

## FOR BOARD ACTION

Agenda Item # 4

Meeting Date: 7/26/11

**SUBJECT:** An Introduction to "*RPU Plugged In*", A Monthly Newsletter

**PREPARED BY:** Patty Hanson, Manager of Marketing and External Affairs

### ITEM DESCRIPTION:

In March, RPU hired Confluence Marketing to perform multiple focus groups within each of the following market segments: residential, small commercial and medium to large commercial. The intent of the focus groups was to learn from our customers in an open, relaxed atmosphere what they knew about Smart Grid.

Key findings provided valuable insights, some of which included some of the following misconceptions:

- RPU's "use of nuclear energy."
- RPU's non-use of solar or wind power. Some view RPU as not being friendly towards renewable energy resources.
- RPU's rates have risen over the last couple of years.
- RPU owns the "Waste-to Energy Center".
- Fears surfaced that RPU would use Smart Grid to control when and how customers use electricity.
- In addition, several customers feared that Smart Grid was going to come into a time of scarcity of electricity.

This was a loud and clear message to staff that we need to do a better job of communicating our activities to our customers on a more regular basis. To meet this need, staff would like to introduce a new monthly newsletter, called "*RPU Plugged In*". It is staff's intention to make a very concerted and complete effort to inform our customers as to the thinking and planning of Smart Grid activities. Other relevant information would include Cold Weather Rule obligations, seasonal rate changes, proposed rate changes, announcement of public events, and at times "tooting" our own horn.

This newsletter will be a direct mail piece to all of our customers as well as being available on the RPU website and FACEBOOK page. The inaugural newsletter is scheduled for September. A draft sample will be provided at Tuesday's meeting.

### FOR CAPITAL PURCHASES/BIDS/MAJOR PROJECTS:

Not Applicable

### UTILITY BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

This is an informational item. No action is requested.

  
General Manager

7-21-11  
Date