



Perris Press Release

Contact: Joe Vargo, Perris Public Information Officer

Phone: 951-956-2120

jvargo@cityofperris.org

Law Enforcement Honors Perris Citizen Patrol

The Perris Citizens Patrol took center stage recently to receive awards and accolades from City law enforcement officers and elected officials, who agreed the volunteer force has been vital in saving taxpayer dollars and keeping crime in check.

"You are some of the best this community has to offer," said

Riverside County Sheriff's Capt. John Hill, who serves as the City's police chief under a contract with the county. "You are part of an elite team. You are dedicated, selfless and helpful. You are an invaluable resource and we appreciate all the hard work you do."

The 2013 awards ceremony took place at the Sol Y Mar Restaurant on Perris Boulevard. In addition to law officers, several elected officials—including Perris Mayor Daryl Busch, City Council members Rita Rogers and Julio Rodriguez and City Clerk Judy Haughney—also attended. Pat and Mike McAleavey, founding members of the Perris Citizens Patrol, also attended.

Founded in 1998, the Perris Citizens Patrol is made up of about 20 members ranging from about 30 to 70 years of age. Volunteers serve as the "eyes and ears" of sworn officers and take on a variety of tasks, including routine patrolling, providing support at traffic accidents, checkpoints, parades and assisting in the search for missing children and adults. Last year, the patrol logged more than 5,000 hours of volunteer time. Since its inception, Perris Citizens Patrol members have donated more than 50,000 hours of their time. By freeing up sworn deputies to concentrate on investigations and other professional responsibilities, the Citizens Patrol has saved Perris more than \$5 million.

Several members of the Citizens Patrol received awards for their service in 2012.

Those included two who received Outstanding Service Awards: John Simmons, who was honored for the most hours served in 2012—1,002.5 hours, and Salvador Hernandez, recognized for working patrol, checkpoints and call outs and as a translator.

Three patrol volunteers were honored with Merit Awards. Those included Ralph Irwin, who assists with pawn slips and organizing the Ben Clark Training Center Museum; Gary Loomer, who assists at DUI checkpoints and call-outs at major incidents and Jami Allison, who assists with metal theft reports.

Gene Rasmussen received the highest accolade: The Bob Hayes Award, named in honor of the late Perris Public Safety Commissioner, who devoted countless hours as a patrol volunteer. Rasmussen volunteers one day a week as a logistics technician, where his responsibilities include driving police vehicles to out-of-area garages to receive maintenance. He also works DUI checkpoints.

A semi-retired probation officer, Rasmussen, 64, said he enjoys volunteering as a "way to give back to the community."

"It's interesting work," he said. "Since this is the City I live in, I can perform the mundane duties and let police officers do their jobs."

Rasmussen said he enjoys living in Perris, describing it as "a really, really nice City."

"I am happy to give some time to the City I live in," he said.

Perris elected officials praised the hard work, determination and selflessness of the Citizens Patrol.

"We appreciate what they've been doing for a long time to make our City safer and a better place to live," Mayor Busch said.

"Their volunteerism allows us to better fund the services we need. They have saved the City a tremendous amount of money over the years and for that we are more than grateful."

Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough worked to form the Citizens Patrol more than 15 years ago. He said the patrol's willingness to serve Perris is inspirational and speaks well of the City's spirit and pride.

"These folks are always willing to do what it takes to keep our City as safe as possible," Yarbrough said. "I take my hat off to them."

Councilwoman Rogers noted that Citizens Patrol volunteers often spend nights, weekends and holidays on the job.

"You are truly the best we have to offer," Rogers said. "Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Councilman Rodriguez called the Citizens Patrol the "example we should all be following."

"Thank you so much for your service," he said.



Perris resident Gene Rasmussen accepts the Bob Hayes Award for his outstanding work with the Perris Citizens Patrol. With him are Riverside Sheriff's Department Capt. John Hill and Nina Zalunardo, a Perris Community Service Officer.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch addresses the Citizens Patrol during the annual awards ceremony last week: "We appreciate what you have been doing."