



# PowerPlus™

## Austin Energy® Customer News

Austin's Community-Owned Electric Utility

www.austinenergy.com

DECEMBER 2011

# ANY 2012

## AUSTIN'S NEW YEAR

### City to Throw Larger New Year's Bash

Austinites can look forward once again to a family-friendly festival to ring in the New Year. The City of Austin is building on the success of last year's Auditorium Shores New Year's Eve event with a program this year featuring more entertainment and an impressive line-up of live music. Austin's New Year, a free community event, will celebrate on December 31 from 5-10 p.m. The event will feature two stages of entertainment, a film festival buffet and a culminating special show. The band line-up includes Vitera, Joe McDermott, Big Don, Aftermath and Carolyn Wonderland with special guest Miss Lavelle White. The theme is A.N.Y. – Any one. Any dream. Anything's possible. Learn more at [www.Facebook.com/austintexasgov](http://www.Facebook.com/austintexasgov) under "Events."

## Public Hearings on Electric Rates

Austin Energy is delivering its final recommendations this month to the Austin City Council on the redesign of its electric rates and a proposed system-average 13 percent increase in base electric rates. Austin Energy base electric rates have not changed since 1994. The Council will set public meetings to receive feedback on the proposal.

Even with stringent budgeting, escalating increases in the cost of goods and services and slower growth have widened the gap between the day-to-day fixed cost of providing electric service and revenues. Revenue shortfalls in 2009 were \$75.1 million; in 2010 shortfalls totaled \$86.1 million. Even with record summer energy use this past summer, end of fiscal year balance sheets look to close with about a \$6.5 million shortfall. For the current fiscal year beginning October 1, 2011, revenue shortfalls are projected at \$75 million – not including a rate increase.

The Council-appointed Electric Utility Commission held five public meetings during September and October to discuss preliminary rate designs by Austin Energy. Extensive feedback was received from citizens representing a wide range of customer groups, including residential customers on low incomes or with low monthly electric usage, schools, worship facilities and businesses.

To review Austin Energy's rate proposals, visit [www.rates.austinenergy.com](http://www.rates.austinenergy.com). The site also provides all presentations and details from previous public meetings. Citizens can also send comments or questions via the website.



## Statewide Transmission Charge Increase

A line item charge on Austin Energy electric bills, called the Transmission Service Adjustment Rider (TSAR), has increased from 82 cents to \$1.44 a month for the average residential customer (1,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity use per month). The TSAR is a pass-through (no profit added) charge to pay for Austin's share of statewide transmission construction and maintenance costs.

All electric providers in the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) are required to pay a share of state grid construction and maintenance costs. The electric grid for the majority of the state is managed by ERCOT. The percentage share of costs is based on a provider's share of the statewide load during the hour of greatest demand for electricity in each of June, July, August and September. Austin Energy customer energy use represents about 4 percent of the statewide load during the four summer peaks. Therefore Austin is required to pay about 4 percent of the statewide transmission expense.

Statewide transmission costs will include an \$8 billion transmission build-out that began last year and will take an estimated six years to complete. The new transmission lines are needed to meet the growth in power demand across the statewide grid and to bring wind-generated electricity from West Texas to the rest of the state. Austin Energy's share of these costs will increase from about \$66 million last year to \$125 million annually by 2016.



*Season's Greetings  
from the  
City of Austin*

## Austin Energy Electric System Reliability Excels

The frequency and average duration of power outages on the Austin Energy electric system are consistently less than industry averages.

In a benchmark study last year of 21 of the largest investor-owned and community-owned electric utilities in Texas, the U.S. and Canada, Austin Energy ranked in the first quartile with the lowest frequency of outages at 0.67 per customer (called the System Average Interruption Frequency Index) and the lowest length of outages at 47 minutes per average customer (System Average Interruption Duration Index). This compared to a mean of 1.09 outages per customer and a mean of 108.98 minutes by the other utilities surveyed. Industry averages overall are higher.

Austin Energy invests about \$80 million dollars annually to update, repair and expand its electric system. For quick response to outages, Austin Energy keeps about 10 crews on standby 24/7 with fully loaded trucks ready to respond immediately when outages occur. Power outages should always be reported by calling **322-9100**.



## BEST REGIONAL SCIENCE FAIR IN TEXAS

The Austin Energy Regional Science Festival is one of the largest regional science fair competitions in Texas with over 3,500 participating students from local and area schools. The 2012 fair will be held Feb. 22-25 at the Palmer Events Center. Students placing at their school science fairs compete at regionals, where middle and high school students have a chance to advance to state and international science fair competitions. The four-day Austin Energy Regional Science Festival requires more than 450 judges and 100 volunteers. Schools that would like to enter their winning students, as well as anyone interested in judging or volunteering, are invited to visit [www.sciencefest.austinenergy.com](http://www.sciencefest.austinenergy.com)

## Holly Power Plant Removal Begins

Work has begun to remove the 52-year-old Holly Street Power Plant. The project will take about 18 months. Once completed, about 9 acres of property along Lady Bird Lake will be developed into a community park.

The removal plan includes a number of considerations and standards to reduce the impact of the project on the neighborhood. A paved stretch of road will be constructed from the power plant connecting with Pedernales Street to keep truck traffic out of the heart of the neighborhood. Trucks bringing in or taking out materials will not operate between 7:30-8:30 a.m. or 2:30-3:30 p.m. while children are traveling to or from school. Work at the site will not be scheduled for nights or on weekends, and dust, noise and vibration monitors have been set up on the site. Activities exceeding these standards will be halted and the problem corrected.

Updates on the project will be provided to the Holly neighborhood through a monthly newsletter, monthly community meetings, a website at [www.holly.austinenergy.com](http://www.holly.austinenergy.com), as well as flyers and door hangers as needed. A toll-free hotline has been established (**1-855-444-6559**) for residents who have questions about an activity or want to report an issue.

## Recycle Your Holiday Tree



Recycle your tree into a free local resource!

Austin Resource Recovery will provide curbside collection of the trees on the same day as your regularly scheduled yard trimmings collection. Please remove all ornaments, cut trees over six feet tall in half and place your tree at the curb, next to your yard trimmings. Those without City of Austin garbage and recycling collection, such as apartment residents, are encouraged to take their trees to Zilker Park after the holidays to be mulched. Every year, thousands of trees from curbside and Zilker collections are recycled into mulch, which is made available free on a first-come, first-served basis to Austin residents in mid-January. To learn more, visit [www.austinrecycles.com](http://www.austinrecycles.com).

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### Para una Traducción en Español:

Si gusta recibir este folleto en español, llame a Austin Energy al 972-9523.



Customer Service Center: 494-9400

Hours: Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.; Weekdays 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

24-Hour Power Outage Reporting: 322-9100

