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Country Music Legend Vince Gill Named Grand Marshal for Piedmont Natural Gas Nashville Christmas Parade

Gill will lead the 59th annual Christmas Parade celebrating "Christmas Around the World" through downtown Music City on December 2nd

October 13, 2011 (Nashville, TN) – Nashville Mayor Karl Dean announced today that Country Music Hall of Fame legend Vince Gill will serve as Grand Marshal for the 59th Annual Nashville Christmas Parade on December 2nd.

The parade, a longtime Music City tradition, officially kick starts the holiday season downtown with the lighting of the city Christmas tree at the Public Square Plaza where Gill will be joined by Mayor Dean and executives from Piedmont Natural Gas, which has sponsored the Nashville Christmas Parade since it originated in 1952. The theme of this year's parade is "Christmas Around the World," and following the lighting of the Christmas tree, Gill will lead parade floats through the heart of downtown from 2nd Avenue through Broadway.

"I wanted to serve as grand marshal because I just like Mayor Dean. It's that simple. He has been beyond supportive of the music community," said Gill.

This is a banner year for Vince Gill who marked his 20th anniversary as a Grand Ole Opry member in August and will debut his first record in more than five years "Guitar Slinger" on October 24th. Noted as one of country music's greatest singers and songwriters of all time, Gill has sold more than 26 million albums and won 20 Grammy Awards and 18 CMA awards including Entertainer of the Year twice. Gill co-hosted the CMA Awards for 12 consecutive years and was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2007.

"Vince Gill's community involvement and amazing talent as a singer, songwriter and musician have made a remarkable and lasting mark on Music City," Mayor Dean said. "I am grateful that he will be taking part in this longtime Nashville tradition."

Gill joins a distinguished group of Nashville Grand Marshal alumni including fellow country music stars Conway Twitty, Patty Loveless, Charlie Daniels, Lorrie Morgan, Josh Turner and John Rich. Country radio legend Gerry House led last year's "Home for the Holidays" themed-parade.

"Vince's songs have touched the lives of many and his humanitarian efforts have helped thousands not only in Tennessee but around the country," said Tim Greenhouse, Piedmont Natural Gas' Regional Executive for Nashville. "Piedmont Natural Gas is honored to have Vince lead the Nashville Christmas Parade, which is now nearly six decades old. With his help, this year's parade will be just as memorable – if not more memorable -- than in years past."

All proceeds from the parade will benefit the Piedmont Natural Gas *Share the Warmth* program, which assists low-income families in Nashville who need help paying energy bills regardless of their energy source or the time of year. Since 2003, Piedmont Natural Gas and its customers, along with the Piedmont Natural Gas Foundation, have donated more than \$1.5 million to *Share the Warmth* energy assistance funds.

To stay up to date on parade happenings and announcements, visit the Nashville Christmas Parade Facebook page at www.facebook.com/nashvillechristmasparade. Additional information on how to participate in this year's parade is also available at <http://nashvillechristmasparade.com>.

About Piedmont Natural Gas

Piedmont Natural Gas is an energy services company primarily engaged in the distribution of natural gas to more than one million residential, commercial and industrial utility customers in North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee, including 52,000 customers served by municipalities who are wholesale customers. Our subsidiaries are invested in joint venture, energy- related businesses, including unregulated retail natural gas marketing, interstate natural gas storage and intrastate natural gas transportation. More information about Piedmont Natural Gas is available at www.piedmontng.com.

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