



home > city hall > press releases

## Perris Celebrates I-215 Upgrades with Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

City officials joined with regional and state lawmakers to cut the ribbon on a 12.5-mile, \$123.5-million construction project that widened Interstate I-215 south of Perris and through the City and brought new bridges to the important traffic corridors of D Street and Perris Boulevard.

The upgrades will greatly improve the movement of people and products through the Perris Valley, decrease traffic congestion and reduce pollution from idling vehicles stuck at choke points.

The final phase of construction completes a 5.75-mile stretch from Ethanac Road to Nuevo Road within the Perris City limits.

Earlier construction added a third lane of the freeway along the 6.75-mile stretch between Ethanac to Scott Road in Menifee and included the new bridges on Perris Boulevard and D Street.

"This has been a long time coming and we are so glad that today has finally arrived," said Perris Mayor Daryl Busch at the Oct. 30 ribbon cutting. "It will definitely make a great impact and improvement to our City."

Busch has taken a keen interest in the construction for years while representing the City on the Riverside County Transportation Commission. This year, Busch served as chairman of the commission and eagerly counted the days until the last of the construction was complete. The ribbon-cutting took place at a church in the shadow of the Perris Boulevard Bridge.

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Perris Mayor Daryl Busch (center) prepares to cut the ribbon signifying the completion of improvements to the Interstate 215 corridor through the City.

Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers also attended and echoed Busch's sentiments.

"We've endured a lot of congestion and inconvenience in recent years but today that all ends," Rogers said. "I'm glad this day is here. The results will be well worth it. No pain, no gain."

The Perris representatives were joined by State Sen. Jeff Stone, R-Temecula; Assemblyman Jose Medina, D-Riverside; Assemblywoman Melissa Melendez, R-Lake Elsinore; Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley, a Perris resident and his fellow Commissioner Chuck Washington.

Perris City Manager Richard Belmudez led a contingent of municipal representatives at the ceremony. Also present were Assistant City Manager Ron Carr, Deputy City Manager Darren Madkin and about a dozen other supervisors from various departments.

"This project allows traffic for the first time in years to move freely through the Perris and Menifee Valleys," Ashley said. "It's a huge improvement. We can move to our and jobs quicker. It increases our mobility and that makes it more likely for people to come to Perris, start businesses and employ people here."

Stone called the RCTC the "most progressive and aggressive transportation commission in the state and maybe the country." Stone noted that Riverside County residents are willing to tax themselves to fund needed highway expansions.

The I-215 corridor improvements were funded by state monies and revenue from Measure A, the half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements in the county.

Stone promised to "champion infrastructure" in the State Senate, noting such projects "improve the quality of life and provide thousands of construction jobs."



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch, who served as chairman of the Riverside County Transportation Commission this year, addresses the audience at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Medina, who serves on the Assembly Transportation Committee, called infrastructure development and transportation the top priority facing Californians and urged his Democratic colleague and Republicans in the state legislature to work across the aisle to fund needed projects.

"I hope we will do a better job, we must do a better job," Medina said.

Melendez, who also serves on the Transportation Committee, said the Inland Empire needs more transportation capacity. She pointed out that warehouses and logistics centers in Riverside and San Bernardino counties are running at 96 percent capacity. Trucks picking up and delivering goods to them are scrambling to keep up with the demand in Southern California and beyond. That means one thing, she said.

"We need more infrastructure," Melendez said.



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