



CenterPoint Energy Asks Customers to Be Alert for Natural Gas Leaks

HOUSTON, Sept 08, 2005 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX/ -- CenterPoint Energy (NYSE: CNP) asks its customers in Louisiana that have been impacted by Hurricane Katrina to be alert for leaking gas as they return to their homes and businesses to assess the damage.

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20020930/CNPLOGO>)

"Public safety is our top priority, and we're asking our customers to please call us if they smell natural gas," said Walter Bryant, vice president and general manager of natural gas operations in Louisiana. "Unlike above-ground utilities, natural gas pipelines are mostly underground but can be damaged by uprooted trees and shifted foundations. In addition, fallen limbs and other debris can damage gas meters and associated piping."

"If you smell gas, leave the area immediately," Bryant added, "and tell others to leave, too. Do not turn the lights on or off, smoke, strike a match, use a cell phone or operate anything that might cause a spark, including a flashlight or a generator. Also, please do not attempt to turn natural gas valves on or off. Once safely away from the area, call 800.477.0177, and we'll send a trained service technician immediately."

Bryant said CenterPoint Energy crews from throughout Louisiana have been working around the clock to repair the damage to its gas distribution system and ensure that gas service in hurricane-affected areas is safe.

"With few exceptions, customers who are able to receive natural gas service are receiving it," he said. "Where there is severe damage, it may be months before customers have a need for service. But we will be ready to reconnect them when they are ready."

Bryant added that customers should call the Louisiana One Call Hotline at 800.272.3020 in order to locate underground natural gas lines and other member utilities before digging on their property or conducting debris clean-up.

CenterPoint Energy, Inc., headquartered in Houston, Texas, is a domestic energy delivery company that includes electric transmission & distribution, natural gas distribution and sales, and interstate pipeline and gathering operations. The company serves nearly five million metered customers primarily in Arkansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas. Assets total approximately \$16 billion. With more than 9,000 employees, CenterPoint Energy and its predecessor companies have been in business for more than 130 years. In Mississippi, CenterPoint Energy serves more than 125,000 residential, commercial and industrial customers in about 100 communities. For more information, visit the Web site at <http://www.CenterPointEnergy.com> .

SOURCE CenterPoint Energy, Inc.

Alicia Dixon of CenterPoint Energy, Inc., +1-713-207-5885, or pager, +1-713-619-5143

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