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**** PHOTO OPPORUNITY****

WESTAR SENDS CREWS TO HELP AFTER HURRICANE IRENE

Crews are headed to New York to assist in restoration.

TOPEKA, Kan., Aug. 26, 2011 — Westar Energy received a call for assistance from the New York Mutual Assistance Group in preparation for damage resulting from Hurricane Irene, which is scheduled to make landfall this weekend.

Westar has released most of its contract crews and will be sending about 80 Westar linemen, supervisors, safety and support personnel to assist with restoration efforts. Some crews will leave Westar's Topeka Operations Center, 4001, NW 14th, at 2:30 p.m. today. Crews will pass through Kansas City, meeting up at Interstate 70 mile marker 414 in two groups: one group will depart at 4 p.m.; and the second will depart at 6 p.m.

Employees from Westar's Topeka, Manhattan, Emporia, Marysville, Salina, Lawrence, Fort Scott, Wichita, Newton, Humboldt, Arkansas City, Atchison, Pittsburg and Olathe offices will assist with the restoration.

Westar crews plan to be in Poughkeepsie, NY, by Monday morning and initially plan to stay for 14 days to assist Central Hudson Gas & Electric, which will reimburse Westar for expenses related to the assistance. Predictions indicate Irene may be a category 3 hurricane

accompanied by 80+ mph winds, which means 55 million people over 1,400 miles could find themselves without power.

Eastern utilities have asked for assistance from as far away as Colorado in preparation for the storm. As of Friday morning, thousands of utility workers were scheduled to assist with power restoration, and more were still being sought.

Westar Energy is a member of the Midwest Mutual Assistance Group. This group allows Westar to call upon neighboring utilities and their contractors for help to restore service in the event of a significant event, such as severe storm. In return, Westar will send line and tree crews to assist neighboring utilities when they are in need. In the event of catastrophic damage utilities reach out for assistance from across the nation.

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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.

For more information about Westar Energy, visit us on the Internet at <http://www.WestarEnergy.com>.