



## ***Austin Water Utility Conservation Programs June 2015***

Austin Water continually evaluates its programs to determine whether they should be modified, phased out, or new programs implemented in order for the city to achieve its evolving conservation goals. Resulting changes are generally based on updated cost benefit analysis, new studies and information, federal manufacturing requirements, promotion of innovative technology, penetration of hard to reach markets, integrated water resource planning, or changes in the city's codes and ordinances.

Since strict rules apply under state "cost-of-service" requirements for public utilities, Austin Water uses the utility cost-benefit approach when giving money from customer revenues to private individuals, with rebate amounts based on a direct, quantifiable, and comparable benefit to rate payers of the utility. Benefits to the utility rate payer from funding conservation rebate programs include the water savings that will avoid cost of service and rate increases due to costs to the utility of increased water and wastewater treatment and distribution costs, and procuring and developing additional water supplies.

Over time, Austin Water will offer fewer small rebates, especially in the residential sector, and focus on encouraging more comprehensive changes that save larger volumes of water and providing short-term incentives to promote new and innovative technology. Austin Water will also employ regulations that embed conservation into new development and deter excessive discretionary water use, create programs that target high water users, and continue marketing efforts that heighten consumer awareness of water use patterns and choices. In addition, Austin will conduct pilot projects and participate in national research projects to identify future conservation strategies and savings potential.

### **Indoor Conservation**

#### **Free Showerheads/Faucet Aerators**

To reduce water use, residential customers can pick up free water-efficient showerheads and faucet aerators from Austin Water. The showerheads, available in either regular or soap-up valve models, use 1.5 gallons per minute. The bathroom faucet aerators use 1.0 and 0.5 gallons per minute and the kitchen faucet aerators use 1.5 or 2.2 gallons per minute. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since December 2010**

#### **Residential and Multi-Family Pressure Regulating Valve (PRV) Rebate (Indoor)**

Pressure Regulating Valves (PRVs) reduce incoming water pressure from water mains to a lower, more functional pressure for distribution throughout the property. Lowering high pressure can reduce water use and prevent damage to pipes, fixtures and appliances and ensure that they are working efficiently. Austin Water offers a \$100 rebate to residential customers for the purchase and installation of a PRV. Multi-family customers can receive a rebate of \$100 per unit,

up to a maximum of \$500 per property. To be eligible for the rebate, customers must have water pressure over 80 pounds per square inch and not have an existing PRV already installed. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since October 2007**

### **Outdoor Conservation**

#### **Residential Irrigation System Evaluations**

Because seasonal landscape watering is the driving factor in the City's peak day water usage, residential customers who use more than 25,000 gallons of water per month or 20,000 gallons in two consecutive months and have an in-ground sprinkler system are eligible to receive a free irrigation system evaluation to help them use their systems more efficiently. Often, customers have a limited understanding of how their controllers work, have multiple programs or start times that they are unaware of, lack a backup battery in their controller, or have heads that mist due to pressure that is too high. During the evaluation, a licensed irrigator from Austin Water examines the system in operation to check for leaks, water application rates, and adequate coverage areas. The auditor helps determine an efficient watering schedule and sets the controller to that schedule. The auditor also assesses the adequacy of the equipment and recommends replacement of components if appropriate. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since 1992**

#### **Residential Irrigation System Upgrade Rebate**

Austin Water's Irrigation System Upgrade Rebate Program is a one-time offer to encourage residential customers to make improvements to their irrigation systems to increase water efficiency. Rebates of up to \$400 are available to assist with the purchase of parts for system upgrades that focus on station and system-wide improvements, including installing rain/soil moisture sensors and pressure regulating valves, converting stations to drip or from spray to multi-stream, multi-trajectory rotor nozzles, and capping a station. New irrigation systems or expansions to existing systems are ineligible to participate. Proper backflow prevention devices must be present in order to receive a rebate. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since FY 1998. Current rebate structure implemented July 2012.**

#### **Residential Drought Survival Tools for Your Yard Rebate**

Austin Water offers rebates of up to \$180 for of mulch, compost and aeration to help prepare yards for the hot summer months so that water stays on the yard, reducing the need for supplemental irrigation. **Date Implemented: March 2014**

#### **Rainwater Harvesting Rebate**

The City of Austin offers an incentive to encourage the use of rainwater as a supplement to municipal water for irrigation use. Customers can receive rebates of \$0.50 per gallon for non-pressurized systems (rain barrels) and \$1.00 per gallon for pressurized systems (large cisterns with pumps) not to exceed 50 percent of system costs up to a total maximum lifetime rebate of \$5,000. The rebate covers materials and labor for dedicated system components including tank, pad, screens, filters, first-flush, and selected piping installation, but does not include gutters, irrigation system components, or backflow preventers. Program requirements vary depending on the size of the system installed. All pressurized systems must have an RPZ backflow preventer installed at City of Austin water meters. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since 2000. Current offerings became effective July 2010**

### **WaterWise Rainscape Rebate**

Austin Water offers rebates of up to \$500 to homeowners and schools for the installation of landscape features such as berms, terraces, swales, “rain” gardens, porous pavement, and infiltration trenches that direct and retain rainwater on the property for on-site irrigation and other beneficial purposes. These features help prevent runoff and reduce or eliminate the need for supplemental potable water for irrigation, saving customers on their water and wastewater bills. **Date Implemented: June 1, 2015**

### **Free Tree Gator Distribution**

To assist with replacing trees lost to the drought and ensuring that these new trees receive adequate water during continued drought conditions, Austin Water developed a process to partner with local organizations such as the non-profit organization Tree Folks, Inc., that promote the planting of new trees to provide them with Tree Gators, drip irrigation bags that significantly reduce water loss from evaporation. **Date Implemented: June 1, 2012**

### **Residential Pool Cover Rebate**

This program assists homeowners with costs related to the purchase of a swimming pool cover to reduce the amount of water lost to evaporation and lower the cost of pool maintenance. Austin Water residential customers can receive 50 percent of the purchase price up to \$50 for a new manual pool cover or solar rings and \$200 for a new permanent, mechanical pool cover. **Date Implemented: June 1, 2012**

### **Residential Water Hose Timer Rebate**

Rebates are available to Austin Water residential customers for 50% of the pre-tax purchase price of up to two (2) hose timers, with a maximum rebate of \$40. Plumbing regulations require that these timers be used with a hose-bibb vacuum breaker; customers must submit receipts showing purchase of both the timer and the vacuum breaker device to receive a rebate, or purchase a model with an integrated vacuum breaker. These devices help customers save water, save money, and add convenience. They are an easy add-on to an existing hose-end sprinkler and allow for better control of hose-end watering. Any style or brand is eligible, from the simplest mechanical timer to a multi-zone, fully programmable digital timer for multiple hoses. **Date Implemented: September 2012**

### **Commercial/Multi-family Irrigation System Improvement Rebate**

Austin Water offers rebates of up to \$5,000 to commercial and multi-family customers for irrigation system improvements including:

- central computer irrigation controller systems;
- master valves;
- flow sensors; and
- multi-trajectory rotor nozzles.

Central irrigation controller systems allow users to remotely schedule and manage the irrigation system to quickly detect and stop leaks, tell if a valve is broken, automatically adjust watering times based on rainfall or soil moisture, and irrigate according to water budgets and watering restrictions. Rebate amounts depend on the type equipment and are for fixed amounts per unit up to a maximum amount for each facility. Rebates are available for master valves for irrigation

systems installed before January 1, 2009. This new rebate replaces the Commercial/Multi-family Irrigation System Upgrade Rebate which was suspended after new irrigation system standards the mandatory irrigation system evaluations came into effect in 2012. **Date Implemented: June 1, 2015**

### **Commercial and Multi-Family Alternative Irrigation Compliance Pilot Program**

Austin Water is conducting a four-year pilot study for commercial properties that will allow these customers to water according to a calculated water budget rather than the assigned watering schedule. A total of 90 properties will participate over the course of the course of the four-year pilot study. Participating properties must have a dedicated irrigation meter, have been a direct customer of Austin Water for at least 3 years, and be in compliance with Austin City Code, Chapter 6-4-63(D), Permanent Water Use Restrictions. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since April 2012**

### **Free Residential Drought Survival Tools**

To assist with conserving water outdoors, Austin Water residential customers can receive free soil moisture sensors and Tree Gators as well as check out digital hose timers to monitor water use and sunlight measuring devices to assist in vegetation selection. The soil moisture meters are easy-to-read devices that measure relative moisture of soils, which can assist customers in deciding when and where to apply supplemental water. Tree Gators are slow release watering bags that evenly deliver water to a tree's roots without run-off or evaporation. These bags are suitable for use with young trees about 2-3 inches in diameter with branches at least 25" from the ground. Austin Water has also partnered with the Austin Public Library to offer digital garden hose meters to customers through the library check-out system. The meters, which attach to standard outdoor hoses, spray-nozzles, and faucets, allow customers to monitor water use while irrigating lawns, washing cars, and more. By seeing how much water is being used, customers can save water by adjusting their habits. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since summer 2011**

### **Residential WaterWise Landscape Rebate**

In July 2010, Austin Water piloted a Landscape Conversion Incentive program to encourage homeowners to conserve water by converting turf areas to native beds, permeable hardscapes, rock gardens, mulching, or non-irrigated beds. Current program offerings allow residential properties to receive rebates of \$25 for every 100 square feet of healthy turf that is converted to native plant beds or permeable hardscape, with a maximum rebate of \$1,250. Homeowners may submit applications twice a year- either December through March for spring installations or June through September for fall installations. Only the first 100 eligible applicants are accepted into the program per application period. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since July 2010. Current program began August 2012**

### **Multi-Family HOA WaterWise Landscape Rebate**

Austin Water is offers WaterWise Landscape rebates to Multi-Family HOAs that share one water meter or one irrigation meter. WaterWise Landscape refers to landscaping and gardening that reduces or eliminates the need for supplemental water from irrigation. Major water savings can be made by converting healthy turf grass to native plant beds. Properties may receive \$25 for every 100 sq.ft. (minimum 1,000 sq. ft. – maximum 20,000 sq. ft.) converted from healthy turf

grass to native plant beds with a maximum rebate of \$5,000. **Date Implemented: September 2014.**

### **Residential and Multi-Family Pressure Regulating Valve (PRV) Rebate (Outdoor)**

Pressure Regulating Valves (PRVs) reduce incoming water pressure from water mains to a lower, more functional pressure for distribution throughout the property. Lowering high pressure can reduce water use and make irrigation systems more efficient by eliminating over-spray and misting. Austin Water offers a \$100 rebate to residential customers for the purchase and installation of a PRV. Multi-family customers can receive a rebate of up to a maximum of \$500 per property. To be eligible for the rebate, customers must have water pressure over 80 pounds per square inch and not have an existing PRV already installed. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since October 2007**

## **Institutional, Commercial, and Industrial (ICI) Conservation Programs**

### **3C Business Challenge**

Participation in the 3C Business Challenge provides businesses with information about ways to reduce water use and shows their commitment to saving water. After conducting a self-audit of water-using equipment at their business, commercial customers submit the completed audit form to Austin Water. Based on the information provided, conservation staff makes recommendations about steps the business could take to reduce water use and provides information about available rebates to assist with water-efficient upgrades. The 3C Business Challenge is also a component of the citywide Green Business Leader program initiated by the Office of Sustainability. **Date Implemented: June 2011**

### **“Bucks for Business” ICI Rebate**

Austin Water offers rebates of up to \$100,000 to industrial, commercial, and institutional customers for installing equipment and process upgrades that produce water savings of at least 100 gallons per day. The incentive available for each project is \$0.50 for every 1,000 gallons saved over a 10-year lifetime of the equipment or 50% of the cost of the purchase price of the equipment, whichever is less, but the total not to exceed up to \$100,000. The rebate payment is based on documented savings following project completion. Applicants must obtain pre-approval for rebated projects and agree to post-installation inspection to verify installation and operation. Because water savings must be documentable, potential projects should be located in areas that can be sub-metered or otherwise measured or where savings can be calculated based on some measured parameter. Examples of eligible upgrades include: replacing single pass cooling with cooling tower water or air cooling; reuse of high quality rinse water, combined process reuse water, AC condensate recovery and use, and storm water reuse for landscape irrigation and other non-potable water uses; and installing water-saving equipment in commercial laundry or car washes. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since 1996, rebate cap increased effective 2008**

### **Commercial Kitchen Equipment Rebate**

Austin Water provides rebates to commercial and institutional customers to replace their food service equipment with more efficient, cost-saving Energy Star rated models. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since February 2014**

### **ICI Water Efficiency Audit Rebate**

Austin Water offers a rebate that pays customers up to \$5,000 for an independent water efficiency audit of their industrial, commercial or institutional facility. To qualify for the rebate, customers must commit to fixing any leaks and making any equipment or system setting adjustments recommended by the auditor. Auditors will also suggest other ways to reduce your water consumption and discuss your eligibility for rebates from Austin Water for more efficient equipment and upgrades. The rebate amount is 75% of the cost of the audit or up to \$5,000, whichever is less. A rebate is available for each separately metered facility meeting the annual usage threshold of 100,000 gallons per year. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since July 2013**

### **Wastewater Reclamation and Auxiliary “Graywater” Programs**

#### **Reclaimed Water Capital Improvement Projects**

Austin Water has provided reclaimed water for irrigation since 1974. Using reclaimed water benefits the water system by reducing demand for potable water for non-potable uses, including irrigation, cooling tower makeup, ornamental ponds, manufacturing, and toilet flushing. The City’s Water Reclamation Initiative, enacted in 1990, is a plan to expand development of a reclaimed water system to meet current and future non-potable water demands. In 2009, a drought year with exceptionally high demand, about 5 percent of wastewater received at the City’s wastewater treatment plants was treated and reused for non-potable uses, mostly irrigation of golf courses. In September 2010, the 51st Street Tower, which serves the University of Texas area, was brought online. In November 2011, the reclaimed system was expanded to Austin Bergstrom International Airport, which is anticipated to save 25 million gallons of drinking water annually. Today, reclaimed water use conserves approximately 1.6 billion gallons of drinking water a year. Austin Water just completed a reclaimed water system extension in Southeast Austin and an extension is in design for the Capitol complex downtown. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since 1974**

#### **Residential Gray Water System Design Manual**

In 2014, the Austin City Council adopted several changes to city codes and ordinances to facilitate the use of auxiliary water (e.g., rainwater, gray water, reclaimed water, A/C condensate) while still protecting public health and safety, and consistent with state law. The changes were the result of a two-year evaluation that included input from a special task force and a consultant hired by the city to review these codes and recommend changes. As a part of implementing these changes, Austin Water has developed a technical guidance document for residential graywater systems to help customers install systems consistent with the new provisions and take advantage of available rebate programs. **Date Implemented: November 2014**

### **Regulatory Measures**

#### **Water Use Management Ordinance**

In 1983, the City of Austin enacted its first water use management ordinance, which implemented watering restrictions in response to supply constraints. In 2001, the City enacted a permanent water waste prohibition making it a Class C misdemeanor (max. \$500 fine) to waste water through poorly designed irrigation systems or fail to repair leaks. In 2007, a revised ordinance limited outdoor watering to twice a week year-round for commercial and multifamily

customers and from May through September for residential customers. That ordinance also prohibited daytime watering and set forth progressive restrictions to respond to increased demand or decreased supply. In 2008, a large number of revisions were made to the city's plumbing code providing water efficiency requirements for a wide variety of equipment and fixtures.

In 2011, the City began a public process to discuss revising the Water Conservation Code (Chapter 6-4 of City Code) to better address the impacts of long-term drought. In August 2012, a revised ordinance established a Conservation Stage that limits outdoor irrigation for residential and commercial customers to no more than twice a week year-round, prohibits daytime irrigation, places restrictions on the use of commercial patio misters. Other significant changes included a car wash certification program, mandatory irrigation system audits for commercial and multi-family properties of one acre or greater in size, a requirement that water may be served at restaurants only on demand, and for hotels to have a linen exchange program. The revised ordinance also implements four drought stages which contain increasing levels of water use restrictions to maximize water savings during times of drought and provides for the assessment of administrative fines in addition to the criminal penalties.

To educate the public about the mandatory watering schedule, the City produces magnets and stickers depicting the schedule; promotes the schedule heavily on television and radio, through bus wraps and in print ads; and increases education efforts during the summer when water use is highest. In August 2008, Austin Water partnered with Austin 3-1-1 to take water waste reports 24/7 and provide tracking assistance to callers. This has led to an increased number of water waste reports from the public and encourages compliance with the watering schedule. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since 1983. Current measures approved August 16, 2012.**

### **Plumbing Code Revisions**

In 2010, Austin revised its plumbing code to require high-efficiency toilets using an average of no more than 1.28 gallons per flush (gpf) and urinals that are either waterless or use no more than 0.5 gpf in all new construction and retrofit projects. Earlier additions to the plumbing code adopted in 2008 prohibited once-through cooling, commercial garbage grinders, and liquid ring vacuum pumps. The 2008 revisions also added requirements for air cooled ice machines, at least 5 cycles of concentration for cooling towers, efficiency standards for car wash equipment and commercial kitchen pre-rinse spray valves, and a requirement for pressure reduction valves where PSI for a residential property was over 65. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since January 2008**

### **Mandatory Reclaimed Water Hook-up**

In August 2012, an ordinance was adopted requiring all new commercial developments or redevelopments within 250 feet of a reclaimed line to hook up to the system. The AWU director may grant a variance from this provision if compliance would pose a significant financial hardship or health risk, but the burden of proof is on the applicant. During FY2014, over 1.45 billion gallons of reclaimed water was used by 72 customers. The reclaimed system is anticipated to be completed within 25 years with over 325 customers. **Date Implemented: October 2012**

### **Innovative Commercial Landscape Ordinance**

The Innovative Commercial Landscape Ordinance serves as both a water quality and conservation tool. This change to the land development code requires new commercial developments to direct stormwater to an area at least 50 percent of the size of the required landscape. Means for conveying stormwater to landscapes vary and range from passive to active methods, several of which can count towards receiving water quality credit. In an effort to limit non-essential irrigation, commercial customers may now choose whether to install permanent irrigation in the peripheral regions of the property, and undisturbed vegetation will count towards the “50 percent requirement.” **Date Implemented: Ongoing since December 2010**

### **Conservation Pricing**

#### **Tiered and Seasonal Rate Structures**

To keep costs affordable for essential uses and discourage excessive use, Austin Water has a five-tiered inclining block rate structure in its water service rates for single-family residential customers. The fifth usage tier, which was added in November 2009 and applies to retail customers using more than 20,000 gallons per month, is set at over \$12 per thousand gallons to discourage unnecessary use. Water rates for commercial and multi-family customers do not increase with the volume of water used; however, these customers have peak and off-peak rates to encourage seasonal conservation.

Wholesale customers and several large volume/industrial customers have individual rates established through negotiated contracts.

Austin Water has one of the steepest rate structures in the country, which has resulted in a dramatic reduction in the amount of water sold at the highest tiers. It has also helped Austin Water increase revenue stability during drought when water demands are reduced by additional restrictions while still allowing customers to save money by reducing water use. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since FY 1994.**

#### **Evaporative Loss Credit Program:**

Austin Water retail customers may obtain an adjustment in the calculation of the customer’s monthly wastewater bill for the amount of evaporated water from cooling towers not returned to the City of Austin’s wastewater system upon approval of the customer’s Evaporative Loss Adjustment application in accordance with City Ordinance 950126-C. For more information, contact David Yeakey, Utility Account Specialist, at (512) 972-0037.

### **Water Loss Prevention**

#### **Leak Response and Repair**

Austin Water uses acoustic technology to inspect more than 1,500 miles of water lines for leaks. In 2013, the utility completed a five-year program of inspecting the entire distribution system. That information is now being used to enhance Austin Water’s active leak detection program. Austin Water has also initiated an accelerated leak response and repair program that has proven highly successful, with most leaks now repaired in one day or less and almost 90% of emergency leaks responded to within three hours. Based on the American Water Works Association’s Infrastructure Leakage Index (ILI), Austin Water performs well in a national group of utilities



that have active water loss programs, often exceeding its goal of an ILI of 3.0 or less, 3.0 – 5.0 being recommended by the Texas Water Development Board as the range best suited for a utility such as Austin that faces the long range resource constraints. The ILI is calculated by taking the real losses (water lost due to leaks) and dividing them by the unavoidable real losses.

### **Renewing Austin**

Austin Water recently launched “Renewing Austin” which invests \$125 million in a five-year program to upgrade aging water lines and keep pace with the infrastructure demands of a growing city. Austin Water has experienced a record number of water leaks because of extreme drought conditions. By implementing Renewing Austin, the utility is leading the way in water conservation and water service reliability.

### **“Smart Meter” Feasibility Study**

In FY 2011, Austin Water launched a study to determine the use of meters that can record consumption of water in intervals of an hour or less and send that information at least daily back to the utility for monitoring and billing purposes. “Smart meters” enable two-way communication between the meter and the central system. This advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) supports automatic meter reading (AMR) in that it enables two-way communications with the meter. During FY2013, two pilot areas were selected that include about 200 connections each that will use district meters to measure total flow into the districts. After district meters have been installed, 6 – 12 months of baseline consumption data will be gathered by the existing meters. Following this, AMR/AMI customer meters will be selected and installed within the districts.

The City of Austin and other Texas cities are working with Pecan Street, a 501(c)(3) research and development organization here in Austin, to develop an encoder (a register that transmits data) that would be used with a secondary piece of hardware that uses the homeowner’s wifi to get them their water use data online. This is still in development, and is not available commercially. <http://www.pecanstreet.org/water/>

### **Leak Adjustment Policy**

Austin Water provides bill adjustments to customers experiencing broken water pipes or other uncontrollable leaks. To make this policy more consistent with existing water conservation ordinances and to encourage customers to be more diligent about monitoring their outdoor water use and maintaining their irrigation systems, Austin Water no longer offers adjustments for excessive usage that is the result of setting a system to run too often or too long, or for broken or misdirected sprinkler heads or leaky outdoor faucets. Austin City Council approved a resolution adopting this policy change on May 12, 2011.

### **Conservation Recognition Programs**

#### **WaterWise Partner Programs**

Through its WaterWise Partner program, Austin Water is recognizing commercial customers that have made comprehensive water-efficiency upgrades in their facilities or incorporated efficiency measures into the design of new properties. Austin Water launched the WaterWise Hotel Partner program at the end of FY 2011 and anticipates eventually expanding the program to include

office buildings, restaurants/bars, craft breweries, schools, hospitals, and car washes. Participants receive a certificate to hang in a public place, free publicity from Austin Water regarding their achievement, as well as table tents, coasters, door hangers and other water conservation signage.

### **Annual Pre-Treatment and Water Conservation Award Program**

Austin Water annually awards those commercial customers who have achieved significant water savings and reductions in wastewater while participating in an Austin Water incentive program or partnering with Austin Water in the development and implementation of innovative water conservation methods, techniques and measures.

### **Green Business Leader Program**

The City of Austin's Green Business Leaders program annually recognizes businesses for innovation excellence in Water Efficiency, Energy Efficiency, Resource Management, Communication & Outreach, Sustainable Transportation, Healthy Work Environment, Community Stewardship, and Beyond the Scorecard in environmentally sustainable practices.

## **Conservation Education Programs**

### **3C: Commit, Calculate and Conserve**

This initiative supports Austin Water's efforts to cultivate a culture of conservation by helping to educate the community about efficient water use and effective water saving methods. It offers an online water calculator to assist customers in recognizing the impact that changing habits, making simple repairs, or upgrading inefficient appliances can have on water use. After using the calculator, which provides an individualized water-saving plan of action, customers pledge to take specified actions that will reduce their water use by ten percent. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since July 2010**

### **Dropcountr Home Water Use Reporting Software Pilot Program**

Austin Water has contracted with Dropcountr, Inc., to provide, on a pilot basis, 10,000 residential customers with free home water use reports. 8,500 customers will be provided with reports accessible by mobile application and/or by online. Three control groups totaling 1,500 will also be provided monthly written reports and were chosen based on water usage, geographic area, and at random across the city. The idea behind providing customers with home water use reports is to leverage social norms – comparing the customer's water use with that of similar homes – as well as feedback to the customer on water and cost saving ideas and available rebates, and goal setting by the customer to see whether this will be more effective in changing water use behavior. The customized home water use reports are designed to help customers identify potential water savings and ideas on how to save water and money on their water bills. **Date Implemented: May 1, 2015**

### **Advertisements/Program Marketing**

Austin Water uses advertising to provide citizens with information about water conservation practices and programs. It regularly places advertisements in local and neighborhood newspapers, on radio and television stations, on-line, and on area billboards, bus wraps, and pump-toppers. Beginning FY 2008, marketing efforts increased significantly with additional

funds to promote new outdoor watering restrictions. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since FY 1983.**

### **Dowser Dan Show**

Targeting kindergarten through 4th grade students, the Dowser Dan Show is an original and highly popular assembly program that teaches kids (and teachers) about water conservation. The City of Austin first designed the program in 1992 and has modified and updated it each year. The Dowser Dan Show reaches approximately 30,000 students each school year. In addition to the show, students receive supplemental education materials such as calendars, magnets, stickers, and bookmarks with water conservation tips and lessons. **Date Implemented: The show, which originated in FY 1992, returned in FY 2010 after a brief suspension and has been ongoing since.**

### **Mobile Classroom**

In partnership with the Colorado River Alliance (CRA), Austin Independent School District, and other local entities, Austin Water, is proud to expand its current set of youth education programs to include the Texas Colorado River Mobile Learning Experience. The mobile exhibit will function as a traveling, interactive science museum, utilizing interactive exhibits and hands-on activities housed inside a 40-foot trailer. Students will enter a watery world where science and technology merge to encounter critical thinking about our most precious resource. The exhibit will bring the field trip experience to more than 5,000 seventh students in AISD. In addition, CRA and Austin Water plan to reach an additional 3,000 to 5,000 sixth thru eighth grade students through community events and expanded partnerships with surrounding area schools.

**Date Implemented: Ongoing since 2015**

### **Speakers Bureau**

Austin Water offers presentations on water conservation techniques and available programs to a variety of interest groups including homeowners associations, garden clubs, professional organizations and other community groups. Austin Water also participates in festivals, school events and informational fairs by providing staff and materials to promote water conservation. In 2009, it developed a Water Conservation Speakers Bureau, allowing area groups to schedule speakers on topics of interest. Staff members are available to speak on topics that include conservation measures, irrigation, leak detection, and water waste. Each year, Austin Water typically participates in more than 100 events and programs. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since FY 2000**

### **Utility Bill Data**

Austin Water customers can access data about their actual water use online at <https://www.coautilities.com>, which has a “history” tab that allows for month-to-month usage comparisons. In July 2010, Austin Water began providing 13-month usage graphs on customer bills and online to give customers easy access to usage pattern information and alert them to unusual usage spikes. Knowing about an unusual spike could alert a customer to the presence of a leak or some other problem that needs to be addressed. Since 2005, Austin Water has also contacted customers with unusually high meter readings to alert them to potentially high bills and the possibility of a leak. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since 2005**

### **Water Theft Education**

In an effort to curb water loss, the Water Conservation Division partnered with the Consumer Services Division and Austin 3-1-1 to implement a Water Theft Education program. Citizens are encouraged to report observed instances of water theft to Austin 3-1-1. To bring awareness to the campaign, Austin Water offered training to City staff and the construction development community and distributed hydrant hang tags, posters, and brochures. Staff presence in the field was also increased to detect occurrences of water theft. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since 2009**

### **WaterWise Irrigation Professional Seminar**

Austin Water offers seminars to licensed professional irrigators area in order to provide continuing education credits toward license renewal along with information on water-efficient irrigation systems, available water conservation programs, and the mandatory watering schedule and watering hours. Other covered topics include electrical troubleshooting, irrigation auditing, and turf grass water requirements. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since FY 1998**

### **Annual AWU/LCRA ICI Water Conservation Technical Workshop**

Austin Water and the Lower Colorado River Authority hold an annual free water conservation technical workshop in September industrial, commercial and institutional customers and facility managers and engineers on water saving measures, technologies, and rebate programs. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since 2013**

### **Online Information, E-newsletters, and Social Networking**

Austin Water communicates conservation information, policies, and program offerings to customers through its website at [www.WaterWiseAustin.org](http://www.WaterWiseAustin.org), which was originally launched in 1998. It has also recently begun incorporating social media into its communication efforts by providing updates on conservation-related topics via Facebook, Twitter, NextDoor and YouTube. Since March 2004, Austin Water has offered the WaterWise e-Newsletter as a way to communicate more regularly with customers and increase participation in water conservation initiatives. This newsletter is distributed electronically to a database of approximately 30,000 customers and made available on the Water Conservation website. A quarterly Commercial Conservation e-newsletter is also published. **Date Implemented: Ongoing since 1998**

### **Water/Energy Partnerships**

#### **Home Efficiency Assistance Program**

Austin Water partners with Austin Energy and Texas Gas to provide low income residential customers holistic water and energy efficiency evaluations, free high efficiency water and energy fixtures and plumbing repairs, and other assistance to save water and energy and their associated costs. By partnering together, the utilities have been able to:

- reduce water and energy costs for low income residents, older facilities, and renters;
- increase compliance with water and energy efficiency ordinances;
- provide customers a one-stop-shop approach to utility efficiency programs;
- leverage program resources and widen their reach and effectiveness; and
- overcome split incentives imbedded in rented and low income building spaces.

**Date Implemented: Ongoing since 2012**

**Multi-Family Efficiency Program**

Austin Water partners with Austin Energy and Texas Gas Service to provide “one touch” energy and water efficiency evaluations, upgrades and retrofits to low income multi-family facilities with consistently higher than average water and energy use. The program started in late 2011 as a result of a competitively awarded federal stimulus grant from the U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) (Better Building Grant). **Date Implemented: Ongoing since 2011.**

More information about these programs can be found at: [www.WaterWiseAustin.org](http://www.WaterWiseAustin.org) or by calling (512) 974-2199