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Historical and Museum Association Installation Ceremony

The Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association celebrated several milestones and, as the non-profit group turns 50 in 2014, is planning several key projects and events in the coming months.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch swore in the officers during a March 29 meeting at the Motte Museum on Highway 74. Those included Quinn Hawley, president; Bill Hulstrom; first vice-president; Ann Motte, second vice-president; Mae Minnich, secretary and Dennise Manning, treasurer.

Busch and other Perris-area elected officials praised the "countless" volunteer hours put forth by association members dedicated and determined to preserve, document and display the history of the Perris Valley. That's what helps make the golden anniversary such a special time.

"A lot of places are envious of Perris," Busch said. "We have real buildings, real artifacts, real documents and a real history. Our museum volunteers have done an excellent job in preserving Perris' past so future generations can learn from our experience. Their dedication makes this an excellent organization."



City archivist Christina Perris, the granddaughter of the man Perris is named for, chats with Jennifer Despain, prior to the installation of officers for the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association.

In recent years the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association reached several milestones. Those include:

The 2009 re-opening of the 1892-Victorian-era Depot Building, which now serves as the site of the Perris Valley Museum.

The 2010 dedication of the former Bank of Perris Building as the new City archive.

The 2011 creation and display of 100-panels depicting aspects of a century of life in the Perris Valley, created as part of the City's centennial since its incorporation. Smaller sets of panels currently are on display at schools and businesses in Perris.

The 2012 premiere of the movie "D Street: A Documentary," which detailed the development, growth and impact of the Downtown corridor.

The 2013 creation of an exhibit entitled "100 Years of the Southern California Fair," which is held every year at the fairgrounds on Ramona Expressway.



Quinn Hawley, president of the board of directors of the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association, addresses the crowd during the March 29 installation event.

Work continues on several ongoing projects, said archivist Christina Perris, the great-granddaughter of Fred T. Perris, the railroad engineer for whom the City is named. The archive has collected and catalogued editions of the Perris High School yearbook, the El Perrisito, since 1915. Christina Perris continues researching the history of the Perris Indian School, which operated at the corner of Perris Boulevard and Morgan Street from 1892 to 1904 before moving to Riverside, where it was renamed the Sherman Indian High School. The museum also has begun a docent program at the Depot building using high-school students to serve as tour guides.

"I appreciate what the City has done to preserve its history," Christina Perris said. "Preserving history through photographs and documents is a lot of fun."

She admits that with her family connection to the City, her job is personal at times.

"It's like documenting the Perris family history as well as the Perris City history," Christina Perris said.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch congratulates members of the board of directors of the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association after swearing them in as officers for 2014-14.

Hawley, a retired Navy chaplain, said the museum will be active in the coming weeks and throughout 2014. Upcoming events include the April 26 Community Health Fair at Perris City Hall, 101 North D Street; a May 10 50th Anniversary celebration and bazaar at the Depot at Fourth and C streets and the annual Rods and Rails Festival June 14 at the Orange Empire Railway Museum 2201 A Street.

Hawley said the people operating the Perris Valley Museum today stand as proud successors of the pioneers of the 19th and early 20-centuries.

"The people who settled this valley had a vision about what they could become," he said. "By capturing and preserving our history we are adding to the good of our great community. We are walking in the footsteps of those pioneers who put their stamp on Perris."

Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough and Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley praised the commitment of museum associates, board members and volunteers.

"It is really exciting that there is such a group of people who take this mission to heart," Yarbrough said. "We have so much of our history intact and these folks taking preserving it to heart. They are a great group of people."

Ashley said he believes the work done to preserve Perris history is some of the best in the region, if not the state and country. It's a labor of love and benefits long-time residents and newcomers.

"They are living and growing the history of the Perris Valley," Ashley said of museum representatives. "That gives new residents a sense of belonging."



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough and his wife, Shelly, were among the dignitaries attending the March 29 installation dinner.

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