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## Fun and Conservation Tips on Offer at Water Fair

The Perris water conservation fair Nov. 1 at Mercado Park offered education, entertainment and exercise.

Education came in the form of arborists, landscapers and irrigation-experts distributing tips and brochures about how to reduce water usage and the benefits of replacing lawns with drought-resistant plants and groundcover and installing water-savers like low-flow shower heads, hose nozzles and toilets. Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough demonstrated how to clean a car without using a single drop of water.



Professional actors Michael "Toobah" Heatherton and Jason Lockett perform the skit "H2O Where Did You Go?" during the City of Perris' water-conservation fair Nov. 1 at Mercado Park.

The day's entertainment include a pair of professional actors who performed songs and skits as part of the show "H2O Where Did You Go?" to inform people about where the source of Southern California's water originates, how people squander it and why it matters to save.

The day's exercise component was provided by professional trainer Laura Sosa, who led a few dozen residents through an hour of sweat-building calorie-burning routines as part of the City's weekly "winter workouts."

Perris elected officials have embarked on a large-scale outreach effort to inform residents in the disadvantaged Downtown community about the worsening drought, its impact on California and the importance of cutting back on water usage. Conserving water saves the precious resource and money for utility bills.



Perris City Council members Mark Yarbrough and Al Landers announce the winner in the "name-the-water-mascot" contest.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch and City Council members Al Landers and Yarbrough attended the event, as did the City's water consultant, Maria Elena Kennedy. A contest was held to determine the names of a trio of mascots created to drive home the point to conserve. The winning name: aguitas—meaning "little water" in Spanish.

Busch said he was pleased with the scope of information provided at the conservation fair, which took place at Mercado Park.

"This is a very important event for our community," he said. "A lot of people want to conserve but they need the information to help them learn how. That's what we are providing here today."

Perris resident Ray Ramirez submitted the winning entry. He commended the City for sponsoring the conservation fair for helping residents "learn a lot about saving water."

"I love the City of Perris," he said. "This fair has been very, very helpful. The City does a great job."

Yarbrough called Ramirez "a champion of change" for supporting the conservation fair.

"You have helped to change the direction of this community into one that is more water-conservation conscious," Yarbrough said. "Next to air, water is our most important resource. We need to do everything we can to maximize its use and minimize its waste."



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough stands next to Ray Ramirez, who won a gift basket for entering the winning entry in the water-mascot naming contest. Standing next to Ramirez are Maria Elena Kennedy, the City's water consultant (her face was painted as part of el Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead), Perris City Manager Richard Belmudez and City Councilman Al Landers.

Resident Jennifer Carballo came to the fair with her three children. She said her family needs to cut back on time spent on showers.

"It's not enough for mommy to tell them to shorten their showers," Carballo said. "But if they hear saving-tips at an event like this, they're more likely to remember."

Glanelis Chavez brought her daughters, Alexa and Glanelis, and son, William, to Mercado Park. Like many residents, she is worried about the drought and wants to learn ways to cut back on water consumption. She said she sees her neighbors "watering dirt" and her family leaving the faucet running while brushing their teeth.

"There needs to be more education focused on saving water," Chavez said.

She said she was glad to put into practice the tips learned at the fair.

Councilman Landers said Perris officials are committed to educating residents about the need to save water. Programs like the conservation fair, he said, provide a great opportunity for the City to take the lead in reaching out to residents with good advice that makes a difference.

"We are a progressive and aggressive City that will use the latest technology to battle this drought," he said. "We are also committed to bring the necessary information to our residents so they can fight this drought and win."

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