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Perris Valley Line Fully Funded

Perris officials joined with regional transportation experts Monday in accepting a \$75-million federal grant that will complete rail transportation between the City, Orange County and Los Angeles—making Perris a vital hub in a rapidly growing region of Southern California.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch couldn't stop smiling as he signed his name to the funding agreement with the Federal Transit Administration to complete the 24-mile section of the Perris Valley Line to Riverside.

On hand with the Mayor and Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough were Congressmen Mark Takano and Ken Calvert, members from the Riverside County Transportation Commission and Therese McMillan, Deputy Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

"This is a red-letter day for the City of Perris," Busch said. "This has been a long-time coming. I've worked on bringing this project to fruition for more than a decade. To say this is a major deal is an understatement. This is huge."

Standing on a podium in blustery conditions at the Metrolink station near C and Second streets, Busch told about 75 dignitaries that Perris began as a railroad hub for farmers sending their potatoes to market beginning in the late 1800s. The restored Victorian-era Depot Building is within site of the new multi-modal transportation hub. In addition to carrying train commuters from Perris to Riverside, Fullerton and Los Angeles, the hub also carries bus-riders throughout Riverside County.

"Rail service in Perris has long been ingrained in our history and it will be ingrained in our future," Busch said.

"Transportation is a life-blood of our economy. We are thrilled to be part of this project."

Yarbrough noted that Perris' history began with public transportation. The City is named after Fred T. Perris, chief engineer for the California Southern Railway, which linked Perris to the rest of the U.S.

"We've come full circle," he said. "This is great day for the City of Perris. It's even better for this region."

Total cost of the Perris Valley Line is \$248.3 million, with the remainder coming from local, state and other federal monies. Construction is expected to be completed in about two years. When finished the line will serve four new stations; Downtown Perris, south Perris near Ethanac Road, March Field in Moreno Valley and Hunter Park in Riverside.

Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley, a Perris resident, said the City and surrounding communities were hard-hit by the 2008 recession. Train service will provide many families with the means to seek and find good-paying work that will raise them into the middle class and keep them there. Others will use the trains to attend school to get the necessary education for long-term employment. The elderly and disabled will have access to transportation that addresses their mobility issues and thus have more freedom to live more active lives.

"The Perris Valley Line is a tremendous economic and social-justice project," Ashley said.

Calvert, R-Corona, called the railway "a great economic step forward" for Perris, Riverside County and Southern California. "This is where the population is moving," Calvert said. "We need all types of transportation for this region."

Other speakers pointed out that the line will carry 4,300 passengers daily when service begins, which will take thousands of vehicles off the road, improving freeway transportation while reducing pollution. The Perris Valley Line will employ the most up-to-date, energy-efficient locomotives.

Takano, D-Riverside, said jobs will follow the Perris Valley Line. Restaurants, retail shops, service stations and other businesses will spring up to meet the demand created by passengers getting on and off the train in Perris.

"I am very pleased with the good-paying jobs that this quality project will bring to the area."

Prior to the ceremony announcing the federal grant, McMillan led a roundtable discussion at Perris City Hall that focused on transportation issues and concerns in the Inland Empire. She touted the Perris Valley Line as an example of how California officials have partnered with the federal government in "advancing infrastructure improvements" throughout the state. She encouraged local representatives to stress the economic benefits from such improvements, saying they contribute to "building a robust economy."

"Public transportation can help build the character of a community," McMillan said.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch inks his name on a giant version of the funding agreement that will provide \$75 million in federal grants to complete the 24-mile Perris Valley Line, which will provide rail service between Perris, Riverside, Orange County and Los Angeles.



Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough and Mayor Daryl Busch look on during the ceremony announcing federal funds to finish the Perris Valley Line.



Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley calls the Perris Valley Line a "tremendous economic and social-justice project."



Therese McMillan, deputy administrator for the Federal Transit Administration, says the Perris Valley Line shows what can be accomplished when local and federal authorities work together to solve vexing problems.