



## CenterPoint Energy Begins Interim Rate Increase for Minnesota Customers

MINNEAPOLIS, Jan 03, 2006 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- Effective Jan. 1, 2006, CenterPoint Energy (NYSE: CNP) began charging its customers an interim rate increase of 2.07 percent, which will add about \$2 a month to the average residential customer's bill.

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

In November 2005, CenterPoint Energy filed a request with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) to change its natural gas distribution rates. The new rates are necessary to help the company recover increased distribution costs, which are the result of higher natural gas prices, capital improvements and decreased customer use.

The MPUC has 10 months to issue a decision on the filing. In the meantime, state law allows CenterPoint Energy to charge an interim, or temporary, rate, which was recently approved by the MPUC. The interim rate is effective for service rendered on and after Jan. 1, 2006 and will appear on bills as an "interim rate adjustment." The interim rate will be collected, subject to a refund with interest, until a final decision is issued by the MPUC and the company implements new rates in the fall of 2006.

Public hearings will be scheduled in several communities and overseen by an administrative law judge. The hearings are an opportunity for customers and the public to comment on the filing. Notice of the hearings will be published in local newspapers and included in all customer bills. Information about the rate filing is available on the company's Web site <http://www.CenterPointEnergy.com/ratecase> or at <http://www.edockets.state.mn.us> (enter docket #05-1380).

Headquartered in Houston, TX, CenterPoint Energy is a domestic energy delivery company that includes electric transmission and distribution, natural gas distribution and sales, and interstate pipeline and gathering operations. The company serves nearly five million metered customers in six states and has assets of about \$16 billion. With more than 9,000 employees, CenterPoint Energy and its predecessor companies have been in business for over 135 years. In Minnesota, CenterPoint Energy is the state's largest natural gas distribution company, serving more than 760,000 residential, commercial and industrial customers in over 240 communities. Home Service Plus(R), the company's non-regulated business in Minnesota, offers products and services in the categories of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) and appliance repair, and HVAC and hearth equipment sales. Visit the Web site at <http://www.CenterPointEnergy.com> .

SOURCE CenterPoint Energy, Inc.

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