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**WESTAR ENERGY PREPARES FOR WINTER STORM, ENCOURAGES
CUSTOMERS TO PREPARE, TOO**

Ice, wind could lead to widespread, extended power outages.

TOPEKA, Kan., Feb. 19, 2013 — Westar Energy is watching the weather closely as meteorologists are predicting sleet, snow and windy conditions Wednesday and Thursday for most of the areas it serves. Ice accumulation on power lines and tree limbs accompanied by wind can cause widespread, extended power outages. Customers are encouraged to have their [storm kits](#) prepared.

Customer storm preparation

People can make waiting out a storm easier with some preparation: assembling a storm kit; deciding if they should seek shelter elsewhere; knowing how to report a power outage; and understanding how to safely operate a generator if they are using one.

When facing prolonged power outages, customers should have the following items on hand:

- Emergency phone numbers
- Flashlights and fresh batteries
- Battery or wind up alarm clock

- Bottled water (a gallon per person per day)
- Nonperishable foods that don't require heating
- Non-electric can opener
- Blankets, bedding and sleeping bags
- First-aid kit and medications
- Tool kit, including a wrench to turn off gas or water lines
- Clean clothes
- Pet supplies

If members of your household are very young, elderly or have special needs, they may need to seek shelter at a location with electricity and heat.

If you have a generator, safety is a top concern for your family and for our workers. Do not connect a generator to your home's electrical panel or directly into a wall outlet. A generator should be connected using a power transfer switch that was installed by a certified electrician. Familiarize yourself with the instructions for operation and never use a generator indoors or in partially enclosed areas.

Reporting an outage and receiving updates

Power outages may be reported to 1-800-LIGHT-KS (1-800-544-4857). This automated line will accept thousands of calls an hour and enter outage reports directly into our work order system. Outages may also be reported online or via a mobile phone at www.WestarEnergy.com if you have registered your account. As reports are received, the work order system analyzes information to help us better pinpoint where the problem might be.

General outage information is always available at www.WestarEnergy.com under Outages and Safety. During storms we frequently provide updates through social media: www.Facebook.com/westarenergyinc and www.Twitter.com/westarenergy.

How Westar prepares

Westar is preparing crews to work safely in adverse conditions and contacting line contractors in case additional personnel is needed. If widespread outages occur, a centralized communication center will be established to coordinate work and resources to restore power to our customers. Once power is restored in one area, crews will be reassigned to other areas we serve as needed.

Most of our storm response preparation happens long before severe weather enters the forecast. As part of its tree trimming and system maintenance program, ReliabiliTree, Westar Energy clears tree limbs and vegetation away from power lines, removing one of the leading causes of power outages. In the Wichita area, where ReliabiliTree debuted in 2010, we have cleared tree limbs away from about three-fourths of the power lines in the area. ReliabiliTree is now active throughout the area we serve. Across all customers we have cleared about 5,800 miles, or 30 percent, of power lines.

In addition, strategic partnerships ensure equipment such as power poles, power line and transformers are reserved and available.

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Westar Energy, Inc. (NYSE: WR) is Kansas' largest electric utility. For more than a century, we have provided Kansans the safe, reliable electricity needed to power their businesses and homes. Every day our team of professionals takes on projects to generate and deliver electricity, protect the environment and provide excellent service to our nearly 700,000 customers. Westar has 7,400 MW of electric generation capacity fueled by coal, uranium, natural gas, wind and landfill gas. We are also a leader in electric transmission in Kansas. Our innovative customer service programs include mobile-enabled customer care, a smart meter pilot project and paving the way for electric vehicle adoption. Our employees live, volunteer and work in the communities we serve.

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