



## CenterPoint Energy continues response efforts in Minneapolis

**MINNEAPOLIS - March 17, 2011** - CenterPoint Energy crews are working to repair the natural gas line involved in the fire at 60<sup>th</sup> and Nicollet. Additionally, company personnel have begun an investigation into the cause of the incident.

"On behalf of all CenterPoint Energy employees, I want to say first and foremost we are thankful that there were no injuries as a result of this incident," said Tal Centers, vice president of Gas Operations for CenterPoint Energy. "Safety is our top priority; we have completed safety checks in the area and want to assure the public that the area is safe."

Emergency responders evacuated people in homes and business within a 6-block radius of the intersection of 60<sup>th</sup> and Nicollet as a precaution. All were allowed to begin returning to their homes and businesses at around 10:40.

"CenterPoint Energy personnel at a nearby company facility observed the fire shortly after 8:00 a.m. and arrived at the scene at 8:10 a.m. At that time, we quickly implemented our Emergency Operation Plan and were able to shut off the flow of natural gas and bring the situation under control at 9:49 a.m. I also want to express sincere appreciation to the emergency responders, the Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety (MNOPS) and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) with whom we have been working closely since this morning. We will continue to work closely with these agencies as we conduct a full and thorough investigation into the cause of this incident," he added.

The leak and ignition occurred on a twenty-inch steel natural gas line that serves the greater Minneapolis area. This section of the line was installed in 1994. No customers lost natural gas service as a result of the fire except for a handful of customers who requested their natural gas service be shut off.

"Incidents like the one today are extremely rare; however any incident, no matter the size is taken seriously and investigated thoroughly," added Centers.

CenterPoint Energy, Inc., headquartered in Houston, Texas, is a domestic energy delivery company that includes electric transmission & 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.

In Minnesota, CenterPoint Energy is the state's largest natural gas distribution utility, serving about 800,000 customers in 260 communities. The utility also operates a non-regulated business in Minnesota called Home Service Plus®. For more information, visit [CenterPointEnergy.com](http://CenterPointEnergy.com).