



Perris Press Release

Contact: Joe Vargo, Perris Public Information Officer
Phone: 951-956-2120
jvargo@cityofperris.org

Black History Month Parade Celebrates Diversity & History

A crowd of more than 2,000 people came to Perris Saturday to observe the City's 11th Annual Black History Month Parade, a celebration of the community's diverse tapestry and history.

A total of 40 entries—floats, equestrian units, classic cars, marching bands, dancers and dignitaries—took part in the parade. The City of Perris was represented by Mayor Daryl Busch and members of the City Council.

Parade grand marshal Waudieur "Woodie" Rucker-Hughes, a longtime Riverside educator and president of the Riverside chapter of the NAACP, said it is important to remember the accomplishments and sacrifices of previous generations of civil-rights advocates in the 21st Century.

"This is a reminder of where we've been, where we are and where we're going," Rucker-Hughes said. "A man without knowledge of himself is like a tree without roots—it cannot grow or thrive."

Rucker-Hughes praised Perris as a community that has gained a reputation as a welcoming place to all races and ethnicities. She said that from the time it was incorporated as a City in 1911, Perris became a melting pot where blacks thrived as successful farmers, artists, business owners and merchants and church and civic leaders.

As it enters its second century as a City, Rucker-Hughes said Perris is poised for greatness. She said she felt "truly honored" to be named grand marshal.

Mayor Busch said Perris is one of the few cities in Inland Southern California to host a Black History Month Parade. He said residents of Perris seem to embrace the event more and more each year.

"This parade honors lots of people who do not get the recognition they deserve," Busch said. "It's always a pleasure to honor them."

Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers said she is glad that so many schools and church groups took part in the parade.

"Everybody loves a parade and Perris is known for its great parades," Rogers said. "Perris is a city that continues to thrive, something that can be attributed to its leadership, staff and the great community support it enjoys."

Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans spent Saturday at American Legion Post 595, cooking breakfast for the parade dignitaries. She said the parade "gives us a chance to show our love for each other."

"This parade takes us back to the principles our country was founded upon," Evans said. "It wasn't just founded by one race."

Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough called the City "a wonderful melting pot of many cultures."

"We are one of the few cities that maintain cultural events like this, and I am proud to be part of such a community," Yarbrough said.

Among the parade entrants was a contingent from the Inland Empire Buffalo Soldiers Heritage Association, which is raising funds to place a monument to the former slaves who as frontier trackers and guides helped settle the American West. Beginning in 1866, Buffalo Soldiers built roads, strung telegraph lines and guarded U.S. mail shipments on the American frontier. Eighteen Buffalo Soldiers were decorated with the Medal of Honor for service "above and beyond the call of duty" in combat.

"They contributed so much to the U.S. Army at a time when it did not value the service of African-Americans," Williams said. She said events like Perris' Black History Month Parade "allow us to express our cultural heritage and give everyone the opportunity to become part of a big family."



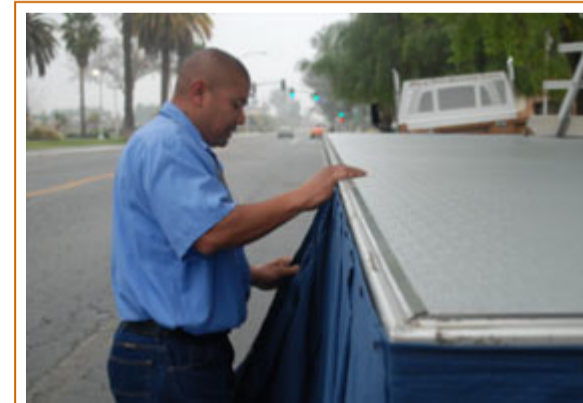
Perris Mayor Daryl Busch chats with Black History Month Parade Grand Marshal Waudieur "Woodie" Rucker-Hughes at American Legion Post 595 prior to the start of the festivities.



Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers and Grand Marshal Waudieur "Woodie" Rucker-Hughes, who said she was "truly honored" to be chosen as grand marshal.



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough (right) with Parade Grand Marshal Waudieur "Woodie" Rucker-Hughes and Yolanda Williams, of the Inland Empire Buffalo Soldiers Heritage Association.



Perris Public Works employee Juan Lemus helps decorate the judging stand prior to the start of the City's 11th Annual Black History Month Parade.