



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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Riverside Public Utilities Shuts Down Oldest Substation Dating to 1949

President Harry S. Truman was finishing his first term when Magnolia Substation came to life

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Riverside Public Utilities, which has been delivering water and power to the city for more than a century, recently shut down its oldest electric substation, ending the service of an aging facility that came to life shortly after World War II.

The Magnolia Substation, wedged between the Central Avenue off-ramp of the eastbound Highway 91 and the nearby railroad tracks to the east, was the oldest substation in the RPU grid, providing power to RPU customers for 69 years.

“It’s a testament to the skill and craftsmanship of RPU employees that this piece of electrical infrastructure was able to provide reliable power to about 1,000 Riverside residents for so many decades,” said Board of Public Utilities Chair Jo Lynne Russo-Pereyra. “That longevity also says a lot about how much emphasis RPU puts into maintaining its equipment.”

The substation was placed into service in November, 1949, just as President Harry S. Truman was completing his first term. It pre-dated the Riverside Freeway (State Route 91) by about 15 years.

The Magnolia substation property will be cleared of all above-grade equipment and structures, and most of the underground sub-structures. Customers served by the now-closed substation now receive power through the new transformer bank at the Plaza Substation, near Elizabeth Street and Magnolia Avenue, which was brought into service in August, 2016.

This new transformer provides more reliable service and increased electric capacity to meet the demand from RPU customers. The increased capacity will assist in managing the energy needs of electric vehicles and other technologies.

“The utility industry is always growing and changing, and RPU works hard to stay abreast of those changes with new infrastructure and strong customer service,” Interim General Manager Todd Jorgenson said. “Ratepayers can rest assured, knowing their water and power needs are being met, now and in the future.”

For information on this and other electric and water utility projects, visit RiversidePublicUtilities.com/projects.