



## City Hosts Third Annual Small Business Summit

More than 800 job seekers, former military members, entrepreneurs and representatives of more than a dozen state and federal agencies are expected in Perris on Nov. 12 as the City plays host to the third annual Small Business Summit.

The daylong summit takes place at various locations throughout the Perris City Hall Campus, including the Bob Glass Gymnasium, and at other sites like the Cesar E. Chavez Public Library.

Retired Marine Chief Warrant Officer Albert Renteria first organized a Small Business Summit in Perris as a way to bring together government representatives looking to dispense contracts, small businesses looking to grow their bottom line and Perris residents seeking steady paychecks.

The summit is not so much a job fair where people drop off resumes along with many other applicants seeking a single position, Renteria said.

Rather it brings together businesses owners and government representatives, community members and job seekers interested in starting their own business as well as looking for employment. During the course of the day's workshops and other interactions, Renteria said he expects some people to forge relationships needed for part-time and full-time employment.

The summit is opened to civilians as well as veterans, Renteria said.

"This is a job-creation venue," he said. "The purpose of the summit is to think about the community, not just veterans," Renteria said. "By thinking about the community, however, we will be helping veterans as well."

Renteria said the 2012 summit drew about 500 participants. Former NFL great Fred Dryer, an advocate on behalf of veterans and athletes afflicted with traumatic brain injuries, will speak during the summit, Renteria said. Other speakers include Perris Mayor Daryl Busch and Riverside County Supervisor Jeff Stone. Perris City Councilman Al Landers is serving as emcee of the summit and chairman of the organizing committee.

Workshops and seminars will be held throughout the course of the day. Those include sessions about how to start and market a small business, the power of Internet advertising and learning how to obtain government contracts. Discussions about establishing a business in Perris also will take place. The City has been designated a HUB (Historically Underutilized Business) Zone, meaning that businesses set up in Perris can earn extra incentives from Uncle Sam.

Representatives from Washington D.C., Sacramento, San Diego, Los Angeles, Ohio and throughout the Inland Empire are slated to appear at the upcoming Small Business Summit.

"It's taken on national significance," Renteria said.

Busch said that Perris policy-makers enjoy working with people organizing events like the small business summit.

"It will provide a lot of information and interaction that will enable veterans to meet their goals and needs," Busch said.

City Councilman Landers said assisting veterans find employment or start their own companies helps create jobs and tax revenues in the City, reduces unemployment and makes good on a debt all Americans owe to the men and women in uniform.

"Freedom is not free; a lot of people have paid for it at the cost of their lives," Landers said.

Landers said his own life changed forever on May 3, 1965—the day his brother, Richard, was killed while serving with the 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam. Landers accompanied his brother's remains to the cemetery in Santa Maria, home to several other young men killed in Vietnam.

Half a century later, the pain remains.

"It never goes away," Landers said. "Even the veterans who come back from war are affected by their service. In Vietnam, they suffered from (exposure to chemical defoliant) Agent Orange. Today they are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries. We owe them so much. We need to get behind every effort to make their lives as good as we can."

Landers said he is proud that the City of Perris is once again hosting the Small Business Summit, which he says will "put Perris on the map" as a veteran-friendly community.

"This event once again reconfirms our commitment to veterans," he said.

More information about the Small Business Summit is available at [www.TheVeteranForce.org](http://www.TheVeteranForce.org).



Perris City Councilman Al Landers (right) discusses final preparations for the Nov. 12 small business summit in Perris, while event organizer Al Renteria looks on.



Former NFL great Fred Dryer is featured on a billboard on Interstate 215 announcing the Nov. 12 small business summit in Perris.