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City Acquires Bus to Serve Veterans

The City-based Southwest Veterans Business Resource Center took possession this week of a refurbished 12-passenger, wheel-chair accessible bus donated by the Riverside Transit Agency. The \$70,000 van will transport, at no cost, former members of the military to the Veterans Administration medical center in Loma Linda, to the Riverside County Veterans Services Office and to doctors' appointments.

Former Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans, a former Marine, lobbied the RTA on behalf of Perris-area veterans. The bus will be based at the veterans' resource center at 227 North D Street, on the City Hall Campus.

"We owe these people a lot," Evans said. "We would not have our freedom without their service and sacrifice."

Evans and Perris City Councilman Al Landers attached the personalized license plate to the bus—signifying the vehicle is ready for action. The personalized plate reads "SWVBRC" with the inscription "Honoring Veterans" below the lettering. Landers is working with the veterans resource group on a "Small Business Summit" that will take place on Nov. 12. The summit brings together dozens of businesses and government and private advocacy groups and puts them in touch with veterans seeking jobs.

Landers said his passion to help veterans is personal. In 1965, his brother—Richard Landers, a member of the 101st Airborne Division—was killed in Vietnam, a loss that pains him and his siblings to this day. Richard Landers was only 19 years old, and never saw the son who was born after his death.

"This City is doing its part to help veterans in any way possible," he said. "It is the responsibility of this community to stand behind its veterans and make their lives a little easier. They have done so much for us. A lot of our veterans who are returning from combat suffer physical disabilities and emotional problems. And some have made the ultimate sacrifice."

Al Renteria, a retired Marine and founder and CEO of the Southwest Veterans Business Resource Center, said 10,000-former Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine and Coast Guard personnel live in the Perris Valley. The new bus will pick up those who are confined to their home. Others who can get to the City Hall Campus will take the bus from there to their appointments.

Renteria used three words to sum up Perris' commitment to veterans: "informed, involved and interested."

"When you can provide a free service to needy veterans, you take a big burden off their shoulders," Renteria said. "It's a tremendous feeling. There are no words to describe it."

To learn more information about the veteran's bus in Perris, telephone 951-722-4941 or email bus@swvbrc.org.



Perris City Councilman Al Landers and former City Councilwoman Joanne Evans attach the license plate on the new bus that will transport veterans to medical and other important appointments..



The new bus carries a personalized license plate.