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NEWS RELEASE

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‘Smarter Natural Gas’ Project Proposed for Dubuque

DUBUQUE, Iowa – The Dubuque City Council’s December 6 meeting agenda includes a proposal for the City of Dubuque and Black Hills Energy to partner on a Smarter Natural Gas pilot study to help residents better understand their natural gas usage and assess energy-efficiency technologies.

If approved, the natural gas study would be the next phase of Smarter Sustainable Dubuque, the City’s partnership with IBM Research to give residents and businesses the information and tools they need to make smarter energy choices in order to reduce their costs and environmental impact.

Black Hills Energy is installing Automated Meter Reading (AMR) units on all residential natural gas meters in Dubuque and expects to be complete by year-end. The Smarter Natural Gas pilot study would utilize the AMR units to gather usage information of 250 volunteer homeowners in Dubuque. The two-year study would enable Black Hills Energy to provide data about gas usage to the City and IBM for research purposes. The data would be anonymous and homeowner-specific data would not be made available.

Black Hills Energy would handle the purchase, installation, and support of all needed equipment. The City and Dubuque 2.0 would assist in the recruitment and engagement of the 250 volunteer households for the study. The pilot would take advantage of existing infrastructure and processes already in place to support the Smarter Water and Smarter Electricity pilot studies of the Smarter Sustainable Dubuque initiative. Other than this support, there would be no direct expenses or funding required of the City.

If the City Council approves the project, the City and Dubuque 2.0 would recruit and engage volunteers over the next month from a targeted geographic area defined by Black Hills Energy. Volunteer households selected for the pilot study would be connected to the new meter reading system in January. Pilot study participants would eventually be able to

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access their hourly natural gas usage and related data through an interactive website, or portal, similar to what IBM developed for the Smarter Water pilot study and under development for the Smarter Electricity study with Alliant Energy.

Smarter Sustainable Dubuque is part of the City of Dubuque's Sustainable Dubuque Initiative, which began in 2006 and seeks to make Dubuque a community that meets the environmental, economic, and social equity needs of its residents today without reducing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

The Smarter Natural Gas Pilot Study helps meet Dubuque's sustainability principle of Smart Energy Use. For additional information on Smarter Sustainable Dubuque, please visit www.sustainabledubuque.org.



Black Hills/Iowa Gas Utility Company, LLC d/b/a Black Hills Energy

Black Hills Energy serves 149,700 natural gas customers in 130 Iowa communities and is a recipient of the U.S. EPA 2010 ENERGY STAR® Leadership in Housing Award. Black Hills Energy is a subsidiary of Black Hills Corp. — a diversified energy company with a tradition of exemplary service and a vision to be the energy partner of choice — based in Rapid City, S.D., with corporate offices in Denver and Omaha, Neb. Black Hills Corp. serves 763,300 natural gas and electric utility customers in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wyoming, and its non-regulated businesses generate wholesale electricity, produce natural gas, oil and coal, and market energy. Black Hills' 2,200 employees partner to produce results that improve life with energy. More information is available at www.blackhillscorp.com.

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