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## Perris Honors Citizens Patrol & Mounted Posse Volunteers

Perris police and elected officials gave thanks to the men and women who serve the Citizens Patrol and Mounted Posse March 13 at an annual awards dinner at the City's Senior Center.

Members of both volunteer groups donate hundreds of hours each year at Perris parades, police checkpoints, accident, crime and fire scenes and searching for missing children and adults. They come from all walks of life but say they are motivated by the same goal: making Perris the best possible City to live, work and play.

Perris Police Chief Mike Judge said their contributions are priceless.

"We can't operate without volunteers," he said. "They provide us with extra eyes and ears, they help out at checkpoints and catch crimes in progress. Without their efforts, we would have to hire more officers and support staff to take up the slack provided by volunteers. They do a great job. They take ownership of their own community."



The volunteers were presented with plaques and this cake thanking them for their service.

Receiving awards for their work the Citizens Patrol were:

**Salvador Hernandez**, who received the highest honor, the Bob Hayes Award, named after the longtime Public Safety Commissioner. Hernandez works almost every Saturday night, providing high-profile visibility in various neighborhoods. Fluent in Spanish, he provides translation for deputies in the field and rarely misses a checkpoint or parade. Hernandez says of his work: "We make a difference in our community. I am humbled and excited to receive this award. I want to help make our community safe."

**Shawn Haughney and John Simmons**: both received Outstanding Service Awards. Haughney is an original member of the Citizens Patrol, which has provided more than 58,000 hours of volunteer service since its creation in 1996. Haughney works on patrol most weeks, participates in checkpoints, call-outs and parades. Simmons works out of the Perris Police Headquarters building most days, driving patrol cars for maintenance or modification. He also attends several checkpoints each year.

**Gary Loomer** received the Distinguished Service Award. Loomer responds to many call-outs each year and also works the annual Rods and Rails Festival along with other special events.

**Al Freeman, Nicole Freeman and Penny Rasmussen** received Merit Awards. Al Freeman patrols various Perris neighborhoods, responds to call-outs, checkpoints and City events. Nicole Freeman patrols the City and responds to call-outs, checkpoints and special events. Rasmussen serves as a liaison with the tribal task force and catalogues its archives. She also volunteers at City events.

Three members of the Mounted Posse also were honored for their service. The posse located to Perris from Jurupa and members take part in parades, the annual National Night Out against crime and help search for missing hikers. They provide their own horses, saddle and tack and pay for all-related services. The posse has grown to 17 members. Posse volunteers honored included:

**Geraldine Farris** earned this year's Most Valuable Volunteer Award. A posse volunteer for 23 years, Farris has appeared at countless parades and special events throughout Riverside County, from Jurupa to Riverside to Perris. Her other passion in life is working with military veterans. Her job as a supervisor for a security company has allowed her to hire hundreds of veterans over the years. She also has accompanied World War II and Korean War veterans—at her own expense—to Washington D.C. for special honors. Farris also works building homes for homeless veterans and serves as the publicist for "Moms of the Military" organization.

"My life's desires are to be on a horse and to give something back to the community," she said. "I have seen Perris grow and whatever I can do to make it better, I will. Thank you so much for this honor."

**Tiffany Porter and Kimber Cadenhead** each received Merit Awards. Porter is the posse veterinarian and vice-president and logged 226 hours of volunteer service in the last year. Cadenhead is the group secretary and accumulated 273 hours of volunteer service.



Salvador Hernandez, a member of the Perris Citizens Patrol, received the Bob Hayes Award for outstanding service. He stands between Perris Community Services Officer Ed Diaz and Police Chief Mike Judge.

Sgt. Danny Lingo said the department "owes them a lot" and said of posse members: "There's no better group of volunteers in the county."

Perris City Council members agreed.

"Enough cannot be said about what you provide to our community," said City Councilman Julio Rodriguez. "Volunteerism is the pinnacle of community service. You are an example to the youth of our community."

City Councilwoman Rita Rogers praised the volunteer honorees for their "passion and driving force."

"The City of Perris relies heavily on volunteer involvement," she said. "They are the pulse of the City. They give of their time, talent and energy to make this City a great City. They are silent heroes."

City Councilman Mark Yarbrough noted that volunteers comprise a "tiny percentage" of residents but each one brings "an unbelievable commitment."

"They are truly unsung heroes," he said. "They save the City a fortune in expenses. They make the commitment and follow through with that commitment, whether that means spending hours on patrol or getting called out in the middle of the night. They are truly unsung heroes."



Mounted Posse honorees included Geraldine Farris, Tiffany Porter and Kimber Cadenhead. Standing on left is Sgt. Danny Lingo; Police Chief Mike Judge is pictured at right.

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