Dear Friends:

The past 12 months have tested and proven the resiliency of our community. We have adapted to change and learned that the ordinary could be accomplished in extraordinary ways. Only weeks ago, we faced an extreme weather event that challenged our system and fortitude and will continue to challenge business processes from planning to conservation.

As Chief Executive Officer of New Braunfels Utilities (NBU), I lead a passionate team dedicated to educating our customers about the intricate details of rate design and assisting customers with utility bill management. A key component in understanding how conservation is directly linked to preserving our water supply and providing the most cost-effective water resources. As you read this special edition of NBU’s Virtual Performance Assessment (VPAs), you will hear from experts on our team as well as community partners, including the Comal County Conservation Alliance, a Texas Master Gardener, and the NBU Community Alliance, about the importance of conservation and its impact on our economic well-being.

As we prepare for summer, customers can expect to see an increase in their bills during the peak season – June 1 through September 30. Peak pricing is designed to encourage conservation during these months when the weather and higher demands impact our water supply. I encourage you to read pages 8 and 9 to learn more about the rates and how they are structured. On pages 10 and 11, I hope that you will find helpful resources to guide you through the NBU water rate structure and tools to help manage your utility costs.

While NBU offers many ways to help customers incorporate conservation and manage utility costs, one of our newest online tools is the Residential Bill Calculator. Customers can go to our website at nbutexas.com to estimate their bills during peak and off-peak months. I encourage you to read more about the advantages of using NBU’s Residential Bill Calculator on page 15.

I hope you will find this publication a handy resource and welcome your feedback. As we serve our community well, friends, and neighbors – we will continue striving to provide innovative essential services that enhance our community.

Ian Taylor
Chief Executive Officer

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

What’s inside… Conserving Our Water, Saving Our Springs

What is your Water Worth?

Department Spotlight

Utility Bill Management for a Growing Community

Safety, Integrity, Team, and Stewardship.

as a trusted community partner dedicated to providing innovative essential services.

The Edwards Aquifer is one of the fastest growing regions in the country. More people move more demand on the aquifer – even though we have other (more expensive) water supplies coming on line. Some might say “Why worry? We have such vast amounts of good clean groundwater underground. We won’t run out, and besides, it’s cheap.” We might not literally run out of fresh drinking water from the aquifer, but if we draw it down too fast to get that water, we could lose our great springs. When the springs run dry, the rivers run dry, water-based tourism disappears, and economies dry up. When alternative sources of water are needed, we reach for imported water to make up the difference, the cost of water goes up. If the Edwards Aquifer is so important to our community well-being and even our pocketbooks,

We can also ensure a reliable, affordable water supply by protecting the land that protects the aquifer. When rainfall collects and drains into the aquifer, the aquifer fills up and its water supply remains available for our future use. So, protecting the land that keeps the aquifer full and being conscientious about water conservation are important ways we can ensure a clean, affordable water supply well into our future.

As Chief Executive Officer of New Braunfels Utilities, I lead a passionate team dedicated to educating our customers about the intricate details of rate design and assisting customers with utility bill management. A key component in understanding how conservation is directly linked to preserving our water supply and providing the most cost-effective water resources. As you read this special edition of NBU’s Virtual Performance Assessment (VPAs), you will hear from experts on our team as well as community partners, including the Comal County Conservation Alliance, a Texas Master Gardener, and the NBU Community Alliance, about the importance of conservation and its impact on our economic well-being.
What is Xeriscaping? Literally, the word comes from the combination of two words: “xeri” derived from the Greek word “xeros” for dry and “scape,” meaning a view or scene. It translates to mean “dry scene.” It simply means landscaping with slow-growing, drought-resistant plants to conserve water and reduce yard trimmings. It doesn’t mean “no water” and it doesn’t mean you can only plant cactus.

Texas has a limited supply of water, subject to ever-increasing demands. Xeriscaping fundamentals are an important way to immediately show cost savings and it doesn’t mean you can only plant cactus. Xeriscaping can also help the community save resources. It means less work for the homeowner! It translates to mean “dry scene.”

When planning your Xeriscape, use the following seven fundamentals:

1. Plan and design for water conservation.
2. Use natural amendments, like compost, to feed and condition soil as needed.
3. Irrigate efficiently with a properly-designed irrigation system, including hose end equipment.
4. Use natural fertilizer.
5. Select plants with low water requirements and group plants with similar water needs together. While indigenous plants are naturally accustomed to local climate, xeriscaping does not mean planting Texas native plants only. One could draw from many colorful, drought-tolerant plants native to Mediterranean climates such as Southern Europe, South Africa, and Australia. Using native and adapted plants reduces the need for fertilizers and pesticides.
6. Keep the soil cool. Native Cedar Mulch from the local area is the best choice.
7. Remember that xeriscaping conserves water and saves valuable landfill space.

Fundamentals of Xeriscaping

Seven fundamentals: 1. Plan and design for water conservation. 2. Use natural amendments, like compost, to feed and condition soil as needed. 3. Irrigate efficiently with a properly-designed irrigation system, including hose end equipment. 4. Use natural fertilizer. 5. Select plants with low water requirements and group plants with similar water needs together. While indigenous plants are naturally accustomed to local climate, xeriscaping does not mean planting Texas native plants only. One could draw from many colorful, drought-tolerant plants native to Mediterranean climates such as Southern Europe, South Africa, and Australia. Using native and adapted plants reduces the need for fertilizers and pesticides. 6. Keep the soil cool. Native Cedar Mulch from the local area is the best choice. 7. Remember that xeriscaping conserves water and saves valuable landfill space.

Step 1 – Water Supply

1. Turn on the water supply at the shut-off and backflow valves. If any shut-off or backflow valves have been turned off for the winter, make sure that they are turned back on before testing the system. Turn these valves on slowly to give time for the lines to pressure without overpressuring them with immediate pressure.

Step 2 – Preliminary Leak Detection

1. Check for leaks before turning on any sprinkler zones. After the mainline has been pressurized, it is a good practice to walk through the yard to ensure that there are no leaks such as vapor or in the grass. It may be difficult to locate them after the system has run, so it is a good idea to check them before testing.

Step 3 – Testing

1. Check each zone for leaks and sprinkler heads that are not aimed properly. Once the irrigation has been pressurized and no initial leaks have been found, it is time to test each zone to ensure the heads are in good operating order. It is easier to fix issues before oversaturation should be conducted. This is the point at which landscapes will cease to absorb water and begin running off and pooling. Each zone should be monitored to determine when this situation occurs and you should rotate the time amounts needed to reach this point. A good rule of thumb is to start each zone at ten minutes and add/subtract time based on the results.

Step 4 – Programming

1. Make sure that all programming cycles are checked. Most sprinkler timers offer several pre-set programming cycles for multi-day schedules. Ensure that all programs are checked to ensure the system only runs on the days and times that are appropriate. New timers often have manufacturer programming per soil, which may increase the amount of irrigation cycles other than programmed.

Step 5 – Monitoring

1. Repeat these steps once per month. To ensure the sprinkler system operates at maximum efficiency, it is a good practice to reinspect the system once a month. Actions that can affect the initial settings include increasing summer temperature and humidity, increased maintenance traffic, and adding/subtracting plants as needed.

Guest columnist Bob Fitzsimmons is a Texas Master Certified Nurseryman, landscape designer, organic specialist, Texas-native plant grower, and 20-year radio host in New Braunfels on KGNB and KNBT radio. He has answered garden related questions for New Braunfels and the surrounding Comal County for many years and is the owner of Southernwood Gardens in New Braunfels.
Irrigation is the Biggest User of Water

Turfgrass, which is not native to Central Texas, requires a significant amount of irrigation. *Many people do not realize St. Augustine grass is not native to New Braunfels,* Cummings noted. *Many popular types of grass, including Bermuda, are native to tropical areas that experience higher levels of annual rainfall than Central Texas.* Planting these common grasses requires more water than landscaping with native plants.

An important factor to consider when planning your landscape is choosing the appropriate grass type. Planting non-native grasses will require more water to maintain than native grasses, resulting in a higher water bill without proper maintenance or landscaping practices such as aerating, mulching, etc.*, Cummings said. New Braunfels Utilities offers information online about sustainable landscaping and provides consultations and assessments to ensure its customers’ efforts are worth the investment.

When our customers want to know what grows well, we ask them to take a drive in the beautiful Texas Hill Country and notice the landscape they see. It doesn’t require any supplemental irrigation. It just grows,” Cummings added. To incentivize planting of drought-tolerant landscaping, NBU offers rebates for customers who implement landscaping that reduces the need for irrigation. Many customers will stack rebates, which can be as simple as laying down a new bed of mulch or replacing a section of turfgrass. Customers who qualify can take advantage of the many rebates offered by NBU. Simply complete the online application and submit the rebate with the necessary documentation for an inspection. Rebates are applied as a credit to the customer’s bill.

Information about rebates and water conservation can be found at nbtx.com/conservation.

Know Your Water Stages

New Braunfels Utilities (NBU) monitors the Edwards Aquifer level and implements water restrictions to encourage conservation and protect natural resources in times of drought. Each drought stage has unique water use guidelines and water restrictions to encourage conservation and protect natural resources.

**NON-DROUGHT**

- Watering with a hand-held hose, bucket, drip irrigation system, or a soaker hose that does not spray water in the air is allowed any time on any day.

**STAGE 1**

- Watering with a sprinkler or irrigation system is allowed one day per week based on the last digit of the address. Must occur BEFORE 10:00 a.m. and AFTER 8:00 p.m.

**STAGE 2**

- Watering with a sprinkler or irrigation system is allowed one day per week based on the last digit of the address. Must occur BEFORE 10:00 a.m. and AFTER 8:00 p.m.

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To schedule your Water or Irrigation Performance Assessment visit nbtx.com/assessments.

Leak Detection Checklist

Household leaks waste more than one trillion gallons of water per year, nationwide. New Braunfels Utilities offers helpful advice to ensure your pipes are sealed and do not contribute to this waste.

**Indoor**

- **Toilets** – Check for leaking toilets by adding food color to the tank. If the color shows up in the bowl after few minutes, the tank is leaking.

- **Kitchen and Bathroom Sink** – Check for any dripping faucets or water leaks.

- **Washing Machine** – Check for leaking hose connections at the washer and the machine.

- **Water Heater** – Check for leaking relief valves or loose connections.

- **Water Softener** – Check to see if the softened water is leaking while not in use.

- **Reverse Osmosis Systems** – Check the plumbing for any leaking valves or filters.

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**Outdoor**

- **Outdoor Water Spigots** – Check for leaking faucets and hose.

- **Sprinkler System** – Check the yard for hidden leaks or standing water. Broken pipes and defective valves (round green lids in the grass) are the most common causes for leaks in yard sprinklers.

If no leak is readily visible after your inspection, a plumber or leak detection specialist may need to be contacted.

To schedule your Water or Irrigation Performance Assessment visit nbtx.com/assessments.

**Toilet Leak Video**

Find out how you can reduce household leaks with this easy leak prevention test.

nbtx.com/leakchecklist

**NBU: NEW BRAUNFELS UTILITIES**

Household leaks waste more than one trillion gallons of water per year, nationwide. New Braunfels Utilities offers helpful advice to ensure your pipes are sealed and do not contribute to this waste. New Braunfels Utilities (NBU) monitors the Edwards Aquifer level and implements water restrictions to encourage conservation and protect natural resources in times of drought. Each drought stage has unique water use guidelines and water restrictions to encourage conservation and protect natural resources.

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Water Rate and Structure Explanation

Rate Creation:
In creating the new water and wastewater rates, NBUs worked with the Boston University Institute for Sustainable Energy to develop rates that protect essential-use water for all customers, ensure revenue recovery for system resiliency, and send price signals to encourage water conservation.

The table to the right outlines the forecasted cost range of the rate increases that will have on a customer’s water bill over the next three years. It is important to note the rate increases will have a 14 percent effect to all customers essential-use water use of 7,500 gallons or less over the forecasted three-year period. This percentage increase is equivalent to a total of $4.00 in 2023.

The wastewater rates increase over the three years as well. Wastewater rates are calculated using a consumer’s three-lowest months of wastewater usage in a rolling 12-month period. The average for all NBUs customers is currently 4,600 gallons.

For additional detail on NBUs rates and to find breakouts for each rate type and year, visit nbutexas.com/electric-water-and-sewer-rates.

The rate increases were designed and implemented to help cover the costs of additional wastewater infrastructure, treatment, and regulatory compliance. When comparing NBUs rates with those of surrounding communities, NBUs rates are still among the lowest.

Take proactive steps to keep your utility bill as low as possible. Taking control of your water use and implementing conservation techniques when using water outdoors will have the most significant effect. New Braunfels Utilities has many tools available to help customers manage utility bills. A comprehensive list can be found on NBUs website nbutexas.com/conservation.

RESIDENTIAL TOTAL BILL IMPACT
Electric: 1,200 kWh | Essential Water Use: 6,000 Gal | Waste Water: 4,600 Gal

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<th>Gaussian</th>
<th>Mean (kWh) 2,250</th>
<th>Rate (kWh) Tier 1 0 - 500</th>
<th>Rate (kWh) Tier 2 501 - 1,500</th>
<th>Rate (kWh) Tier 3 1,501 - 3,000</th>
<th>Rate (kWh) Tier 4 3,001 - 6,000</th>
<th>Rate (kWh) Tier 5 6,001 - Unlimited</th>
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<td>$0.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The water conservation is among NBUs highest priorities. New Braunfels Utilities has a long-term water supply plan that increases water supply and to meet the needs of our community for decades to meet the need to acquire water supply, build and maintain infrastructure, keep up with the community’s growth, and to meet regulatory requirements.

Utilities has a history of maintaining a diversified water portfolio that focuses on having an adequate water supply to meet the needs of our community for decades to meet regulatory requirements. NBU is no different. New Braunfels Utilities has a long-term water supply plan that increases water supply and to meet the need to acquire water supply, build and maintain infrastructure, keep up with the community’s growth, and to meet regulatory requirements.

Communities across Texas are working to ensure they have acquired access to enough water to meet their growing needs; NBU is no different. New Braunfels Utilities has a history of maintaining a diversified water portfolio that focuses on having an adequate water supply to meet the needs of our community for decades to meet regulatory requirements.

In fall 2020, the New Braunfels City Council approved a new Braunfels Utilities (NBU) rate plan that increases water and wastewater rates progressively through 2023. These rate increases are driven primarily by the need to acquire water supply, build and maintain infrastructure, keep up with the community’s growth, and to meet regulatory requirements.

The newly approved rates will affect all customers using water within this range, and approximately 95 percent of NBUs customers use less than 25,000 gallons of water per month.

A comprehensive list can be found on NBUs website nbutexas.com/conservation.

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If you are interested in learning more, call 330.608.2922 or email conservation@nbutexas.com.
RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY GROWTH

New Braunfels Utilities (NBU) is making required upgrades to its electric, water, and wastewater infrastructure, securing new water resources, and adding vital system capacity. These upgrades will ensure NBU is well prepared to meet the needs of its customers for decades to come. To preserve natural resources and control rate increases, NBU utilizes several techniques to encourage conservation.

Tiered billing charges customers a higher water rate as use increases. This pricing structure is designed to keep water affordable for essential use, such as drinking, washing, and cooking. With the tiered water rate structure, costs are allocated to high use customers who drive the need to acquire new water supplies and to build new infrastructure.

Seasonal, or Peak, rates are effective June through September. September to encourage conservation during periods of reduced precipitation and potential increased demand associated with lawn watering and outside water activities. Limited water usage during the months of June through September can have a positive impact on your utility bill.

To keep your utility bill as low as possible, take advantage of tips and information to help save water, energy, and money by viewing the NBU video library.

Customers can help offset rate increases by adjusting utility use and practicing conservation techniques. New Braunfels Utilities offers comprehensive tools, tips, and assets to help customers understand and manage utility expenses.

WE’RE HERE TO HELP

Customers help offset rate increases by adjusting utility use and practicing conservation techniques. New Braunfels Utilities offers comprehensive tools, tips, and assets to help customers understand and manage utility expenses.

MORE TO HELP

Customers can help offset rate increases by adjusting utility use and practicing conservation techniques. New Braunfels Utilities offers comprehensive tools, tips, and assets to help customers understand and manage utility expenses.

To access New Braunfels Utilities Bill Management Tools, visit nbutexas.com/conservation.

Unmetered consultations on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. After-hours consultations on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Auto-payThreshold Alerts

Customers experiencing financial hardship or wanting to help customers in our community can participate in the NBU Utility Bill Payment Assistance program.

Bill Assistance Program

The Residential Utility Bill Calculator can help you estimate monthly residential electric, water, and wastewater usage costs.

Budget Billing

Avoid big changes in your utility bill—especially during peak months when air conditioning, heating, and sprinkler systems can increase costs.

Conservation Tips

To help reduce your usage, follow these simple tips:

- Take the opportunity to program your irrigation timers and learn how to set up your online account, and manage usage alerts with helpful do-it-yourself videos.
- FREE water, energy, and irrigation assessments are a great way to identify waste and solutions that can help reduce utility expenses.
- Leak Detection Checklist

Household leaks waste more than one trillion gallons of water per year across the nation. New Braunfels Utilities offers helpful advice to ensure your pipes are sealed and do not contribute to this waste.

DIY Videos

Get more for less with energy and water rebates. For more information, call the NBU Conservation Rebates Line.

Home Assessments

FREE Virtual Performance Assessments are conducted online or by phone without NBU staff visiting your home.

WASTEWATER

To access New Braunfels Utilities Bill Management Tools, visit nbutexas.com/conservation.

Utility Consumption Reports

Request a consumption report that shows how your usage compares to your neighborhood and community averages.

Utility Bill Management Tools

NBU: NEW BRAUNFELS UTILITIES

RESOURCE SUMMARY

BILL MANAGEMENT TOOLS

Threshold Alerts

Automated

Instruct customers on how to set automated threshold notifications if you are approaching a preset water or electric volume during the months.

Threshold Alerts

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When customers receive their monthly New Braunfels Utilities (NBU) bill for water and electricity usage, it totals to one number. However, behind that number, especially when it comes to water, there are many points to consider. The cost of water is the cumulative cost of acquiring, treating, and distributing water.

“When talking to customers, I loosely define the cost of water as how much money it costs from when we pull the water out of the ground all the way to when you turn on your faucet. It is the cost from the beginning to the end,” Conservation and Customer Solutions Manager Andrew Cummings said.

The rate increases have customers seen over the last year were put in place to further invest in the infrastructure needed to maintain the existing water distribution system and to also meet continued growth.

Through analyzing customer usage across the NBU system, NBU has determined 6,000 gallons of water per month per person is considered essential use. This includes water for bathing, cooking, and other regular household use.

The rate increases have minimal impact on essential use and instead are applied primarily to high or very high water use which typically includes outdoor irrigation. This type of water use is what drives the need for additional infrastructure and water supply.

New Braunfels Utilities is committed to keeping essential use water affordable and offers rebates to ratepayers to encourage outdoor irrigation. Information about these rebates can be found at nbutexas.com/conservation.

"The Water Rate Increases Primarily Affect Irrigation, Which Is What Drives the Need for Additional Infrastructure and Water Supply."

David Hubbart
NBU Chief Administrative Officer

A surprise bill is never good news and New Braunfels Utilities (NBU) provides customers with tools to help them understand how much they are using. By accessing the NBU online bill calculator, NBU customers are able to determine what their bill will look like with current rates and plan for different customers.

“The online calculator provides customers with the opportunity to pull up anticipated usage or current usage and see a precise an instant view of what their bill will be based on that usage,” System Control Manager Justin Stroupe said.

The customer can complete the water, and wastewater usage amounts and reflect what the bill will be based on that usage. "The estimate provided by the residential rate calculator helps customers plan for changes in weather and their expected needs in a way that should seem very familiar," Cummings said.

"In essence, the calculator is doing four different calculations and providing a cost estimate for the customer," Consution and Customer Solutions Manager Andrew Cummings noted. "So it can be very complex. You can use one of the high-volume users where usage is reflected in that rate, and it can be a family of four people with high water use."

Rates vary between seasons; however, the calculator is designed to calculate current NBU rates.

"The customer will need to have their bill available to input required information," Cummings said. "Then, if all the right boxes are checked, the customer will get a very quick response."

“Time and again, studies show that conserving the water we already have is the most cost-effective way to secure our water futures. The Hill Country Alliance and our partners in the Texas Living Waters Project work with residents, landowners, cities, and utilities to promote water conservation practices across the region and the state. Conservation actions taken now will continue yielding water benefits well into the future. Each of us has a role to play in protecting the waters of the Hill Country. By installing low-flow fixtures, native and drought-tolerant landscapes, capturing rainwater off our roofs, and being savvy consumers of water resources, we can all contribute to ensuring the waters that define this region are here to sustain future generations. We hope you’ll dig in to learn more about the Hill Country’s water resources at hillcountryalliance.org."

Executive Director, Hill Country Alliance
Guest Columnist Katherine Romans, Executive Director, Hill Country Alliance

The The Hill Country is a region defined by its water resources. From the banks of the Comal to the various swimming holes of the Guadalupe to the pristine waters of the Comal, our creeks, rivers, and springs are the source of our economic and ecological resilience. Millions of Texans, from Mountain Home to Matagorda Bay, rely on these flows for their livelihoods and quality of life.

And yet, our water resources are in immediate jeopardy. Boomng population growth means increasing strains on an already overallocated resource. Three of the top five fastest growing counties in the country – including Comal County – are right here in the Hill Country. More roads, malls, and subdivisions mean less opportunity for precious rainfall to percolate into our groundwater supply. More development means additional straws pumping water from our aquifers. There simply is not an endless supply of water in our creeks, springs, and rivers to sustain the gradual doubling of our current population over the next 30 years.

And yet, our water resources are in immediate jeopardy. Boomng population growth means increasing strains on an already overallocated resource. Three of the top five fastest growing counties in the country – including Comal County – are right here in the Hill Country. More roads, malls, and subdivisions mean less opportunity for precious rainfall to percolate into our groundwater supply. More development means additional straws pumping water from our aquifers. There simply is not an endless supply of water in our creeks, springs, and rivers to sustain the gradual doubling of our current population over the next 30 years.

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In keeping with its vision to be a trusted community partner, New Braunfels Utilities (NBU) consistently strives to help customers manage their utility bills. Recently, NBU introduced a new initiative to help customers who are struggling financially and qualify for financial assistance. The low-income discount program is available for customers who meet specific criteria, offering to help ease some of their financial and economic hardship.

"New Braunfels Utilities assesses revenue requirements annually. Part of this financial planning process is to determine needed rate adjustments that allow NBU to continue to provide essential services at affordable costs to our community. Several years ago, we identified the need for a low-income discount program and we can now provide limited resources to qualifying customers through this program," said NBU Chief Financial Officer Dawn Schriewer.

"What New Braunfels Utilities developed is a program to protect essential use water customers." New Braunfels Utilities has four water usage tiers, with essential water use (under 6,000 gallons per month) as the lowest use tier. Customers falling within this tier will not be affected by the current rate increases.

"New Braunfels Utilities is partnering with the New Braunfels Food Bank to administer the low-income discount program. As program administrator, they will review and qualify all applicants," Schriewer noted.

Customers will be referred to the New Braunfels Food Bank by NBU customer service representatives when determining if financial assistance is needed. The Food Bank, which also administers the NBU Utility Bill Payment Assistance program, will determine if customers meet the program’s requirements.

"The household income will have to be at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty guidelines," Customer Service Manager Carlos Salas said. "Also, if they are on unemployment or if there is an illness of the applicant or primary income provider, they may qualify for the program."

Customers may also qualify if one of the household income providers dies or the household is experiencing extreme hardship.

Discounts are applied over a 12-month period. If a customer continues to need and qualify for the program after 12 months, they will need to reapply. The program is available to a limited number of customers in its initial phase.

To learn more about the Low Income Discount Program visit nbutexas.com/utility-bill-assistance.

The sensible way to handle your utility costs.
• Your New Braunfels Utilities (NBU) bills won’t go up and down and you’ll know exactly what your utility bill will be from month to month, making it easier to manage your budget.
• Over time, Budget Billing won’t cost you any more than regular billing.

Ease the impact of higher seasonal utility bills by spreading your bills into 11 equal monthly payments with the 12th month serving as the reconciling month.

Learn more at nbutexas.com/budget-billing.

WHAT IS YOUR WATER WORTH?

The Cost of NBU Water Compared to Common Daily Commodities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1,000 Gallons of Water</th>
<th>8,000 Bottles of Water (16 oz)</th>
<th>8,000 To-Go Coffees (16 oz)</th>
<th>8,000 Gallons of Milk (whole)</th>
<th>8,000 Gallons of Gas (unleaded)</th>
<th>1,000 Gallons of Laundry Detergent (50 oz)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AS LOW AS $1.66 per</td>
<td>$1.45 for 8,000 bottles</td>
<td>$2.70 for 8,000 to-go coffees</td>
<td>$2.45 for 8,000 gallons of milk</td>
<td>$3.09 for 1,000 gallons of gas</td>
<td>$3.44 for 1,000 gallons of laundry detergent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*NBU’s current rates list 1,000 gallons of water at $1.66 in the lowest tier during off-peak season.</td>
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NBU: NEW BRAUNFELS UTILITIES
SPECIAL EDITION SPRING 2021
Gardening and Irrigating Your Lawn Times of Drought

A good garden can make an otherwise unremarkable yard breathtaking; however, Central Texas is not known for its tropical rainfall. Thus, New Braunfels Utilities (NBU) customers should keep an eye on maintaining their gardens while not relying too heavily on irrigation.

“Working with our customers, we have learned that many people think drought tolerant is going to be brown and it is going to be boring. That couldn’t be further from the truth,” NBU Conservation and Customer Solutions Manager Andrew Cummings said. “There are many things you can plant that don’t take any water and provide a lot of color. We encourage people to visit the Headwaters at the Comal and get an idea of what they can do.”

There are two major types of gardening: aesthetic and production. Aesthetic includes flowers and bushes, while production includes fruits and vegetables.

Aesthetic gardening can be done in such a way that it only relies on rainfall. One key to gardening during times of drought is making sure plants’ water stays underground. Even more, customers are encouraged to simulate crushed granite, river rock, and artificial turf as drought-resistant alternatives to maintain turfgrass.

2020 – 2021 Gardening Guide Rebate

The Comal County Gardening Guide offers valuable information to help customers implement the Comal Master Gardener’s local management practices to create a low-maintenance and water-conserving landscape.

• The Guide Rebate is available to NBU residential water customers only.
• The rebate reimburses customers for the cost of a guide (up to $40 with receipt).
• For purchase locations, visit the Comal Master Gardener website at comalmg.org/gardening-guides.
• The rebate application can be accessed at rebates.nbutexas.com/conservation.

Rebates, Home Assessments, and How Weather Impacts Your Utility Bill

Your utility bill is typically straightforward—breaking down costs for electric, water, and wastewater services. The amount customers owe on their utility bills can be traced back to a chain of events starting thousands of miles away. La Niña, a weather cycle originating in the Pacific Ocean, traditionally brings warmer temperatures and other conditions to Central Texas. This weather cycle is expected to last into late spring or early summer of this year.

New Braunfels Utilities (NBU) recommends customers set their thermostats no higher than 78 degrees Fahrenheit during the summer and 68 degrees in the winter. “Generally, La Niña should promote warmer than average conditions heading into summer,” NBU Conservation and Customer Solutions Manager Andrew Cummings said. “This cycle also can affect the level of water stored in the Edwards Aquifer, which is one of the sources New Braunfels Utilities accesses to supply water to customers. Between 2011 and 2015, customers experienced a very dry cycle which led to a severe need to manage water to customers only. Stage 3 limits irrigation or sprinklers to once a week, and limits hand watering, soaker, or drip irrigation to before 10:00 a.m. and after 8:00 p.m. Stage 3 limits hand watering, soaker, or drip to before 10:00 a.m. and after 8:00 p.m., and sprinkler systems to every other week.

“Going into the spring, conditions remain drought prone, there is potential to escalate into Stage 2 and Stage 3 drought restrictions,” Cummings noted.

So how can customers prepare for these drought conditions? New Braunfels Utilities promotes the use of drought-tolerant plants and landscaping through rebates that can help lower customers’ water bills. New Braunfels Utilities also offers FREE home energy, home water, and irrigation assessments.

Home assessments to determine a customer’s eligibility for a rebate can be performed over the phone; however, some inspections require a Conservation and Customer Solutions team representative to inspect a customer’s yard. Due to COVID-19, NBU currently offers contactless irrigation inspections over the phone while a representative inspects the customer’s yard.

Customers can apply for rebates up to a year after a qualifying yard improvement. A receipt for proof of purchase is required.

Learn more about available NBU Rebates at rebates.nbutexas.com/conservation.

Outdoor
• Harvest the rain. Boy or make a rain barrel at a cost to collect water for your plants.
• Use drought-tolerant plants that are adapted to Central Texas’ hot, dry climate. A drip irrigation system can help conserve water usage by 20 to 50 percent.
• Mulch with compost or mulch to help maintain moisture and reduce competition from weeds. Shredded tires have also become a popular alternative to mulch to retain moisture.
• Keep a container of drinking water in the refrigerator. Running water, from the tap, will raise your electric bill.
• Solar-powered pumps are very efficient.

Indoor
• Wash your car with a bucket and sponge.
• Use drought-tolerant plants that are adapted to Central Texas’ hot, dry climate. A drip irrigation system can help conserve water usage by 20 to 50 percent.
• Install a low-flow shower head.
• Install aerators on your faucets to use less water.
• Only run the dishwasher with a full load.
• Do not allow the water to run while brushing your teeth.
• Never use the toilet to dispose of trash.

For more conservation tips, visit nbutexas.com/conservation to learn more.
The Value of Consumption Use Alerts

While surprises can be positive and negative, New Braunfels Utilities (NBU) consumption use alerts are for customers who want to eliminate negative surprises when they receive their bill. The consumption use alerts feature notifies customers when their water and electricity usage exceeds a customer-selected threshold.

“For example, if you indicate that you want to receive a notification when you exceed a specified consumption level within one hour, one day, or one week, a notification will be sent to you either through email or as a text message,” said Customer Service Manager Carlos Salas.

“You can also see them online within your Customer Connect account under the Notification Settings.”

Using the existing metering system, customers can receive alerts online or on their phones about surprise spikes in water and electricity usage. Customers can also easily set up an account on the NBU website, allowing them to view and pay their bill online.

“The notification system sends an alert to customers if water use is exceeding the threshold when it shouldn’t be, for example, when the customer is not at home. Determining what prompted the alert can cut down on waste and water loss from plumbing or irrigation issues,” Salas said.

This service helps customers make needed repairs and detect leaks to avoid financial surprises.

“If the customer waits until the bill arrives to check usage, they will not have time to reduce usage or to correct an issue, thereby incurring a higher bill,” Salas added.

The notifications give customers actionable information to stop high usage before it continues. “The best way to save water and electricity and reduce consumption is to be aware of how much you are using,” Salas concluded.

TO SIGN UP FOR CONSUMPTION USE ALERTS, CUSTOMERS MUST HAVE A SMART METER INSTALLED AND BE IN THE NBU ELECTRICITY COVERAGE AREA.

Conservation and Customer Solutions Team Spotlight

The NBU Conservation and Customer Solutions team provides education, support, and oversight to ensure customers are equipped and ready to conserve and save money throughout the year. You may meet one of our representatives during a home assessment, event, or following up on a rebate request. This team is passionate about protecting our resources and helping customers.

Learn more about the NBU Conservation and Customer Solutions team below (ordered left to right per the group photo above).

Kory Foster
Resource Conservation Representative
• Enjoys playing disc golf
• Likes playing guitar
• Enjoys cooking for his girlfriend

Andrew Cummings
Conservation and Customer Solutions Manager
• Is an avid woodworker
• Enjoys hiking and mountain biking with his wife
• Loves to play golf with his best buds
• Will never say no to a cup of coffee

Ashley Gonzalez
Resource Conservation Representative
• Has a dog named Sid and loves animals
• Looks forward to her annual family reunion at the lake
• Loves spending time with her family and friends
• Likes to work on DIY projects and the finds on Pinterest

Kimberly Klausner
Resource Conservation Representative
• Has a dog named Sid and loves animals
• Loves to make delicious charcuterie boards
• Loves cooking and experimenting with different recipes from around the world
• Enjoys learning about different cultures and places

Wyatt Runde
Resource Conservation Supervisor
• Enjoys hiking and fishing
• Lives on a dairy farm and has multiple pets
• Loves spending time with his friends and family

Kristin Martinez
Conservation and Customer Solutions Supervisor
• Has seven children ranging from 5 to 20 years old
• Is an avid reader and helped create the annual reading challenge for NBU employees
• Is a certified Master Naturalist with the Lindheimer Chapter and volunteers at the Headwaters at the Comal

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CONSERVATION HELP, RIGHT AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Analyzing your historic energy and water usage can help you identify opportunities for savings.

New Braunfels Utilities offers a Utility Consumption Report for residential customers. This report charts your recent electric, indoor water, and irrigation water use and compares it to your neighborhood average.

This report provides a snapshot of your utility consumption and helps identify additional opportunities for savings. As peak billing season approaches, now is the ideal time to review and adjust your usage.

To request your personal report, visit nbutexas.com/conservation.