



**AUSTIN
UTILITIES**
Connections for Better Living™



**Austin Utilities
Board of Commissioners**

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**AUSTIN UTILITIES
WILL BE CLOSED
MONDAY, SEP. 6TH**



Connections

August 2021
Customer Newsletter

Ellis Water Tower Open House Wednesday, August 25 - 3:30-6pm

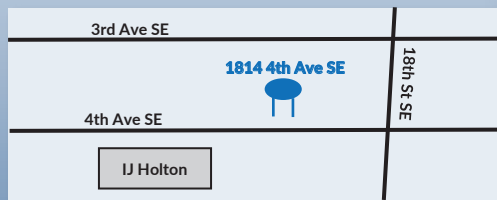
Refreshments & Water-Saving Gadget Giveaways!

Join us!

Stop in and see the workings of a water tower and well system! Originally constructed in 1955, this site has recently received over 1.3 million in renovations including a full replacement of the building and pumping system components.



Be sure to stop for your **FREE** water sample and learn all about your drinking water.



Celebrating Five Years

We are celebrating five years at our new location and we can't believe it! Since moving in, our natural gas rates have remained flat and our electric rates have decreased by 0.85%. Having all our staff in one location has allowed us to meet or exceed our savings target of \$100,000 per year. The building allows customers more privacy when speaking to staff about confidential bill information. It has been shared with the community to host many important programs like the high school CEO program and Red Cross blood drives, and has supported strategic planning events for several community organizations. We look forward to this location being our home for many years to come.

Making Connections at School



Austin Utilities wrapped up the third year of their popular Project Conserve and Save program, a collaborative partnership with the National Energy Foundation (NEF). This program provides all Austin 4th graders education about energy efficiency and concludes with a take home kit of energy saving devices the student installs with a family member. Home Energy Worksheets are used to survey the participant's experience. We continue to see a high rate of installation of energy saving devices that help our customers save energy and money at home.

What are parents saying about this program?

- 67% say participation changed the way they use energy in the home.
- 87% say they would like to see the program continued in local schools.
- 87% say they will continue to use the take home kit items after the completion of the program.

"My son really enjoyed helping with this."

"Awesome that you are getting kids thinking about energy usage."

"I really like the shower timer, it helped me a lot."



Getting Students rEVed Up

In April 2021, Austin Utilities participated in a pilot program with NEF to educate students about electric vehicles through a program called rEV. rEV teaches about the advantages of electric transportation delivered through a "choose your adventure" interactive movie format, with accompanying teacher and student materials. The program was offered to 370 ninth grade students who received a string bag and rEV t-shirt for participating and completing a survey about their experience.

What are students saying about this program?

- 85% have gained general knowledge about electric vehicles.
- 60% have a more favorable attitude about EVs after participating in the rEV program
- 28% reported visiting their utility website to learn more about EVs, and another 46% plan to.

"Can't wait to show it to my family!!!"

"I'm glad that there are more electric cars being made. It is great for the environment."

"I think that the rEV video we watched today made a big impact on the way I think about electrical cars. "

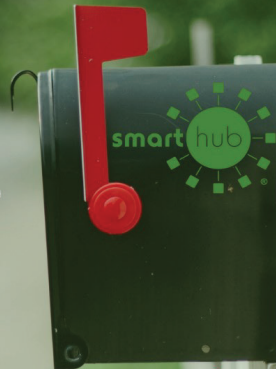
Construction Notice

MetroNet will soon begin construction in the city of Austin. Residents will see a series of messages before construction activity begins in their neighborhood, including a letter, postcard, and yard marker. Next, they will see crews identifying underground utilities and marking their locations with temporary paint or flags. If you have any questions, we recommend you please call 1-877-386-3876 or go to Metronetinc.com/construction.



Meter Upgrade Project

Watch your mailbox this fall for an important notice about our Advanced Meter Infrastructure project. This 4-year project will include the replacement of all meters in our service territory to provide improved service, operational savings, and better billing information.



To take advantage of the information your new meters will provide sign up for an Austin Utilities SmartHub account.



Employee Spotlight

Keven Maxa

Engineering Supervisor

Keven Maxa joined the staff as the Engineering Supervisor in November of 2000. He came with over 10 years of experience in the Engineering Department at Owatonna Public Utilities. Keven says he enjoys problem solving and coming up with new ways to serve AU's customers. His job has a lot of variety and he likes doing something different each day.

Keven has been married to his wife Julie for almost 34 years. They have four adult children, one boy and three girls. Keven boasts a large extended family tree with 43 first cousins and an aunt who is 105 years old. In his spare time Keven likes to work on cars and small engines, woodworking, and studying history. He is also involved as an adult leader in the Boy Scouts and for 4H. When Keven retires in a few years he hopes to travel to the locations on his bucket list like Alaska, Germany, and Switzerland. He's also looking forward to spoiling some grandkids as soon as he gets some.



July 4th Parade

Austin Utilities participated in this year's Fourth of July parade in Austin and featured our alternate fuel vehicles. Our 2016 Ford F150 pickup was retrofitted with a compressed natural gas kit, and our Nissan Leaf electric vehicle (EV) was purchased in 2020. Customers who own EVs can join our EV Owners Club and earn \$30 in Chamber Bucks.



Introducing AU's mascot, Meter Buddy



Mark Nibaur, Miguel Solis, Leo Heimer, Adam Heimer, Ann Christianson and Marty Johnson.

Is my air conditioner load control activated?

[Click here to learn more](#)

Want to know if we have activated air conditioner load control? Click on this icon on the home page of our website to learn how. Remember, we never run air conditioner load control on weekends or holidays.

FEBRUARY GAS ADJUSTMENT UPDATE

A major winter storm in February 2021 created a historic spike in gas prices February 13-17th. These costs were passed on to customers in seven installments beginning with their May bill, based on their usage during that time period. Customers will see these charges in the Current Service Detail of their bill as "Feb 2021 PGA Payment". A motion made by our board of commissioners to use cash reserves reduced the amount due from customers by over 37 percent. The average residential customer will pay seven installments of \$27. To learn more about this see our April and May 2021 Connections newsletters.

The Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners Monthly Meeting was held on June 15th, 2021.

Agenda items included:

- Request for donation to July 4th festivities
- Developer's Agreement for Nature Ridge III
- NE Plant demolition timeline

Meeting minutes are available at www.austinutilities.com



Austin Utilities



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