



# RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

## Board Memorandum

**BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES**

**DATE: JULY 8, 2024**

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

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

Customer Engagement electric programs are funded by Assembly Bill (AB) 1890, adopted in 1996. The bill requires publicly owned utilities to collect and spend public benefits and 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 that ended on March 22, 2024, will use the reserve balance in the fund to support water conservation rebates, education, and outreach programs.

The Customer Engagement Team provides and processes a diverse range of assistance and rebate programs and conducts a wide range of education and outreach to support energy efficiency and water conservation for customers and the community.

#### **CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT MAY 2024 HIGHLIGHTS**

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

- A. Sharing Households Assist Riverside's Energy (SHARE) program assisted 4,354 customers from July 2023 through May 2024 totaling \$1,088,500.
- B. Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP) assisted 338 customers from July 2023 through May 2024 and expended \$319,721.34.
- C. Electric Vehicle (EV) Rebate Program has processed a total of 71 applications.

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

- A. Processed 99 large commercial rebates from July 2023 through May 2024 for a total of \$237,857.52 and 3,626,060 kWh saved.
- B. Small Business Direct Install Program vendor Richard Heath & Associates completed 64 direct installs.

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

- A. Continued water conservation classes and have concluded the 2023-2024 school year.
- B. STEAM Day at Casa Blanca Library on May 16, 2024.
- C. Continued planning for STEM in Public Utilities Learning Labs.
- D. Continued planning for STEM FUNdamentals.

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

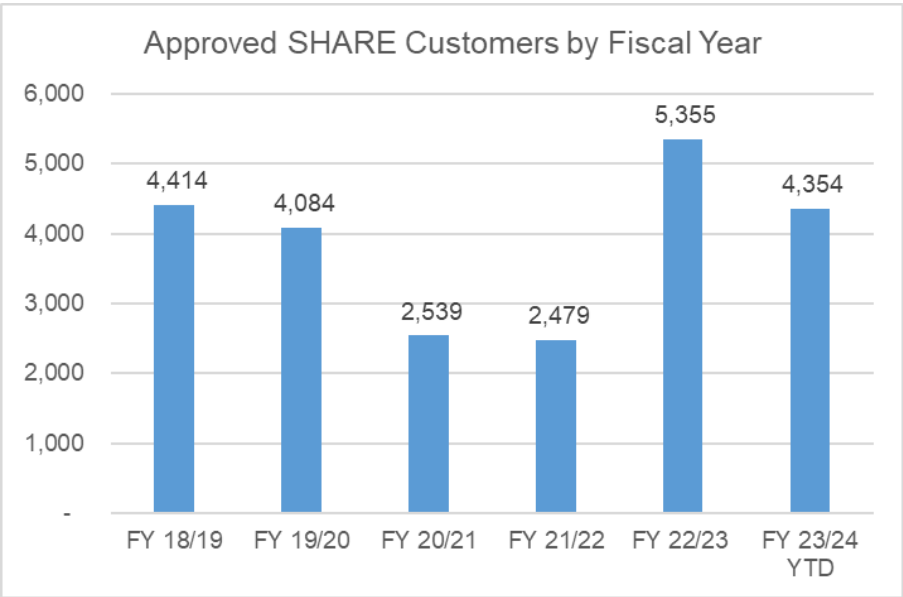
- A. Created welcome kits for new commercial customers featuring sustainable promotional items
- B. Published Sustainable Buying Guide and Best Practices for Colorblind Appropriate Presentations to RPU and City intranet sites

C. Commercial Email: 5/3

RESIDENTIAL DETAIL

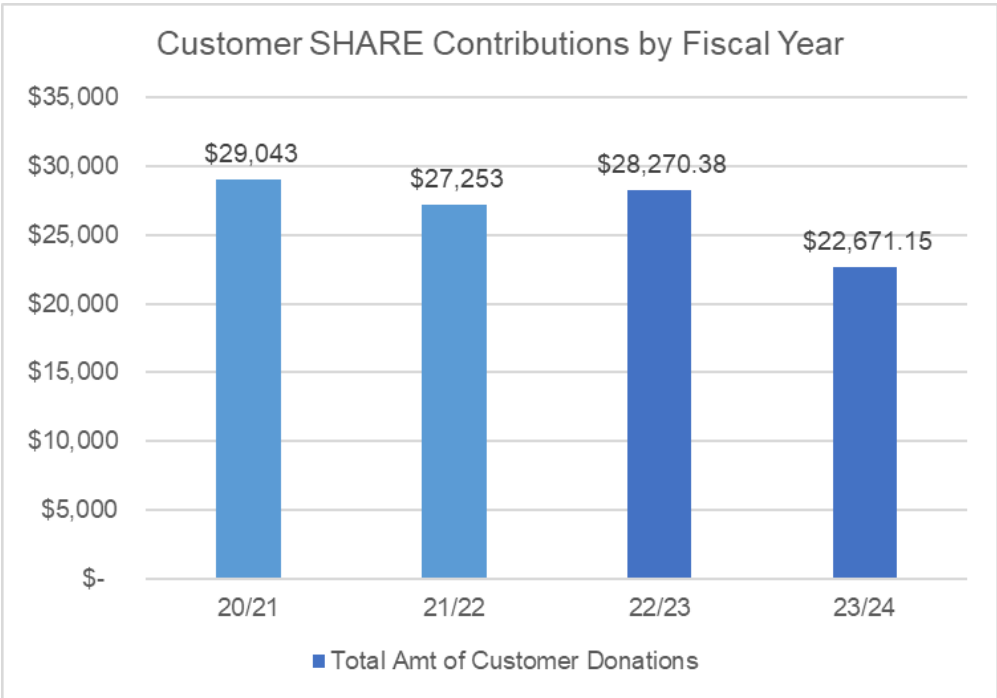
Sharing Households Assist Riverside’s Energy - SHARE PROGRAM

The Sharing Households Assist Riverside’s Energy (SHARE) program assisted 4,354 customers from July 2023 through May 2024, 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 helps low-income customers access energy-savings home improvements at no-cost. From July 2023 through May 2024, the program has benefitted 338 homes in the RPU service area, expending a total of \$319,721.34. 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. In January 2024, a new measure for whole house fans was introduced, and from January 2024 through May 2024, 101 customers have benefited.

## **Residential Rebates**

From July 2023 through May 2024 a total of 6,909 residential energy rebates were processed, for a total rebate benefit of \$580,665.97.

<b>Residential Devices</b>	<b>Participation</b>	<b>RPU Expenditures</b>
Air Conditioning	389	\$211,040.48
Energy Star	1,002	\$83,007.32
Pool Pump	87	\$17,400.00
Tree Power	4,876	\$194,802.91
Weatherization	278	\$50,865.26
Recycling	277	\$23,550.00
<b>Energy Rebate Total</b>	<b>6,909</b>	<b>\$580,665.97</b>

From July 2023 through May 2024 the Used Electric Vehicle (EV) Rebate Program has approved 71 rebate applications for a total of \$78,499. The EV Charger Rebate Program has approved 67 rebates for a total of \$29,819.19.

## **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 May 2024 a total of 244 residential water rebates were processed with total payout (RPU/MWD) of \$308,312.

Residential Devices & Turf	Participation	RPU Expenditure	MWD Expenditure
Flow Monitor/Leak Detection Device	5	\$375	\$500
High-efficiency Clothes Washer (HECW)	109	-	\$9,265
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	2	\$237	\$158
Weather-based Irrigation Controllers (WBIC/WBICLL)	75	\$8,160	\$12,320
<b>Water Efficiency Total</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>\$115,488</b>	<b>\$192,824</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 May 2024, 245 customers have been assisted.

### ***Climate-appropriate Landscaping with Trees Workshop at Bourns***

On May 18, approximately 30 attendees participated in the RPU Climate-appropriate Landscaping with Trees Workshop at Bourns, where a decade ago that longstanding Riverside business removed 3.3 acres of turf and replaced it with waterwise plants and materials. The Master Gardeners, Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District and Public Works' arborists were on-hand to provide expert information on how to convert to a climate-appropriate landscape; a tour of the waterwise grounds was also conducted for attendees.



## COMMERCIAL DETAIL

### *Rebates*

From July 2023 through May 2024, a total of 99 commercial rebates were processed (2 performance-based incentive, 36 lighting, 45 air conditioning, 10 weatherization, and 6 energy star) with a total payout of \$237,857.52 and a kWh savings of 3,626,060.

### *Direct Install Programs*

In May 2024, the Small Business Direct Install and Outdoor Lighting Program conducted 59 audit visits at local businesses and a total of 64 direct installs were completed. The Refrigerated Load Program has completed refrigeration efficiency upgrades at 22 businesses with an additional 4 businesses approved and ready to start upgrades.

## EDUCATION DETAIL

In May, the education team taught 3 water conservation classes with a total of 297 students at one school. The school year has officially ended successfully with the education team conducting a total of 137 Electricity circuits classes with 3,993 students; 147 water conservation classes with 3,831 students. This school year the education team launched a Water Pollution class with 9 classes and 144 students, and a kindergarten community helpers' class with 15 classes and 305 students.

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, the education team conducted the 3<sup>rd</sup> Family STEAM Day at the Casa Blanca Library. Students were able to take apart electronics to see how they worked, design wind mill blades, build electricity circuits, and do an oil water clean up.

Planning continued for STEM in Public Utilities Learning Labs. The schedule has been determined and presenters have been contacted. There are 31 students registered and staff expect more to register in the month of June. Key projects students will be working on are building mini grids, designing wind mill blades, and touring Riverside Energy Resource Center and the Utility Operation Center.

Planning continued for STEM Fundamentals. The schedule has been determined and 32 students have registered. The maximum number of participants have signed up and there is a waiting list. Students will learn all about engineering and design while creating urban landscapes.

## COMMUNICATIONS DETAIL

### *Email Communications*

Commercial email sent on 5/3. Content included: Family STEAM Day Event, Waterwise Workshop, Hunter Substation Update, Outdoor Water Rebates – High-Efficiency Sprinklers, EV Rebates, Drinking Water Week, AAPI Heritage Month.

- 5,000 emails sent
- 2,100 emails opened by customers

### *In-Person Events*

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

- 5/1- Summer EXPO, Nichols Park, Hunt Park
- 5/2 – Summer EXPO, La Sierra Park and Villegas Park

- 5/4- Show and Go, Downtown Riverside
- 5/8- Janet Goeske Senior Center's Monthly Utility Assistance Programs Visit
- 5/15-Riverside Forward Wednesday, Riverside Conv. Center
- 5/16-Family STEAM, Salvadore Lara near CRC
- 5/18- Culture, Rides and Good Vibes, White Park
- 5/18- Arts and Music Festival, Lincoln Park
- 5/18- Waterwise Workshop, Bourns
- 5/28 - Riverside Cookoff, Arlington Park

### *Social Media Outreach*

Key social media posts during the month of May 2024:

- 5/01 – Show and Go Car Show Event
- 5/02 – Landscape Workshop
- 5/03 – RPU Throwback
- 5/04 – RPU Outage Map
- 5/04 – May the 4<sup>th</sup> Be With You
- 5/06 – Drink Water Week
- 5/7 – STEM Summer Camp at Bourns
- 5/7 – Phone Line Maintenance
- 5/7 - Landscape Workshop
- 5/8 – STEAM Day
- 5/9 – Hunter Substation
- 5/10 – Groundwater Atlas
- 5/11 – Happy Mother's Day
- 5/12 – STEAM Day
- 5/15 – Landscape Workshop
- 5/17 – Free Soaker Hose
- 5/18 – RPU All Day Every Day
- 5/20 – RPU Closed 5/23
- 5/22 - Car Show Event
- 5/23 - We're Hiring
- 5/23 – RPU Closed 5/23
- 5/25 - STEM PULL
- 5/26 - Memorial Day Closure
- 5/27 - Happy Memorial Day
- 5/29 - Mylar Balloon Outages
- 5/30 - Water Rebates

### **UPCOMING EVENTS – AUGUST**

- 8/3 - 2<sup>nd</sup> AUSD Resource Workshop, La Sierra High School
- 8/14 - Janet Goeske Foundation Event, Janet Goeske Center
- 8/22 - Family STEAM, Main Library Branch

Back of Bill messaging for August

- Outdoor Water Rebates – Turf Replacement



## RPU - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS GALLERY

5/1/24 Summer EXPO, Nichols Park



5/1/24 Summer EXPO, Hunt Park



5/2/24 Summer EXPO, Bourns Center



5/15/24 Riverside Forward Wednesday, Riverside Convention Center



5/18/24 Creative Rides Car Show, Norte Vista High School



5/18/24 Waterwise Workshop, Bourns Inc.





5/25/24 Chili Cook Off and Car Show, Arlington Heights Park



5/27/24 West Coast Thunder, 7688 Indiana Ave

