



## News Release

### Media Contacts:

Janaan Harp 402-680-8928  
24-Hour Media Line 866-243-9002

### BLACK HILLS ENERGY NATURAL GAS METER SAFETY TIPS

DENISON, Iowa, Jan. 22, 2010 – Black Hills Energy reminds customers to keep their outdoor natural gas meters visible at all times, and to clear an area around the meter so their gas meter set is easily accessible. Snow and ice should be kept away from the shut-off valve located underneath the meter so it's easy to locate.

“When the meter is visible, it helps Black Hills Energy technicians and police and fire personnel to access the meter in case of an emergency at a customer’s residence,” said Gordon Hough, Black Hills Energy senior lead operations technician in Denison. “In addition, easily accessible meters help to ensure our technicians are able to read the customer’s meter each month. With the recent amount of snow accumulation in Iowa, it’s important customers remember not to tamper with or bury their meter, and to keep the meter’s shut-off valve visible at all times,” Hough continued.

Natural gas meters and regulators are manufactured to operate under normal winter conditions. Some general ice coating may be typical with the weather. However, there has been an abnormal amount of snowfall and ice this winter.

#### **Black Hills Energy offers the following natural gas meter safety tips:**

- Be careful during snow removal to not pile snow on meter set or piping.
- If there's snow on the meter, it can be brushed away by hand or with a brush but should not be removed with a shovel.
- Customers should not attempt to remove ice from a meter set, but should contact Black Hills Energy.
- If there is concern for snow or ice build up on natural gas equipment, call the company’s 24-hour customer service center at 888-890-5554.

“For those that have buried meters, it’s generally as simple as clearing away any snow before it freezes,” said Hough. “Regardless of the season, we always encourage customers to keep their natural gas meter and service valve visible and accessible at all times.”

Black Hills Energy serves 149,500 natural gas customers in 130 Iowa communities, and is a proud recipient of the U.S. EPA 2009 Energy Star® Leadership in Housing Award. Black Hills Energy is part of Black Hills Corp. (NYSE: BKH) — a diversified energy company with a tradition of exemplary service and a vision to be the energy partner of choice — is based in Rapid City, S.D., with corporate offices in Denver and Omaha, Neb. The company serves 759,000 natural gas and electric utility customers in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wyoming. The company's non-regulated businesses generate wholesale electricity, produce natural gas, oil and coal, and market energy. Black Hills employees partner to produce results that improve life with energy. More information is available at [www.blackhillscorp.com](http://www.blackhillscorp.com).

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