

## Winter Safety Tips

Snow and ice can damage electric and natural gas meters. Keeping the meters clear of snow and ice will help ensure your heating systems are running safely and properly.

### Meter Safety Tips:

- Remove snow and ice from your meter by using a broom or by hand. A meter locked in snow and ice can affect the operation of the meter set.
- After clearing snow, make sure your meter and furnace vents are clear.
- Remove icicles from overhead to prevent dripping water from splashing on your meter or vent pipes.
- Check for gas leaks, if you detect a gas leak or smell rotten egg odor, leave the area immediately and call Austin Utilities at 507-433-8886.

### NEED HELP WITH YOUR UTILITY BILLS?

APPLY FOR MINNESOTA'S  
ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

APPLY AT  
[mn.gov/energyassistance](https://mn.gov/energyassistance)

### In home safety tips:

- If using space heaters, make sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions. Keep space heaters away from flammable objects.
- Install Carbon monoxide detectors throughout your home, especially near bedrooms. Test detectors regularly and replace batteries often.
- Teach family members about gas safety and what to do in a gas-related emergency.

Following these safety tips can assist in having a safe and warm home during the winter season.

## Frozen Water services

### Signs that your water service may be frozen.

- No water or slow trickle when a faucet is in use.
- Whistling and banging coming from the pipes.


If you suspect that your water service is frozen, call Austin Utilities at 507-433-8886. Our dispatch team will obtain the necessary information and inform you of services available and next steps.



## Payment Reminders

Setting up payment reminders is a simple process that can be customized to meet your needs. You can choose to set reminders for 1, 3, or 5 days before your payment due date. Additionally, you can select whether you prefer to receive reminders via email or text message. Sign up for other important notifications by using Smarthub.



**FEBRUARY  ENERGY-SAVING TIP**

**ADJUST THE REFRIGERATOR TEMPERATURE**

Setting thermostats at the recommended temperature settings, 37°F to 40°F for the refrigerator and 5°F for the freezer, will help optimize energy savings, while keeping food fresh.

**REMINDER!**

**MARCH 31** 

**2023 REBATE APPLICATIONS DEADLINE IS MARCH 31, 2024**

[austinutilities.com/pages/rebates-programs/](https://austinutilities.com/pages/rebates-programs/)

**CONSERVE & \$AVE™**

## House Call Energy Audits



Was your new year's resolution to save on your utility bill? A Conserve and Save™ House Call Home Energy Audit is a great starting point to reduce your energy usage. A home energy audit can offer several benefits. Advantages to having a home energy audit:

- Identify inefficiencies - Can pinpoint areas where energy is being wasted. Examples are drafts, leaks, inefficient appliances, and outdated insulation.
- Energy Cost Savings – addressing the inefficiencies can save you money by lowering your utility bill.
- Improved comfort and air quality – addressing drafts, uneven heating and cooling, and proper ventilation can make your home a comfortable and healthier living space for you and your family.

Austin Utilities offers two options for House Call Home Energy Audits.

### Standard House call - \$300 value for a co-pay of \$50

It includes reviewing your energy use history; performing an in-depth thermal envelope analysis; directing the installation of energy saving devices; assessing appliances, water heater, and HVAC equipment; performing a blower door test; and providing you a detailed written report that lists energy-saving recommendations specific to your home.

### Performance House Call - \$380 value for a co-pay of \$125

The performance House Call includes the same features as the Standard House Call but in addition, the auditor will perform an infrared diagnosis of your home.

Want to schedule an audit? Visit our website <https://www.austinutilities.com/pages/energyAudits> or stop into our office and complete the questionnaire to get started.

# Endings and Beginnings

Ann Christianson, Finance Manager at Austin Utilities (AU) will be retiring after 33 years of service. During her tenure, Ann has seen many changes in the accounting industry, including two significant software conversions at AU. Ann led many rate studies and was active in minimizing rate increases. “Thank you to Ann and for her long-term career at Austin Utilities. Ann was careful to balance revenues with expenses and always maintained a focus on customer fairness,” said Mark Nibaur.



As a result of Ann’s retirement, Austin Utilities welcomes Kory Robinson as the new Finance and Customer Care Director. Kory’s background includes 20 years of finance experience across multiple industries. He is a graduate of DeVry University and Keller Graduate School. His most recent experience was as a plant controller at Federal-Mogul in Lake City, MN.



After 22 years of service, Duane McGonigle, dispatch and systems operations controller, is set to retire. Duane started as an assistant boiler operator in 2001. He later became a boiler operator and a plant operator in 2005. Since 2016, he has been assisting customers and AU staff in dispatch. Mark Nibaur extends



congratulations to Duane on reaching this milestone in his career.

Isaiah Wright started as a dispatch and systems operations controller in November. He is a lifelong resident of Austin and previously worked as a turbine technician. When not at AU, Isaiah likes to hunt and fish.

## Employee Spotlight

### Corey Kreutzbender Relief Dispatch Operator/Building Maintenance

Corey joined Austin Utilities in October of 2020 as the Relief Dispatch Operator/Building Maintenance Technician. He came from a position as a Wind Turbine Technician. Corey says the best part about his job is getting both time in the office and out in the field and that every day is different.

Corey has a 12-year-old daughter, Evelyn. He enjoys archery, hunting, four wheeling, and tinkering on things in his garage. He says he is a “Jack of all trades master of none.” He also claims to be a closet nerd.

Corey’s future plans are simple. Many more years at AU and eventually retire to the north shore.



# AU Butterfly Garden Expanding

This spring, the AU butterfly garden will be expanding to make room for more pollinators. The expansion will add square footage to the southside of the current garden. The expansion will include specific plants that promote pollination.

Butterfly gardens can offer numerous benefits. The gardens support a diverse range of plant and insect species. Butterflies are important pollinators, transferring pollen from one flower to another as they feed. It is a critical process for the reproduction of many plants, including fruits and vegetables. As butterfly species continue to decline due to habitat loss, gardens provide a suitable space for the delicate species.

The Butterfly Garden was first planted in 2016 by Austin Utilities employees. Since then, the Shooting Sport and Wildlife Mower County 4H group has been maintaining the garden.



## AMI INSTALLATIONS

Allegiant Utility Services has been chosen by Austin Utilities as their authorized contractor to perform electric and water meter replacements as part of AU's advanced meter infrastructure project.

These replacements will be completed at no cost to you and will take approximately 15-30 minutes. If you receive a letter or phone call from Allegiant Utility Services please work with them to make an appointment to replace your water or electric meter at a convenient time. Thank you.

**Allegiant**  
UTILITY SERVICES

866-925-8048

American Red Cross

# BLOOD DRIVE

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

redcrossblood.org 1-800-REDCROSS

## Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners

Tyler Hulsebus

Jeanne Sheehan

Steve Greenman

Jay Lutz

Kristin Johnson

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



Austin Utilities will be  
**CLOSED**  
Monday, February 19th  
President's Day



**Austin Utilities**

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