



Electronic Water Meters Coming to San Antonio

A new year means a new start. For San Antonio, 2022 marks the beginning of a smart start — with the installation of electronic water meters across the city.

San Antonio Water System’s Board of Trustees approved rollout of the ConnectH2O meter replacement program in December.

“The ConnectH2O program means that customers will have the data and power at their fingertips to better understand and control their water use,” said Mary Bailey, SAWS vice president of Customer Experience and Strategic Initiatives. “This will allow customers to stop high bills in their tracks because they’ll have information even before their bill is generated.”

During pilot testing at 2,500 homes and businesses, the new meters helped alert more than 400 customers to possible leaks, saving water and helping limit high bills and prevent damage. They also lowered the number of in-person service calls by SAWS crews, thus reducing costs.

“This investment in technology is a tremendous step for SAWS and will help us become even more cost efficient,” said Board Chairwoman

Jelynn LeBlanc Jamison. “Not only will customers have more tools to control their bills, but we’ll be able to reduce lost water, helping us meet ambitious water conservation goals that ensure plentiful water supplies for our growing city.”

Other benefits of the ConnectH2O electronic metering program:

- The new water meters use the same secure wireless network as CPS Energy, helping both utilities save money.
- Hourly water use can be tracked by customers via a secure, mobile-friendly website.
- The new ultrasonic meters have no moving parts, are more accurate, and won’t need to be replaced as often.



SAWS aims to install about 65,000 electronic meters in 2022 beginning mid-year, and will continue until

all 600,000 customer meters are replaced by the end of 2026.

Total cost authorized for the new ConnectH2O metering program is \$215 million.

More information on the ConnectH2O pilot, the technology of automated metering, and other frequently asked questions is available at saws.org/ConnectH2O.

Federal Water Bill Assistance Now Available

In November, San Antonio City Council voted to set aside a portion of local American Rescue Plan Act, or ARPA funds for utility bill relief, making up to \$10 million available to SAWS customers who qualify.

To receive this assistance, you must:

- Be a SAWS residential customer.
- Live inside San Antonio city limits.

- Affirm that you have experienced a COVID-19-related financial hardship.
- Have an unpaid balance on charges from March 1, 2020 to Sept. 30, 2021.

Most customers who qualify can receive up to \$700 in bill assistance. Those who meet certain income guidelines may qualify for more. Learn more and apply online at saws.org/covid19 or call **210-704-SAWS** (7297).



Feb. 25 is family flashlight night at San Antonio Botanical Garden! Experience the nocturnal side of the Garden, navigate the light maze and enjoy hands-on activities. Get tickets at sabot.org.

Event Calendar

Outdoor Screening: In The Heights

Feb. 3

McNay Art Museum
6000 N. New Braunfels Ave.
mcnayart.org/events

Native Plant Guided Tour

Feb. 5

San Antonio Botanical Garden
555 Funston Place
sabot.org

San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo

Feb. 10-27

AT&T Center/Freeman Coliseum
3201 E. Houston St.
sarodeo.com

Visit Mitchell Lake

Every weekend in February

Mitchell Lake Audubon Center
10750 Pleasanton Road
mitchelllake.audubon.org



Customer Service and 24-hour Emergency
210-704-SAWS (7297)
saws.org/waternews

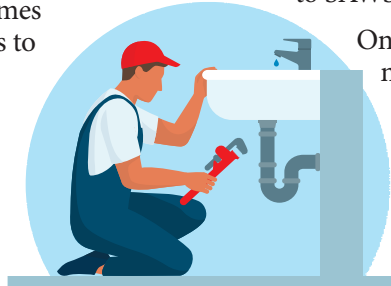
Be Ready Rebate Deadline Extended Through February

We want to help you from being left out in the cold with a whopping water bill in hand.

Through the end of February, SAWS is offering the Be Ready rebate for residential customers when they hire a licensed plumber to check their homes for leaks and opportunities to winterize plumbing.

To qualify for the rebate, customers must:

- Download and print the plumber's checklist



from GardenStyleSA.com/plumbing.

- Hire a licensed plumber to perform the assessment and complete the checklist.
- Submit the plumber's invoice and checklist to SAWS.

Once all rebate requirements are met, a \$75 credit will be applied to the customer's water bill.

Get full program details, including a list of FAQs, at GardenStyleSA.com/plumbing.

Last Chance to Prune Oaks

There's not much time left to prune your oak trees this winter, especially if you want to minimize the chance of oak wilt. During the coldest days of the year, the beetles that carry the spores of the oak wilt fungus are very few and unlikely to fly.

Pruning is done for three reasons (in order of importance): safety, tree health and appearance.

Some helpful dos and don'ts:

- Prune narrow branch junctions that are V-shaped; these are structurally weak, especially if two or more of the branches are of equal diameters. Long branches that have been repeatedly stripped of their lateral branches should be shortened



or removed completely

- Look for the "3-D" branches — dead, diseased and dying. These are a source of disease and insects, as well as a food source to attract more disease and insects.

- Never cut through the branch collar. This donut-shaped ring at the junction of two branches or trunks is a zone of specialized cells and chemicals that reduces the potential for decay and disease.

Finally, **always paint fresh oak wounds** — this is a must to preventing oak wilt. You don't need to paint the wounds for elm, ash, sycamore, pine, tallow or pecan trees.

Basura Bash Is Back!

After a pandemic hiatus, the Basura Bash returns Feb. 19!

Join Basura Bob — everyone's favorite trash-slashing, fish-faced mascot — and sign up to join the one-day, all-volunteer event



to help clean up San Antonio's rivers and streams.

The clean-up happens from 8 a.m. to noon. Online registration opens in January. Visit basurabash.org for more information and to sign up!