PROJECT CONSERVE & SAVE

Austin fourth grade students are ready to Take Action and Think Energy thanks to Austin Utilities (AU) energy efficiency school kit program. Project Conserve and Save is a program in partnership with the National Energy Foundation (NEF). This educational undertaking introduces local fourth graders to Minnesota’s energy resources and the importance of energy and water efficiency. They gain a better understanding of the energy they use and the environmental and financial benefits of using it efficiently.

The program is offered to all elementary schools within Austin and reached approximately 434 students our first year in 2019. After participating in classroom activities, students receive a take home kit of energy saving items like an LED bulb, LED nightlight, low flow faucet and showerhead and more. In 2020, over 440 students took home efficiency kits to transfer knowledge gained in the classroom into efficiency actions in Austin homes. According to AU General Manager Mark Nibaur, “The turnkey approach of this NEF program made it possible for us to offer it to our local schools. It gets kids started with energy saving behaviors and allows AU to fulfill their mission to connect with our community.”

“Since I brought the kit home I learned to try and take shorter showers and I pay more attention to turning off lights” Leo Heimer, Neveln 4th grader, pictured with his Dad, AU”s Adam Heimer.

School Project Savings (2019 program)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAVINGS</th>
<th>BENEFIT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13,210 kilowatt hours</td>
<td>551 trees planted</td>
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<tr>
<td>4,147 therms natural gas</td>
<td>65.7 cars off the road</td>
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<tr>
<td>316,205 gallons of water</td>
<td>52 homes powered</td>
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Benefit calculated at https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator
City of Austin & Mower County Electronics Recycling Event

Saturday, May 9th
9am to 2pm
Mower Co. Fairgrounds

Information available on the City of Austin Facebook page. Volunteers please contact the City at 507-437-9940

Paint the Town Pink

Austin Utilities Employees raised $3,623 for Paint the Town Pink in February. A raffle of donated items from employees raised half the amount. Direct employee donations accounted for the rest.

Pictured left to right: Keven Maxa, Kelly Lady, Michelle Orozco, Dar Duholm and Dave Thompson.

Celebrate Earth Day - Wednesday, April 22nd and Arbor Day - Friday, April 24th

Partners in Planting

$10 REBATE on a qualifying tree from:

- Stiver's Nursery & Landscaping
- DeLaat's

Call 811 or visit
www.gopherstateonecall.org
at least 48 hours in advance
(not including weekends and holidays)
How do I prevent disconnection when the Cold Weather Rule ends?

The Cold Weather Rule (CWR) in Minnesota protects customers from being disconnected from October 15th through April 15th under special conditions. With the CWR deadline approaching soon you may want to know how to avoid a disconnection after that date.

Pay your bill in full by April 15th.

If you have a payment plan with AU but your bill will not be current by April 15, contact us to request a continuation of that payment plan.

If you have a payment plan and you cannot make a payment as agreed upon because your situation has changed make sure you contact your utility right away to request a change to the payment plan.

AU makes every effort to keep our customers connected. Please contact our office at 507.433.8886 if you have any problems paying your utility bill.

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**Employee Spotlight**

**SKIP FERGUSON  LINeworker**

At just 20 years old, Skip Ferguson started his career with Austin Utilities. Over the following 28 years he worked his way up from Janitor to Fireman’s helper, Fireman, Chief A Engineer, Operator, Plant Mechanic and now Lineworker. Skip says he has wanted to work at AU since he was 12 years old. He wanted to be just like his Dad who was also a Chief A Engineer at Hormel.

Being a lineworker can be a dangerous job, as Skip found out 5 years ago. During a training exercise, he fell 30 feet from a utility pole and managed to survive with only a few small fractures and a concussion. He says he considers himself a walking miracle. “After 28 years at AU, I still wake up every morning and say ‘I love my job’. Not many people can say that.”

Skip has been married to his wife, Sara, for 14 years. They have 4 children ranging in age from 8 to 14 years old. He loves spending time with them, riding motorcycles, shooting pool, and coaching his son’s diving team. He also recommends trying the ‘Skiparita’ at Rave nutrition, a special drink flavor named after him.

When asked about his future plans he says “Continue my career at the job I love and keep living by the motto ‘Leave it better than I found it’.”
Standing left to right: Colin Roberts, Dillon Sprague, Doug Rysavy, Tyler Underdahl, Kurt Regenscheid, Doug Barth, Steve Tiegs, Trevor Herfindahl, Tom Tylutki, Jeff Martinson, & Bill Bumgarner. Seated left to right: Mark Gerstner, Pat Andera, Pat Donovan & Skip Ferguson.

On April 18th we celebrate National Linewoker Appreciation Day. It's our honor to celebrate the hard work, innovation, and dedication of Electrical Lineworkers who often work in dangerous and difficult conditions to provide reliable and safe power to our customers. They are among the first responders in the wake of storms and other disasters. With a combined 279 years of experience you can be assured Austin Utilities Lineworkers provide you a safe and reliable electric system.

Financial Assistance Available for Well Sealing

Austin Utilities has teamed with Mower County Soil and Water Conservation District to offer financial assistance of 50 percent cost-share up to $1,000 to seal a well. Money is made available through a state grant and property owners who apply now for cost-share will be considered on a “first-come, first-served” basis, with the focus on priority areas for groundwater protection.

An unused well can act like a drain that allows surface water runoff, contaminated water or improperly disposed waste a direct path into drinking water sources. When this happens, everyone’s drinking water quality is threatened — city water wells, neighbors’ wells and the landowner’s current well — which is why the state advises homeowners to test their water annually.

Interested in applying for cost-share? Contact Tim Ruzek at Mower SWCD at 507-460-4577 or by email at tim@mowerdistrict.org.

The Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners
Monthly Meeting was held on March 10th, 2020.
Agenda items included:
- Recognition of Geoff Baker leaving the Board of Commissioners
- Annual insurance liability waiver
- Update on AMI project

Meeting minutes are available at www.austinutilities.com

For more information please contact Scott Felten, Mower County Auditor-Treasurer, at 507-457-9457, or scottfelten@mower.mn.us.