



CenterPoint Energy Finalizes Agreement With DOE on \$200 Million Smart Grid Investment Grant

Funds to accelerate current smart meter project and begin building intelligent grid

HOUSTON, March 23, 2010 /PRNewswire via COMTEX News Network/ -- CenterPoint Energy, Inc. (NYSE: CNP) announced that its electric transmission and distribution subsidiary, CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC, has signed an agreement with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to receive a \$200 million stimulus grant for its advanced metering system and intelligent grid projects. The agreement is the culmination of negotiations that began in November 2009 after the DOE selected CenterPoint Energy as one of six utilities to receive the maximum smart grid grant under the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act.

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20020930/CNPLOGO>)

"We are very pleased to have finalized this agreement with the DOE to help accelerate the deployment of our advanced metering system and fund the first phase of an intelligent grid," said Tom Standish, group president of Regulated Operations for CenterPoint Energy. "These funds will help deliver the benefits of smart meters and the intelligent grid to Houston-area electric consumers sooner while reducing the amount that they will have to pay for this significant upgrade to the electric grid."

The CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric grant application requested \$150 million to accelerate its current installation of smart electric meters and associated equipment that make up its Advanced Metering System (AMS). The application also requested \$50 million that will be used to begin building a self-healing Intelligent Grid that utilizes the AMS and other technologies to improve operational efficiency and power reliability in greater Houston.

Since March 2009, CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric has installed more than 267,000 smart meters and, with the aid of the grant, expects to complete installation of over 2 million smart meters, along with the necessary communications infrastructure and computing systems, in 2012 rather than 2014 as originally planned. The initial Intelligent Grid deployment is expected to be completed in 2013.

For the latest information on CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric's current smart meter program, visit www.CenterPointEnergy.com/EnergyInSight.

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. Assets total nearly \$20 billion. With about 8,800 employees, CenterPoint Energy and its predecessor companies have been in business for more than 135 years. For more information, visit the Web site at www.CenterPointEnergy.com.

This news release includes forward-looking statements. Actual events and results may differ materially from those projected. The statements in this news release regarding the offering and the use of proceeds thereof are forward-looking statements that involve risks and uncertainties including market conditions, changes in CenterPoint Energy's business plans, the timing and impact of future regulatory actions and other factors discussed in CenterPoint Energy's and its subsidiaries' Forms 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2009, and other filings with the SEC.

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