

## Our Lobby Is Open - With New Options to Pay



Last month Hartselle Utilities unveiled a new payment kiosk. Located in our glass foyer, the PaySite kiosk accepts debit and credit cards, as well as cash and checks, and it is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Payments post to your account immediately.

"Lots of customers used to come in to pay their bills with debit and credit cards, but we had to turn them away," says Customer Service Manager Tim Mitchell. "Now anyone can pay their bill here."

The first time you use the kiosk, you will need your bill – there is a barcode that the kiosk can scan – or at least your account number. You have the option of setting up a MyPaySite account, using your phone number and a PIN, for easier logins in the future.

"Our new glass foyer is secure," explains General Manager Bob Sittason. "We have security cameras and it is well lit at night. I've personally come down here after hours to make sure that the area has enough light for our customers to feel secure."

## Our Customer Service Staff Welcomes You Back

Hartselle Utilities' Customer Service department saw several changes while our lobby was closed due to COVID-19 precautions, so as we welcome customers back in person, here is an introduction to the people who are the faces of Hartselle Utilities.

Jeremy Dorrance is our Assistant Customer Service Manager. He began working for HU 10 years ago as a meter reader and then served as safety coordinator and utility inspector. Since beginning his current position in October 2020, Jeremy says he's spent a lot of time talking to customers, mostly over the phone. "I really enjoy dealing with people," he says.

Ashley Wright started with HU as a Customer Service Representative in July 2019. She worked in banking for 10 years before joining us. "I really enjoy getting to know all our customers and building a relationship with them," she says.

Jessica Gibson has been with HU for three years this May. Originally from Detroit, she enjoys living in Hartselle now. Like Ashley, she enjoys creating personal relationships with customers. "I like the chit-chat we can have with customers, and getting to know faces!" she says.

Emily Merrill started at HU last February, and had only been on

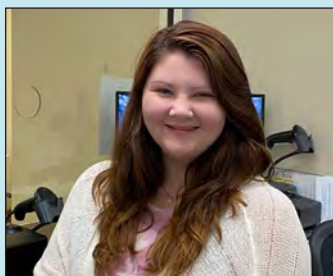
the job four weeks when the pandemic affected utility operations.

She had worked for Family Security Credit Union before joining HU. "I love the interactions with customers," she says, "hearing about gardens, kids, grandkids and dogs. When you see people every month, you get to know them. I like to hear how their lives are going."

If you are setting up new service, changing services, signing up for bank draft, we welcome you in person! And if you would like help learning to use our new payment kiosk, any of our customer service reps will be glad to help you.



Assistant Customer Service Manager Jeremy Dorrance explains how to use our new payment kiosk. The kiosk, available 24/7, is located in the glass foyer at Hartselle Utilities.



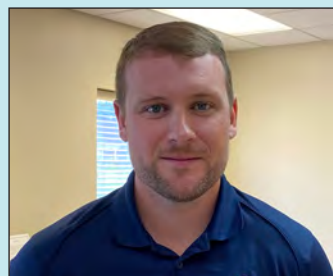
Jessica Gibson



Ashley Wright

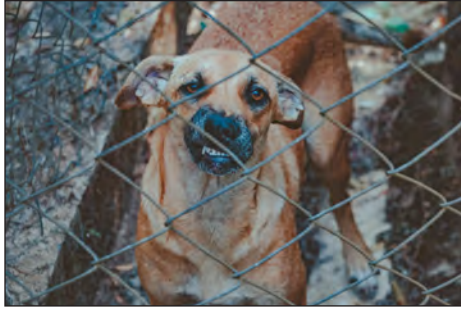


Emily Merrill



Jeremy Dorrance

## Please Keep Your Meter Accessible To Our Meter Readers



Hartselle Utilities has three meter readers across our electric, natural gas and water departments, and a small time window each month to read over 9,000 meters. Our meter reading operations are designed to be as efficient as humanly possible – in the long run that saves our customers money by keeping our expenses down, and rates low.

But sometimes, meters are blocked, either by aggressive dogs, fences with locked gates or other structures. Due to time constraints, meter readers are not allowed, for example, to open trap doors in decks or crawl to see a meter's readout.

"While we can estimate readings from time to time, our policy requires us to physically lay eyes on your meter at least twice a year," explains Customer Service Manager Tim Mitchell. "If we can't get to your meter, that's a problem. And if your meter takes even a couple of minutes longer to get to, that also creates a problem."

There is a restricted access fee for every meter HU cannot access. If a meter is estimated instead of manually read, at least once every six months HU will require the customer to make an appointment to unblock access so the meter can be read manually, and settle up any over or under charges – which could cause quite a sticker shock, says Mitchell.

Mitchell advises customers to check meters regularly to make sure:

- Meters aren't blocked by anything structurally
- Aggressive dogs don't block the path to a meter
- Gates in fenced-in areas around a meter are unlocked.

## Automatic Bank Draft: The Easiest Way to Pay Your Utility Bill

Are you tired of writing a check to Hartselle Utilities each month? By enrolling in our Bank Draft Plan, you'll never have to worry about late utility bills again.

How does it work? It's simple: the amount of your bill is automatically deducted from your bank account on the day it is due each month. If your due date falls on a weekend or holiday, your bill is paid on the next business day. The transaction will appear on your bank statement as a payment to Hartselle Utilities.

You still receive your utility bill each month as usual, and your due date does not change. The message "Paid by Bank Draft" will appear on your bill.

To enroll in the program, all you need to do is complete an enrollment form and bring it or mail it to HU along with a voided check. It takes about two minutes to enroll, and costs absolutely nothing. Plus, you can cancel at any time with a phone call.

For more information and to request an enrollment form, call HU at (256) 773-3340 or send an email to Customer Service at [inquiries@hartselleutilities.org](mailto:inquiries@hartselleutilities.org).

## A message from the Hartselle Fire Department

### Summer months mean grilling!

Make sure your home is protected: Keep grills 3 feet away from your house and anything that can burn!



Home fire safety doesn't stop at the door. There are many fire risks outside the home. You may have these in your backyard. Here are some ways you can keep your home safer from outside fire.

**GRILLING: Make safe outdoor cooking a priority this summer!**

- Move the grill away from siding, decking, and other things that can catch fire.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill when it's hot.
- Stay with the grill the entire time you're cooking.
- Keep your grill clean so leftover grease and fat won't catch on fire.



FEMA



## Rate Changes Effective July 1

Rates for water and natural gas services will increase effective July 1, 2021.

The water rates will increase across the board by 2.0 percent. The average residential monthly water bill will increase \$.55.

Natural gas will increase 2.165 percent across the board. For those residential customers who heat their homes with natural gas, the average monthly natural gas bill will increase \$.98 during the heating season.

## Your Number, Please!

Can Hartselle Utilities communicate with you, both during an emergency and for more routine communications?

Check your utility bill to make sure your contact telephone number – the one in red – is up-to-date, especially if you have moved or switched to a mobile number in the last several years.

## Summer Sewer Fee Cap

Typically, most of the water a household uses enters the sewer system as waste, so HU uses each customer's water bill to calculate their sewer fees. During the summer months, residents generally use more water outdoors and this water does not enter the sewer system.

HU sets a cap for the summer sewer rates at 120 percent of the average of each customer's winter usage. From May 1 to October 31, customers are not charged a sewer fee for water used above the cap.

Have you signed up  
for E-Bill?

[hartselleutilities.org/e-bill](https://hartselleutilities.org/e-bill)



Have a non-emergency question or a question about your bill? Email us at [inquiries@hartselleutilities.org](mailto:inquiries@hartselleutilities.org).

We try to respond to billing and general questions within 24 hours; service issues that need investigation may take up to 48 hours.

**To report a gas leak, sewer backup or power outage, call our office.** Our phones are answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week. During business hours (M-F, 7:30 am - 4:30 pm), call (256) 773-3340. After hours, call (256) 773-2533 or (256) 773-2588.

SMELL  
GAS?



ACT  
FAST!

256-773-2533 or 911



Hartselle Utilities

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1010 Sparkman St NW  
Hartselle, AL 35640  
256-773-3340  
[HartselleUtilities.org](https://HartselleUtilities.org)