

### Midwest Faces Propane Shortage

(KTNC) -- Propane prices are skyrocketing, and unless the weather warms and demand drops, one industry official says the Midwest supply of the fuel could run out next month.

Jeff LaPan, a spokesman for C-H-S Incorporated, a Minnesota company that sells propane on the wholesale market, says Midwesterners used about one-point-two million gallons of propane last week and only about five million gallons are left in the region.

LaPan says a combination of factors have led to this shortage – the shutdown of a key pipeline, below average supplies last fall, higher demand for propane to dry the 2013 harvest, and higher demand from homeowners due to the cold temperatures.

About eight-percent of homes in Nebraska use propane as a heating fuel. LaPan says this is essentially a perfect storm situation, calling the high demand an anomaly that's far outside the norm.

Propane prices hit a record high last week at a distribution hub in Conway, Kansas, while prices in some areas of rural Nebraska rose to five-dollars a gallon. A week earlier, it was less than half that price in Nebraska.

Elsewhere, Iowa's governor sent a letter to President Obama on Monday, asking the president to ease or waive whatever federal regulations he can that might make it easier to get propane to market. Also Monday, Minnesota's governor declared a state of emergency because of a severe shortage of propane and other home heating fuels.

Nebraska Radio Network