



home > city hall > press releases

## Safety in the Spotlight at National Night Out

Perris residents got an up-close look at the latest public-safety equipment and technology their tax dollars buy at the National Night Out against crime on Aug. 2.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch and City Councilman Mark Yarbrough headed up the Perris delegation at the 31st annual National Night Out, in which the City was honored for its continuing support of law enforcement. Mayor Busch picked up a plaque from Perris Police Chief Mike Judge.

The equipment on display included bomb-snatching robots, armored vehicles, motorcycles capable of chasing down illegal off-roaders, dogs trained to pull uncooperative suspects from vehicles and life-saving techniques used by firefighters to extract people from crumpled cars.

"People often wonder what their public-safety dollars go to buy," Busch said. "This night provides people with the opportunity to see where some of their money goes. It's important to keep people informed about how our City spends its public-safety budget."



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch accepts a plaque for the City's support of National Night Out activities from Police Chief Mike Judge.

Perris contracts with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department for its police services. Judge said Perris is a great supporter of its police department. The City's Citizens Patrol provides thousands of volunteer hours each year from a dedicated group that includes small business owners, government workers and retired residents. Perris Citizens Patrol volunteers respond to traffic collision, provide crowd control at fires, parades and special events and search for missing children and adults. The sheriff department's Mounted Posse is based in Perris, as are major drug and gang-suppression units, the department's forensics team and dive team.

The Perris station includes 2,600-miles of cities and unincorporated communities that total 270,000 people.

"We have a great relationship with the City of Perris and we appreciate all the support they give our department," Judge said.

Other cities served from the Perris Station include Menifee and Canyon Lake.

Longtime Perris Citizens Patrol volunteer Mike McAleavey said he helps out to make the City a safer place. He estimates he's donated 12,000 hours of his time since joining the Citizens Patrol as an original member in 1996. The City supports the Citizens Patrol by providing a vehicle, fuel and uniforms.

"I like going out and assisting the police and the community," he said.



The Mounted Patrol, based in Perris, put in an appearance at the Aug. 2 National Night Out event.

Councilman Yarbrough chatted with several law officers, including those whose duties include bomb disposal and off-road vehicle enforcement. Bomb technician Sgt. Bob Epps said the unit responds to 250 to 300 calls a year—about one-third which are for disposal of live explosive devices like homemade pipe bombs or military ordnance. The unit responds throughout Riverside County. He also expressed interest in hopping on a motorcycle to do a ride-along with the off-road enforcement team.

"There are so many things to see here!" Yarbrough said. "These resources allow us to recruit and retain the best-of-the-best in law enforcement. It helps keep people safe at night."



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough inspects a bomb-detecting robot with Police Chief Mike Judge while bomb technician Bob Epps explains how the robot works.

A series of demonstrations attracted scores of people throughout the course of the National Night Out. Police officers put their trained canines through a series of obstacles and turned them loose to pull suspected criminals (actually law enforcement volunteers) out of vehicles. CalFire firefighters removed the doors and roofs of smashed cars to show how they extricate victims trapped inside. Visitors could look inside ambulances and pose for photos in police cars. Throughout the course of the event, public safety officers answered questions about their jobs and technology from the public.

Other community groups came out as well, including the recently formed Boys and Girls Club of Perris.

Jose and Jackie Ramos, chairman of the board and chief executive officer of the club, said they are grateful for the City's support, which makes possible their program. The couple started a Neighborhood Watch group in their May Ranch community last year as a way to keep the community safe. The Boys & Girls Club attracted 20 day-campers this summer and 10 interns, who contributed more than 2,000 volunteer hours. The City provides space to the club for \$1 a year.

"We are here to help keep our community safe," Jose Ramos said. "Safe communities are healthy communities."

### Media Contact

Joe Vargo  
Public Information Officer  
951-956-2120  
jvargo@cityofperris.org



Perris City Hall  
101 N. D Street  
Perris, CA 92570

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