.com

Columbia Gas Cold Weather Minute Protect Yourself Against Hypothermia

In an effort to help customers manage winter heating bills, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania and Columbia Gas of Maryland today released the seventeenth in a series of ongoing public service announcements called "Cold Weather Minute" to print and broadcast media outlets across Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania and Columbia Gas of Maryland service areas. These tips are aimed at helping customers manage their energy bills this winter heating season by using energy wisely.

Hypothermia can occur when a person is exposed to cold and loses body heat faster than it can be replaced. The condition can be dangerous because normal body functions can be affected when body temperature drops below 95 degrees. As temperatures continue to drop this winter, be alert for these symptoms of hypothermia:

- Confusion
- Difficulty speaking
- Slow breathing
- Sleepy and hard to wake up
- Puffy face
- Cold, stiff muscles

Dressing warmly is the best way to protect yourself against hypothermia. Room temperatures below 70 degrees F can be dangerous to a person not dressed warmly enough and if you are having trouble paying your heating bill, call 1-888-460-4332 to learn more about Columbia Gas assistance programs that can help keep you warm this winter.

Word Count: 122

VO Time: 30

About Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania and Columbia Gas of Maryland

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, with local headquarters in Canonsburg, serves approximately 413,000 customers in 26 counties. Columbia Gas of Maryland serves approximately 33,000 customers in Garrett, Allegany and Washington counties. They are two of the 10 energy distribution companies of NiSource Inc. (NYSE: NI). NiSource distribution companies serve 3.8 million natural gas and

electric customers primarily in nine states. More information about Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania and Maryland, visit www.ColumbiaGasPa.com and www.ColumbiaGasMd.com.

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Columbia Gas
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NiSource Companies

Southpointe Industrial Park
121 Champion Way Suite 100
(724) 416-6300
(724) 416-6382 Fax



Know what's below.
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For Immediate Release

Jan. 6, 2011

Contact: Mike Marcus

724-416-6333

mmarcus@nisource.com

**Columbia Gas Cold Weather Minute
KEEP GAS METERS CLEAR OF SNOW AND ICE**

In an effort to help customers manage winter heating bills, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania and Columbia Gas of Maryland today released the twelfth in a series of ongoing public service announcements called "Cold Weather Minute" to print and broadcast media outlets across Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania and Columbia Gas of Maryland service areas. These tips are aimed at helping customers manage their energy bills this winter heating season by using energy wisely.

Heavy snow and ice build up on or near gas meters could present a condition that temporarily stops the flow of natural gas or creates a potential safety hazard. To help avoid these types of problems make sure your natural gas meter is clear of ice and snow and that it is visible and accessible at all times. When clearing the area around your meter, gently use your hands to remove the snow or ice and avoid using a snow blower near a meter. For more natural gas safety tips, visit www.ColumbiaGasPa.com.

Word Count: 92

VO Time: 30

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of Pennsylvania

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NiSource Companies

Southpointe Industrial Park
121 Champion Way Suite 100
(724) 416-6300
(724) 416-6382 Fax



Know what's **below**.
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For Immediate Release

Jan. 27, 2011

Contact: Mike Marcus

724-416-6333

mmarcus@nisource.com

Columbia Gas Cold Weather Minute
BE CAUTIOUS WHEN USING SUPPLEMENTARY HEATING DEVICES

In an effort to help customers manage winter heating bills, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania and Columbia Gas of Maryland today released the fifteenth in a series of ongoing public service announcements called "Cold Weather Minute" to print and broadcast media outlets across Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania and Columbia Gas of Maryland service areas. These tips are aimed at helping customers manage their energy bills this winter heating season by using energy wisely.

Space heaters are not intended to replace your home's heating system.

When using a space heater be careful not to overload the electrical outlet. Avoid using extension cords and keep all space heaters at least 3 feet away from combustibles, such as clothes, curtains, beds or other furniture. Never use equipment such as a grill, stovetop or oven as a supplementary heater.

Word Count: 62

VO Time: 30

About Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania and Columbia Gas of Maryland

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Columbia Gas
of Pennsylvania

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of Maryland

NiSource Companies

Southpointe Industrial Park
121 Champion Way Suite 100
(724) 416-6300
(724) 416-6382 Fax



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For Immediate Release

Feb. 24, 2011

Contact: Mike Marcus

724-416-6333

mmarcus@nisource.com

Columbia Gas Cold Weather Minute
BE CAREFUL WHERE YOU STORE FLAMMABLE MATERIALS

In an effort to help customers manage winter heating bills, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania and Columbia Gas of Maryland today released the nineteenth in a series of ongoing public service announcements called "Cold Weather Minute" to print and broadcast media outlets across Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania and Columbia Gas of Maryland service areas. These tips are aimed at helping customers manage their energy bills this winter heating season by using energy wisely.

Never store household chemicals or combustible materials near any gas appliance or equipment. Flammable liquids should be stored outside of living areas in properly labeled, non-glass safety containers and should never be stored in a garage where a fuel-burning appliance is located. When cooking, keep the area around the burners clear at all times and use potholders rather than a dishtowel, which can easily catch fire.

Word Count: 66
VO Time: 30

About Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania and Columbia Gas of Maryland
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**Columbia Gas
of Pennsylvania**
A NISource Company

Southpointe Industrial Park
121 Champion Way Suite 100
Canonsburg, PA 15317
(724) 416-6300
(724) 416-6382 Fax



**Know what's below.
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For Immediate Release
October 28, 2011
Contact: Ellen Partridge
724-416-6359
EPartridge@NiSource.com

Columbia Gas Encourages Customers to Use Energy Safely and Wisely this Winter Season

Canonsburg, PA (October 28, 2011) - Even though natural gas prices are lower than ever, many households continue to struggle to make ends meet. Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. is encouraging customers to use energy wisely and safely this winter season to help lessen the impact of natural gas bills on a family's budget and ensure a safe winter heating season.

The largest portion of a residential customer's monthly bill is the cost of natural gas, which generally represents about 60 percent of a residential customer's total bill and is based entirely on the customer's individual gas consumption. Columbia purchases gas on the wholesale market and under Pennsylvania law passes these costs directly to customers on a dollar-for-dollar basis, without mark up or profit. By taking the following actions, customers can have the largest impact at lowering winter heating bills by reducing natural gas usage, as well as stay safe and warm throughout the winter.

- Take time to test your furnace and ensure that it works properly. Discovering a malfunction once the cold weather sets in may make it difficult to find a heating contractor to make repairs.
- Consider installing an electronic programmable thermostat that allows scheduling to save money on heating costs throughout the winter. Program the thermostat to lower home temperatures during the day when no one is home.

- Conduct a home energy audit to assess how much energy your home uses and evaluate what measures you can take to improve efficiency. Many do-it-yourself audits are available free online, or professional home energy auditors can provide a deeper understanding of your homes energy efficiency.
- See if you qualify for Columbia's Income Qualified Energy Efficiency Program (IQEEP). IQEEP is a free program available to qualified Columbia customers that offers a free, comprehensive in-home energy audit identifying and recommending energy saving improvements throughout the home. Call Columbia Gas at 1-866-956-0308 to see if you qualify and to schedule your audit.
- Reduce home heating bills by as much as 30 percent with properly-installed weatherstripping. Inspect and replace worn weatherstripping on all doors and windows to reduce drafts.
- A properly sealed duct system can increase your heating system's efficiency by as much as 20 percent. Sealing and insulating ducts increases efficiency, lowers energy bills, and can help improve air quality in your home. Seal air leaks in ducts using mastic sealant or metal tape. Never use duct tape, as it is not long-lasting.
- Water heating can account for nearly 19 percent of a home energy bill. A \$25 water heater insulation blanket will pay for itself over one winter and continue to save you money throughout the year.
- Ensure your home is heated safely by adding a carbon monoxide detector. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless, tasteless gas created whenever combustion takes place without sufficient oxygen. Very poisonous and even lethal in enclosed spaces, carbon monoxide is most often created by malfunctioning or improperly vented appliances. Add a carbon monoxide detector to your home to ensure your family's safety this heating season and all year long. Simple carbon monoxide detectors plug into an electrical outlet.

To learn more information on energy efficiency and to view videos demonstrating simple home weatherization opportunities, such as the installation of an electronic thermostat and weatherstripping, visit www.ColumbiaGasPa.com.

Columbia Gas is also encouraging customers to plan ahead for winter heating bills and use the many payment assistance programs that are available. At the first sign there may be problems paying their natural gas bill, customers should contact Columbia Gas at 1-800-460-4332.

About Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania is ranked number one in customer satisfaction among Pennsylvania natural gas utilities. The company, with local headquarters in Canonsburg, Pa. (Washington County), serves approximately 414,000 customers in 26 counties. It is one of the seven energy distribution companies of NiSource Inc. (NYSE: NI). NiSource distribution companies serve 3.8 million natural gas and electric customers primarily in nine states. Visit Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania online at www.ColumbiaGasPa.com.

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Columbia Gas
of Pennsylvania
A NiSource Company

Southpointe Industrial Park
121 Champion Way Suite 100
Canonsburg, PA 15317
(724) 416-6300
(724) 416-6382 Fax



Know what's below.
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For Immediate Release

October 25, 2011

Contact: Rachel Ford

724-416-6356

RFord@NiSource.com

Columbia Gas Offering Free Energy Audits to Customers in Washington County

CANONSBURG, PA (October 25, 2011) – Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. today announced they are offering customers significant energy savings through their Income Qualified Energy Efficiency Program (IQEEP). IQEEP offers a free, comprehensive, in-home energy audit identifying and recommending energy saving improvements throughout the home helping customers save on their home energy bills.

“Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania is committed to helping our customers save money and use energy more wisely,” said Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania President Carol Fox. “The first step to lowering home energy bills is identifying where a home loses energy, which is why we are encouraging qualified customers to sign up for a free home energy audit.”

In addition to the free audit, Columbia has generous financial incentives available to help customers who want to implement the recommended energy efficiency measures. IQEEP also provides a free quality inspection of those improvements, after they are installed, ensuring safe, complete and effective installation.

Customers who take advantage of the free audit are not required to make any energy saving improvements suggested by the auditor.

Columbia Gas is utilizing Conservation Consultants, Inc. (CCI), a Pittsburgh-based non-profit that specializes in the delivery of energy efficiency programs, to help administer IQEEP.

“Not only do energy audits benefit our customers directly, but they also have an economic impact on the communities we serve. By subcontracting with CCI, we are creating more jobs in Western Pennsylvania,” said Fox. In addition, by saving money on home energy bills, our customers can reinvest that money back into their community.”

IQEEP is available to Columbia Gas households whose income is between 151% and 250% for Federal Income Guidelines (See income chart below). To schedule your free home energy audit, call Columbia Gas at 1-866-956-0308 or CCI at 1-877-376-2783.

Federal Income Guidelines:

Household Size	150% Income Level	250% Income Level
1	\$18,332	\$27,228
2	\$22,068	\$36,780
3	\$27,792	\$46,320
4	\$33,528	\$55,872
5	\$39,252	\$65,424
6	\$44,988	\$74,976
7	\$50,712	\$84,528
8	\$56,448	\$94,080

(Note: These are federal income guidelines that change annually)

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For Immediate Release

November 14, 2011

Contact:

Ellen Partridge
Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania
724-416-6359
EPartridge@NiSource.com

***** MEDIA ADVISORY AND PHOTO OPPORTUNITY*****

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania Energy Efficiency Program

Demonstrated on Washington County Home

Audit and Upgrades Can Help Save Up To 30 Percent on Home Energy Bills

WHAT: To showcase the energy audit process and highlight potential savings, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania will perform a comprehensive energy evaluation throughout a customer's home.

When: Wednesday, November 16, 2011, at 10 a.m.

Where: 351 Cleveland Road, Washington, PA15301

How: The first step to lowering home energy bills is identifying where a home loses energy. Columbia's Income Qualified Energy Efficiency Program provides income qualified customers with a free home energy audit, identifying home savings of up to 30% on annual energy bills. In addition, significant financial incentives are available to help customers with the cost of the energy efficiency measures.

The energy audit process includes a blower door test to locate leaks, infrared photography of the walls to determine insulation needs and a combustion efficiency analysis to make sure gas appliances are operating safely and efficiently.

To RSVP and/or schedule interviews in advance, please contact Ellen Partridge at EPartridge@NiSource.com or 724-416-6359.

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Columbia Gas
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of Maryland

NiSource Companies

Southpointe Industrial Park
121 Champion Way Suite 100
Canonsburg PA 15317
(724) 416-6300
(724) 416-6382 Fax



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For Immediate Release

Feb. 17, 2011

Contact: Mike Marcus

724-416-6333

mmarcus@nsource.com

Columbia Gas Cold Weather Minute A Properly Sealed Duct System Can Help You Save Money

In an effort to help customers manage winter heating bills, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania and Columbia Gas of Maryland today released the eighteenth in a series of ongoing public service announcements called "Cold Weather Minute" to print and broadcast media outlets across Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania and Columbia Gas of Maryland service areas. These tips are aimed at helping customers manage their energy bills this winter heating season by using energy wisely.

Increase your heating system's efficiency by as much as 20 percent with a properly sealed duct system. Sealing and insulating ducts increases efficiency, lowers energy bills, and can help improve air quality in your home. Seal air leaks in ducts using mastic sealant or metal tape. Never use duct tape, as it is not long-lasting. Also make sure connections at vents and registers are well-sealed where they meet the floors, walls and ceiling.

Word Count: 73

VO Time: 30

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