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## **Xcel Energy announces measures to help customers combat higher heating bills**

DENVER – Expressing deep concern for Coloradans facing higher heating bills, Xcel Energy President and Chief Executive Officer Richard Kelly today called on community leaders to join in efforts to aid consumers. He also announced an extensive, five-point Xcel Energy plan to address energy customer needs.

“Colorado residents will be facing perhaps the most difficult winter ever for energy costs,” Kelly said. “Xcel Energy is committed to working at all levels of our company to help address our customers’ energy needs – for assistance, resources, information and solutions.”

First, Kelly announced an immediate \$2 million donation to Energy Outreach Colorado. He also announced the company’s decision to match up to \$1 million more in customer contributions. In total, the company is donating more than \$5 million across its service territories to heating assistance programs this season. Xcel Energy customers will receive information in their November bills about how they can contribute to the matching program.

Second, Kelly said the company will ask the Colorado Public Utilities Commission to allow for a five-year extension of Xcel Energy’s \$2.4 million annual contribution to Energy Saving Partners, an energy efficiency program for low-income customers from the Colorado Governor’s Office of Energy Management and Conservation.

Third, Kelly said Xcel Energy would add additional personal account representatives to assist low-income and other at-risk customers with payment options, and to provide information about community resources that offer financial assistance. The company will also proactively communicate with at-risk customers to offer these options.

Fourth, Xcel Energy is working with other local companies and organizations, inviting ideas and suggestions from each for developing additional support for energy customers.

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“We have contacted federal legislators, urging them to appropriate additional money for the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), to the new, authorized limit,” Kelly said. “We also have approached others in the business and philanthropic communities to join us in this effort.”

Fifth, Kelly said the company would communicate extensively with customers to provide them with resources and information to reduce their energy consumption and lower their bills. Xcel Energy will promote conservation and related programs, including weatherizing homes and the use of energy-efficient appliances.

“Xcel Energy has long been considered an industry leader in its support of its most vulnerable customers – low-income seniors, families and disabled people,” said Skip Arnold, Energy Outreach Colorado executive director. “By stepping forward to renew its commitment again this year, Xcel Energy continues an unmatched track record of significant funding to help all Coloradans afford home energy.”

Kelly said the company predicts that Colorado customers could pay at least 35 percent more to heat their homes during the winter months. This is due to supply and demand issues recently magnified by hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico, heavier use of natural gas for electricity generation this past summer and lower natural gas storage levels nationally for the winter heating season.

He also pointed out that as a state-regulated distributor of natural gas, Xcel Energy does not profit from increases in the cost of fuel. Kelly noted that the company cannot control the market price of natural gas, but it attempts to lessen the impact on customers with purchasing strategies, as well as storage and conservation improvement programs.

Xcel Energy urges customers concerned about their heating bills or in need of information about assistance to contact Xcel Energy’s 24-hour customer service number at 1-800-895-4999. Customers also may go to the company’s Web site ([xcelenergy.com](http://xcelenergy.com)) or call the customer service number for a free copy of the brochure, “60 Simple Ways to Save Money on Your Energy Bill,” and other information about recommended conservation measures.

Xcel Energy is a major U.S. electricity and natural gas company with regulated operations in 10 Western and Midwestern states. Xcel Energy provides a comprehensive portfolio of energy-related products and services to 3.3 million electricity customers and 1.8 million natural gas customers through its regulated operating companies. In terms of customers, it is the fourth-largest combination natural gas and electricity company in the nation. Company headquarters are located in Minneapolis. More information is available at [xcelenergy.com](http://xcelenergy.com).