



JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2014

# Inside College Station

\* \* \* \* \* CITY OF COLLEGE STATION \* Home of Texas A&M University® \* College Station, Texas \* \* \* \* \*



**College Station Utilities**  
**HOTLINE**

**USE YOUR CSU ACCOUNT NUMBER**  
**WHEN REPORTING AN OUTAGE**

Since College Station Utilities (CSU) implemented its new outage hotline in March 2013, customers have provided many ideas to improve the system. As a result, CSU has continually made adjustments, including changes to the recording you hear when you dial-in an outage.

In past outages, the hotline number and Outage Management System have proven to be valuable tools, and the outage map has been especially useful in providing customers with real-time information.

The storm on Oct. 13, 2013 was the most severe College Station's seen in a long time. From 3 a.m. to midnight, the outage hotline received more than 2,000 calls. Unfortunately, almost half of those calls were not identified by the system because callers didn't enter their account number, were calling from a phone the system couldn't recognize, or went straight to leaving a message.

The system automatically grouped calls and predicted outage sizes and locations for the calls that went directly into the system. The

other calls had to be handled manually, which took time away from tending to the outage and directing crews.

CSU is constantly striving to improve the system, and the key is to use your account number when reporting an outage.

### How the system works

When you call the utilities outage hotline number at 855-528-4278, you must choose one of three options:

1. Electric power outage or issue.
2. Water/Wastewater problem.
3. Other issues.

If you choose "1," the system takes you to the "enter the account" stage. Then, you must choose from the following:

1. Electric power outage or problem.
2. An electrical emergency.

If you enter "2," you'll hear this message: "If this an emergency issue affecting damage to property or public safety, please hang up immediately and call 9-1-1; otherwise,

please leave your name, number and a message detailing the location and nature of the electric emergency and we will call you back as soon as a system operator becomes available. Thank you."

When prompted, if you enter your account number, the system immediately locates your information, finds your location, and identifies the transformer and substation feed. As more affected customers call and enter their account number, the system predicts the location of the failed device, which enables CSU to quickly dispatch a crew to the trouble spot.

If you don't have your account number, the system tries to identify your location by your telephone number, but that works only if the number is tied to your account. If the system can't locate you, you are prompted to leave a message and CSU staff will contact you directly to get your information.

Ultimately, identifying more customer locations make CSU's predictions more accurate, and that means your power will be back on sooner.

### Always report outages

Unfortunately, power and water outages happen. When they do, it's important for CSU customers to let us know promptly. If you simply assume your neighbor has already reported it, service restoration may be delayed. Your timely report also helps determine the size of the outage.

**QUICK LINKS**  
College Station Utilities  
[cstx.gov/utilities](http://cstx.gov/utilities)  
Utilities Outage Hotline  
**855-528-4278**



### Prevent Stormwater Runoff

Stormwater runoff pollution occurs when precipitation from rain flows over impervious surfaces, picking up debris and pollutants before entering the storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream or river. Polluted stormwater runoff can have adverse effects on plants, fish, animals and people.

Any discharge to the municipal storm sewer that is not entirely composed of storm water or listed as a permitted stormwater discharge is referred to as an "illicit discharge." Some Illicit discharges include:

- Water line flushing of hyperchlorinated water
- Non-residential vehicle washing
- Chlorinated swimming pool discharges
- Contaminated runoff from construction sites
- Runoff from dumpsters
- Contaminated storm water exposed to industrial activities
- Building exterior or parking lot washing with soap
- Illegal dumping of solids and/or liquids
- Restaurant oil/grease container leaks

If you observe or suspect illicit discharge, please report it to 855-528-4278 and select option "3." For more information on preventing stormwater pollution, visit [brazoscleanwater.org](http://brazoscleanwater.org).

### The Big Event

#### Now accepting job requests

Do you need a job (painting, yard work, cleaning, etc.) completed around your house? Let Texas A&M University's The Big Event do it for you! The Big Event is the largest, one-day, student-run service project in the nation where students of Texas A&M University come together to show their appreciation to the residents of Bryan and College Station.

Fill out a job request form at [bigeventonline.tamu.edu/jobrequest](http://bigeventonline.tamu.edu/jobrequest) by Feb. 14. If it's approved they will complete the job on Saturday, March 29.

### Watering Wisdom

#### Tips for a healthy home landscape

Is your sprinkler system turned off, yet? By now, it should be! It's the perfect time of year for routine maintenance on irrigation systems and for pruning and mulching your landscape. Here are a few tips to improve your landscape and save water and money:

- Familiarize yourself with your irrigation controller's operation. Most companies have manuals available online.
- Make sure your controller has a functioning backup battery installed. This retains irrigation schedules if power is lost.
- Make sure your controller is equipped to work with a rain sensor (most are).
- Run a test cycle of your irrigation system and note any deficiencies. Look for missing or broken nozzles and leaks.
- Apply a thick layer of organic mulch in flower beds and vegetable gardens. Mulch cools the soil in summer, protects tender plant roots in the winter, and helps improve soil health.

Visit [cstx.gov/water](http://cstx.gov/water) for more useful water conservation tips and other information from City of College Station Water Services.

**Energy Conservation & Rebates**  
979-764-6343  
[cstx.gov/energy](http://cstx.gov/energy)

**Water Conservation & Rebates**  
979-764-6223  
[cstx.gov/water](http://cstx.gov/water)

**Wind Watts / Wind Power**  
979-764-3535  
[cstx.gov/windwatts](http://cstx.gov/windwatts)

**eBill Sign Up**  
979-764-3535  
[cstx.gov/ebill](http://cstx.gov/ebill)

**Online Payments**  
[epay.cstx.gov](http://epay.cstx.gov)

**Utility Outage Hotline**  
855-528-4278

**College Station Utilities**  
Reliable, Affordable, Community Owned  
[cstx.gov/utilities](http://cstx.gov/utilities)

## events

### February-March 2014

**Brazos Valley Senior Games**  
Feb. 20-23 (register Jan. 13-Feb.7)  
[cstx.gov/seniors](http://cstx.gov/seniors) or 979.764.3486

**Homebuyer Education Course**  
Feb. 4, 11, 18 & 25 | 6-7:30 p.m.  
Register at [cstx.gov/homebuyer](http://cstx.gov/homebuyer) or call 979.764.3778

**African American History Lecture Series**  
Feb. 11, 18 & 25 | 6:30 p.m.  
[cstx.gov/lincolncenter](http://cstx.gov/lincolncenter) or 979.764.3779

**Movies in the Park**  
Feb. 14 & March 7 | Gates open 7 p.m., movie begins 8 p.m.  
[cstx.gov/wolfpen](http://cstx.gov/wolfpen) or call 979.764.3486

**Taste of the Soul in the Brazos Valley**  
Feb. 27 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
[cstx.gov/lincolncenter](http://cstx.gov/lincolncenter) or 979.764.3779

**Exploring History Luncheon**  
Feb. 19 & March 19 | 11:30 a.m.  
\$5 per person. RSVP to 979.764.6351 or [mrodgers@cstx.gov](mailto:mrodgers@cstx.gov).

**Longboard 5K**  
April 5, 8 a.m. (register March 3-April 14). All ages welcome.  
[cstx.gov/wolfpen](http://cstx.gov/wolfpen) or 979.764.3486

**Neighborhood Fishing Program**  
March 15, 9 a.m.– 2 p.m. at Stephen C. Beachy Central Park Pond.  
[cstx.gov/events](http://cstx.gov/events) or 979.764.3486

**HERSHEY'S Track & Field Games**  
Register: March 17-May 16  
Event: May 17, 10 a.m. Ages 9-14.  
[cstx.gov/sports](http://cstx.gov/sports) or 979.764.3486

**Young Readers Book Sale**  
March 22 | 10 a.m.– 3 p.m. at Larry J. Ringer Library. [bcslibrary.org](http://bcslibrary.org)

**Bicycling Essentials Course**  
March 22 | 9 a.m.– 12 p.m.  
[cstx.gov/bikepedgreenways](http://cstx.gov/bikepedgreenways) or 979.764.3674

For more events, visit:

[cstx.gov/calendar](http://cstx.gov/calendar)