

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release



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Subject: NIPCO Among Finalists for APEX Award

Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative of Le Mars, Iowa, was among 10 finalists for the 2008 APEX Award given at the annual meeting of the Utilities Telecom Council in Orlando, Fla.

The award recognizes utilities around the world using mobile and wireless communications systems to improve the quality of life within their communities. The award is also supported by the Motorola company.

Dennis Hill, NIPCO's vice president telecommunications services, accepted the finalist trophy at the May 6 ceremony.

NIPCO was recognized for its contributions to communications services in northwest Iowa. In the 1980s and 1990s, NIPCO used microwave radios to control its electric transmission network. When the Federal Communications Commission assigned those microwave frequencies to wireless telephone companies, NIPCO in 1996 began installing a 440-mile fiber optic network for its core business communication needs. During that time, many communities in northwest Iowa had no access to modern telecommunications technologies.

NIPCO's new fiber path ran close to many of the communities that NIPCO serves with electricity. With excess capacity on the fiber optic cable, NIPCO began leasing space on its cable to telecommunications companies which brought end services such as wired and wireless Internet, cable television, wired and wireless telephone services and many other modern technologies to those communities.

NIPCO's fiber optic cable, in addition to providing for NIPCO's communication needs, now brings services to more than 35,000 people in 17 rural northwest Iowa communities. In addition, the fiber optic cable now provides new utility technologies to rural electric cooperatives in NIPCO's service area, including automated meter reading and joint use of computer network servers by cooperatives which are many miles apart.

NIPCO, a Touchstone Energy cooperative headquartered in Le Mars, is a wholesale electric generation and transmission cooperative owned by six rural electric cooperatives and also by a full-service municipal electric cooperative serving six western Iowa towns. Touchstone Energy is a national alliance of local, consumer-owned electric cooperatives providing high standards of service to

customers large and small. More than 662 Touchstone Energy cooperatives in 46 states deliver energy and energy solutions to more than 30 million customers every day. Touchstone Energy cooperatives serve their members with integrity, accountability, innovation and a long-standing commitment to communities.

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