



**NEWS RELEASE
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AUSTIN UTILITIES EARNS AWARD FOR OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

AUSTIN, Minn.— (September 4, 2024) - The American Public Gas Association (APGA) presented Austin Utilities with the prestigious APGA System Operational Achievement Recognition (SOAR) for excellence in operating its natural gas utility. Public natural gas systems are entrusted by their customers to deliver clean and affordable natural gas through a safe and reliable distribution pipeline system. To accomplish this mission, a forward-thinking natural gas utility constantly strives to improve its operating capabilities, overcome challenges and adapt to its changing environment.

Out of approximately 750 APGA members, Austin Utilities was selected for SOAR level silver by its peers on the APGA Operations and Safety Committee. The selection was based on demonstrated excellence in the four areas of system integrity, system improvement, employee safety, and workforce development.

System integrity refers to the natural gas distribution system performing its overall intended function safely, efficiently and effectively – distributing energy to all customers without being degraded or impaired by its internal or external environment. System improvement refers to keeping the natural gas system well maintained and up to date through a self-improvement program that includes both an eye on the future through research and development, technology integration and a commitment to system improvement programs. Systems that exhibit excellence in employee safety include adopting a safety program that includes policies and procedures for education involvement and accountability for all employees, as well as tracking safety performance. Lastly, workforce development focuses on creative recruitment, training, education and development practices that provide a return on investment through increased employee loyalty, motivation, safety and productivity.

“This recognition was achieved through many years of dedication and hard work from our employees. I am proud that our company has focused on delivering reliable, safe, and economical gas services for our customers,” stated Mark Nibaur, General Manager.

Austin Utilities was one of twenty-five SOAR recipients recognized in 2024, joining the 54 previous SOAR award recipients. The system also received a plaque signifying Austin Utilities commitment to and achievement in excellence in operating a natural gas utility system. APGA recognized Austin Utilities at its Annual Conference in Traverse City, MO in July.

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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.