Your Public Utility

Austin Utilities celebrates Public Power and Public Natural Gas week, Oct. 3-9, along with more than 2,000 other community-owned, not-for-profit electric and gas utilities that collectively provide utility services to over 47 million Americans.

Public utilities are community-owned, locally controlled and operated on a not-for-profit basis. Each utility is a little different, depending on population, geography, structure, and the community’s values and goals. This ability to tailor local control, reliable customer service, affordable rates, and economic development to the local community is the foundation of public power’s success.

“Public Power and Public Natural Gas Week gives us the chance to emphasize the advantages of locally managing our energy supply to our citizens,” said Mark Nibaur, General Manager. “Our service is reliable and safe because of the pride we take in Austin and serving our friends and neighbors.”

Customers who stop in our lobby during the month of October will receive a free gift as our thank you for being a public utility customer.

Here are some of the good things our customers have said about their public utility:

- Because you’re helpful in working with people in bad and hard times. Always friendly doing what you can to help people who are struggling!
- Lived here all my life. Great people, work and great service.
- I have had good interactions in the past with AU workers, for example, when my furnace went out in the middle of the night. I also appreciate the rebates offered.
- I have always found the people working in the office very friendly and helpful. I have not experienced any outages for a long time.
- Can’t go without power! (that makes you all pretty important.)
Employee Spotlight

Kara has been married to her husband, Mike, for 40 years. They have 3 grown children and 6 grandchildren. Her favorite pastimes are going to Country music concerts, especially Chris Young, traveling to Disney locations to see Mickey, and spending time with her family. Kara hopes to retire in the next 6-7 years and then take it "One day at a time." If you’ve called AU’s main number in the last 18 years chances are you’ve spoken to Kara. She has been the Customer Service Representative who handles most calls and phone payments for nearly 2 decades. When she joined AU she already had a background in Customer Service at Hy-Vee and the Austin Medical Center. Kara says the best part of her job is the variety. "It’s always a different day." One thing that doesn’t change is her dedication to helping customers. "It’s really satisfying to know you were able to make things a little bit easier for someone when they’ve been struggling." 

Ellis Water Tower Open House

Over 50 people attended the open house held at the Ellis Water Tower on August 25th. The event was held to showcase the over $1.3 million in renovations recently completed. Some of the participants recalled seeing the water tower construction when they were young. The original buildings were constructed in 1955.

Energy Circuit Loop

Members of the Austin Area Mountain Bike Team pose in front of a sign leading to the new Energy Circuit Loop located behind the Northeast Power Plant on the Schindler's Way Trail. The trail is open for public use. The Energy Circuit Loop is rated as More Difficult, which indicates more technical riding with steeper slopes, obstacles, or features. This trail requires more experienced riding and should be used with caution. Austin Utilities allowed an expansion of the bike trail onto our property to provide them with a more robust trail with more levels of riding challenges. Dr. Gareth Hataye, with the Austin Cycling Team and the Southern Minnesota Bicycling Club, has "appreciated the support and willingness of Austin Utilities to expand the trail system". "The addition of the Energy Circuit Loop made the trail more attractive to visitors and residents alike. At the race a few weeks ago, Mr. Mark Nibaur allowed us to make adjustments to our race course so we could hold high school races that were safe and competitive, in lieu of the 10+ inches of rain we received that week."

Pictured from L to R: Peyton Clark, Garrett Clark, Logan Regner, Winston Walkup, Caden Soucek.
**Employee Spotlight**

**Kara Wollschlager**

**Customer Service Representative**

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Time for the Be Bright lighting campaign. This is our 21st year participating in the program that offers a selection of ENERGY STAR LED bulbs at a discounted price. Austin Utilities works with participating retailers to offer a variety of styles. ENERGY STAR labeled LEDs use 80% less energy and last up to 25 times longer than incandescent light bulbs. By replacing the five most-used bulbs in your home with LEDs, you can save up to $40 in energy costs during the first year alone. Customers can avoid rebate paperwork because the Austin Utilities rebate has already been applied. Discounts are available through December 31, but remember supplies are limited so get your discounted LEDs before they sell out.

**Get a Furnace Clean & Tune Get a $25 Rebate***

**WHY DO I NEED A FURNACE CLEAN & TUNE?**

You need a furnace tune-up once a year for several important reasons. Your tune-up can do all of the following:

- Improve operating efficiency, which can reduce your home heating costs
- Institute preventive measures to avoid furnace malfunction and keep your family safe
- Identify minor issues before they grow severe, preventing furnace failure later

Overall, a furnace tune-up simply makes good financial sense because it safeguards both your investment in the furnace and your family’s safety and comfort.

***$25 Rebate available every 2 years**

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The Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners Monthly Meeting was held on Aug. 19, 2021.

Agenda items included:

- Riverland Workforce Development Scholarship
- Ellis Well House renovation update
- Update to AU masking policy

Meeting minutes are available at [www.austinutilities.com](http://www.austinutilities.com)