

## Gas Worker Appreciation

In March we join a nationwide celebration of natural gas workers by honoring those who work tirelessly, day-in and day-out to serve our natural gas customers. Thanks to the efforts of our gas workers, Austin Utilities has earned the System Operational Achievement Recognition (SOAR) which honors public natural gas systems that have achieved excellence in the operation of their natural gas utility. Gas workers at Austin Utilities perform a variety of functions involving the construction and service of our system. If you recognize one of our gas system workers be sure to thank them for the work they do.

### Gas Construction Crew



Back: Wade Nelson, Wayne Guyette, Brian Gunderson, Jeff Majerus, Matt Ball, John Maxfield. Middle: Garrett Gilster, Matias Martin, Carson Hjelman, Hunter Yocom. Front: Rob Cabeen, Adam Heimer, Justin Peterson, Willie Granholm, Brandon Henry

### Gas Service Crew

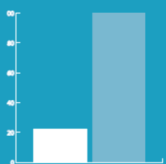


Back: Rob Gleason, Jessie Dumais, Jason Cummings, Joe Bartholomew  
Front: Sam Bekaert, Marty Johnson, Ryan Bell, Scott Wangen

## Natural Gas Facts

With all the talk about electrification, we wanted to remind you about some of the facts on natural gas. Natural gas is one of the cleanest burning fuels available. It is directly responsible for drastic reductions in emissions and provides American homes with an affordable, reliable energy source. Homes that use natural gas save an average of \$1000 per year compared to a typical electric home. The direct use of natural gas in appliances is three times as efficient as electricity on a full fuel cycle basis because so much energy is lost when converting and transmitting electricity. Policy driven electrification will not only result in utility bill increases; it will also force consumers to shoulder the cost of replacing the appliances and equipment they use to heat their homes, cook, and dry clothes. None of the regulatory or advisory agencies responsible for protecting consumer health and safety have documented significant risks to respiratory health from natural gas stoves. Natural gas service disruptions are rare. On average, only 1 in 800 natural gas customers experience an unplanned outage in any given year. In comparison, electric system customers experience an average of one unplanned outage per year per customer.

Keep natural gas a part of your energy mix.



Carbon dioxide emissions from residences using natural gas are about **22% lower** than those attributable to a typical all-electric home.



Carbon emissions from the average natural gas home **decline 1.2 percent per year.**

# Drops to Watts: Saving Water Saves Energy and Money

Most people know when you use LED lightbulbs you use less electricity but did you know using less water can save money on water, sewer and sometimes energy costs? It's true. Why? Your sewer charge is based on your water usage, and "Sewer Averaging" (sewer charges billed June-Sept), is based on your average water usage Jan-May. Reducing your winter water usage can save summer sewer costs. Not only that, if you save hot water, used for showering, laundry and dishes, you can also save on natural gas or electric costs, depending on how your water is heated.

*The average American family uses more than 300 gallons of water per day at home. Roughly 70 percent of this use occurs indoors. With just a few tools and a little bit of time you can reduce water use by 30% without sacrificing performance. Start with easy steps below to retrofit your bathrooms with WaterSense faucet aerators and showerheads. Other residential WaterSense labeled products include residential toilets, bathroom faucets, commercial toilets and irrigation controllers.*

## How to Replace a Showerhead in 4 Easy Steps



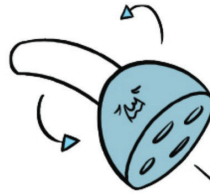
### You will need:

- Toothbrush
- Plumbing Tape
- Cloth (optional)
- waterSense Labeled Showerhead
- wrench (optional)

[www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense)



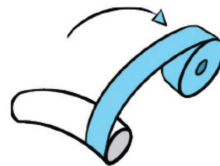
1: Remove old Showerhead.



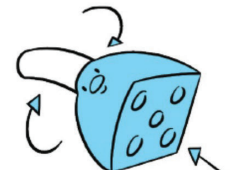
2: Clean the thread.



3: Apply plumbing tape clockwise.



4: Twist on new WaterSense labeled showerhead.



## How to Replace a Faucet Aerator in 4 Easy Steps



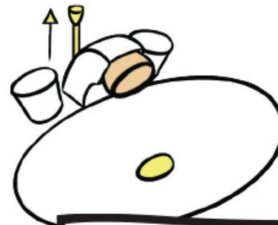
### You will need:

- WaterSense Labeled Aerator
- Wrench (optional)
- Cloth (optional)

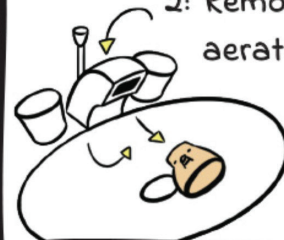
[www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense)



1: Cover your drain.



2: Remove aerator.



3: Remove rubber washer if stuck.



4: Twist on new WaterSense labeled aerator.



## Here are more ways to make sure your drops save watts this winter –

- Make sure to use a WaterSense® labeled showerhead and save your family up to \$70 in annual energy costs and 2,900 gallons of water per year. **Get a rebate up to \$25 for a new WaterSense® labeled showerhead.**
- Switch to cold water washing. An estimated 75 to 90 percent of all the energy your clothes washer uses goes to warming up the water. **Get a rebate up to \$90 for a new ENERGY STAR clothes washer or \$25 for a heat pump clothes dryer.**
- Retrofit your entire bathroom with WaterSense labeled products. They can reduce water use by 30% without sacrificing performance. **Get a \$50 rebate on a new WaterSense HE toilet.**

For more information about WaterSense labeled products or the drops-to-watts connection, visit [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense).

### Is your toilet running? Better go catch it!

It was a funny joke when we were kids, but in reality, leaking toilets are the main cause of unexpected high water and sewer bills, costing some customers hundreds of dollars. Here are tips to avoid surprises on your bill from a leaky toilet -

- Listen for running water after your flush is complete and conduct the food coloring test below.
- Food coloring test: place a drop of food coloring in the toilet tank. If any color shows up in the bowl after 10 minutes, you have a leak.
- Check all toilets on a regular basis, especially ones you don't use often or located downstairs.
- Use AU's SmartHub app to track your water usage.

The leaky toilet culprit is often a worn out flapper that can be easily fixed. Visit the WaterSense Fix a Leak web page for handy videos that show you how to do it.

[www.epa.gov/watersense/fix-leak-week](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/fix-leak-week)

### Where's the Leak?



## Employee Spotlight

### Sarah Douty

Administrative Coordinator

Sarah joined AU in 2014 after 9 years as Director of the Austin Main Street Project and over 10 years as a television news reporter and weather anchor. She has a B.S. degree in Mass Communication and served in local government as a township clerk and city council member in her hometown of Adams. Sarah and her husband of 28 years, Jim, have 2 adult children and 2 slightly overweight cats.

Sarah is responsible for a number of roles at AU including executive support services, Board of Commissioners meetings, internal communications and even writing the employee spotlights and producing this monthly Connections newsletter. She says she loves being creative and being able to share all the benefits of a public utility with her co-workers and with customers. Her plans for the future include watching her husband enjoy his retirement while she keeps bringing home the bacon, at least for a few more years.



## Red Cross Blood Drive

Tuesday, April 4th  
9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Austin Utilities - 1908 14th St. NE

1-800-REDCROSS [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org)



## HEATSHARE FUNDRAISER

AUSTIN PIZZA RANCH - EVENING OF MAR. 15TH

AU staff will be volunteering to help raise funds for the Salvation Army's HeatShare program. Stop out and enjoy a meal and help support your neighbors in need of energy assistance.



## Looking for Free Ways to Save Energy?

This is a challenging time for many families and we are here to help with a free kit to help lower energy costs. Stop by Austin Utilities and pick up a free home energy savings kit filled with products designed to help you save more at home. These items are easy to install so you can begin saving on your home's water heating costs right away. Each kit includes instructions on how to install and use all items included.

### WATER SAVING KIT

- Sava Spa Showerhead
- Leak-Detection Dye Tablets
- Dual-Threaded Bubble Faucet Aerator
- Closed-Cell Polyethylene Hot Water Pipe Insulation
- Plumber's Tape

Kits can be picked up at Austin Utilities and are available during normal business hours for gas or water customers while supplies last.

### NOTICE

In compliance with the Code of Federal regulation #49, Part 192.16, Austin Utilities must notify each customer who owns buried natural gas piping after the meter.

1. Austin Utilities does not maintain the customer's buried piping.
2. If the customer's buried piping is not maintained, it may be subject to the potential hazards of corrosion and leakage.
3. Buried gas piping should be:
  - (a) periodically inspected for leaks.
  - (b) periodically inspected for corrosion if the piping is metallic.
  - (c) repaired if any unsafe condition is discovered.
4. When excavating near buried gas piping, the piping should be located in advance, and the excavation done by hand.
5. Austin Utilities and plumbing and heating contractors, can assist in locating, inspecting, and repairing the customer's buried piping.

Customers with buried natural gas piping should feel free to contact Austin Utilities at 433-8886. You can also find information at [www.austinutilities.com](http://www.austinutilities.com).

Limited  
Supply!

## Rain Barrel Sale

- Order online \$90 + tax
  - Pick up April 6th
  - Receive a \$10 Rebate  
(AU Customers Only)
- [www.AustinUtilities.com](http://www.AustinUtilities.com)



## Scholarship Reminder

AU Lineworker & Utility Related Trade Scholarship-

- Due April 1st

AU-MMUA Scholarship-

- Due April 7th

For more information visit  
[www.AustinUtilities.com](http://www.AustinUtilities.com)

### Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners

Thomas C. Baudler      Jeanne Sheehan  
Steve Greenman      Kristin Johnson  
Jay Lutz

To contact or find more information on  
AU's elected Commissioners visit  
[www.austinutilities.com/pages/board](http://www.austinutilities.com/pages/board)

ONLINE  
NEWSLETTER  
& MORE INFO  
ON OUR  
WEBSITE



AU will be Closed  
Friday, April 7th  
for the Easter Holiday

### Austin Utilities

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