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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Allegheny Power issues holiday lighting safety tips

Greensburg, Pa., December 11, 2003—The holidays have arrived, and for many, decorating the home is part of the celebration. Allegheny Power reminds everyone that checking electric lights and decorations before installation can help ensure a safe holiday season.

Do not assume that because the lights worked last year that they are in good working condition and that they should not be inspected this year. When inspecting the lighting, look for frayed wires, damaged sockets, or missing insulation, and if you find any of these conditions, throw the lights away. When purchasing new lighting, you can reduce the possibility of electrical shock or fires by checking for the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) label before stringing lights and setting up other decorations. Equally important is to use lighting according to the manufacturer's specifications—indoor lights for indoor use only and outdoor lights for outdoor use.

In addition to visually inspecting holiday lighting and decorations, Allegheny Power offers the following holiday safety tips:

- When installing outdoor lights, use only lighting and other electrical decorations certified for outdoor use.
- Carefully inspect each decoration before plugging into an outlet. Cracked sockets, loose connections, and frayed, loose, or bare wires may cause a serious electric shock or start a fire. Replace damaged items with new decorations.
- Always unplug a light string or electrical decoration before replacing light bulbs or fuses.
- Don't mount or support light strings in any way that might damage the cord's wire insulation. Never nail or staple light strings or extension cords.

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Allegheny Power holiday lighting tips

- Don't overload extension cords — it could cause the cord to overheat and start a fire.
- Keep all outdoor extension cords and light strings clear of snow and standing water and well protected from weather.
- Don't allow children or pets to play with light strings, candle lights, or other electrical decorations. Even small light decorations can produce a deadly electric shock if they are misused.
- Turn off all electrical light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.
- Plug outdoor electric lights and decorations into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable GFCIs can be purchased wherever electrical supplies are sold.
- When hanging lights outside, around your house or in trees, be sure to survey the area for overhead power lines and maintain at least a 10-foot distance.

Allegheny Power, an Allegheny Energy company, delivers low-cost, reliable electric and natural gas service to about four million people in parts of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia, and Ohio. For more information about Allegheny, visit our web site at www.alleghenypower.com.