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## **Austin Utilities to hold Winter Readiness and Utility EXPO #CommunityPowered**

AUSTIN, MN October 3, 2018 – Austin Utilities (AU) will be holding their award winning Winter Readiness Event on Wednesday, October 10th from 3-7 pm. The event is being held in conjunction with Public Power and Public Natural Gas Week and will include a Utility EXPO being held at the same time.

The open house style event will allow customers to visit with utility staff and vendors to learn how to prepare for upcoming winter heating bills. Among other things, attendees can sign up for budget payments, learn about high bill culprits, talk to a home energy auditor, and see if they qualify for local heating assistance. Participating vendors will include Ace Hardware, GA Ernst energy auditor, Salvation Army, and SEMCAC heating assistance program.

Attendees can then check out the utility EXPO where utility workers will be available at a hands on display of utility vehicles and equipment including line trucks and heavy construction equipment. Utility staff will demonstrate work typically performed in the field and display various utility specific tools used. Hot dog meals and cookies will be available for a free will donation to the Salvation Army HeatShare program. Attendees will receive a free LED for attending and have the chance to win one of four \$50 bill credits being awarded if they are AU customers.

The week's events will also include a Share the Heat 5K or 1 Mile Run | Walk on Saturday October 6<sup>th</sup> and public tours of their building on Monday October 8<sup>th</sup>. Information on these events and more can be found at [www.austinutilities.com](http://www.austinutilities.com).

This is the second year Austin Utilities has hosted the Winter Readiness event which earned runner up in the Marketing and Sales award category from the American Public Gas Association. In 2017 over 100 people attended this event.

The open house date was selected because it falls during both Public Power and Public Natural Gas week. These events celebrate the benefits of being served by a municipal utility. Serving Austin as far back as 1887, Austin Utilities is one of the largest combined municipal utilities in the State of Minnesota with 79 full-time and 5 part-time staff.

Your public utility is good for the community for many reasons including:

- **Local Control:** Having a public utility gives a community local control over how homes and businesses are served. Decisions are made through an elected board and citizen participation instead of being made in a distant city by people who do not understand local issues and who are primarily focused on profits instead of service.
- **Competitive Costs:** In order to offer fair and competitive rates, public utilities operate as a not-for-profit entity and do not face pressure to pay dividends to stockholders.

- Economic Benefits: As a public utility, we play a valuable role in helping communities broaden their tax base, and in turn improve the local economy and increase jobs. Public utilities ensure that local dollars stay at home.
- Customer Service: As a not-for-profit entity, we focus on service, rather than profits. Public natural utilities are an integral part of a community. We maintain a close relationship with our customers, and as a result, we are successful in meeting our customers' needs.

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Austin Utilities is a municipal utility serving approximately 12,300 electric customers, 10,300 natural gas customers, and 9,000 water customers. Their mission is to offer utility products and services in a safe, reliable and responsible manner in order to enhance the quality of life in our community. Austin Utilities' Board of Commissioners are elected by the consumer-owners of Austin to represent their best interest. For more information on Austin Utilities visit their website at [www.austinutilities.com](http://www.austinutilities.com).