

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATE OFFICIALS, UTILITIES AND NATIONAL ENERGY ALLIANCE BRING WEATHERIZATION MESSAGE TO FORT WAYNE

FORT WAYNE, IN (Feb. 3, 2006) – Indiana utility regulators, the state’s utility consumer advocate and leaders from a national energy alliance today visited a Ft. Wayne residence to bring home the message that weatherization and energy efficiency can help customers manage their heating bills.

“The work being done at this house illustrates the things we can all do to reduce our winter energy costs,” said Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) Chairman David Lott Hardy. “This winter’s natural gas prices have made the need for energy efficiency throughout the nation greater than ever, and we all need to take the steps that will add up to savings on our bills.”

Across the nation, the cost of natural gas is at record-high levels and many customers are only now starting to realize the full impact. Utilities across Indiana – all of whom neither mark-up nor profit from the cost of natural gas – have been working with Gov. Mitch Daniels and several state agencies since last summer to provide customers with tips and strategies on how to weatherize their homes and use energy safely and wisely. Also, Gov. Daniels recently announced the creation of the Help Thy Neighbor Heating Fund – a collaborative effort funded by Lilly Endowment, the state’s three major natural gas utilities, and private donations.

Hardy, Indiana Utility Consumer Counselor Susan L. Macey and Alliance to Save Energy President Kateri Callahan today visited the home of Mark and Danielle Yablonsky, which is undergoing a series of weatherization improvements.

Representatives from Indiana’s major natural gas utilities, including NIPSCO President Mark Maassel, Citizens Gas Director of Customer Service Greg Sawyers and Vectren Vice President of Customer Service and Marketing Doug Karl also participated as part of the statewide effort to educate customers on the value of weatherization and conservation in helping to control home heating bills

The Yablonsky home is being weatherized and made energy efficient through a program funded by the Alliance to Save Energy. Weatherization initiatives that took place today included addition of wall and attic insulation, caulking, sealing, weather stripping and installation of a programmable thermostat.

“There is never a bad time to enroll in budget billing programs, add insulation, buy a programmable thermostat or do any of the other things that will reduce your energy bills,” said Indiana Utility Consumer Counselor Susan L. Macey. “We also want people to know that financial assistance is available for households that qualify, while encouraging the more fortunate among us to donate to the Help Thy Neighbor Heating Fund as well as energy assistance funds that are offered by utilities throughout Indiana.”

-more-

HOME WEATHERIZATION MESSAGE COMES TO FT. WAYNE PAGE 2

The Alliance to Save Energy recently launched ***“The Power is in Your Hands”*** campaign in Fort Wayne to empower customers to lower their energy bills by using energy wisely. The campaign brings together business, industry, utilities, trade associations, federal agencies and community groups whose common goal is to reduce energy use in order to lower prices in the long run.

“The power to save energy and money is in the hands of each and every consumer. Even small actions by large numbers of people add up to significant energy and monetary savings,” said Alliance President Kateri Callahan. “Energy efficiency remains the quickest, cheapest, cleanest way to help consumers lower their home energy bills, extend our nation’s energy supplies, and bring down energy costs for all of us.”

The home was selected for the weatherization project by Community Action of Northeast Indiana (CANI), which administers home weatherization funding for Northeast Indiana. CANI weatherized 160 homes for low-income families during 2005.

Knauf Insulation and Momper Insulation of Fort Wayne provided insulation for today’s home weatherization.

###

Weatherization tips:

- Make sure your home or business has proper insulation.
- Properly maintain your heating system (including changing the filter regularly).
- Use a programmable thermostat (or turn the temperature down a few degrees during bedtime and when the home or business is unoccupied).
- Check weather stripping, caulk and seals and make needed repairs.
- Insulate your water heater (if the manufacturer's instructions allow).
- Purchase and use appliances with the Energy Star label.
- Wear appropriate winter clothing and adjust your thermostat accordingly.
- Take additional small steps to improve efficiency (such as opening draperies during the day but closing them at night and setting ceiling fans to run clockwise during winter).

For more information on energy efficiency and/or budget billing:

- Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC): www.in.gov/oucc or 1-888-441-2494
- Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC): www.in.gov/iurc.
- U.S. Department of Energy: www.energysavers.gov or 1-800-363-3732; an insulation fact sheet is available at www.ornl.gov/roofs+walls/insulation.
- The Power is in Your Hands: www.powerisinyourhands.org
- Your local natural gas utility.

To contribute to energy assistance funds:

- Help Thy Neighbor Heating Fund: 1-866-628-1616
- Indiana Community Action Association 800-382-9895

Media Contacts:

Anthony Swinger, Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC), 317/233-2747, aswinger@oucc.in.gov

Mary Beth Fisher, Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC), 317/232-2297, mfisher@urc.state.in.us

Dan Considine, Citizens Gas, 317/407-9254, dconsidine@cgcu.com

Mike Roeder, Vectren, 812/491-4143, mroeder@vectren.com

Tom Cuddy, NIPSCO, 219/647-6556, tcuddy@nisource.com

Katie Stack, Alliance to Save Energy, 202/257-9903, katie.stack@dittus.com