



# RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

## Board Memorandum

**BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES**

**DATE: MARCH 24, 2025**

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

#### **CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM UPDATES THROUGH JANUARY 2025**

Customer Engagement electric programs are funded by a 2.85% Public Benefits charge based on electricity usage established by Assembly Bill (AB) 1890 that was adopted in 1996. The legislation 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 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 water conservation for customers and the wider community.

#### **CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT JANUARY 2025 HIGHLIGHTS**

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

- A. Sharing Households Assist Riverside's Energy (SHARE) program assisted 3,081 from July 2024 through January 2025 totaling \$770,250.00 in past-due assistance.
- B. Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP) assisted 215 customers from July 2024 through January 2025 and expended \$336,718.
- C. Electric Vehicle (Used-EV) Rebate Program processed 4 applications.
- D. Electric Vehicle (EV) Residential Charger Rebate Program processed 4 applications.

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

- A. Processed a total of 66 large commercial rebates from July 2024 through January 2025 for a total of \$144,993.21 and 1,837,593 kWh saved.
- B. Small Business Direct Install and Outdoor Lighting Program - completed 43 direct installs.

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

- A. Live virtual classes were held for grades 3 and 5
- B. The Utilities Industry Career Fair at Sierra Middle School 1/9
- C. In-person classes for Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten in partnership with electricity line crews 1/16
- D. Supported Alvord Unified School District's 39<sup>th</sup> annual district level science fair 1/21-22

- E. Sierra Middle School Facilities tour at Riverside Energy Resource Center and the Kathleen Gonzales Waterwise Garden 1/30
- F. Presented at Summer Learning Labs Thank You Breakfast at Bourn’s, Inc.

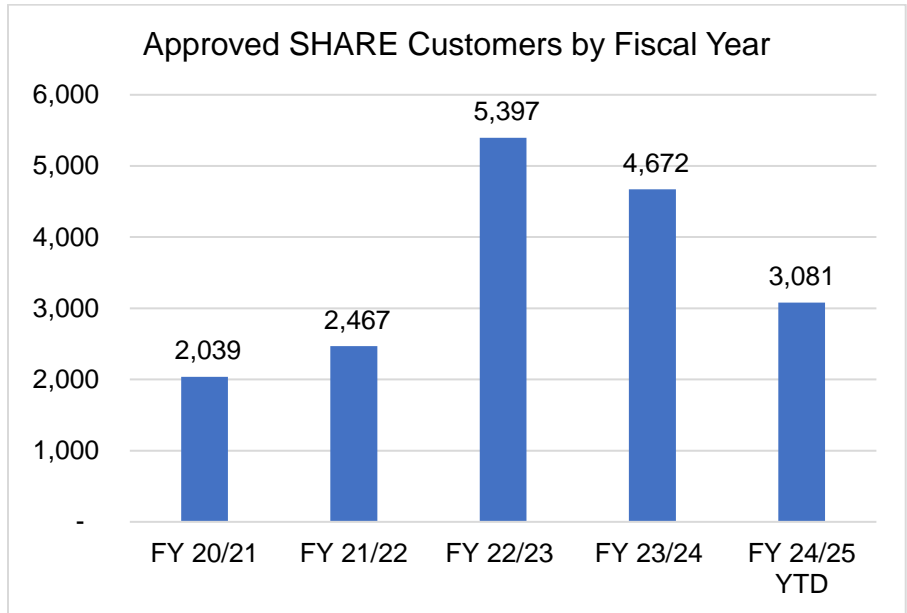
**Communications**

- A. Worked with Office of Communications (OOC) - bill insert featuring water rebates
- B. Worked with OOC - reusable signs for commercial turf replacement projects
- C. Residential Email: 1/17
- D. Commercial Email: 1/29

**RESIDENTIAL DETAIL**

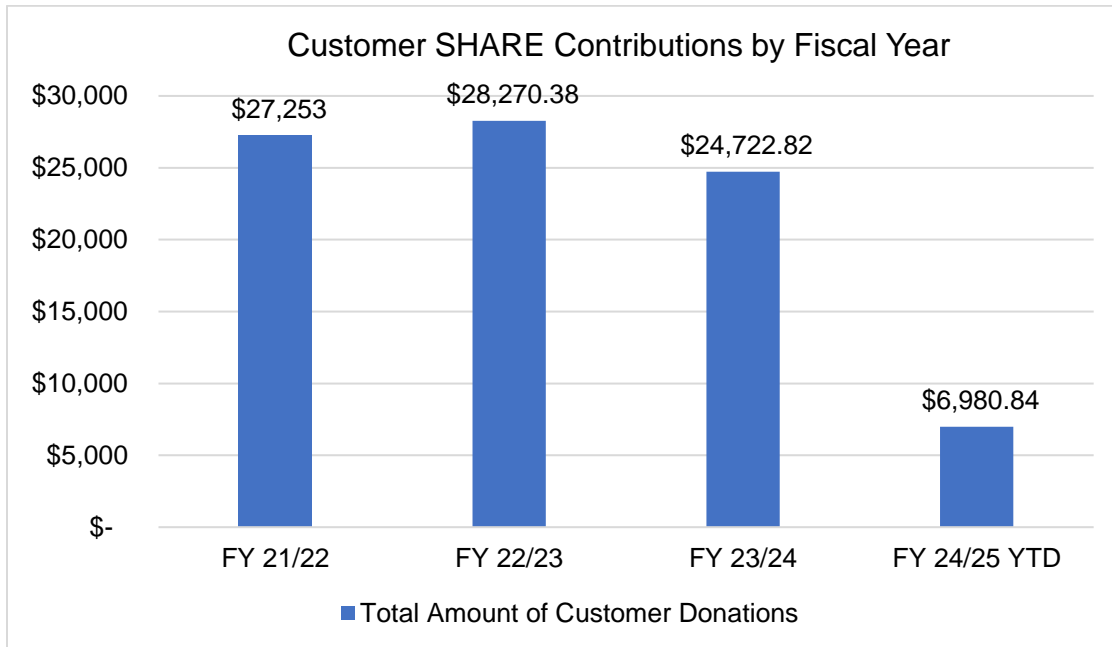
**Sharing Households Assist Riverside’s Energy - SHARE PROGRAM**

The Sharing Households Assist Riverside’s Energy (SHARE) program assisted 3,081 customers from July 2024 through January 2025, 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 \$48.00 per year. Customer donations are promoted through back of utility bill, social media, and customer outreach. In January 2025, customers who donated during 2024 received a letter thanking them for their contribution to the SHARE program. A total of 512 customer SHARE donation letters were issued.



**Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP)**

ESAP helps low-income customers access energy-savings home improvements at no-cost. From July 2024 through January 2025, the program has worked with 215 homes in the RPU service area, expending a total of \$336,718. The program helps customers access a range of energy efficiency measures such as HVAC tune-ups, LED lightbulbs, Wi-Fi thermostats, and newly installed whole house fans.

**Residential Rebates**

From July 2024 through January 2025 a total of 2,215 residential energy rebates were processed, for a total rebate amount of \$716,765.48.

Residential Devices	Participation	RPU Expenditures
Air Conditioning	300	\$97,825.00
Heat Pump	147	\$447,440.73
Energy Star	600	\$52,925.00
Pool Pump	41	\$8,200.00
Tree Power	115	\$10,391.31
Weatherization	199	\$34,083.44
Recycling	213	\$19,150.00
A&G Recycling	600	\$46,750.00
<b>Energy Rebate Total</b>	<b>2,215</b>	<b>\$716,765.48</b>

From July 2024 through January 2025, the Used Electric Vehicle (EV) Rebate Program has approved 54 rebate applications for a total of \$64,500.00. The EV Charger Rebate Program has approved 26 rebates for a total of \$11,412.18.

## Water Efficiency Programs

In June 2004, RPU adopted the 10-year Water Conservation Surcharge, it was again adopted in 2014; it assessed 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 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 through January 2025 a total of 130 residential water rebates were processed with total payout (RPU/MWD) of \$198,090, representing annual water savings of 3,332,173 gallons.

Residential Devices & Turf	Participation / Devices	RPU Expenditure	MWD Expenditure
Flow Monitor/Leak Detection Device	7	\$600.00	\$800.00
High-efficiency Clothes Washer	52	\$4,200.00	\$4,420.00
Hose Bib Irrigation Controller	1	\$15.00	\$35.00
Premium HET (from 1.6 GPF toilet)	2	\$0	\$80.00
Rotating Nozzles	3 (124)	\$372.00	\$248.00
Turf Removal (per square foot)	29 (47,318)	\$86,143.00	\$94,177.00
Weather-based Irrigation Controllers (WBIC / WBICLL)	36	\$4,200.00	\$2,800.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>\$95,530.00</b>	<b>\$102,560.00</b>

## COMMERCIAL DETAIL

### Energy Rebates

From July 2024 through January 2025, a total of 66 commercial rebates were processed (12 lighting, 2 Energy Star, 1 tree power, 1 weatherization, 1 performance-based incentive, and 49 air conditioning) with a total payout of \$144,993.21 and a kWh savings of 1,837,593.

### Direct Install Programs

In January 2025, the Small Business Direct Install and Outdoor Lighting Program conducted 42 audit visits at local businesses and a total of 43 direct installs were completed, expending an estimated total of \$158,107 for businesses in January 2025.

### Water Rebates

From July through January 2025, 7 commercial accounts removed 60,602 square feet of turf with a rebate total of \$140,580; these projects represent annual water savings of 2,567,142 gallons. One commercial account replaced 238 Premium High Efficiency Toilets (PHET) representing 814,303 gallons of water saved annually.

## EDUCATION DETAIL

In January 2025, the team taught 4 electricity conservation classes to 120 students in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and 21 water cycle classes to 492 students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade residing in the Riverside Public Utilities service area. Additionally, 80 students from 5 kindergarten and transitional kindergarten classes at Woodcrest Christian Day School. The students participated in a Big Truck Career Day and community helpers' classes. Students learned about how they get their electricity and electricity safety.

On January 9, 2025, the team organized and participated in a day-long career fair for 100 middle school students in the career technical program at Sierra Middle School, in the Riverside Unified School District. Students had the opportunity to meet with RPU staff to learn about previously unknown jobs in water treatment, energy delivery, safety, communications, sustainability and more.

On January 30, after participating in the Sierra Middle School Career Fair event, 30 of the students participating were motivated to sign up for a facilities tour of the Riverside Energy Resource Center. Following the RERC tour, students were taken to the Kathleen Gonzales Waterwise Garden for another tour, furthering conversations about career pathways in water conservation.

Since 2006 RPU has partnered with Alvord Unified School District supporting their district-level science fair, judging projects with topics concerning water, energy or sustainability. This year, 30 projects fit the utility's criteria and were scored by the team. Ten of those projects were selected to receive special mention by RPU and received certificates, medals of recognition and a \$50 Visa gift card at Alvord's 39th science fair awards night on Wednesday, January 22, 2025. Approximately 150 students, family members and friends attended the awards ceremony.

On January 30, to provide a summary and accounting of their educational impact, the Science Technology Engineering Partnership (STEP) held their annual 'Thank You' breakfast for donors, supporters and participants. The team had the opportunity to present attendees for their work on the 2024 summer learning labs, STEM Fundamentals for middle school and STEM Public Utilities Learning Labs for high school students.

## COMMUNICATIONS DETAIL

### *Email Communications*

- Residential Email sent on 1/17/25. Content included: Energy Star Rebates, Ways to Save Rebate House, & Weather-Based Irrigation Controller Rebates.
  - i. 77,519 emails sent
  - ii. 53,117 emails opened by customers
- Commercial email sent on 1/29/25. Content included: Energy Star Rebates, Paperless Billing, Small Business Direct Install Program, Water Savings Incentive Program, and Upcoming Waterwise Workshops.
  - i. 5,202 emails sent
  - ii. 3,245 emails opened by customers

### *In-Person Events*

Below are the in-person events the CE Team participated in January 2025:

- 1/20 – MLK Walk-A-Thon, Main Library Breezeway

- 1/21 – Alvord Science Fair Judging, La Sierra High School
- 1/22 – Alvord Science Fair Awards Night, La Sierra High School
- 1/25 – 1/26 – 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Riverside Lunar Festival, Downtown Riverside
- 1/30 – Sierra Middle School Field Trip, RERC

### *Social Media Outreach*

Key social media posts during the month of January 2025:

- 1/1 – Happy New Year
- 1/3 – Assistance Program
- 1/6 – Update Contact Info
- 1/7 – High Wind Reminder
- 1/8 – SHARE
- 1/9 – Plant Sustainable Plants
- 1/10 – Hawarden Fire
- 1/10 – EV
- 1/13 – Weather Alert
- 1/14 – Commercial Rebates
- 1/17 – Insect Fair
- 1/19 – Utilicare
- 1/20 – Marting Luther King Jr. Day
- 1/21 – Marting Luther King Jr. Day
- 1/22 – Outdoor Lighting
- 1/22 – Water Rebates
- 1/23 – Refrigerator Recycling
- 1/29 – Weather Based Irrigation Controller
- 1/30 – Rain Barrel
- 1/31 – TV Rebate

Back of Bill messaging for April

- Paperless Billing

## RPU - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS GALLERY

Career Fair at La Sierra Middle School, 1/9/2025



Annual MLK Walk-a-Thon, Main Library Breezeway, 1/20/25



Alvord Unified School District Science Fair Awards Ceremony, La Sierra High School, 1/22/25





Lunar Festival, Downtown Riverside, 1/25 -1/26/25



Sierra Middle School Field Trip to RERC, 1/30/25



Sierra Middle School Field Trip to Kathleen Gonzales Waterwise Garden and CRC, 1/30/25





STEP Foundation Thank You Breakfast, 1/31/2025

