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[21911001]

Arkla Inc. said that as part of a program to improve profitability it will take a total of \$ 189 million in after-tax charges by year end .

[21911002]

It also announced an initial public offering of 18 % of its gas exploration and production subsidiary .

[21911003]

The Shreveport , La. , natural gas company said the charges , though partially offset by a one-time gain from the offering , will result in a full-year after-tax loss .

[21911004]

Last year , the company had net income of \$ 117.3 million , or \$ 1.30 a share .

[21911005]

Arkla said it will report \$ 179 million in one-time charges against continuing operations for the third quarter , reflecting settlement of certain natural gas contracts .

[21911006]

It said it will take a \$ 10 million fourth-quarter charge against discontinued operations , reflecting certain write-downs and the planned sale of a unit .

[21911007]

Arkla said its initial offering of 18 % of Arkla Exploration Co. is expected to result in a net gain of about \$ 90 million , which will be used to pay down Arkla debt .

[21911008]

Arkla Exploration owns sizable gas and crude-oil reserves in the South and Southwest .