



Contact: Annette Henkel
651-227-7902
info@energyminnesota.org
www.EnergyMinnesota.org

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**Safety starts from within investor-owned utilities and through great partnerships
with the Minnesota Safety Council**

"We are fortunate that we get to work with the investor-owned utilities. They spend time and energy creating a workplace culture that keeps their employees safe," said Paul Aasen, President of the Minnesota Safety Council. "We work closely with them to keep safety a top priority at work and to take safety home. The goal is for all their employees to work safe, drive safe and live safe."

Each and every one of Minnesota's investor-owned utilities has made a culture of safety on the job their top priority. These companies constantly strive to keep their employees safe by living and promoting safety education, safe work practices and communication with the goal of zero injuries, accidents or incidents on the job and at home.

This year, employees at [Otter Tail Power](#) are focused on moving safety from a value to an action. This means employees encourage each other to use safe work practices every time they complete a task, translating their safety value into a safety action. "We have a comprehensive program with a commitment to safety on every job site because ultimately we want our employees to go home to their families at night," said Eric Hamm, Safety Services Manager for Otter Tail Power. The company is an industry leader in avoiding serious injuries when compared to the Edison Electrical Institute (EEI) average and the top 25 percent of electric utilities.

Minnesota's investor-owned utility, [CenterPoint Energy](#), has created a policy requiring all employees to work together in a safe manner to prevent accidents and injuries, and to eliminate hazards in the workplace. The company believes that safety must be designed into each and every job it performs to ensure that its employees arrive home safely at the end of each workday, as well as help achieve a key business goal for the company. In fact, CenterPoint Energy finds safety so important that the company recently added it to its core values and lists it as number one.

CenterPoint Energy continually monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of its safety practices. Ultimately, the wellbeing of every employee depends on one's personal dedication to working safely. By promoting this spirit of cooperation, CenterPoint Energy believes that each employee, customers, and ultimately, the general public, will enjoy the benefits of a safe work environment. At the 2016 Environmental, Safety & Health, and Training Conference, CenterPoint Energy was recognized by the [Southern Gas Association](#) as a winner in the Safety Video Awards program.

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Xcel Energy believes that it is the role of management to foster, develop, implement and provide training and communication about safety programs that will help reduce occupational injuries and illnesses at work. The company tracks the safety performance of 340 workgroups, and of those groups, 79 percent have gone one year or more without an OSHA recordable injury. In fact, for Xcel Energy, recorded injuries were down 10 percent in 2015 compared to 2014.

The company has 21 corporate safety policies in place to address occupational safety and health issues and believes that communication, safety committees and training and three key components to maintain its safety and health culture. In 2015, Xcel Energy entered the sixth year of its ambitious Journey to Zero workplace safety campaign. Journey to Zero is about creating a safer work environment by putting safety at the forefront of everything the company does.

"Utility companies have definitely elevated their focus on work, home and community safety in the past decade. These businesses operate around the clock, every day of the year, sometimes under very difficult conditions like storm recovery," added Aasen. "It's easy to take lighting and heating or cooling and hot water for granted but on those rare occasions when the electricity or gas is off, when our sense of routine and safety are interrupted, that's when you truly appreciate the work that goes into making our day to day lives predictable and comfortable."

For over 145 years, Minnesota's investor-owned utilities have stayed committed to safety for both their employees and the public. These utilities will continue to keep safety a top priority and core function in energy delivery now and into the future.

Energy Minnesota is an initiative of Minnesota's investor owned electric and natural gas utilities. The privately run, investor-owned utilities in Minnesota deliver safe, reliable and affordable energy 24/7/365. This track record of performance has been ongoing for nearly a century and a half. Energy Minnesota strives to inform and educate customers, businesses, community leaders and public policymakers and to foster well-informed public policy. Learn more at www.energyminnesota.org.

413 Wacouta Street #230 St. Paul, MN 55101 www.EnergyMinnesota.org @EnergyMinnesota