



**AUSTIN  
UTILITIES**  
Connections for Better Living™



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Board of Commissioners**

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**AUSTIN UTILITIES  
WILL BE CLOSED  
THURSDAY,  
NOVEMBER 11TH**



# Connections

October 2021  
Customer Newsletter

## Your Public Utility

Austin Utilities celebrates Public Power and Public Natural Gas week, Oct. 3-9, along with more than 2,000 other community-owned, not-for-profit electric and gas utilities that collectively provide utility services to over 47 million Americans.

Public utilities are community-owned, locally controlled and operated on a not-for-profit basis. Each utility is a little different, depending on population, geography, structure, and the community's values and goals. This ability to tailor local control, reliable customer service, affordable rates, and economic development to the local community is the foundation of public power's success.



AU Board of Commissioners  
Left to right: Steve Greenman, Jeanne Sheehan, Jay Lutz, Kristin Johnson & Tom Baudler



"Public Power and Public Natural Gas Week gives us the chance to emphasize the advantages of locally managing our energy supply to our citizens," said Mark Nibaur, General Manager. "Our service is reliable and safe because of the pride we take in Austin and serving our friends and neighbors."

Customers who stop in our lobby during the month of October will receive a free gift as our thank you for being a public utility customer.

Here are some of the good things our customers have said about their public utility:

*Because you're helpful in working with people in bad and hard times. Always friendly doing what you can to help people who are struggling!*

*Lived here all my life. Great people, work and great service.*

*I have had good interactions in the past with AU workers, for example, when my furnace went out in the middle of the night. I also appreciate the rebates offered.*

*I have always found the people working in the office very friendly and helpful. I have not experienced any outages for a long time.*

*Can't go without power! (that makes you all pretty important.)*

## ELLIS WATER TOWER OPEN HOUSE

Over 50 people attended the open house held at the Ellis Water Tower on August 25<sup>th</sup>. The event was held to showcase the over \$1.3 million in renovations recently completed. Some of the participants recalled seeing the water tower construction when they were young. The original buildings were constructed in 1955.



Wayne Guyette details the chlorination process.



Free biodegradable and reusable sponges were handed out to all who attended.



Keven Maxa explains the inner workings of the well house to attendees.

## Energy Circuit Loop

Members of the Austin Area Mountain Bike Team pose in front of a sign leading to the new **Energy Circuit Loop** located behind the Northeast Power Plant on the Schindler's Way Trail. The trail is open for public use. The Energy Circuit Loop is rated as **More Difficult**, which indicates more technical riding with steeper slopes, obstacles, or features. This trail requires more experienced riding and should be used with caution. Austin Utilities allowed an expansion of the bike trail onto our property to provide them with a more robust trail with more levels of riding challenges. Dr. Gareth Hataye, with the Austin Cycling Team and the Southern Minnesota Bicycling Club, has "appreciated the support and willingness of Austin Utilities to expand the trail system". "The addition of the Energy Circuit Loop made the trail more attractive to visitors and residents alike. At the race a few weeks ago, Mr. Mark Nibaur allowed us to make adjustments to our race course so we could hold high school races that were safe and competitive, in lieu of the 10+ inches of rain we received that week."

Pictured from L to R: Peyton Clark, Garrett Clark, Logan Regner, Winston Walkup, Caden Soucek.



# FALL INTO SAVINGS

Get ready for winter by falling into savings when you purchase new equipment with the ENERGY STAR or WaterSense logo. When you see these logos, you can be sure you will be saving energy and money over the life of your equipment. Before you make a purchase check and see if we have a rebate available and what the minimum efficiency requirements are. Austin Utilities offers rebates on over 35 different technologies. You can find a complete listing of our rebates by visiting our website at [www.austinutilities.com](http://www.austinutilities.com). Because we all benefit when we Conserve & Save.

**CONSERVE  
& \$AVE**

# DRIVE THRU TRICK OR TREAT

**THURSDAY  
OCT. 28TH  
3 PM - 6 PM**

Dress up the kids  
and drive out to  
our parking lot at  
1908 14th St NE.

AU's mascot,  
Buddy, will be  
there handing out bags of treats.



Bring a non-perishable food item and help  
us support the Salvation Army Food Bank.

## *Employee Spotlight*

### **Kara Wollschlager**

#### **Customer Service Representative**

If you've called AU's main number in the last 18 years chances are you've spoken to Kara. She has been the Customer Service Representative who handles most calls and phone payments for nearly 2 decades. When she joined AU she already had a background in Customer Service at Hy-Vee and the Austin Medical Center. Kara says the best part of her job is the variety. "It's always a different day." One thing that doesn't change is her dedication to helping customers. "It's really satisfying to know you were able to make things a little bit easier for someone when they've been struggling."

Kara has been married to her husband, Mike, for 40 years. They have 3 grown children and 6 grandchildren. Her favorite pastimes are going to Country music concerts, especially Chris Young, traveling to Disney locations to see Mickey, and spending time with her family. Kara hopes to retire in the next 6-7 years and then take it "One day at a time."





# LED Light Bulbs

ON SALE NOW



Reduced pricing through December while supplies last at this participating local retailer:

Walmart



Time for the Be Bright lighting campaign. This is our 21<sup>st</sup> year participating in the program that offers a selection of ENERGY STAR LED bulbs at a discounted price. Austin Utilities works with participating retailers to offer a variety of styles. ENERGY STAR labeled LEDs use 80% less energy and last up to 25 times longer than incandescent light bulbs. By replacing the five most-used bulbs in your home with LEDs, you can save up to \$40 in energy costs during the first year alone. Customers can avoid rebate paperwork because the Austin Utilities rebate has already been applied. Discounts are available through December 31, but remember supplies are limited so get your discounted LEDs before they sell out.

NOVEMBER 7th

Fall Back!  
DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

Set your clocks back one hour.

MN Cold Weather Rule

The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule is in effect Oct 1 to April 30 and provides disconnection protection to customers who have made a payment plan. Payment arrangements must be kept to avoid a disconnect. If you need to make a payment plan call our office at 507-433-8886 or email customerservice@austinutilities.com

## Get a Furnace Clean & Tune Get a \$25 Rebate\*

### WHY DO I NEED A FURNACE CLEAN & TUNE?

You need a furnace tune-up once a year for several important reasons. Your tune-up can do all of the following:

- Improve operating efficiency, which can reduce your home heating costs
- Institute preventive measures to avoid furnace malfunction and keep your family safe
- Identify minor issues before they grow severe, preventing furnace failure later

Overall, a furnace tune-up simply makes good financial sense because it safeguards both your investment in the furnace and your family's safety and comfort.

\*\$25 Rebate available every 2 years

# CONSERVE & \$AVE

The Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners Monthly Meeting was held on Aug. 19, 2021.

Agenda items included:

- Riverland Workforce Development Scholarship
- Ellis Well House renovation update
- Update to AU masking policy

Meeting minutes are available at [www.austinutilities.com](http://www.austinutilities.com)



## Austin Utilities



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