

CHARLOTTE, N.C., Oct. 25, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Piedmont Natural Gas (NYSE: [PNY](#)) released its annual winter forecast today for residential customers in North Carolina

, South Carolina

, and Tennessee. The Company is projecting that the wholesale cost of natural gas will be modestly higher this winter and that monthly natural gas bills will on average be \$5 to \$7

higher per month for

Piedmont's

typical residential customer over the five month November through March winter period.

In 2012, the wholesale cost of natural gas fell to its lowest point in nearly 10 years following the 2011-2012 winter period that was significantly warmer than normal. The wholesale cost of natural gas has increased since then as demand for the affordable and clean-burning energy source has increased. Piedmont's forecast assumes that weather, the primary driver of a customer's actual usage, will be normal this winter.

Natural Gas Costs Remain Significantly Lower Than 2008

Even with the projection of modestly higher wholesale natural gas costs, the Company said that the estimated cost of natural gas service for the average residential customer this winter will remain 20 to 25 percent lower than the winter of 2008-2009, saving the typical residential customer \$150 to \$160 in energy costs.

Company Website a Resource for Energy Saving Tips for Customers

For customers who want to learn more about energy savings tips, Piedmont maintains a separate section on its website devoted to educating customers about their home's energy

usage. Visiting www.piedmontng.com

[W](#)

, says

Ranelle Warfield

Piedmont's

Vice President of Customer Service, could help customers better manage the natural gas they use this winter along with their monthly energy bills. "There are many steps that customers can take to control their energy consumption," she said. "Some, like turning your thermostat down several degrees saves energy, costs nothing, and is easy to do. Others, like making sure windows and doors are properly sealed only cost a few dollars. Still other steps, like investing in a programmable thermostat or purchasing higher efficiency natural gas equipment and appliances may cost a bit more upfront but will save the customer both energy and money over the life of the equipment."

The Company's website also provides consumers with several energy calculator tools. Commenting further, Warfield said, "The energy calculator tools on our website are a great way for customers to see what energy their home actually uses and how they can potentially reduce their consumption and better manage their monthly bills. These tools also give customers an idea of their home's carbon footprint, something we all have an interest in reducing."

Piedmont's "Share the Warmth Round Up" Program Assists Others in the Community

Piedmont reminds its customers that its "Share the Warmth Round Up" Program offers customers an easy way to help those in their communities who face economic hardship. Customers may enroll in the Share the Warmth Round Up Program to round up their monthly natural gas bills to the nearest dollar. The amount rounded up provides emergency energy assistance funds to individuals and families within the communities Piedmont serves, regardless of what energy is used in the home or even what time of year the need arises.

Piedmont

also contributes funds to the energy assistance program and, since 2003, has provided more than

\$1.5 million

to its Share the Warmth partner agencies.

For those customers who want to learn more about the Share the Warmth Round Up Program or to enroll in the program, they are encouraged to visit Piedmont's website at www.piedmontng.com.

About Piedmont Natural Gas

Piedmont Natural Gas is an energy services company primarily engaged in the distribution of natural gas to more than one million residential, commercial, industrial and power generation utility customers in portions of North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee, including customers served by municipalities who are wholesale customers. Our subsidiaries are invested in joint venture, energy-related businesses, including unregulated retail natural gas marketing, and regulated interstate natural gas transportation and storage and intrastate natural gas transportation businesses. More information about Piedmont Natural Gas is available on the Internet at [http://
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