



**AUSTIN
UTILITIES**
Connections for Better Living™

**Austin Utilities
Board of Commissioners**

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**\$500 AU
Scholarship**



Open to seniors who have a parent or guardian who is a customer of Austin Utilities. Applications available at austinutilities.com. Deadline April 2nd.

**Austin Utilities Office
will be Closed
Friday, April 2nd**



Connections

March 2021
Customer Newsletter

NATURAL GAS UTILITY WORKERS' DAY IS MARCH 18TH



We invite you to join us in celebrating your local natural gas utility workers. 2021 is the sixth year in which March 18 is Natural Gas Utility Workers' Day, a time when communities such as ours give recognition to the employees who provide one of our most valuable assets — our natural gas utility.

MEET THE CREW

Gas and Water Operations Supervisor - Jeff Majerus

Gas and Water Services Supervisor - Rob Gleason

Lead Gas Construction

Matt Ball
Rob Cabeen

Lead Water Construction

Willie Granholm
Brian Gunderson

Gas Service Field Technician

Dave Maloney

Gas/Water Service Technicians

Joe Bartholomew Ryan Bell
Jason Cummings Marty Johnson
Scott Wangen Gary Gabrielson (Ret. 2/19/21)

Welder

Justin Peterson

Pipefitter

Wade Nelson

Heavy Equip. Operator

Brandon Henry
Craig Weis

Light Equip. Operator

Garrett Gilster Matias Martin
Brandon Schaefer Hunter Yocom

Lead Meter/Repair

Jessie Dumais

Meter Repair/Tester

John Troupe

ANNUAL RAIN BARREL SALE

Rain barrels capture and store rainwater draining from your roof, providing free water for gardening and a reduction in storm runoff. Austin Utilities is partnering with the Recycling Association of MN to offer **Rain Catcher Rain Barrels for only \$79 plus tax**. The barrels are constructed of 100% recycled material and include a debris screen, garden hose, shut-off thumb valve, hanging hose clip, overflow hose, and linking kit.

- Assembled Dimensions: 24" D x 24" W x 32" H.
- Total Volume: 6 cu ft / 45 Gallon

Available beginning March 1st. Order online at AustinUtilities.com. Quantities are limited and all orders must be made and pre-paid online. **Water customers of AU will receive a \$10 bill credit on their purchase when picked up.**



Drive Thru
Pick up
May 13th
3-6 pm

How can I use that much water?

Leaks are often the culprit when a high water bill is received. Austin Utilities bills water in CCF units. One CCF of water billed is about 750 gallons of water. The average residential customer uses about 6 CCF of water per month in the winter. Take a look at your water usage during a colder month, such as January or February. If you are using much more than our average, you may want to check for leaks.



March 15–21, 2021

Fix a Leak Week

Checking for Leaks

Fix a leak week is a reminder to check around your home for water leaks. Leaks are often easy to fix, requiring only a few tools and hardware that can pay for themselves in water savings. Fixing easily corrected household water leaks can save homeowners about 10 percent on their water bills.

Toilet Leaks

Identify toilet leaks by placing a drop of food coloring in the toilet tank. If any color shows up in the bowl after 10 minutes, you have a leak. Old or worn-out toilet flappers (e.g., valve seal) can cause leaks. Flappers are inexpensive rubber parts that can build up minerals or decay over time. Replacing them can be a quick and easy fix for your water woes. To fix this leak, consult your local hardware store or home improvement retailer.

Tip: Bring the old flapper to the hardware store for comparison to make sure you buy a new flapper that fits your toilet model.

Faucet Leaks

Old and worn faucet washers and gaskets frequently cause leaks in faucets. A leaky faucet that drips at the rate of one drip per second can waste more than 3,000 gallons per year. That's the amount of water needed to take more than 180 showers! Many tutorials are available online for how to fix a wide variety of faucets.

Tip: Don't forget to turn off the water line before you start!

Showerhead Leaks

A showerhead leaking at 10 drips per minute wastes more than 500 gallons per year. That's the amount of water it takes to wash 60 loads of

dishes in your dishwasher. Some leaky showerheads can be fixed by making sure there is a tight connection between the showerhead and the pipe stem and by using pipe tape to secure it. Pipe tape, also called Teflon tape, is available at most hardware stores, is easy to apply, and can help control leaks.

Tip: It's also a good idea to check and, if needed, replace the washer or "o" ring inside the showerhead while making this repair.

Outdoor Leaks

If you have an in-ground irrigation system, check it each spring before use to make sure it wasn't damaged by frost or freezing. An irrigation system that has a leak 1/32nd of an inch in diameter (about the thickness of a dime) can waste about 6,300 gallons of water per month. If you need help, hire an irrigation professional to inspect it for you.

Tip: Don't forget garden hoses! Check your garden hose for leaks at its connection to the spigot. If it leaks while you run your hose, replace the nylon or rubber hose washer and ensure a tight connection to the spigot using pipe tape and a wrench.

A graphic featuring a silver faucet with a single drop of water falling from it. The text 'In just 10 minutes you could save...' is written in a curved path above the faucet. Below this, three lines of text list the savings: '10 percent on your water bill', '10 thousand gallons of water', and '10 months of laundry water'. At the bottom of the graphic, the text 'Find and fix leaks!' is written in a bold, blue font.

Austin Utilities is about to launch their third year of Project Conserve & Save. This program, offered to all 4th grade classrooms, provides curriculum about energy efficiency and a take-home kit filled with energy saving devices the student installs with their parent. In 2020, 82% of parents said participation changed the way they use energy in the home. If you have a 4th grade student watch for your kit to come home in March or early April.

Conserve + Save at School

This program for 4th grade students, encourages students and families to



with their energy and water use through an energy efficiency curriculum and a take home kit



Your Style. More Savings. Rebates for your WaterSenseability



WaterSense Rebates
Showerheads
\$25

High Efficiency Toilets
\$25

APPLY TODAY!
CONSERVE & \$AVE

Employee Spotlight

Dave Maloney Gas Service Field Technician

Dave Maloney joined Austin Utilities in 1998 as a Light Equipment Operator. After two years he transferred to Gas Service and has been a technician ever since. Dave's experience came as a local welder and as a 2nd Class Petty Officer in the Navy. He says the best part of his gas service job is assisting customers, especially when he can help them solve a problem.

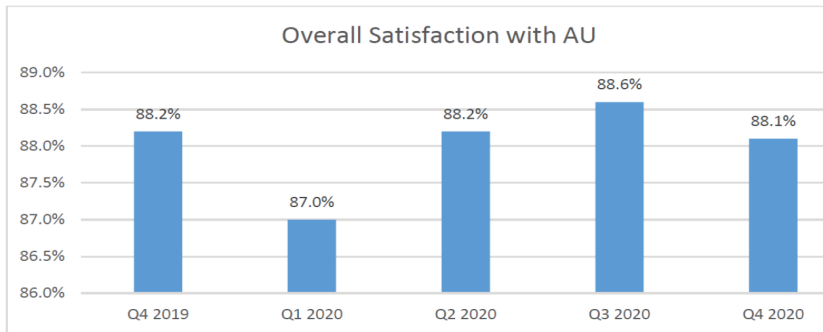


Dave has been married to his wife Julie for 28 years and they have three adult sons. Camping, boating and muscle cars are his biggest hobbies and his super fast 1969 Super Bee is a prized possession. A six month Mediterranean tour in the Navy sparked his interest in traveling. Assuming cruise ships are running again, he plans to take a cruise to Aruba and the Dominican Republic next year. In the meantime, he says he'll continue to perfect his frozen pizza making skills and binge watch some Netflix. Retirement is still several years away so for now, expect to see Dave continuing to serve AU customers whenever he's called.

The Annual Results Are In!

Thank you to all the customers who participated in our quarterly customer satisfaction survey. Although we saw a small dip at the beginning of 2020, we came back strong by responding to survey results.

If you receive our survey in 2021 by email or postal mail, we hope you will take time to give us your important feedback that we use to continue meeting customer expectations.



Red Cross Blood Drive

Thursday, April 29th
Austin Utilities
1908 14th St NE
9:00 am - 3:00 pm



redcrossblood.org
1-800-REDCROSS

The Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners

Monthly Meeting was held on January 19th, 2021. Agenda items included:

- Swearing in of Commissioners and election of officers. 2021 President Steve Greenman, Vice President Jeanne Sheehan
- AU Pay Equity Report filing
- Economic incentives for Nu-Tek

Meeting minutes are available at www.austinutilities.com

Austin Utilities was recently surprised with a check for \$1,550 and a request that the proceeds go to support customers struggling to pay their utility bill because of COVID19. The donation was raised through a Go Fund Me campaign started by an AU customer who chooses to remain anonymous. The customer was inspired by a recent national headline news story in which a similar act resulted in enough funds to pay off past due bills for an entire small community. Thank you to all those who donated. Austin Utilities customers can also help local neighbors in need by setting up a HeatShare donation on their monthly utility bill. Just call 507-433-8886 or email Talk2AU@AustinUtilities.com.

Important!



IMPORTANT NOTICE: Cold Weather Protection expires April 15th. Customers who have past due balances should make arrangements to bring their account in good standing to avoid disconnection.

SEMCAC

507-433-5889 or
800-944-3281

- Call to receive further instructions regarding assistance

Mower Co Health & Human Svcs

507.437.9701
201 1st St NE

- Applications for assistance and drop-off available at entrance doors and online
www.mowercountyhhs.com

Salvation Army.

507-437-4566

- Call to receive further instructions regarding assistance

To discuss programs available from AU or to make payment arrangements please contact us at 507.433.8886 or email us at talk2au@austinutilities.com



Even if the lobby is closed you can still reach us at:

Austin Utilities

1908 14th St NE Austin, MN 55912 Office: 507-433-8886
Email: talk2au@austinutilities.com Website: www.austinutilities.com

