

# Eileen O’Neill Odum:

## Executive Vice President and Group CEO, NiSource Indiana Business Segment

### **Role of NiSource and NIPSCO:**

“NiSource, our parent company, has three companies in Indiana. The largest is NIPSCO – Northern Indiana Public Service Company. NIPSCO serves about 720,000 natural gas customers on the utilities side and a little more than 450,000 electric customers (most also receive natural gas). Also in Indiana are Kokomo Gas and Northern Indiana Fuel and Light.

“Our role is to serve our customers and give them the very best natural gas and electric service that we possibly can.”

### **More than a job:**

“The very most rewarding part of my job is serving customers. That is a strong, cultural connection with everyone in our company. We’re a service company, and we’re proud of what we do.”

### **How the energy industry will change in the next decade:**

Expect environmental legislation and regulation to increase. Due to new technologies in the ability to extract natural gas in the United States “customers will see generally lower and more stable natural gas prices.” Industry is experiencing an aging workforce phenomenon so “there are going to be incredible career opportunities for people in our industry and those who enter our industry.”

### **Impact of renewable energy:**

Generally renewable sources of energy, including wind, are more expensive than Indiana’s primary source – coal. While NIPSCO has purchased long-term wind energy contracts as part of its portfolio, it cannot be a primary source. “There are no efficient way today to store electricity. It’s not like we can generate a whole lot of energy at night with wind or on the windiest day of the year and save it up and use it when the wind’s not blowing.”

### **Community involvement:**

NIPSCO, Kokomo Gas and Northern Indiana Fuel and Light give about \$1 million a year in charitable contributions across Northwest Indiana. On a personal level, Odum serves on the board for the Crisis Center in Gary and the board of trustees for the Indiana chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

### **Best part of living in Northwest Indiana:**

Lake Michigan and the dunes. Greatest biodiversity in the state. Human diversity.

### **Valuable advice from mentor:**

“Relatively early in my career, I worked for a gentleman who absolutely insisted that I complete a career plan. ... I think that is the single most valuable piece of advice I ever got. What it forced me to do is really sit down with a piece of paper and think about what it was that I wanted to achieve in my career. ... It enabled me to tell people what it was I wanted, what I was looking for and what was important to me. That’s the advice I try to share.”

