

ICONIC AUSTIN MUNICIPAL PLANT REMEMBERED

Austin Utilities (AU) held a private ceremony on September 15th to commemorate a remembrance wall installed in the YMCA at the Austin Community Recreation Center. The wall was created to recognize the Downtown Power Plant. The power plant was demolished in 2018, after it had been decommissioned, to make room for the new community recreation building. The power plant and its neon **AUSTIN POWER PLANT** lighted sign were an iconic Austin landmark for many years.

Mark Nibaur, AU General Manager said this, “We had made the move into a new central facility that combined seven buildings at three locations into one. When we were approached to offer the power plant location for a community recreation center it was a perfect fit for the property.” In addition to providing the property for the new building, Austin Utilities paid a rebate to the YMCA at the Austin Community Recreation Center of over \$157,000 for energy efficient lighting and equipment installed in the construction of the new recreation center building.

The remembrance wall location was selected due to its proximity to the community room which is available for public use. The mural includes a collage of photos of the power plant and the following statement reflecting on the public use of the property, “In 1887 this ground was broken to raise a building that would provide public power and water to the community of Austin until 2013. The Austin Municipal Plant was removed in 2016. The 2020 opening of the Austin Community Recreation Center continues the tradition of public service on this ground.”

Local contractors were used to complete the project including Leyk House Creative LLC, Diamond Ridge Printing, and Innovative Signs and Graphics. The mock neon sign is powered with LED lighting. “The power plant and neon light were such a presence at this location for many years. The wall is a fun reminder for many of our members,” said Diane Baker, YMCA Executive Director.

The Austin Municipal Plant was an iconic Austin landmark for many years. Constructed on the 1888 site of the original municipal water plant, various additions were made to the plant through 1985. It provided the first electrification for street lighting in 1889, and in its prime provided 31 megawatts of power generation and steam for a district heating system for the community of Austin. It was removed in 2018 due to outdated technology.

Austin Utilities is a municipal utility serving approximately 12,300 electric customers, 10,300 natural gas customers, and 9000 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.

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