



# RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

## Board Memorandum

**BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES**

**DATE: SEPTEMBER 11, 2023**

**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

**CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM UPDATES THROUGH JULY 2023**

Customer Engagement is funded by Assembly Bill (AB) 1890 that was adopted in 1996. The Bill 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 Customer Engagement Team provides and processes a robust and diverse range of assistance and rebate programming; the team also conducts significant education and outreach to support these programs, as well as energy efficiency and water conservation messaging for customers and the wider community.

**CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT JULY 2023 HIGHLIGHTS (NEW FISCAL YEAR)**

***Residential***

- A. Sharing Households Assist Riverside's Energy (SHARE) program assisted 290 customers in July 2023 totaling \$170,342 in past-due assistance, monthly electric and water credits.
- B. Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP) has started the new fiscal year with new interested participants, as of yet no data to report.
- C. Electric Vehicle (EV) Rebate Program did not have participation in July 2023; customers have expressed interest in the program through email inquiries.

***Commercial***

- A. In July 2023, there are several commercial rebates in pending status that will be finalized for payout in the upcoming weeks.
- B. Small Business Direct Install Program vendor Richard Heath & Associates scheduled 84 direct installs.

***Education***

- A. STEM Public Utilities Learning Lab (STEM PULL) was held July 10-14 at California Baptist University
- B. STEM Fundamentals middle school academy was held July 25-27 at Bourns Technology Center

***Communications***

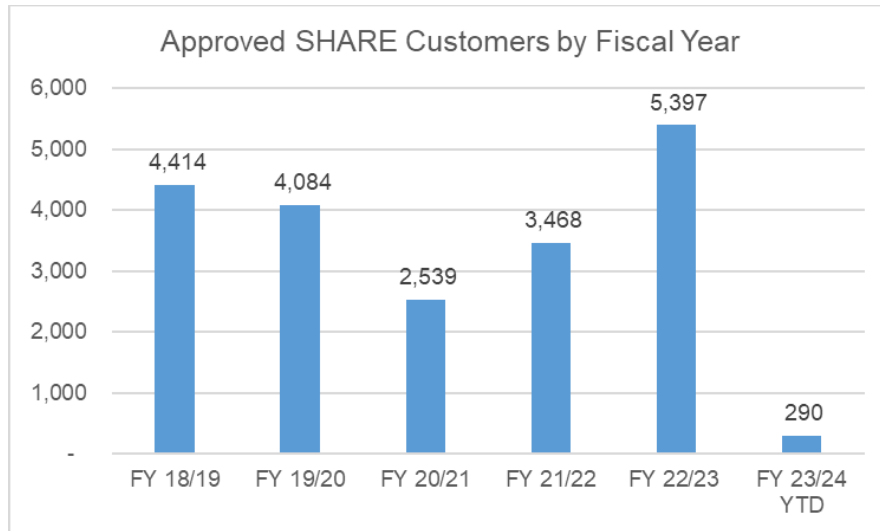
- A. Hosted annual Good Morning Riverside event on July 13, met with Greater Riverside Chamber of Commerce members and shared updates about RPU programs.
- B. Coordinated and executed mailings about proposed rate changes and outreach meetings to Electric, Water, and Public Works customers.

- C. Attended and supported the first community rates meeting on July 31 to help inform customers about RPU assistance and rebate programs.
- D. Customer email to residents sent on July 17 - Beat the Heat/Cool Centers | Flex Alerts | Rates Proposal Meetings | AC Tips | Scam Alerts | Outage Map. 75k sent | 62% unique opens | 5% unique click rate.
- E. Customer email to commercial accounts sent on July 31 - Rates Proposal Meetings. 5k sent | 42% unique opens | 2% unique click rate.

**RESIDENTIAL DETAIL**

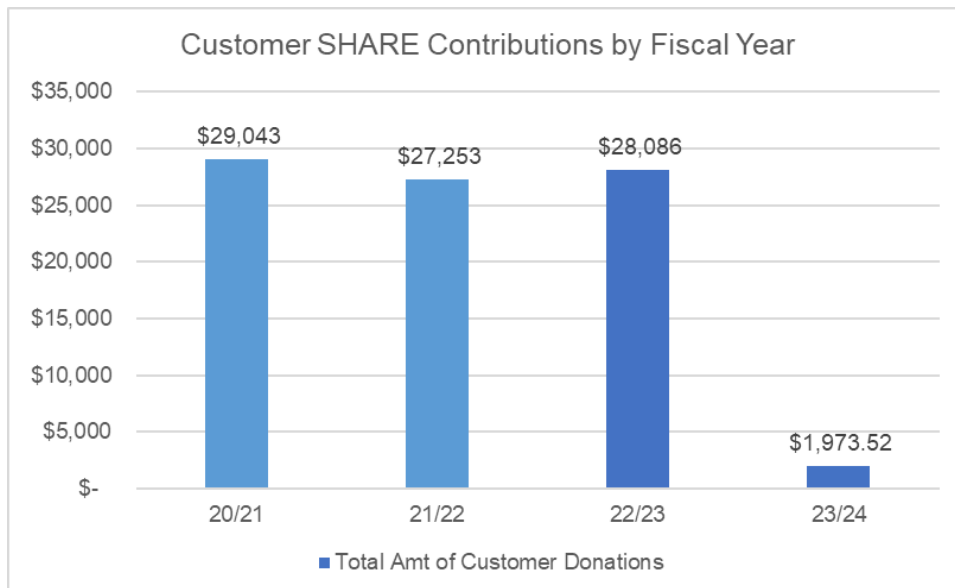
***Sharing Households Assist Riverside’s Energy Program (SHARE)***

The SHARE program assisted 290 customers in July 2023, which reflects the total participant amount for the \$250 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 per year. Customer donations are promoted through back of utility bill, social media, and customer outreach.



**Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP)**

ESAP was created to help low-income renters and homeowners access energy-savings home improvements at no-cost. In July 2023, the program vendor Synergy has continued to reach potential customers for the new fiscal year, updates to follow. The program helps customers with efficiency measures such as A/C tune-ups, LED lightbulbs, electronically commutated motors, and HVAC motor upgrades as the most popular.

**Low-Income Home Water Assistance Program (LiHWAP)**

LiHWAP is a temporary emergency program that helps low-income families with assistance on past due water and sewer bills. The program website is <https://capriverside.org/utility-assistance-program>. Program enrollment was accepted with California Department of Community Services & Development (CSD) and Community Action Partnership of Riverside County (CAP), the program was implemented June 2022. Since its launch the, LiHWAP program has assisted 2,375 customers and \$1,357,421.31 has been paid in past due water and sewer bills.

**Residential Rebates**

In July 2023, a total of 242 residential energy rebates were processed, for a total rebate benefit of \$15,743.90.

Residential Devices	Participation	RPU Expenditures
Air Conditioning	6	\$250.00
Energy Star	24	\$2,050.00
Pool Pump	9	\$1,800.00
Tree Power	157	\$6,255.92
Weatherization	22	\$3,337.98
Recycling	24	\$2,050.00
<b>Energy Rebate Total</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>\$15,743.90</b>

In July 2023, the Used Electric Vehicle (EV) Rebate Program and EV Charger Rebate Program did not have participation, though customers have expressed interest in the program through email inquiries.

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. In July 2023 a total of 30 residential water rebates were processed with total payout (RPU/MWD) of \$23,183.

Residential Devices & Turf	Participation	RPU Expenditure	MWD Expenditure
Flow Monitor/Leak Detection Device	2	\$150	\$200
High-efficiency Clothes Washer (HECW)	9	\$0	\$765
Hose Bib Irrigation Controller	1	\$15	\$35
Residential Turf Removal (per square foot)	2	\$6,000	\$12,048
Rotating Nozzle	1*	\$192	\$128
Weather-based Irrigation Controllers (WBIC)	15	\$1,560	\$2,090
<b>Water Conservation Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>\$7,917</b>	<b>\$15,266</b>

\*64 total nozzles

With the start of the new fiscal year, RPU’s Smart Irrigation Program is working to assist approximately 50 customers with landscape water efficiency evaluations that includes installation of weather-based irrigation controllers and sprinkler nozzles.

## COMMERCIAL DETAIL

In July 2023, several commercial rebates remain in pending status and will be finalized for payout in the upcoming weeks.

On January 10, 2023, City Council approved a range of consultant administered direct installation services for energy efficiency programs. The programs will assist local businesses with efficiency measures such as outdoor lighting, refrigerated load and beverages storage, and direct installations.

In July 2023, Richard Heath & Associates, the vendor for the Small Business Direct Install and Outdoor Lighting Program conducted 84 audit visits at local businesses and a total of 31 direct installs were completed. Staples Energy, the vendor for the Refrigerated Load Program provided refrigeration and lighting energy upgrades at six 6 businesses.

## EDUCATION DETAIL

The education team hosted STEM Public Utilities Learning Labs July 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>. Students met from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily at California Baptist University where they participated in workshops and education panels with City officials and RPU staff. The focus of the week was on creating a resilient city through development of a resilient utility. Highlights of the week included a demonstration by RPU linemen, a tour of the Riverside Energy Resource Center (RERC) and student-built, working models of an energy grid. The program was completed by 48 students.

During the week of July 25-27, the team piloted a middle school STEM Academy at Bourn's Technology Center, entitled STEM FUNdamentals. The purpose of the program was to teach applications of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, to real-world careers and to provide a pipeline of students for next year's STEM Public Utilities Learning Lab Program. The three-day program consisted of lessons on engineering water reuse systems for grey water, using the Bourn's Waterwise Garden in conjunction with RPU's turf rebate program, and giving students the opportunity to work with Riverside Office of Communications to develop public service announcements for water conservation rebate programs. Because this was a pilot program, the Riverside Unified School District limited student enrollment to 20 students. A total of 14 students designed their own waterwise gardens, managed a budget for their turf removal model and calculated the amount of their rebates. On the final day students presented their public service announcement ideas to Kaitlin Reiersen and Amy Navas-Lopez.

## **COMMUNICATIONS DETAIL**

Below are the in-person events the CE Team participated in July 2023:

- 7/3 – Concert for Heros at Riverside National Cemetery
- 7/4 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Fourth of July Car Show, Concert, and Fireworks at La Sierra Park
- 7/5 – Good Morning Riverside, Mission Inn Hotel
- 7/12 – Stem Pull at CBU Gordon and Jill Bourns College of Engineering
- 7/12 – Janet Goeske monthly on-site visit
- 7/12 – Concerts in the Park, Fairmount Park
- 7/13 – Good Morning Riverside at the Mission Inn
- 7/19 – Concerts in the Park, Fairmont Park
- 7/26 – Concerts in the Park, Fairmont Park
- 7/31 – Rates discussion at Orange Terrace Community Center

Key social media posts during the month of July 2023:

- 7/5 – Water Conservation
- 7/5 – Water Contamination Scam
- 7/6 – Cooling Centers
- 7/7 – Flex Alerts
- 7/11 – Upgrade your home's energy efficiency
- 7/12 – Water Quality Report
- 7/13 – Throwback to groundbreaking pipeline install on Park Avenue
- 7/13 – Water Contamination Scam
- 7/14 – Save Energy with LED Bulbs
- 7/18 – Heat Illness Prevention
- 7/20 – 311 App
- 7/21 – Outdoor Water Conservation
- 7/21 – Gage Canal
- 7/22 – Washing Clothes at night
- 7/24 – RPU Outage Map
- 7/26 – Pool Pump Upgrade
- 7/27 – Community Meetings
- 7/28 – AC System Tune-Up
- 7/30 – Flex Alert Notifications

- 7/30 – Rate Meetings

Back of Bill messaging for July:

- Flex Alerts

Back inserts for July

- 311 Mobile App Spanish Version
- Assistance Programs

## UPCOMING EVENTS- SEPTEMBER

- 9/16 – Deaf Awareness Day
- 9/23 – Riverside Innovation Fair
- 9/30 – Citrus Heritage Festival
- 9/30 – Riverside Art and Music Festival

Back of Bill messaging for September:

- Employee Appreciation/ All Day Every Day

## RPU - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

7/12/23 STEM PULL - Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District



7/11/23 STEM PULL – California Baptist University, Gordon and Jill Bourns College of Engineering



7/13/23 Good Morning Riverside – Mission Inn



7/19/23 Summer Concerts in the Park – Fairmount Park



7/31 Rates Proposal Meeting – Orange Terrace Park

