



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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EEI HONORS WESTAR ENERGY WITH 'EMERGENCY RECOVERY AWARD' FOR POWER RESTORATION EFFORT

WASHINGTON (March 11, 2009) – The Edison Electric Institute today honored Westar Energy with the association's "Emergency Recovery Award" for its effort to restore electric service to its customers after an ice storm that covered much of the company's service territory.

Presented annually by EEI, the award recognizes exceptional efforts in restoring electric service that has been disrupted by severe weather or other natural events. The award was presented today during EEI's Spring CEO meetings.

On Dec. 9, 2007, an ice storm greatly affected electric service to customers as it worked its way east from Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and southern Missouri to Westar's service territory in southeast Kansas. Electric service was disrupted to 204,000 unique customers, with 414,850 multiple outages. The storm attacked Westar's electric infrastructure, necessitating repairs to 29 transmission structures and 2,090 distribution poles.

Because the storm hit parts of Oklahoma and Missouri before reaching Westar's service territory, there was a shortage of nearby linemen and vegetation workers. As a result, line contractors from Michigan, Wyoming and Colorado were called in to assist with power restoration, while Westar completed a thorough damage assessment. In the end, crews from 20 states pitched in. After five days, 83 percent of Westar's customers had been brought

back online. Service was restored to all of Westar's customers after ten days.

"Westar Energy completed the difficult task of restoring its customers' electric service after a very damaging ice storm," said EEI President Thomas R. Kuhn. "The company's extraordinary response is a great example of what it takes to make sure we all have power."

Westar Energy (NYSE: WR) is the largest electric energy provider in Kansas, delivering reliable service to more than 679,000 customers.

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Edison Electric Institute (EEI) is the association of United States investor-owned electric utilities and industry affiliates and associates worldwide. Its domestic members generate approximately three-quarters of all the electricity generated by electric utilities in the country and serve about 70 percent of all ultimate customers in the nation.

