



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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Riverside Public Utilities Hits Record Energy Usage, Encourages Conservation

Local peak eclipsed a record set a day earlier

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Riverside Public Utilities is encouraging residents and businesses within its coverage area to continue to conserve energy after local power usage hit its all-time peak on Wednesday, after previously hitting a new high on Tuesday.

Riverside Public Utilities (RPU) saw instantaneous power usage surge to 653 megawatts at 3:30 p.m., which reflects power being used within RPU's system at a specific point in time of the day. RPU also saw average hourly usage reach a record 648 megawatts between 3 and 4 p.m. on a day when temperatures soared to 106 degrees.

Wednesday's new peak broke a record that had been set just the day before, when 650 megawatts of power were being used at 3:50 p.m. on Tuesday. The average hourly usage, also a record at the time, was 644 megawatts, also between 3 and 4 p.m. The previous high for an hourly average was 640 megawatts in August 2017.

"RPU thanks its customers for their efforts in conserving energy and especially those larger entities in our voluntary Power Partners Program which reduced energy usage during the critical period between 4-9 p.m. when demands increase and limited renewable solar generation is available," General Manager Todd Corbin said. "During this record demand period, the utility relied on its internal power generation facilities to supplement the power we receive through our single connection to the statewide grid to meet our record demands. We ask and need customers' continued participation, knowing that by Friday and certainly by the weekend, we should see some cooler temperatures."

Temperatures have exceeded 100 degrees in Riverside every day since Aug. 30 and have frequently surged as high as 108. The high for today (9/8) is forecast to be 104, with high temperatures forecast for 94 on Friday and 83 with a chance of rain on Saturday. This heat wave is on track to be both the hottest and longest on record in the state for September.

The high-usage phenomenon was mirrored at the California Independent System Operator (CAISO), which manages electrical distribution around the state, and at the grid that serves the western United

States. The CAISO hit an all-time record high demand of more than 52,000 megawatts on Tuesday, while the Western grid recorded a record 165 gigawatts.

The high temperatures and record demand for energy have kept RPU crews busy maintaining, managing and repairing the local power system. That work includes everything from replacing a failed transformer to monitoring the statewide grid for potential problems to safely and efficiently operating natural gas facilities that allow RPU to generate power locally.

“We are fortunate to have such a dedicated workforce that allows RPU to continue to deliver safe and dependable power to customers even in difficult circumstances such as these,” said David Crohn, Chairman of the Board of Public Utilities. “Even when we have an outage, we know RPU employees are going to do the job to get the lights – and the AC – back on as soon as possible.”

State officials warned that the more power that is saved through conservation, the less likely we are to see power outages. They encouraged all Californians to pre-cool their homes before 4 p.m., then turn thermostats up to 78 degrees and avoid use of major appliances and any unnecessary lights after 4 p.m.

For the latest information and resources regarding COVID-19 -- www.RiversideCA.gov/COVID-19