



# RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

## Board Memorandum

**BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES**

**DATE: AUGUST 12, 2024**

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

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

Customer Engagement electric programs are 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 Water Conservation Surcharge is a charge that RPU no longer collects (per the City Council decision as of 4/22/24), the Surcharge was a 1.5% charge on water bills. Surcharge funds will be used to fund RPU's portion of water conservation rebates, and water efficiency and conservation education and outreach programs. These programs will be provided until the Water Conservation Surcharge fund is fully expended.

The Customer Engagement Team provides and processes a diverse range of assistance and rebate programs; the team also conducts a wide range of education and outreach to support energy efficiency and (while the Water Conservation Surcharge has funds available) water conservation for customers and the wider community.

#### **CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT JUNE 2024 HIGHLIGHTS**

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

- A. Sharing Households Assist Riverside's Energy (SHARE) program assisted 4,661 customers from July 2023 through June 2024 totaling \$1,165,250.
- B. Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP) assisted 398 customers from July 2023 through June 2024 and expended \$414,309.61.
- C. Electric Vehicle (EV) Rebate Program has processed a total of 92 applications.

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

- A. Processed 108 large commercial rebates from July 2023 through June 2024 for a total of \$324,178.80 and 4,519,971 kWh saved.
- B. Small Business Direct Install Program vendor Richard Heath & Associates completed 36 direct installs.

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

- A. Planning for STEM Public Utilities Learning Labs and STEM FUNdamentals.
- B. 2023-2024 school year has ended, the team has conducted more classes this year than in previous years.

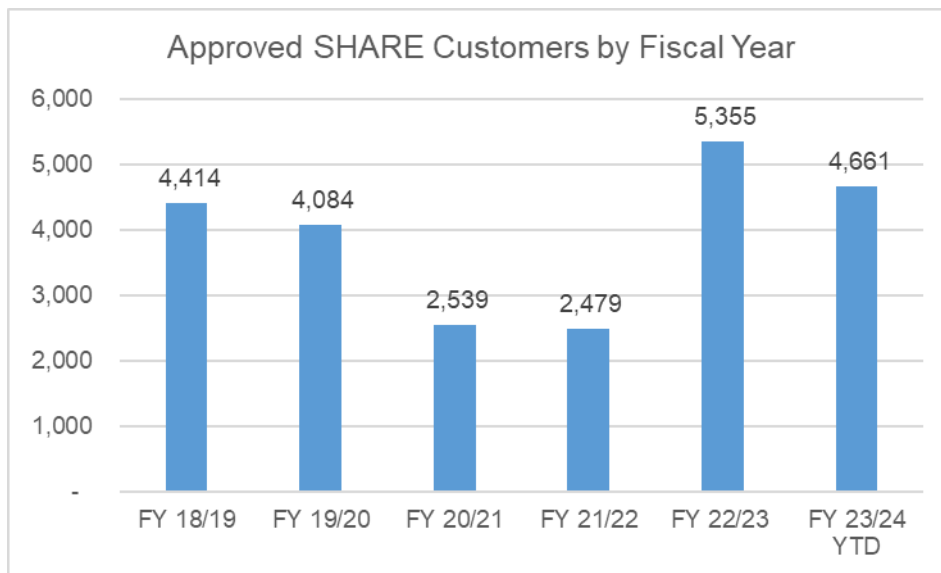
**Communications**

- A. Mailed postcard to 150 commercial customers promoting turf replacement program
- B. Worked with Office of Communications to develop a new flyer promoting Commercial EV program
- C. Began distributing welcome kits for new commercial customers featuring sustainable promotional items
- D. Began distributing large format and Braille versions of Assistance and Rebate materials
- E. Residential Email: 6/13
- F. Commercial Email: 6/27

**RESIDENTIAL DETAIL**

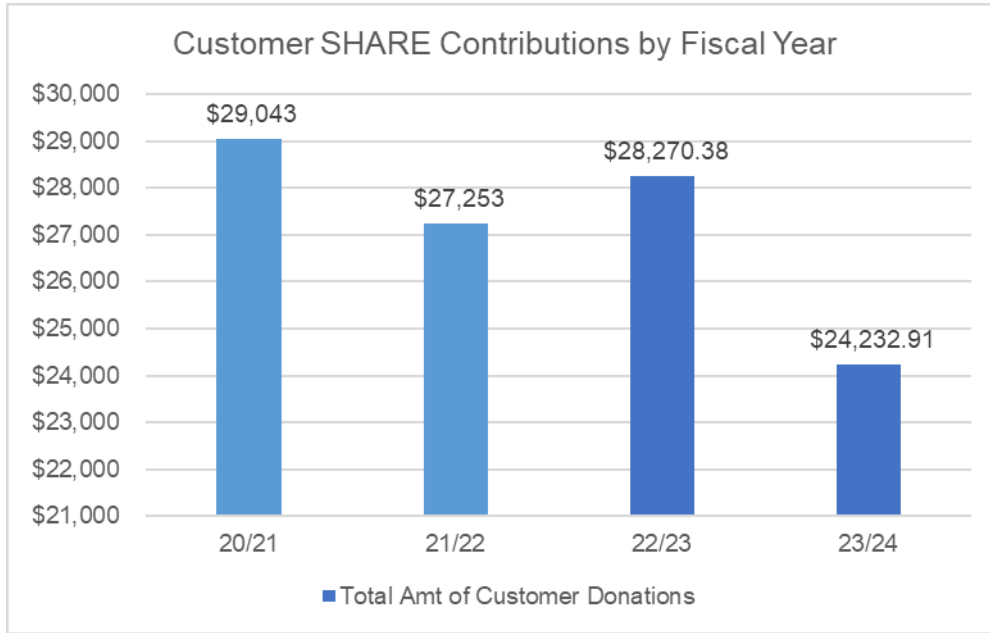
**Sharing Households Assist Riverside’s Energy - SHARE PROGRAM**

The Sharing Households Assist Riverside’s Energy (SHARE) program assisted 4,661 customers from July 2023 through June 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 bill, social media, and customer outreach.



**Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP)**

ESAP helps low-income customers access energy-savings home improvements at no-cost. From July 2023 through June 2024, the program has benefitted 398 homes in the RPU service area, expending a total of \$414,309.61. The program helps customers access a range of efficiency measures such as A/C tune-ups, LED lightbulbs, Wi-Fi thermostats, and HVAC motor upgrades as the most popular. Beginning January 2024, a new measure for whole house fans was introduced, and from January 2024 through June 2024, 105 customers have benefited.

**Residential Rebates**

From July 2023 through June 2024 a total of 10,547 residential energy rebates were processed, for a total rebate benefit of \$765,609.16.

Residential Devices	Participation	RPU Expenditures
Air Conditioning	422	\$231,839.48
Energy Star	1,072	\$88,887.31
Pool Pump	99	\$19,800.00
Tree Power	8,324	\$341,139.48
Weatherization	321	\$57,842.89
Recycling	309	\$26,100.00
<b>Energy Rebate Total</b>	<b>10,547</b>	<b>\$765,609.16</b>

From July 2023 through June 2024 the Used Electric Vehicle (EV) Rebate Program has approved 92 rebate applications for a total of \$102,499.00. The EV Charger Rebate Program has approved 76 rebates for a total of \$33,909.19.

### **Water Efficiency Programs**

In June 2004, RPU adopted the 10-year Water Conservation Surcharge, it was again adopted in 2014; it assesses a rate of 1.5% of water usage charges for retail sales. The funds from the surcharge are used 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. At its meeting on April 16, 2024, the City Council voted to cease collecting the Water Conservation Surcharge. Programs and rebates funded by the Surcharge will only remain available until funds are exhausted.

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 June 2024 a total of 260 residential water rebates were processed with total payout (RPU/MWD) of \$310,557.

<b>Residential Devices &amp; Turf</b>	<b>Participation</b>	<b>RPU Expenditure</b>	<b>MWD Expenditure</b>
Flow Monitor/Leak Detection Device	6	\$450	\$600
High-efficiency Clothes Washer (HECW)	115	-	\$9,860
Hose Bib Irrigation Controller	1	\$15	\$35
Rain Barrels/Cisterns	2	-	\$320
Residential Premium HET (from 1.6 gpf toilet)	5	-	\$280
Residential Turf Removal (per square foot)	45	\$106,701	\$169,946
Rotating Nozzles	3	\$282	\$188
Weather-based Irrigation Controllers (WBIC/WBICLL)	83	\$9,000	\$12,880
<b>Water Efficiency Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>\$116,448</b>	<b>\$194,109</b>

### **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 June 2024, 247 customers have been assisted.

### **COMMERCIAL DETAIL**

#### *Rebates*

From July 2023 through June 2024, a total of 108 commercial rebates were processed (2 performance-based incentive, 36 lighting, 53 air conditioning, 10 weatherization, 6 energy star, and 1 LEED new construction) with a total payout of \$324,178.80 and a kWh savings of 4,519,971.

#### *Direct Install Programs*

In June 2024, the Small Business Direct Install and Outdoor Lighting Program conducted 17 audit

visits at local businesses and a total of 36 direct installs were completed. The Refrigerated Load Program has completed refrigeration efficiency upgrades at 33 businesses with an additional 5 businesses approved and ready to start upgrades.

## EDUCATION DETAIL

The team continued planning for STEM in Public Utilities Learning Labs which will be held on July 8th through the 12<sup>th</sup>. Speakers and panel discussions have been scheduled, and tours of the Utility Operation Center and Riverside Energy Resource Center have also been scheduled. Currently there are 52 students enrolled. The STEM in Public Utilities Learning Labs Website has also been created, this allows students to see the weekly schedule, view videos, and other resources for them to use during the week.

STEM FUNdamentals are scheduled to be held on July 23 through the 25<sup>th</sup> and activities and lesson plans have been scheduled. Students will be working on designing an urban landscape and including waterwise gardens. The STEM FUNdamentals website has been created, allowing students to log onto the website and find the daily schedule as well as additional resources. Currently there are 30 students enrolled.

The education team conducted 147 water conservation classes and had 3,831 participants in the 2023-2024 school year. This is an increase of 25% for classes, with 20% more participants than the 2022-2023 school year. Similarly, 151 electricity classes were taught to a total of 4,298 student participants, representing a 45% increase in electricity classes and a 35% increase in participation in electricity classes over the previous school year.

## COMMUNICATIONS DETAIL

### *Email Communications*

- Residential email sent on 6/18. Content included: Congratulations to Graduates/Mylar Balloon Reminder, Outage Tips, Utilicare Program, Water Quality Report, Utility Users Tax Refund, Tree Power.
  - i. 73,000 emails sent
  - ii. 46,000 emails opened by customers
- Commercial email sent on 6/27. Content included: Congratulations to Graduates/Mylar Balloon Reminder, Outage Tips, Scam Alert Reminder, Water Quality Report, Tree Power.
  - i. 5,000 emails sent
  - ii. 3,500 emails opened by customers

### *In-Person Events*

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

- 6/2/24 – Battle of the Badges, Orange Terrace Community
- 6/8/24 – Riverwalk Community Movie Night, Riverwalk
- 6/12, 19 & 26/24 – Concerts in the Park, Fairmount Park
- 6/12/24 – SHARE Community Outreach, Janet Goeske Senior Center
- 6/15/24 – 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Juneteenth Celebration, Fairmount Park
- 6/18/24 – SHARE Community Outreach, Victoria Springs
- 6/27/24 – Soboba Tribal TANF Family Resource Fair, Eastside Office
- 6/29/24 – Neighbor To Neighbor Arlanza Kick-Off Festival, Bryant Park

### *Social Media Outreach*

Key social media posts during the month of June 2024:

- 6/01 – Pride Month
- 6/03 – National Safety Month
- 6/05 – Free Shade Tree
- 6/06 – Water Quality Report
- 6/07 – Hiring
- 6/08 – All Day Every Day
- 6/10 – Scam Alert
- 6/11 – Concerts in the Park
- 6/12 – Water Quality Report
- 6/13 – Utilicare Program
- 6/16 – Happy Father’s Day
- 6/17 – Utility Users Tax Refund
- 6/19 – Juneteenth Closure
- 6/19 – Juneteenth Holiday
- 6/21 – STEM PULL
- 6/22 – Heat Pumps
- 6/22 – All Day Every Day
- 6/24 – Hiring General Manager
- 6/25 – Free Shade Tree
- 6/27 – Flex Alert Notifications
- 6/28 – Tree Care
- 6/29 – Canyon Crest Booster Station Replacement Project

### **UPCOMING EVENTS – SEPTEMBER**

- 9/14 - Deafestival City Hall Breezeway
- 9/19 - Family STEAM, Arlington Library
- 9/28 - Riverside Arts and Music Festival, White Park
- 9/28 - Riverside Downtown Partnership (TBD)

Back of Bill messaging for September

- All Day Every Day - RPU Employee Appreciation

## RPU - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS GALLERY

6/1/24 Battle of the Badges, Orange Terrace Community



6/8/24 Riverwalk Community Movie Night, Riverwalk



6/15/24 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Juneteenth Celebration, Fairmount Park



6/19/24 Concerts in the Park, Fairmount Park



6/29/24 Neighbor to Neighbor Arlanza Kick Off Festival at Bryant Park

