



Perris Press Release

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Perris Library Celebrates 100th Birthday

The Cesar E. Chavez Library in Perris celebrates its 100th anniversary this year but there is nothing old about this venerable institution.

Indeed, the library is aimed for the young and young at heart. Walk into the library at 163 East San Jacinto Avenue across from Perris City Hall and it quickly becomes apparent that this place doesn't merely confine itself to books and people quietly sitting at desks. This library is a beehive of activity.

"Libraries have changed a lot," said Perris branch Manager Thomas Vose. "They are lot more noisier—the public is not always quiet."

Depending on the time and day, a visitor might find himself taking in a version of Dungeons and Dragons, watching teen-agers make catapults, enjoy screenings of classic movies or modern hits like "The Hunger Games," find residents working on their income tax returns, witness immigrants talking citizenship classes or listening to a lecture about Perris' ancient past, a time when mammoths and mastodons roamed the region. They could see be entertained making sculptures out of Rice Krispies, hear about the thrills of skydiving or discuss current events.

They might even run into the library's dual mascots: Page the Cat or Warlord the Frog.

The City of Perris long has supported the library financially. Last July, the City spent \$98,300 to repair the library's heating and air-conditioning systems and fix its roof. Previously, the City set aside a \$1 million endowment that accrued interest used to fund library-related projects—including \$23,000 for new Internet work stations in 2006 and another \$36,000 for material acquisition in 2007-2008. Perris officials are currently exploring ways to replace worn-out carpeting.

"The City of Perris has been very helpful, they've brought this library up to speed," Vose said. "They've been great partners."

Vose said the Perris library is the oldest in the Riverside County system, adding that City residents have always supported its library as a center of learning. The first Perris library dates to 1882, when it was housed in a bicycle-repair and jewelry shop on D Street owned by City pioneer Henry Akin. Over the years, the library moved several times, locating to its current address about 20 years ago. It is named in honor of Cesar E. Chavez, the labor organizer and human rights activist.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch said the City is committed to helping the library any way possible. He said that while Perris is 102 years old in 2013, the library outdates it by 20 years.

"It's a place we've always supported," Busch said. "It's an institution we're proud of and want to keep vibrant and vital for all Perris residents."

The Perris library has a large and growing group of followers. About 11,000 residents visit monthly and the Perris branch counts about 12,000-active users. The branch ranks first in programming geared for young adults. Last year, 1,100 youngsters took part in the library's summer reading program.

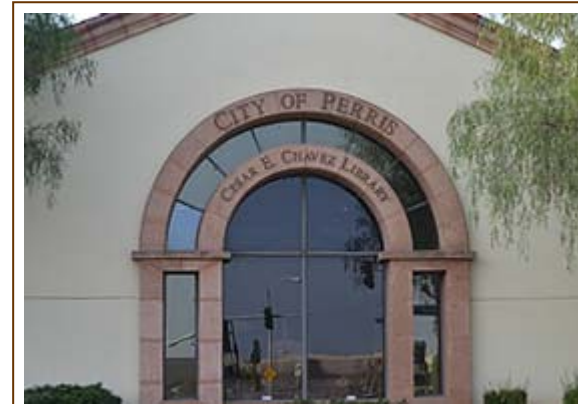
"Kids are interested in keeping up their reading in the summer," Vose said.

The Perris library has worked with partner agencies to expand the size and scope of its outreach. Grants from Wal-Mart, Boeing and Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley have all supported the library's education efforts. The Perris library also received teaching materials from the National Endowment for the Humanities for its "Muslim Journeys" cultural awareness program.

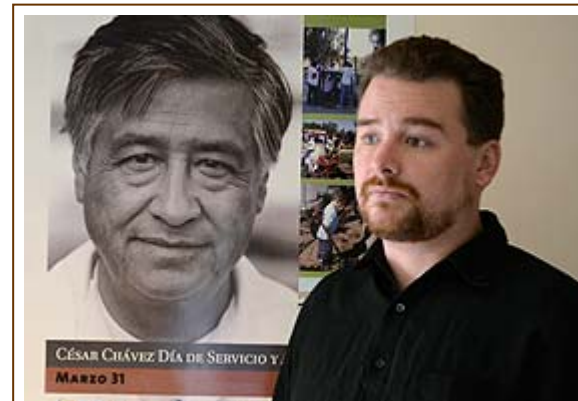
Vose said the 21st Century library remains relevant in the Internet age. He wants Perris residents to think of it as a sort-of self-help center for a variety of daily life challenges.

"Everybody needs help once in a while," he said. "The library isn't about just books anymore. It's about information and helping people. We want to share what we know with the community."

More information about the Perris library is available at rivlib.info/perris-library.



The Cesar E. Chavez Public Library is located on San Jacinto Avenue across the street from the Perris City Hall Campus. The City library is the oldest in the Riverside County system.



Branch manager Thomas Vose in front of a portrait of labor leader and human-rights activist Cesar E. Chavez.



This mural capturing several historic Perris images and locations is part of the artwork at the Cesar E. Chavez Public Library.