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For immediate release

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## **CenterPoint Energy's Home Service Plus technicians volunteer their time to provide free furnace tune-ups to families in need**

### ***Volunteers share holiday giving of safety and reliability***

**MINNEAPOLIS – December 10, 2009** –CenterPoint Energy's Home Service Plus technicians joined forces with the Suburban Community Action Partnership and the Salvation Army to provide free furnace safety inspections and tune-ups to 48 needy families on Saturday. Technicians tuned-up customers' furnaces to ensure proper operation and provided important safety guidelines to avoid carbon monoxide (CO) build up and exposure.

"Annual safety checks and tune-ups are very important for our customers' safety and their heat reliability," said Joe Vortherms, director of Home Service Plus for CenterPoint Energy. "We're grateful for the opportunity to share our expertise and thank our customers for allowing us to come into their homes to help them this season."

Furnaces and other fuel-burning appliances such as water heaters, clothes dryers and stoves, produce CO that can reach dangerous levels if not maintained or used properly. CenterPoint Energy recommends that customers have all their fuel-burning appliances inspected by a qualified technician at the start of the heating season. The company also recommends that homeowners purchase a CO detection device with an audible alarm and digital display, install it 10 feet from each bedroom as required by law, change the batteries as necessary and check for proper operation.

During this season of giving, the company also invites customers to help those in need stay warm this winter by donating to the Salvation Army's HeatShare program. HeatShare provides energy assistance to families in crisis. Funds are used for natural gas, fuel oil, propane, electricity, furnace checkups and, in the Twin Cities area, furnace repairs. The



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program was founded by CenterPoint Energy in 1982 and is administered by the Salvation Army. Visit [www.Heatshare.MN.org](http://www.Heatshare.MN.org) to make a donation.

Additional energy savings information is available from CenterPoint Energy and Stay Warm Minnesota. Visitors to CenterPoint Energy's Web site ([www.CenterPointEnergy.com](http://www.CenterPointEnergy.com)) can find easy, low-cost/no-cost energy saving recommendations, including caulking, weather-stripping, changing return air filters, and additional energy saving tips. They can also find information about rebates available through the company's conservation improvement programs and important gas safety information.

The Stay Warm Minnesota campaign was launched to help every Minnesota family experience a safe and comfortable winter. The campaign's Web site, [www.staywarm.mn.gov](http://www.staywarm.mn.gov), contains useful information regarding energy efficiency and heating assistance programs provided by the federal and state government, private industry, nonprofits and energy utilities. For Minnesota residents who meet certain income requirements, the site also serves as a one-stop shop for energy assistance programs from many different government and non-government sources. A program application form is available on-line or by calling (800) 657-3710.

CenterPoint Energy, Inc., headquartered in Houston, Texas, is a domestic energy delivery company that includes electric transmission and distribution, natural gas distribution, competitive natural gas sales and services, interstate pipelines and field services operations. The company serves more than five million metered customers primarily in Arkansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Texas. Assets total nearly \$19 billion. With about 8,800 employees, CenterPoint Energy and its predecessor companies have been in business for more than 135 years. In Minnesota, CenterPoint Energy is the state's largest natural gas distribution utility, serving nearly 790,000 customers in 260 communities. The utility also operates a non-regulated business in Minnesota called Home Service Plus®. For more information, visit the Web site at [www.CenterPointEnergy.com](http://www.CenterPointEnergy.com).

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