

National Line Worker Appreciation Day



Front L to R: Garrett Lahann, Steve Tiegs, Bill Bumgarner, Dillon Sprague, Tyler Underdahl Back: Skip Ferguson, Colin Roberts, Kurt Regenscheid, Mark Gerstner, Jeff Martinson, Pat Andera, Trevor Herfindahl, Garitt Wytaske, and Alex Fieblekorn.

Every year on April 18th we celebrate our line workers on National Line Worker Appreciation Day. Since 2013, this has been a day to celebrate the effort of people who maintain power and protect public safety.

Line workers work outside in all weather conditions and all times of the day. Last year, our line crew installed 65,000 feet of underground cable. They also responded to 399 emergency and 216 outage calls while changing out 3,405 electric meters.

We would like to take a moment to recognize the dedication and skill of our AU line workers who keep our community powered. It is a time to celebrate the efforts of those who brave the weather and long hours to ensure that our homes and businesses have reliable electricity.



Please help our crews by slowing down and steering clear of our vehicles and workers when we are doing our jobs. We want to keep you and our fellow co-workers safe.

Upcoming Street Projects

21st Ave SW (4th Dr-12th St)

6th Ave NE (17th St-19th St)

4th St NW (13th Ave-I90)

25th St SW (Oakland Ave-7th Ave)

Oakland Ave (1st St NE-8th St NW)

RAIN BARREL SALE



Available online now, purchase a 45 gallon rain barrel for \$50 plus tax, a \$100 value.



ORDER ONLINE

<https://mowerswcd.org>

AU water customers qualify for an instant \$10 rebate!

Pick Up Date: April 25 Time: 12:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Mower County Recycling Center 1111 8th Ave NE

SAVE THE DATE

THURSDAY, JUNE 12
3 PM - 7 PM
AT RIVERLAND
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

RECHARGE AUSTIN RIDE AND DRIVE

National Safe Digging Month

April is National Safe Digging Month, a timely reminder to call before you dig as you plan your projects for the year. Gopher State One Call (GSOC) was officially approved by the Commissioner of Public Safety in 1987. The initiative originated on July 8, 1986, when a quiet neighborhood in Mounds View, Minnesota, was abruptly awakened by a wall of fire down the street. The fire was caused by a hazardous liquid pipeline running through the area.

In the aftermath of this tragic incident, the Minnesota Legislature conducted a study on pipeline safety and third-party damages, leading to the establishment of State Statute Chapter 216D in 1987. This legislation mandated the creation of a state-wide "one call" center and the formation of a non-profit organization to provide call center services. GSOC accepted its first locate request on October 1, 1988, and by the end of its first year of operations, had handled over 900,000 incoming requests.

In 2024, Austin Utilities located 3,817 GSOC tickets. Customers should follow these best practices when needing to locate utilities:

811
Gopher State One Call
www.gopherstateonecall.org

COLOR CODE FOR MARKING UNDERGROUND UTILITY LINES

- Proposed Excavation
- Temporary Survey Markings
- Electric
- Gas-Oil-Steam-Propane
- Communication-CATV-Fiber
- Water
- Reclaimed Water-Irrigation
- Sewer

call 811 or visit gopherstateonecall.org three days before you dig and wait for the utilities to be marked. When digging with equipment, maintain a distance of at least 2 feet from the marks. If you are within 2 feet of the marks, only use a shovel and dig carefully.

Historical information gathered from www.gopherstateonecall.org/resources/history-background



Planting a Tree for Arbor Day?

1) Call 811 before you dig!

Make sure the "perfect spot" you picked out for the new tree is "perfectly safe!" Minnesota state law requires that before you begin any project that requires digging, you must first contact Gopher State One Call to locate any underground utilities.

Call 811 or visit www.gopherstateonecall.org.

2) Don't forget your Austin Utilities rebate!

Carefully positioned trees can save up to 25% of a home's energy use for heating and cooling. Customers of Austin Utilities are eligible for a **\$10 REBATE** when they purchase a tree that is on our qualifying list from one of our partnering nurseries:



Stivers Nursery & Landscaping

To receive your rebate, complete and submit a Partners in Planting Rebate Form available from the nursery or www.AustinUtilities.com.

APRIL AU ENERGY-SAVING TIP

USE POWER STRIPS

Even when turned off, electronics and IT equipment can use a small amount of electricity. Using a power strip for your computer, TV and other equipment allows you to completely disconnect the power supply from the power source, eliminating standby power consumption.

Attention AU Customers

Minnesota Cold Weather Rule utility protection ends on April 30th. If your bill is not current, be sure to have an active payment plan in place to avoid disconnection. Learn more at austinutilities.com/pages/ColdWeather/ or by calling one of our customer service staff at 507-433-8886.

Energy Assistance Programs

SEM CAC

507-433-5889 or 800-944-3281

Mower Co Health & Human Svcs

507-437-9701

Salvation Army

507-437-4566



Commissioners L to R: Tyler Hulsebus, Steve Greenman, Jeanne Sheehan, Jay Lutz, and Kristin Johnson.

Jeanne Sheehan, long standing AU commissioner, retired from the Board on February 18, 2025 after 21 years of service. Throughout her tenure as Commissioner, Jeanne witnessed significant milestones, including the decommissioning of the downtown plant, the demolition of the northeast Power Plant, and the construction of the central facility. Jeanne has been honored to represent AU customers and has valued the connections she has built. She appreciated the moments when customers reached out to share concerns or express gratitude for AU's staff and crews. She takes great pride in AU's strong reputation for reliability and service.

"Jeanne is a great advocate for our community and customers. She came to the board meetings prepared, asked great questions, and provided thoughtful insight. I want to thank Jeanne for her dedication to our community, and just as importantly her dedication to AU employees. We wish her well, she will be missed." said General Manager, Mark Nibaur.

In her free time, Jeanne plans to continue giving back through volunteer work. You might find her tending to her flower gardens, taking walks, enjoying a round of golf, or most importantly, spending time with her grandchildren.

Behind the Scenes - Line Workers

Line workers are part of AU's operations team. This tight-knit team consists of 11 line workers, who have 239 combined years of experience in their field. One of the most experienced, Mark Gerstner is looking forward to retirement after 34 years this year.

AU has an apprentice program to allow new line workers to gain the knowledge and experience needed to become a licensed journeyman. To be a lead line worker, 5 years of journeyman experience is required.

The major responsibilities of the line workers are to maintain the overhead and underground distribution lines. They continuously upgrade infrastructure to enhance system reliability. The group is a one stop shop, doing all the construction needed for a project within the department. This year, the team will begin doing their own directional drilling. Another focus is on quick response times for outages. Their commitment extends 24/7, regardless of weather conditions. Each workday brings new challenges and experiences.

Many of the line workers have participated in mutual aid. An effort that combines forces with other utilities to help restore power after a natural disaster. The group holds many accomplishments including American Public Power Association's Excellence in Reliability, but if you asked any of the line workers, nothing is more gratifying than restoring power to a customer who has been without it.



NOTICE

In compliance with the Code of Federal regulation #49, Part 192.16, Austin Utilities must notify each customer who owns buried natural gas piping after the meter.

1. Austin Utilities does not maintain the customer's buried piping.
2. If the customer's buried piping is not maintained, it may be subject to the potential hazards of corrosion and leakage.
3. Buried gas piping should be:
 - (a) periodically inspected for leaks.
 - (b) periodically inspected for corrosion if the piping is metallic.
 - (c) repaired if any unsafe condition is discovered.
4. When excavating near buried gas piping, the piping should be located in advance, and the excavation done by hand.
5. Austin Utilities and plumbing and heating contractors, can assist in locating, inspecting, and repairing the customer's buried piping.

Customers with buried natural gas piping should feel free to contact Austin Utilities at 433-8886. You can also find information at www.austinutilities.com.



Austin Utilities employees joined the community-wide Paint the Town Pink fundraising event. Paint the Town Pink is an annual campaign to raise funds for breast cancer and other cancer research at the Hormel Institute. Together employees raised \$1,919 in donations. These contributions were gathered through an annual raffle, featuring prizes donated by departments.



General Manager Mark Nibaur and Board Member Jay Lutz attended the APPA Legislative Rally. This conference brings together association members to discuss legislative priorities and vote on policy resolutions. It also provides an opportunity for members to meet with their representatives. During the conference, Mark and Jay, alongside other SMMPA members, met with Representative Brad Finstad to discuss important issues, such as preserving tax-exempt financing (which saves our customers thousands of dollars), maintaining public pay and related credits for renewable energy projects, and streamlining permitting regulations. They also participated in meetings with Senators Klobuchar and Smith.

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.



Tuesday, April 29th
Austin Utilities 1908 14th St NE
9:00 am - 3:00 pm

redcrossblood.org 1-800-REDCROSS

ONLINE
NEWSLETTER &
MORE INFO
ON OUR
WEBSITE



AUSTIN UTILITIES
will be CLOSED
FRIDAY, APRIL 18TH



Austin Utilities

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

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

