

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE EMPIRE DISTRICT GAS COMPANY ADVISES CUSTOMERS TO BE ALERT FOR NATURAL GAS ODOR

JOPLIN, MO – February 19, 2014 – The Empire District Electric Company reminds customers that natural gas is one of the safest, most efficient and most reliable forms of energy available. But, like any energy source, natural gas must be used properly.

Natural gas is colorless and odorless. Empire adds a harmless, non-toxic chemical called Mercaptan to natural gas, so that it's easier to detect a gas leak before it can create a hazardous situation. The chemical has an odor similar to rotten eggs that helps in the detection of even the smallest gas leak. If you smell gas, do not attempt to locate the leak.

- From a safe distance, call Empire District Gas Company's emergency gas leak number at 800-406-9220.
- Do not turn any electrical switches, appliances, or lights on or off, or unplug electrical appliances when there is a strong gas odor.
- Do not use telephones in the area of a strong gas odor.
- Do not smoke or use lighters, matches or other open flames.

Additional safety reminders include:

- Follow manufacturer's instructions for safe operation of natural gas appliances.
- Keep an approved and charged fire extinguisher near natural gas appliances or equipment.
- Arrange for natural gas appliances and equipment to be installed and/or repaired by a trained professional.
- Teach children not to turn on or attempt to light a natural gas appliance.

Page 2/Natural gas alert

Based in Joplin, Missouri, The Empire District Electric Company (NYSE: EDE) is an investor-owned, regulated utility providing electricity, natural gas (through its wholly owned subsidiary The Empire District Gas Company), and water service, with approximately 217,000 customers in Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. A subsidiary of the Company also provides fiber optic services. For more information regarding Empire, visit www.empiredistrict.com.

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