

Recognize Scams

Utility related imposter scam calls and other advanced tactics being used to target customers are on the rise. Since the pandemic began, scams have escalated, and scammers have increased their efforts to take advantage of utility customers and the financial challenges that many are facing.

Customers should know that utilities will never call to demand immediate payment, and they will never ask for personal information over the phone. Utilities also will never ask customers to pay their bills with pre-paid cards, or by using third-party payment apps, such as CashApp, Venmo, or Zelle.

If you receive a suspicious call from a possible scammer, please remember the following tips:

- **Slow down.** Scammers typically try to rush customers and will ask for personal information and immediate payment.
- **Verify.** Scammers often pose as utility company employees. If the scammer is on the phone, make sure they can verify they are with the utility or can verify your account information. If you are unsure, hang up and contact the utility directly by using the information on your most recent bill or the utility's website.
- **Stop before you act.** Think about the information the caller is asking of you. If it seems unsafe or incorrect, rethink the situation and ask questions.

Please remember that utility scammers can be extremely sophisticated, and they often use strategies that can make customers believe they are not an imposter. Here are few common scams and tips that customers should know:

- Scammers often threaten **immediate service disconnections**. They ask for personal information or demand payments to prevent service interruptions.
- Scammers have been taking advantage of increased online activities during the pandemic. They are asking for **payments over the phone by using digital payment apps, cryptocurrencies, or direct transactions with banking institutions**.
- Scammers are using tactics to prey on households with tight budgets. Scammers will inform customers that they have **overpaid utility bills and are due a refund**, but first they need to provide their banking information to process the refund. They also may claim that **immediate bill payment will result in a discount or that a charitable donation** can be made in exchange for a lesser bill payment.
- Scammers also are posing as utility employees by claiming the number on the **caller ID does not match the utility's phone number due to the company's COVID-19 remote work policies**.

It is important for utility customers to understand the types of threats that exist and to remember that anyone can be targeted. Utilities and customers must continue to be vigilant and to raise awareness. Together, we can #StopScams. Visit the [Utilities United Against Scams website](#) for more information.



Problem: 40% of customers who don't receive their bill electronically say "My paper copy is my reminder to pay my bill."

Solution: Sign up for AU Alerts and get a reminder to pay your bill.

E-bill is the quickest and most sustainable way to receive your monthly utility bill. To receive an e-bill you must be signed up for SmartHub but then you can receive all the benefits SmartHub has to offer, like AU Alerts! Right now, when you sign up for electronic billing you can get a \$5 bill credit.

INFLATION REDUCTION ACT (IRA) OF 2022

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 makes the single largest investment in climate and energy in American history aiming to boost clean energy and increase tax revenues. The Inflation Reduction Act calls out both tax credits and rebates to accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy and will likely drive significant deployment of new clean electricity resources. The decarbonizing success of this act will depend on the country's transition to carbon free energy which some critics say may not be reliable enough and will increase energy prices.

To learn more and keep track of new clean energy incentives as they arrive, go to:
www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org/inflation-reduction-act-what-you-need-know

To learn more about how much you qualify for, enter your household information at the Rewiring America savings calculator:
www.rewiringamerica.org/app/ira-calculator

Tax Credits Now Available:

- Battery Storage Installation
- Geothermal Heating Installation
 - Electric Panel
 - Electric Vehicle Charger
- New and Used Electric Vehicle
 - Heat Pump AC/Heater
 - Heat Pump Water Heater
 - Rooftop Solar Installation
- Weatherization Electrification



Rebates Will Be Available: (not including utility rebates)

- Electric Panel
- Electric Stove
- Electric Wiring
- Heat Pump Water Heater
- Heat Pump AC/Heater
- Heat Pump Clothes Dryer
 - Weatherization
 - Efficiency Rebates

What is a Heat Pump?

The IRA provides rebates for switching to a variety of electric technologies, including heat pumps. Heat pumps simply move heat from one location to another. The technology works similarly to your refrigerator, but importantly, can move heat both ways. An air source heat pump (ASHP) is an electric heating and cooling system that can condition homes more efficiently than traditional electric systems or propane, but not more efficiently than a conventional natural gas heating system. The technology is improving and an advanced heat pump in a well-insulated and air-sealed home can support a switchover temperature as low as 5 degrees, but still depend on a backup system to cover the coldest days of the year. If you currently run a natural gas heating system and want to switch to an electric heat pump system, we recommend keeping your gas system for backup.

For more information about air source heat pumps visit <https://www.mnashp.org/>

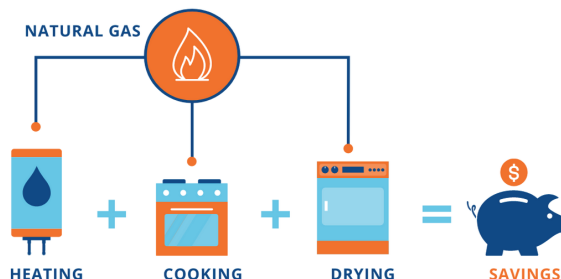
177 Million Americans Choose Affordable Natural Gas



Consumer Affordability



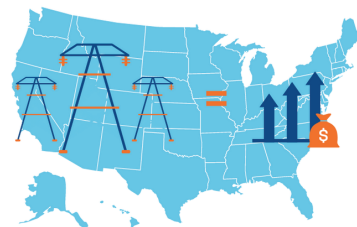
Electrification will cause the average household energy-related costs to increase. Estimates range between **\$750 AND \$910 PER YEAR, OR ABOUT 38-46%.**



Households that use natural gas for heating, cooking and clothes drying **SAVE AN AVERAGE OF \$874 PER YEAR** compared to homes using electricity for those applications.



Economic Impact



The total increase in energy-related costs of forced electrification (residential consumer costs plus incremental power generation and transmission costs) ranges from **\$590 billion to \$1.2 trillion** through Forced electrification will result in significant increases in peak electric demand and the need for major new investments in the electric grid including generation, transmission and distribution capacity:

• **\$102 to \$319 billion** in incremental generation capacity requirements by 2035.

• **\$53 to \$107 billion** in associated transmission system upgrades.

Gas Wise Kids and the 411 on the 811

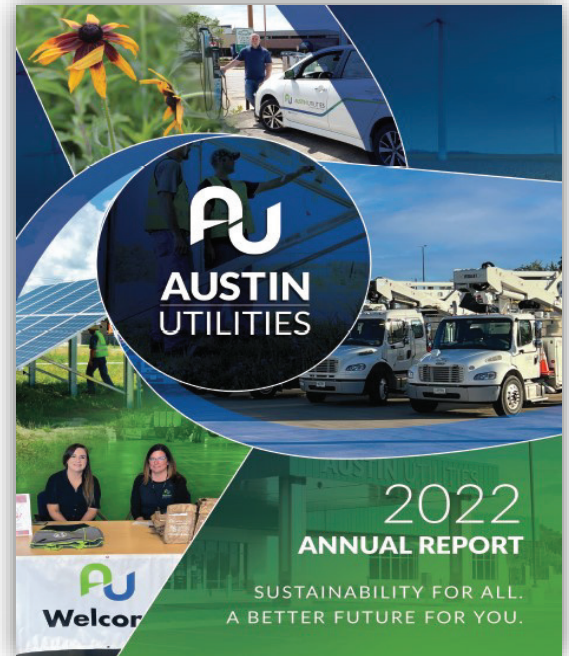
Summer education class for kids grade 3-6

July 18th from 10-noon

Austin Utilities, 1908 14th St NE

REGISTRATION: You may register by calling 460-1714 or on the web at <https://austin.revtrak.net/Community-Education/>

You probably never think about how you get natural gas to your home, but hidden beneath the ground are miles and miles of utility pipe. It's like an underground highway. This class introduces kids to underground utilities and teaches them ways to be safe through a variety of videos and hands-on demonstration!



Austin Utilities 2022 Annual Report looking at ways your local utility is sustainable for you is now available online and in our lobby.

Water is our most vital resource.

Get involved in #DrinkingWaterWeek and learn more about how safe, clean water helps protect public health across the globe. To ensure safe, clean drinking water now and in the future, water professionals everywhere are hard at work building infrastructure, advancing technology and protecting the environment. Learn more about your local water quality in AU's annual Water Quality Report available online or in our lobby.



Drinking Water Week 2023

May 7-13, 2023

AUSTIN WATER IS GOOD WATER!
Se puede tomar el agua.



Employee Retirement Spotlight

Pat Donovan

Lead Electric Lineman

Pat joined AU in 1991 as a lineman and has spent every year since then serving the customers and keeping everyone's power on. A lot has changed in the industry since he started but he gives credit to AU for always putting safety first and making sure the crews have what they need to get the job done. He says he feels good about retiring because AU has a great group of younger guys ready to step up and take his place.

Pat has joined mutual aid disaster teams at least 20 different times over the last 33 years. He has helped restore power to communities all over the country after blizzards, ice storms, tornadoes, hurricanes and floods.

When he hangs up his hardhat at the end of April he plans to spend a lot of time up north at his cabin fishing, chasing pheasants and hunting white tails over east along with enjoying his kids and grandkids.



Come see us at these local events

COMMUNITY SUMMER KICK OFF

4th Ave Fest

Live Music
Photo Booth
Open Swim
Canoe & Kayak
Seed Library
Dance



FREE Culture & Arts Commission 

Wed. June 7th 5pm - 8pm

We'll be sharing electric vehicles and EV information with our EV Owners Club.

RECHARGE ALBERT LEA: EV Expo & Test Drive

May 6, 2023
10:00am – 2:00pm

Design Ready Controls Albert Lea Facility
590 East 14th Street, Albert Lea, MN

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

RECHARGE MN

We'll be there with our electric vehicle. To schedule an EV test drive go to www.recharge-minnesota.org/albert-lea/



Annual Cultural Heritage Festival

Saturday, May 20, 2023

11am-3pm

Bandshell Park, 4th Street and 9th Place SW, Austin MN

Come try a sample of our water and learn why Austin Water is Good!

Here are some other sustainable events happening in Austin

Buzzing with Biodiversity **POLLI NATIVES**

Friday, May 5th, 7PM

with Don Smith @ the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center

Monday, May 8th, 6pm

with Kara Page @ Austin Public Library

Thursday, May 11th, 1pm

with Jim Stiles @ Mower County Senior Center

Learn about the fascinating world of bees, butterflies, and other important pollinators and the native plants that they depend on.

Mower County & City of Austin Electronics Recycling Event

**Saturday May 13th
9am to 2pm
Mower County Fairgrounds**

To volunteer please contact Mower County Recycling at 437-9551.

Notification to Customers

In compliance with Austin Utilities adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, Austin Utilities is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers that satisfy the conditions as a qualifying facility. Austin Utilities is obligated to provide information regarding rates and interconnection requirements free of charge to all interested customers upon request. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any disputes over interconnection, sales, and purchases relative to qualifying facilities should be brought to Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners for resolution, per Austin Utilities Distributed Generation Rules adopted February 13, 2018. Interested customers should contact Austin Utilities at 1908 14th St. NE, Austin, MN 55912 or call 507-433-8886.

Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners

Thomas C. Baudler
Steve Greenman

Jeanne Sheehan
Kristin Johnson

Jay Lutz

To contact or find more information on AU's elected Commissioners visit www.austinutilities.com/pages/board

ONLINE NEWSLETTER & MORE INFO ON OUR WEBSITE



AU will be Closed Monday, May 29th Memorial Day

Austin Utilities

1908 14th St NE Austin, MN 55912
Office: 507-433-8886

Email: talk2au@austinutilities.com
Website: www.austinutilities.com

