



RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

Board Memorandum

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

DATE: SEPTEMBER 11, 2023

SUBJECT: CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE/OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION ANNUAL UPDATE COVERING COMMUNICATION RELATED ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

ISSUE:

Annual Office of Communications update related to communication activities on behalf of Riverside Public Utilities.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Public Utilities receive and file the annual communication activities update by the City Manager's Office, Office of Communications.

BACKGROUND:

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2017/18, the Board of Public Utilities received a report on operational improvements and efficiencies that Riverside Public Utilities (RPU) identified to maximize cost savings and revenues. During the review, RPU identified similar positions between RPU and the City Manager's Office/Office of Communications (Communications) and it was determined that Communications could provide greater and more cost-effective services to RPU. As a result of this recommendation, the decision was made to move five full-time equivalent (FTE) positions to Communications beginning in FY 2018/19, to be cost-allocated back to RPU. In the years following, RPU identified and added two additional positions that were transferred to Communications and began to pay 50% of one administrative position. RPU currently funds 6.50 FTEs within Communications.

In return for the additional positions and responsibilities, Communications committed to providing RPU with a defined level of communications services including, but not limited to, communication management and coordination, regulatory compliance, customer/community outreach and customer communications enhancement. Initial performance measures were outlined, and Communications agreed to work collaboratively with RPU Executive Management and RPU Customer Engagement on the status of goals and objectives and provide annual updates to the Board of Public Utilities. Since then, Communications has worked alongside RPU to meet the needs of internal and external customers.

DISCUSSION:

In person, on paper, and digitally, the Communications Team is committed to constructively relay timely and factual information between various City of Riverside departments and our employees, residents, and all other parties.

As a service department to RPU and other City Departments, Communications is comprised of 15 full-time staff members specializing in the areas of Graphic Design, Social Media, Email Marketing, Video/Photography, Web Development, and Project Coordination/Administration. The dedicated team works collaboratively to meet the needs of internal and external customers to provide effective communications.

Throughout numerous years of delivering communication services, the Communications Team has become an integral part of RPU. With consistent open lines of communication and weekly standing meetings, staff continues to foster and grow relationships amongst the various RPU divisions to ensure all communications needs are met. These relationships have proven instrumental in the achievement of success for Communications in the designated service areas. Examples of these efforts consist of major campaigns, large projects, and more, include but are not limited to:

1. Communication Management & Coordination
 - Streamlined Communications Coordination
 - Interorganizational Coordination
2. Regulatory Compliance
 - Water Quality Report
 - Power Content Label
 - Drought Status
 - Emergency Communications
 - i. Everbridge/Riverside Alert Outage Communications
 1. Significant Power Outages
 2. CAISO Energy Emergency Alert 2 – Flex Alert
 3. CAISO Energy Emergency Alert 3 – Load Shedding
 - ii. Public Outage Map
 - iii. Flex Alert Campaign
 1. Power Through. Be Aware. Be Prepared
3. Annual Reports
 - Financial Report
 - Water Quality Report
 - Groundwater Atlas
 - Mission Square Building
4. Customer/Community Outreach
 - Assistance Programs
 - i. Emergency Recovery Assistance Program (ERAP)
 - ii. Restart Repayment Program
 - iii. Sharing Households Assist Riverside’s Energy (SHARE)
 - iv. Assistance Campaign
 - Rebate Programs
 - i. Tree Power

- ii. Water Rebates
 - 1. Spring into Water Savings
 - 2. Tree Care Program
 - a. Soaker Hose
- iii. Electric Rebates
 - 1. Energy Star
 - 2. HVAC
 - 3. Electrify Riverside – EV Rebates
- RPU All Day Every Day Campaign
- Safety Campaign – Check Yourself Before You Wreck Yourself
- Riverside Insect Fair & Earth Day Event
- Smart Irrigation Program
- Mylar Balloons Campaign
- Engineering Essay Contest
- STEM PULL
- 311 Application – Spanish Translation
- Paperless Billing Campaign
- Rate Adjustments Campaign
- Customer Service Appreciation Campaign
- Capital Improvement Project Communications

5. Communication Enhancements

- Start/Stop/Transfer Service Forms
 - i. Consistent Communication Templates
- Inclusive Communications - Spanish Translation
- RPU Safety Fair Collaboration
- Bill Notification Updates
 - i. Monthly Back of Bill
 - ii. Monthly Bill Insert Collateral
 - iii. Rebrand of Discontinuation of Service Door Hanger
- Employee Spotlights & Day In the Life Videos
- Recruitment Collateral
- APPA Communications Award Submissions
- Standardization of Application Forms
- Management of ScreenCloud Application at RPU Customer Service Lobby TVs
- Magazine Advertorials
 - i. Riversider Magazine
 - ii. Explore Riverside

In pursuit of continuous improvement and to highlight the qualitative communication efforts put forth by the Office of Communications, informational measures are presented below. These measures have been carefully monitored and incorporated into a RAG (red, amber, green) rating system, which allows for a quick analysis in comparison to targets. The RAG rating categorizes the team's performance as follows:

'Red' indicates that the data shows performance at 85% or less of the target.

'Amber' is applied to measures achieving more than 85% but less than 100% of the target.

'Green' is assigned to measures meeting or exceeding 100% of their target.

Despite the importance of these measures and their potential impact on the overall goals of RPU,

it is essential to recognize that the numbers alone do not provide a comprehensive assessment in accounting for the quality of work being completed.

Red (R) – KPI is significantly missing target	Amber (A) – target was missed	Green (G) – target met or exceeded
0-<85%	85%-99.9%	100% +

SUGGESTED INFORMATIONAL MEASURES EFFECTIVE FY 2022/23	FY 2022/23	FY 2021/22	TARGET	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Social Media Engagement Rate	3.2% (G)	3.9% (G)	Remain above industry average. >2.5%	Engagement rate measures the number of engagements (reactions, comments, and shares) your content gets as a percentage of your audience. The measure aims to calculate what percentage of people who were exposed to a post chose to engage with it in some way. Per Hootsuite platform, a good engagement rate is between 1% to 5%.
Increase Email Open Rate	52% (G)	41% (G)	Remain above industry average. >29%	Produced and defined by Granicus platform annually with consideration to surrounding agencies in the region utilizing GovDelivery email platform.
Increase Email Engagement	70% (G)	58% (G)	Remain above industry average. >51%	Produced and defined by Granicus platform annually with consideration to surrounding agencies in the region utilizing GovDelivery email platform.

While certain initiatives can be quantified, there are also endeavors intended solely for informational purposes, without direct comparison to industry benchmarks.

Informational Only			
Graphic Design Projects	183	202	Total number of graphic design projects for RPU.
Videos Developed	20	29* (*includes social media reels/videos)	Total number of RPU videos developed.
Social Media Posts	1,400 (3.8 per day)	1,253 (3.4 per day)	Total number of RPU posts on all platforms.

Hours Spent on RPU Website	2,252	1,020	Total hours spent on RPU web updates.
Board/Committee Meeting Videos	45	27* (*No committees)	Total number of RPU meetings broadcasted.

In addition to the informational measures outlined above, Communications will begin to provide updates to the Board every two months to share and report on upcoming and past communication efforts, accomplishments, campaigns, large projects and/or other communication efforts created on behalf of RPU. The Communications Team will maintain its collaboration with RPU leadership to consistently enhance utility communications and elevate customer service, ensuring that the needs of both internal and external customers are effectively met.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 5 - High Performing Government** and **Goal 5.3** to enhance communication and collaboration with community members to improve transparency, build public trust and encourage shared decision-making.

This agreement aligns with the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – Communications provides transparent, timely communications for RPU programs, projects, and various areas of community engagement to educate and inform the community and build public trust.
2. **Equity** – Communications provides RPU’s ratepayers with multiple outreach efforts to ensure information about RPU’s programs and services is equally available to provide the highest public benefit.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The service level agreement brings economies of scale to RPU thus minimizing operational costs to rate payers.
4. **Innovation** – The service level agreement has proven to be collaborative and adaptable by implementing creative solutions to best meet the needs of RPU.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Communications ensures that RPU can communicate and adapt communication methods as needed to continue providing long-lasting programs that meet the current and future needs of ratepayers.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this informational update.

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