

Austin Utilities Celebrates Natural Gas Utility Workers' Day on March 18

This is the tenth year in which Natural Gas Utility Workers' Day has been officially celebrated across the country. This day of recognition is a time when communities such as ours give recognition to the employees who provide one of their most valuable assets - their natural gas utility.

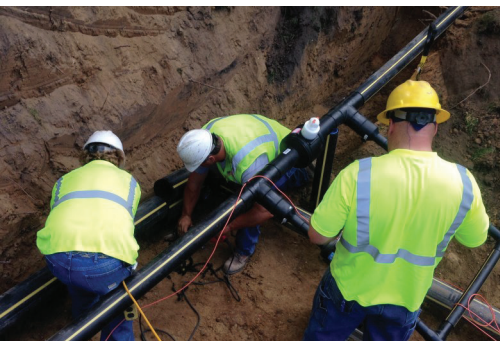


NATURAL GAS UTILITY WORKERS' DAY



The official Natural Gas Utility Workers' Day is March 18 because

that is the date of the New London, Texas school explosion in 1937 that led to the widespread odorization of natural gas and an increased emphasis on safety. Safety is a vital aspect to natural gas distribution and the employees of distribution companies endeavor to make natural gas delivery as safe as possible. In Austin, we add mercaptan to our natural gas before it enters our distribution system to make it easier to detect gas. Mercaptan is a non-toxic substance that has a pungent smell which has been described as having the smell of rotten eggs.



This annual nationwide event is intended to build public awareness about the hard work done by the employees of natural gas utilities. In 2024, our gas construction crew built,

installed, and replaced 8,081 feet of gas main. They also replaced 44 gas services to homes and businesses and installed 25 new services. Our gas service technicians responded to 1,046 emergency calls. Austin Utilities appreciates the dedication of our

Natural Gas Employees and celebrates their achievements in serving our customers.



AU-SMMPA Scholarship Opportunity

Do you know a local graduating senior who is looking for financial support to further their education? Austin Utilities and Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA) are offering a \$1,000 scholarship to help achieve academic dreams.



Visit our website <https://www.austinutilities.com/pages/scholarship/> or use the QR code for more details!

Using Technology to Aid in the Detection of Water Leaks

The average household's leaks can account for nearly 10,000 gallons of water wasted every year. Common types of leaks found in a home are worn toilet flappers, dripping faucets, and other leaking valves. These leaks may be small or go unnoticed. The financial impact of the leak may not be identified until you receive your utility bill.

AU's previous meter reading technology made it difficult to assist in leak detection as meter readings were obtained monthly for billing. That has changed. New advanced metering infrastructure has given not only AU, but customers the ability to detect leaks quicker, resulting in less waste of water and saving the customer money on their bill.

AU staff can be alerted of abnormal usage within a week, allowing communication with the customer. An email will be sent to the customer, giving them information on the potential leak. Email addresses are critical to the process, so having an updated email address will allow for quick communication. If you aren't sure whether or not we have your email address, contact us at customerservice@austinutilities.com to update.

Customers can monitor their usage on Smarthub or using the Smarthub mobile app. View your usage from the previous day by the hour. Monitoring usage on Smarthub can help identify issues or allow you to see the impact of watering your lawn, filling a swimming pool, or other outdoor activities that require water.

What to do if you suspect a leak? Check your toilets for leaks, especially ones that are not used on a regular basis. Check your faucets and showerheads. For more information on detecting and fixing leaks, visit www.epa.gov/watersense/fix-leak-week#.

THE FACTS ON LEAKS

- 10** percent of homes have leaks that waste 90 gallons or more per day
- A leaky faucet dripping at the rate of one drip per second can waste more than **3,000 gallons** per year
- Did you know?** Minor water leaks account for nearly **1** trillion gallons of wasted water each year and is equal to annual household water use in nearly **11** million homes
- A shower leaking at **10 Drips** per minute wastes more than **500** gallons per year
- Repair** leaks by checking faucet washers and gaskets for wear and replacing them if necessary
- Replace old toilets with WaterSense models & save **13,000** gallons of water savings for the average family
- Homeowners** can save **10 percent** on their water bills
- look for WaterSense** Meets EPA Criteria

EPA epa.gov/watersense

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:



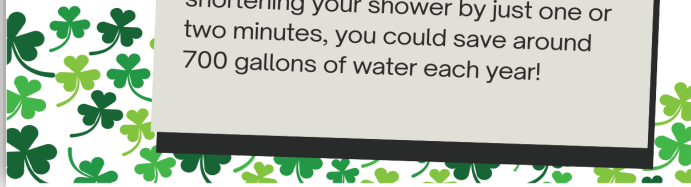
- Identify inefficiencies - Can pinpoint areas where energy is being wasted. Examples are drafts, leaks, inefficient appliances, and outdated insulation.
- Energy cost savings - addressing the inefficiencies can save you money by lowering your utility bill.
- Improved comfort and air quality - addressing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



MARCH AU ENERGY-SAVING TIP

SHORTEN YOUR SHOWER

The average shower lasts about 8 minutes, and an average showerhead has a water flow rate of 2.1 gallons per minute. This means each shower uses more than 16 gallons of water. By shortening your shower by just one or two minutes, you could save around 700 gallons of water each year!



Don't Rely on Luck

SECURE YOUR WARMTH WITH A NEW FURNACE!



CONSERVE & SAVE™

Purchase a new natural gas furnace and receive up to a \$1,000 rebate! Visit austinutilities.com for more rebate information.



Welcome New Employee Brooke Hostetler

Austin Utilities welcomes Brooke Hostetler, a new customer service representative to our team. Her previous work experience includes 16 years of retail experience, with the last 13 years as a pharmacy technician.

Brooke likes working with her teammates in customer service here at AU along with the customers. In her free time, she likes camping and being with her friends and family.

Behind the Scenes Gas & Water Service Technicians

Gas and Water Service Technicians are part of AU's operations team. We have six full-time technicians and one full-time Lead Meter Shop Technician. They are responsible for installing gas and water meters, maintaining the propane air plant, and responding to customer calls. The meter shop oversees the maintenance of 10,500 gas meters, 9,250 water meters as well as pressure regulators for the City of Austin. Every day is different and their job responsibilities can change with the weather, which can be challenging. In the summer, the team's focus is exchanging gas meters, performing surveys, and maintaining two gas border stations and 21 district regulator stations.

In the winter, their primary focus is troubleshooting when a customer doesn't have heat or hot water. Blizzards and polar vortexes haven't stopped the team from responding to calls. They are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for customer convenience. They respond to emergency calls year around. In 2024, the team responded to 1,713 customer calls, 1,046 of those being an emergency.

Gas Service works closely with gas and underground construction, dispatch, and customer service. That communication leads to quicker response times for our customers. Utility experience is helpful in their role, especially gas and water construction. All have gained valuable experience with the apprenticeship program within the department. The most rewarding parts of their job are educating and assisting customers who smell gas or experience the loss of heat or hot water.



L to R: Samantha Bekaert, Ryan Bell, Rob Gleason, Jessie Dumais, Jason Cummings, Scott Wangen & Marty Johnson. Not pictured: Justin Peterson

CHECK OUT OUR PODCAST

WRIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW





REMINDER!


2024 REBATE APPLICATIONS DEADLINE IS MARCH 31, 2025

austinutilities.com/pages/rebates-programs/

CONSERVE & SAVE



HEATSHARE
Administered by The Salvation Army



HELP RAISE FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE SALVATION ARMY'S HEATSHARE PROGRAM

WED. APR. 2ND
5:00 pm - 8:00 pm
AUSTIN PIZZA RANCH

Legislative Summit APGA



General Manager Mark Nibaur attended the American Public Gas Association (APGA) Legislative Summit. During this event, APGA members and staff gathered to discuss industry matters, receive updates on energy policy, and meet with congressional offices and staff. Mark had discussions with staff from the offices of Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith, as well as Representatives Brad Finstad, Angie Craig, Pete Stauber, and Michelle Fischbach. In these meetings, he emphasized the need to ensure continued access for customers to use natural gas appliances, highlighted the importance of municipal financing, and advocated for support of low-income home energy assistance programs.

Board Members Sworn In

At the Board of Commissioners meeting on January 21, Tyler Hulsebus, Kristin Johnson, and Jay Lutz were sworn into office by Tom Dankert. They were all reelected in November by Austin's voters to serve four-year terms. The board also voted for Steve Greenman to serve as President and Tyler Hulsebus to serve as Vice President.



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

Legislative Conference MMUA

Jay Lutz, one of our board members, attended the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA) Legislative Conference in St. Paul. The conference featured engaging presentations from a diverse array of industry and legal experts, covering various local government issues, MMUA's administrative and legislative priorities, and more. Participants also visited the Capitol to meet with their representatives. During these meetings, Jay spoke with Representative Patricia Mueller and Senator Gene Dornink about three key topics: ending Minnesota's moratorium on the development of new nuclear power, passing a bonding bill to adequately fund necessary utility infrastructure improvements, and providing funding for the replacement of old lead water pipes.



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