

Prepare for Higher Natural Gas Prices



Austin Utilities is preparing for natural gas prices that may be 30-35% higher this winter. According to the US Energy Information Administration Winter Fuels Outlook, October 2021, “As we head into the winter of 2021–22, retail prices for energy are at or near multiyear highs in the United States.”

‘We expect that households across the United States will spend more on energy this winter compared with the past several winters because of these higher energy prices and because we assume a slightly colder winter than last year in much of the United States. We expect that the nearly half of U.S. households that heat primarily with natural gas will spend 30% more than they spent last winter on average—50% more if the winter is 10% colder-than-average and 22% more if the winter is 10% warmer-than-average.’ <https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/steo/report/WinterFuels.php>.

The high prices follow changes to natural gas energy supply and demand patterns.

- The drop in demand for natural gas during the COVID-19 pandemic caused many shippers to suspend drilling activity.
- Natural gas storage levels are at a deficit to previous year levels.
- Increased pricing for liquid natural gas (LNG) overseas has shifted the U.S. to being a net gas exporter.

“Our team is managing our internal costs very well, however the actual natural gas commodity we have to purchase to deliver to customers is volatile. The price changes daily based on supply and demand which is why we have so many tools in place to protect our customers from high gas prices” says Mark Nibaur, General Manager.

Austin Utilities Office will be Closed
January 17th, 2022 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day &
February 21st, 2022 for President’s Day

**See inside for
tips on saving
this winter!**

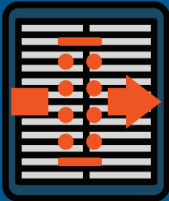
TOP WINTER SAVINGS IDEAS



Take advantage of heat from the sun. Open curtains on your south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat your home. Close them at night to reduce the chill from cold windows.



Cover drafty windows with clear plastic film during the cold winter months and install tight-fitting, insulating drapes or shades on windows that feel drafty.



Clogged air filters make your system use more energy. Replace your furnace filter as recommended by the manufacturer, usually every 2-3 months and save anywhere from 5 to 15% on your heating costs.



Turn back the thermostat. If you set your thermostat 1 or 2 degrees lower than your usual number, you'll see a 1 to 3 percent savings in your energy bill. Using a Smart learning thermostat can save you up to 10%.

MORE WAYS TO SAVE

Switch the rotation of your ceiling fan to a clockwise rotation to push warm air down * Dress warmer at home, including the fuzzy socks * Use your exhaust fans sparingly so you don't pull warm air out of your home * Switch to LED lighting for your home and decorations * Close doors and vents in unused rooms * Get a home energy audit for a list of energy saving ideas * Keep extra blankets around the house * Use a space heater if you only need to heat a small area for a short time * After using the oven, leave the door open until the heat is gone

CONSERVE & \$SAVE[®] HOUSE CALL RESIDENTIAL ENERGY AUDITS



AU

**AUSTIN
UTILITIES**

Connections for Better Living[®]

• **STANDARD AUDIT: \$50 co-pay** (\$300 value!)

• **PERFORMANCE AUDIT: \$125 co-pay** (\$380 value!)

Learn more at www.AustinUtilities.com

New Year's Resolution: CONSERVE & \$SAVE[®] It's That Easy!

Visit our website at austinutilities.com to learn how to conserve energy and save money all year long!

You'll also find a list of available rebates for energy- and water-efficient equipment.



2022 Rate Adjustments

The Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners approved the 2022 Austin Utilities budget and related rate adjustments at the December board meeting. The annual budget is used to set rates along with Cost of Service and Rate Studies performed every three years. These changes take effect January 1.

Electric Rates - No changes will be made to the electric rate.

Water Rates - Water rates will increase by 2% for residential, 2% for commercial, and 9% for industrial customers. The effect of the overall residential water rate adjustments will be an average monthly bill increase of \$.072. About 85% of Austin Utilities current customers are residential. Small to mid-sized business customers can expect to see monthly water increases in the range of \$1.68 to \$10.56 depending on the size of their meter and usage.

Gas Rates - Austin Utilities will not make changes to the natural gas rate but will use their Purchased Gas Adjustment mechanism (PGA) to address anticipated winter gas increases on a month-by-month basis. During the winter months gas prices could be 30-35% higher. Customers are encouraged to follow conservation practices to save on heating costs.

For questions on the foregoing Austin Utilities rate adjustments, please call our office at 433-8886.

AU bills the following services for the City of Austin. For questions on these charges call 507-433-9940.

Austin City Council has reviewed sewer rates for the 2022 fiscal year and the following adjustments have been approved.

Sanitary Sewer Rates - Sanitary Sewer Rates will increase by 7% to all residential and commercial customers. This rate increase was adopted to cover costs associated with improvements to the collection system and planned major upgrades to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. This will result in a \$3.00 monthly increase to the average residential customer.

Storm Sewer Rates - Storm Sewer Rates will increase by \$1.50 per residential parcel. This will increase the residential rate from \$4.00 per month to \$5.50 per month. Commercial property rates will be increased by 37.5% of your current charges. Storm water funds are used to upgrade the collection system, maintain ditches and ponds and improve water quality.

Hydrant Fee - No changes will be made at this time.

Employee Spotlight

Dave Thompson Customer Service Representative

For more than 13 years Dave Thompson has been serving AU's customers. Dave came with experience as a Sales Representative with Weyerhaeuser before becoming AU's Residential Account Representative and now a Customer Service Representative. Dave is also a veteran of the US Army-Army National Guard and served during the Gulf War in Saudi Arabia. He says he really enjoys assisting our Customers on a daily basis and working with a top notch team of Customer Service Representatives who support one another as if they were family. Dave's real family consists of his wife, Beth, who teaches pre-school, their adult children, Emily and Eric, 3 dogs and a cat. He says his hobbies include helping people make solution based decisions driven by their needs, desires and dreams but in reality we know he loves being a top notch, award winning auctioneer and amateur comedian. When asked about his future plans he would only say "Stay alive long enough to enjoy several years of retirement".



Important!



IMPORTANT NOTICE: Cold Weather Protection is in effect October 1 through April 30th. Customers who have a past due balance need a payment plan in place to avoid disconnection. Assistance is available from these organizations.

SEMCAC

507-433-5889

111 N Main, Suite 201

Applications available online or stop in the office for assistance.

www.semCAC.org/energy/eap-application/

Mower Co Health & Human Services

507.437.9701

201 1st St NE, Suite 18

Applications for assistance are available in the lobby and online.

www.mowercountyhhs.com

Salvation Army

507-437-4566

206 1st Ave NE

Call the HeatShare hotline at 800-842-7279 for immediate help if you receive a disconnect notice

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

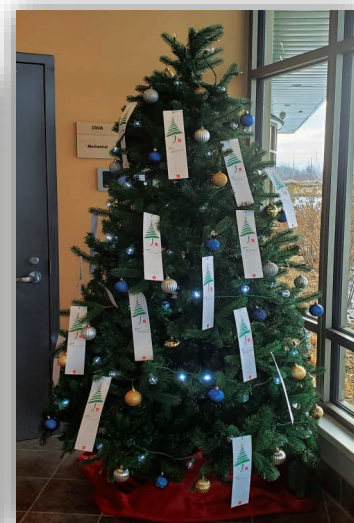
ROUND UP A LITTLE, HELP OUT A LOT!

There's an easy way to warm your heart this winter. Sign up for HeatShare Round Up. Each month we round up your bill and donate that amount to HeatShare, a program administered by The Salvation Army. It is used by low-income seniors, disabled people unable to maintain a steady income, and anyone experiencing an unexpected financial emergency. Warm your heart today.

Scan QR Code to Sign Up or call the AU office



AU Collecting Gifts for the Salvation Army



Mark Nibaur, General Manager, and Dan Ulland, Employee Relations Director, helped deliver cash donations along with dozens of toys and gifts to the Salvation Army. AU sponsored an Angel Tree in the lobby and collected customer and staff donations in early December. The Salvation Army distributed the gifts to local families needing assistance over the holidays.

Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners

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The Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners

Monthly Meeting was held on November 16th, 2021.

Agenda items included:

- Proposed 2022 Budget and potential rate adjustments.

Meeting minutes are available at www.austinutilities.com