



Communications Overview

Amy Petri, Public Information Office Division Manager

Water & Wastewater Commission | November 12, 2025

Agenda



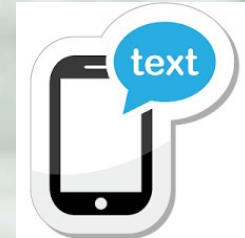
- Considerations and Drivers
- Toolbox and Tactics
- Recent Initiatives and Outcome



**Good communication
is the bridge between
confusion and clarity.**

Nat Turner

The competition for attention



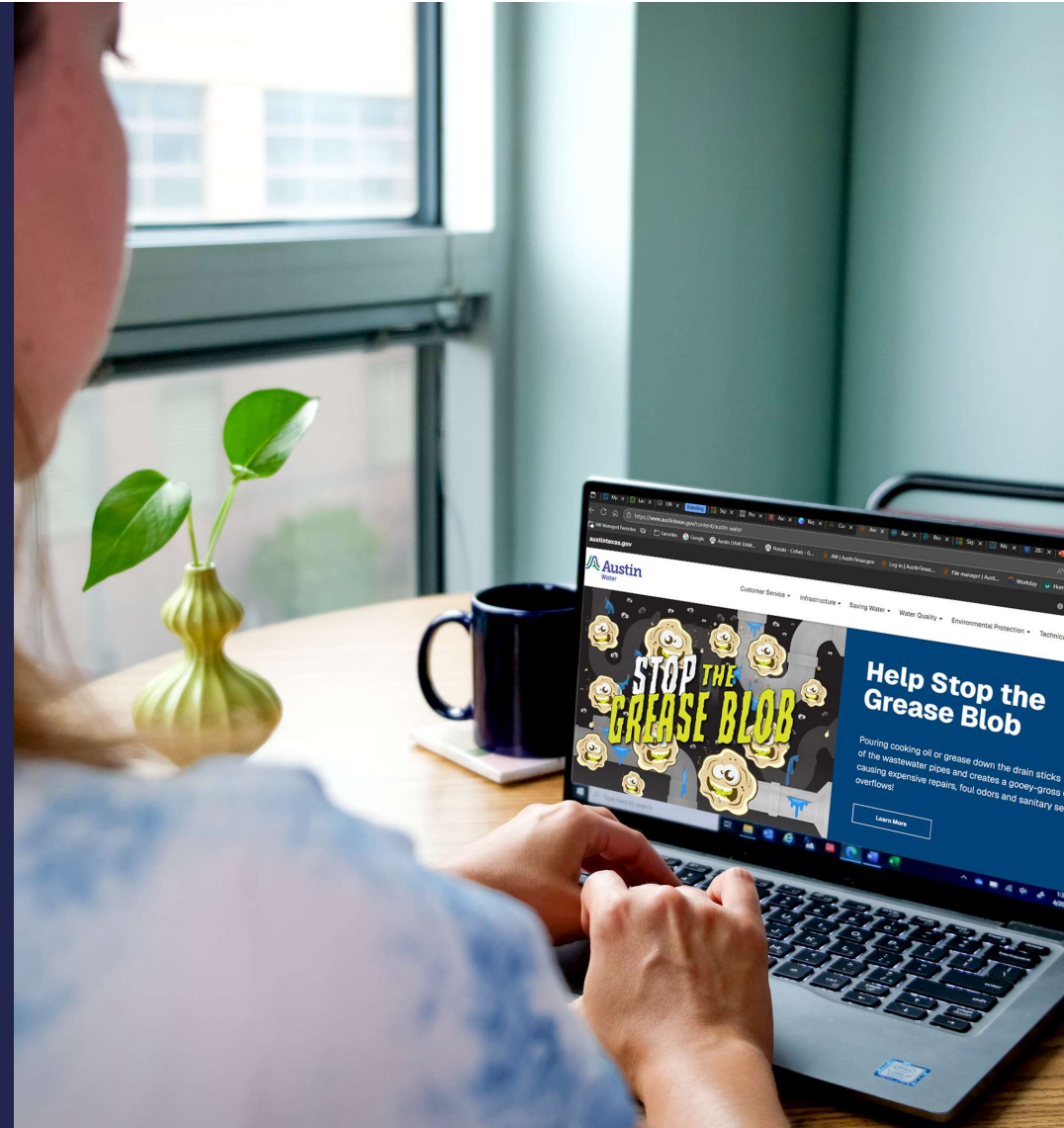
Considerations and Drivers



- **Audience:**
What are people interested in? What do they want to know?
- **Messenger:**
Who does the audience trust and believe?
- **Timing:**
What else is happening that might shape our message or impact the outcome?
- **Adaptability:**
How can the message evolve based on new information or circumstances?
- **Measures of success:**
How do we know if the communications worked?

Communications Toolbox

- Photography
- Video
- Brochures
- Flyers
- Reports
- Web Site
- My ATX Water customer portal
- Speak Up Austin
- Newsletters
- Employees



Communications Tactics

▪ Outreach and Engagement

- CIP Outreach (~40 on-going projects at any given time)
 - Newsletters
 - Informational meetings
 - Dedicated web pages
- Community Events
 - 44 events
 - 7,200 customers
- Public Input and Open Houses
 - Rate Adjustments
 - Water Forward Plan Updates
 - Aquifer Storage & Delivery
- Social Media
 - Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube



Communications Tactics

■ Media Relations

- Press Releases & Events
 - 13 releases in 2025 (so far)
 - Walnut Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion and Improvements
- Media Response (104 interviews or statements provided to inquiries this year)
- Emergency Communications
 - 8 PIO staff are part of Incident Management Team
 - Regular scenario training
 - Template development and translations
- Customer Impacts
 - Planned and unplanned outages
- Regulatory Reporting and Notifications



Communications Tactics

Advertising & Marketing

- Annual contracts:
 - Value
 - Prime spots (guaranteed)
 - Seasonal emphasis
 - English and Spanish outlets
 - Extras and bonus ads
- TV, Radio, Print and Digital outlets
 - Streaming services
 - Talk show appearances
 - Web and social
 - Paid content
 - Apps
- Seasonal messaging

Austin Returns to Conservation Stage Watering Restrictions

Know your watering day. Saving water is still encouraged to protect our precious resource.



STOP THE GREASE BLOB

The more you feed the blob the bigger it gets, becoming a monster clog causing expensive repairs. Foul odors and sanitary sewer overflows! Fat, oil and grease comes from food like cooking oil, meat drippings, butter, sauces, greasy dairy products, and even salad dressing.

Help stop the Grease Blob!

- Scrape food scraps into the trash or compost if you can
- Collect cooking oil in a container then toss into the trash
- Use paper towels or wipes to remove grease.
- **DON'T FLUSH:** toss them into the trash

Austinwater.org

My ATX Water

Austin's Smart Water Meter System

THE My ATX Water PROGRAM

Austin Water launched a new smart water meter program called My ATX Water across the city. This program involves upgrading traditional water meters to digital ones connected to a wireless network. Along with this, a new customer portal is being introduced, offering near real-time water use information, leak alerts, emergency notifications, water conservation tips, and customizable features.

HOW TO SIGN UP IN THREE EASY STEPS

- 1** Locate your account number. You can find this either on your utilities bill or call COA Utilities Customer Care 512-494-9400

- 2** Type your account number and zip code into this website: austintx.watersmart.com

- 3** Fill out your user profile and start saving!

We want to know you better so we can provide accurate comparisons to similar households.

LEARN ABOUT AUSTIN'S Water Quality

We're Continuously Sampling and Testing

Austin Water collects and tests samples at our treatment plants and across our water system multiple times a day, every day, for bacteria and chemicals that could pose a risk to our customers. Our top priority is to ensure our water is safe and satisfying to drink.

We have taken steps to protect drinking water safety and quality in key areas that include:

- Protecting Vital Infrastructure
- Enhancing Treatment Reliability
- Ensuring Quality Control in Storage, Pressure and Pipes
- Increasing Treated Drinking Water Testing

An expanded snapshot of our rigorous quality controls is posted on our website as well as in our annual Drinking Water Quality Report. Find the **2024 Consumer Confidence Report** online at the link below, or call 512-972-0155 to receive a copy by email or mail.

Austin Water's annual consumer confidence report describes the overall quality of water from the collection and storage in the residential or your tap. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires that all drinking water suppliers provide a water quality report to their customers on an annual basis.

Austin Water Quality Report 2024
AUSTINWATER.ORG/WATERQUALITY

Para una versión en Español llame al 512.972.0155.

Recent New Initiative



My ATX Water Portal Communications

- Advanced metering replacements completed this summer
- Potential move to Drought Stage 3
- Pilot campaigns (May – September):
 - Increase portal registrations – “Register Now” campaign
 - Encourage saving water with Home Water Reports
 - Reduce off-schedule automatic irrigation

My ATX Water Portal Communications



“Register Now” Campaign

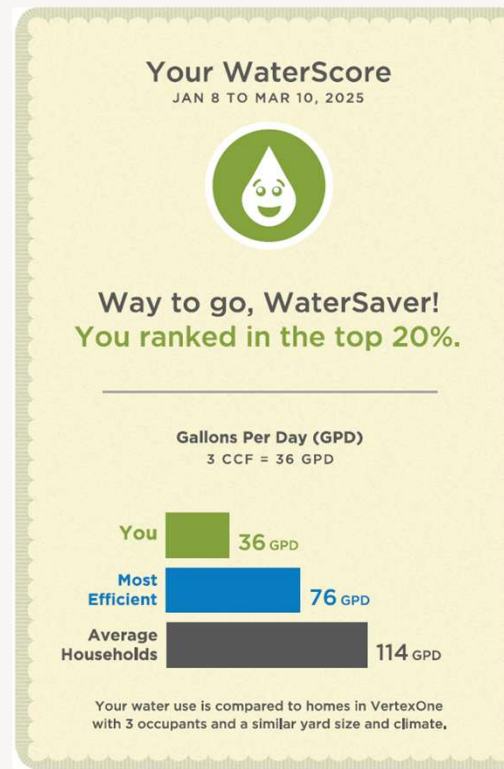
- 2 email messages, 1 text message reminder sent
 - Outcome: ~1,600 new registrations, 250 unsubscribes
 - Overall registrations increased from 22% to 24% in 4 months
- “Register Now” messages incorporated into other communications had better results
 - 31% percent of Home Water Report recipients have registered compared to 24% overall
- In industry comparisons, Austin Water’s registration rate is high for portals that do not incorporate billing and payments

My ATX Water Portal Communications



Home Water Reports

- Offers average household water use benchmarks for comparison
- Some constraints on customized messaging
- Email distribution = ~175,000 out of ~250,000 accounts
- Four reports sent to date
 - Open rates of >70%
 - Significant source of increased portal registrations
 - Feedback has been mostly positive and appreciative



<RecipientID>demo29182198</RecipientID>



Fresh air, friendship & low bills

The current style is to enjoy fresh air and entertain outside. Do both and save money with our new Outdoor Living rebate. Replace turf with pavers, flagstone or deck and save money long term. See www.GardenStyleSA.com



Online Classes

Got gardening and landscaping on your mind this spring? Check out this resource of FREE online classes including rainwater harvesting, vegetable gardening, DIY sprinkler repair and more! savetarrantwater.com/events

My ATX Water Portal Campaign



Reducing Off-Schedule Automatic Irrigation

- 3-part campaign providing tips to improve irrigation efficiency:
 1. Know your watering day
 2. Video showing how to program your controller
 3. Request an irrigation check-up

Open rates were high, but click throughs were low – little feedback or comments

- Post rain event reminders – “Turn off your irrigation system”:
 - Emails sent to all automatic irrigators within 24 hours of significant rain events
 - High open rates (60% or higher)
 - Positive feedback overall – gratitude for the reminder

My ATX Water Portal Campaign



Key Takeaways and Next Steps:

- Shifting from advertising and calls-to-action solely focused on registration
 - Include in Home Water Reports going forward
 - Explore opportunity for an incentive to register
- Continue using the portal to provide notifications based on current conditions (rain events, changes in watering schedules)
- Consider other opportunities to engage with irrigators to promote best practices
 - Is this the right platform?
 - Are there better messengers?
 - Is the timing right?

Recent New Initiative



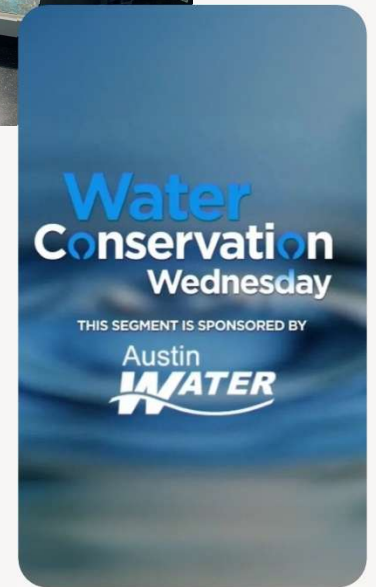
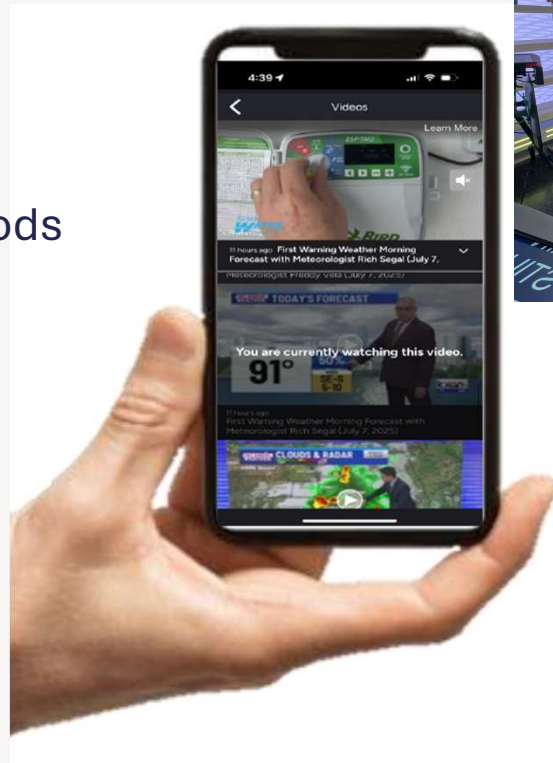
TV Conservation Campaigns

- Messages driven by potential move to Drought Stage 3
 - Know your watering day
 - Monitor water use with the My ATX Water portal
 - Water saving tips
 - Leak detection tips
 - Conservation rebates and incentives
- Ran from April – September
- Multiple touchpoints: TV spots, streaming, mobile apps, social
- Bilingual messaging
- Assets produced by Austin Water

TV Conservation Campaign

Outcomes:

- 11,193,290 impressions
- Web site traffic increase
- Pivot in messaging after July floods



Questions?



Austin

Austin Water | November 12, 2025