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## **WESTAR ENERGY RECEIVES EEI'S 2012 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE AWARD**

**Washington** – Edison Electric Institute (EEI) today honored Westar Energy with the association's 2012 Emergency Assistance Award for its efforts to help other electric utilities restore power following the June "derecho" and October/November Hurricane Sandy and Winter Storm Athena events.

The electric power industry's Emergency Assistance Award has been presented each year to EEI member electric utility companies since 1998. The award recognizes extraordinary efforts undertaken in restoring electric service to another utility company that has been disrupted by severe weather conditions or other natural events. Westar Energy was chosen by following an international nomination process, and the award was presented during EEI's Winter CEO meeting.

"Westar Energy's restoration assistance following this summer's strong thunderstorms and late fall's Hurricane Sandy/Winter Storm Athena was truly remarkable," said EEI President Tom Kuhn. "Getting the lights back on quickly and safely following a major storm is never easy. Working through the industry's mutual assistance program, Westar's crews were essential in helping their fellow utility companies restore service in affected neighborhoods. Importantly, Westar's assistance also shows their compassion in helping others in their time of need. I congratulate them."

Accepting the award on behalf of Westar was its CEO, Mark Ruelle, who said, "It is an honor to be recognized for the efforts of our employees and our company, taking comfort in the knowledge that others will be there for us and our customers in our time of need. But the real reward is in helping other utilities restore power to their customers. Utilities have a long-standing tradition of neighbor helping neighbor – even if that neighbor is hundreds of miles away. It's our way of saying thank you for the assistance

we receive from other utilities during our own weather-related disasters. I know of no other U.S. industry that does this and am honored to be part of it."

On June 30, 2012, Westar sent crews to assist through July 13 with restoration efforts in West Virginia following strong thunderstorms, referred to as a "derecho" in this instance, that left millions without electricity in the eastern U.S.

Between Oct. 27 and Nov. 13, 2012, Westar crews assisted several utilities with power restoration to millions of customers in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York after Hurricane Sandy and Winter Storm Athena devastated large portions of the Eastern Seaboard.

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*The Edison Electric Institute (EEI) is the association of U.S. shareholder-owned electric companies. Our members serve 95 percent of the ultimate customers in the shareholder-owned segment of the industry, and represent approximately 70 percent of the U.S. electric power industry. We also have more than 65 International electric companies as Affiliate members, and more than 170 industry suppliers and related organizations as Associate members.*

Westar Energy, Inc. (NYSE: WR) is the largest electric utility in Kansas, providing electric service to about 687,000 customers in the state. Westar Energy has about 7,100 megawatts of electric generation capacity and operates and coordinates more than 35,000 miles of electric distribution and transmission lines.

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