



# RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

## Board Memorandum

**BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES**

**DATE: MARCH 11, 2024**

### **GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

#### **CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM UPDATES THROUGH JANUARY 2024**

Customer Engagement electric programs are funded by Assembly Bill (AB) 1890, adopted in 1996, that requires publicly owned utilities to collect and spend public benefits charge funds in four areas: low-income assistance, energy efficiency and conservation programs, renewable energy, and research, development, and demonstration projects. The Water Conservation Surcharge, a 1.5% charge on water bills, approved by the Board and City Council, funds water conservation rebates, education, and outreach programs.

The Customer Engagement Team provides a diverse range of assistance and rebate programming as well as education and outreach to support energy efficiency and water conservation for customers and the community.

#### **CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT JANUARY 2024 HIGHLIGHTS**

##### ***Residential***

- A. Sharing Households Assist Riverside's Energy (SHARE) program assisted 2,788 customers from July 2023 through January 2024 totaling \$697,000
- B. Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP) assisted 166 customers from July 2023 through January 2024 and expended \$78,149.07
- C. Electric Vehicle (EV) Rebate Program has processed a total of 41 rebates with 2 additional participants for the month of January

##### ***Commercial***

- A. Processed 46 large commercial rebates from July 2023 through January 2024 for a total of \$95,387.90 with 1,248,396.70 kWh saved
- B. Small Business Direct Install Program completed 21 direct installations

##### ***Education***

- A. Full schedule of water and energy classes
- B. Launched a new water pollution virtual class
- C. Attended the Alvord Unified School District Science Fair
- D. Planned Family Science Technology Engineering Arts Math Nights
- E. Attended the Connections Conference: Employment with Passion
- F. Presented at the Water Education Coordinator Member Agency Meeting

##### ***Communications***

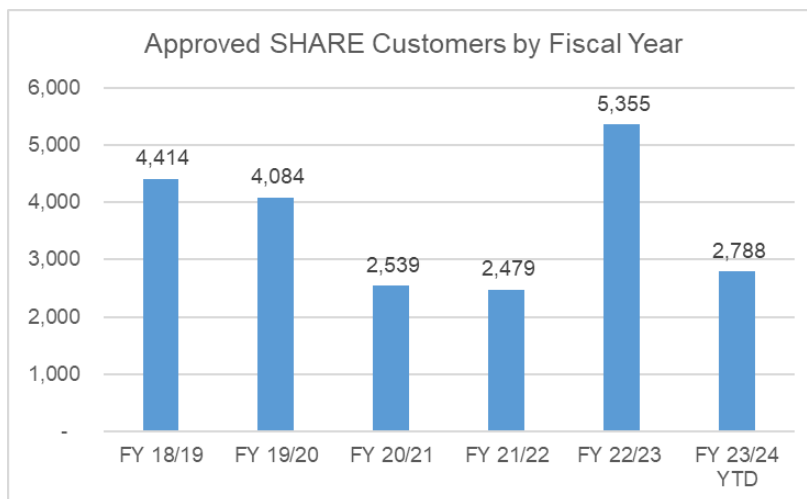
- A. Added tips for pet owners to the Outage Tips page [Tips for Pets During Outages | Riverside Public Utilities \(riversideca.gov\)](https://www.riversideca.gov/public-utilities/tips-for-pets-during-outages)

- B. Published new “Ways to Save” page that shows our energy and water rebates in a visual layout to help make it easier for customers to find ways to lower their utility costs [Ways to Save | Riverside Public Utilities \(riversideca.gov\)](https://www.riversideca.gov/ways-to-save)
- C. Customer email to residents sent on 1/11 - Energy Star TV's | Cistern Rebates | Landscaping Workshop | Rain/Irrigation Reminder – WBIC Rebates | Weatherization Rebates | Heat Pump Rebate | Landscape Certification Program. 80k sent | 51% unique opens | 2% unique click rate
- D. Commercial email sent on 1/9 - Energy Star TV's | Landscaping Workshop | Rain/Irrigation Reminder – WBIC Rebates | Weatherization Rebates | Landscape Certification Program. 4.7k sent | 44% unique opens | 4% unique click rate
- E. CE team visited Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's La Kretz Innovation Campus on 1/24/24 and learned more about different demonstration models for energy efficiency and water conservation at their Customer Engagement and Sustainable Living Labs

## RESIDENTIAL

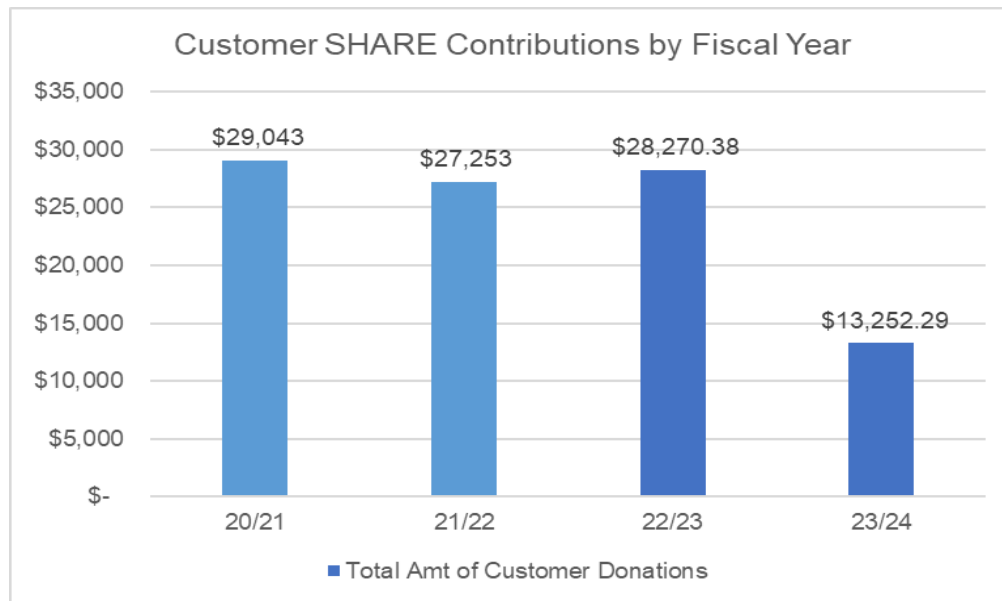
### SHARE

The SHARE program assisted 2,788 customers from July 2023 through January 2024, which reflects the total participant amount for the \$250.00 shut-off and/or deposit assistance credit.



### SHARE Customer Donations

RPU customers can donate to the SHARE program that will help qualifying customers with their bills; the average customer donation is \$31.00 per year. Customer donations are promoted through back of utility bills, social media, and customer outreach. In January 2024, customers who donated during 2023 received a thank you letter for their contribution to the SHARE program.



### **ESAP**

ESAP was created to help low-income renters and homeowners access energy-savings home improvements at no-cost. From July 2023 through January 2024, the program has benefitted 200 homes in the RPU service area, expending a total of \$124,594. The program helps customers access a range of efficiency measures such as A/C tune-ups, LED lightbulbs, electronically commutated motors, and HVAC motor upgrades.

### **Rebates**

From July 2023 through January 2024 a total of 1,826 residential energy rebates were processed, for a total rebate benefit of \$281,306.24

Residential Devices	Participation	RPU Expenditures
Air Conditioning	262	\$149,076.48
Energy Star	642	\$52,442.35
Pool Pump	61	\$12,257.73
Tree Power	490	\$19,528.38
Weatherization	193	\$32,801.30
Recycling	178	\$15,200.00
<b>Energy Rebate Total</b>	<b>1,826</b>	<b>\$281,306.24</b>

RPU provides customer rebates for Used Electric Vehicle and Electric Vehicle Chargers from the sale of Low Carbon Fuel Standard credits. From July 2023 through January 2024 the Used Electric Vehicle (EV) Rebate Program has approved 41 rebate applications for a total of \$47,000.00. The EV Charger Rebate Program has approved 39 rebates for a total of \$17,992.00.

### **Water Efficiency Programs**

In June 2004, and again in 2014, the Board and City Council adopted the 10-year Water Conservation Surcharge to collect 1.5% of retail water sales to fund efforts for conservation, education and water use efficiency programs, as well as research development and

demonstration programs to advance science and technology with respect to water conservation.

RPU's water rebate programs are processed via [www.SoCalWaterSmart.com](http://www.SoCalWaterSmart.com), Metropolitan Water District's (MWD) rebate portal. All rebates issued to RPU water customers are paid out of the MWD budget, unless RPU elects to add additional funding to selected measures.

RPU pays an additional rebate for weather-based irrigation controllers, high efficiency sprinkler nozzles, hose bib irrigation controllers, leak monitoring devices and turf removal projects. From July 2023 through January 2024 a total of 159 residential water rebates were processed with total RPU/WMD investment of \$211,394.

Residential Devices & Turf	Participation	RPU Expenditure	MWD Expenditure
Flow Monitor/Leak Detection Device	3	\$225	\$300
High-efficiency Clothes Washer (HECW)	65	\$0	\$5,525
Hose Bib Irrigation Controller	1	\$15	\$35
Rain Barrels	0	\$0	\$0
Residential Premium HET (from 1.6 gpf toilet)	4	\$0	\$240
Residential Turf Removal (per square foot)	31	\$67,752	\$125,142
Rotating Nozzle	1	\$192	\$128
Weather-based Irrigation Controllers (WBIC/WBICLL)	54	\$5,760	\$6,080
<b>Water Efficiency Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>\$73,944</b>	<b>\$137,450</b>



**Waterwise Landscape Workshops**  
In Fall 2023, a series of free landscape workshops designed to assist customers in being water efficient and environmentally considerate was scheduled through February 2024. Designed and hosted in partnership with the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District, the workshops were held on select Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon. The January 13th workshop focused on climate-appropriate landscaping. A new suite of workshops will be planned for Spring 2024.

### **Smart Irrigation Program**

Residential and business customers are helping to reduce water use and costs by installing smart irrigation controllers and high-efficiency sprinkler nozzles via the Smart Irrigation Program (SIP). The SIP provides a free irrigation assessment to evaluate water use and the corresponding efficiency opportunities and repair or replacement of up to \$300 of irrigation equipment. From July 2023 through January 2024, 161 customers have been assisted and 199 are scheduled.

### **COMMERCIAL**

From July 2023 through January 2024, a total of 46 commercial rebates were processed, 1 performance-based incentive, 13 lighting, 25 air conditioning, 5 weatherization, and 2 energy star,

with a total investment of \$95,387.90 and a kWh savings of 1,248,396.70.

In January 2024, the Small Business Direct Install and Outdoor Lighting Program conducted 4 audit visits at local businesses and a total of 21 direct installs were completed.

## **EDUCATION**

In January, the education team provided 4 electricity classes at Woodcrest Christian School with a total of 108 participants and 21 water conservation classes with a total of 435 participants at Mount View Elementary School in the Riverside Unified School District and Woodcrest Christian School.

A new Water Pollution Solution class was implemented and provided for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. The class focuses on keeping the Santa Ana River clean from pollutants and learning how pollution can contaminate ground water supplies, ultimately affecting drinking water. In the lab portion of the class, students engage in design challenges to develop new ways to reuse plastics to prevent them from becoming water pollutants. The pilot program consisted of 3 water pollution classes with students at Madison Elementary School, with 75 participants.

On January 23<sup>rd</sup> the team judged water, energy, and sustainability-focused science fair projects at the district level science fair competition for Alvord Unified School District. 10 projects were selected and winners were awarded a \$50 gift card and a medal at the science fair awards ceremony on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

The team continues to plan Family Science Technology Engineering Arts & Mathematics nights with libraries. These family STEAM nights will form part of a wider collaboration with RPU and the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Riverside Fire Department, Office of Emergency Management, and Museum of Riverside; they will take place on different dates over the course of the next year.

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, the team attended the Connections Conference: Employment with Passion. The conference was hosted by Riverside Unified School District Career Technical Education program.

The team was invited to present at the Water Education Coordinator Member Agency Virtual Meeting for Metropolitan Water District on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024, to share Riverside Public Utilities new STEM FUNdamentals middle school summer program.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Below are the in-person events the CE Team participated in January 2024:

- 1/06 - Citrus Heritage Run Arlington Heights Sports Park
- 1/10- Monthly outreach at Janet Goeske Senior Center
- 1/13 - Landscape Water Efficiency Workshop Casa Blanca Library
- 1/24 - LADWP's La Kretz Innovation Campus
- 1/27& 1/28- Lunar Festival Downtown Riverside

Key social media posts during the month of January 2024:

- 1/01 – Happy New Year
- 1/02 – Paperless
- 1/03 - Climate-friendly Landscape Workshop
- 1/04 -Career Day
- 1/05 - Event
- 1/07 - All Day Every Day Billboard
- 1/10 - Climate-friendly Landscape Workshop
- 1/11- Rain Barrel & Cistern
- 1/12 - National Cut Your Energy Costs Day
- 1/13 - Water Conservation
- 1/14 - Landscape Workshop
- 1/15 - Closed Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 1/16 – Happy Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 1/17 - Refrigerator Recycling Program
- 1/18 - California Native Plants
- 1/19 - Electric Vehicles
- 1/20 - We're Hiring
- 1/21 - All Day Every Day
- 1/23 - Weather-Based Irrigation Controller
- 1/24 - 311 Spanish App

**Upcoming Events – March - April 2024**

- 3/13/2024 - Janet Goeske Foundation: Monthly Visit
- 3/16/2024 - Spring Eggstravaganza
- 3/21/2024 - Family STEAM night
- 4/06/2024 - Citrus Festival
- 4/20/2024 - Earth Day and Insect Fair
- 4/27/2024 - Cinco de Mayo Celebration
- 4/27/2024 - Riverside Tamale Festival

Back of Bill messaging for April: Paperless Billing



## RPU - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS GALLERY

1/6/24 – Citrus Heritage Run Arlington Heights Sports Park



1/13/24 - Landscape Water Efficiency Workshop held at the Casa Blanca Library



1/24/24 – LADWP La Kretz Innovation Campus Tour, Los Angeles

