



Perris Press Release

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

Enchanted Heights Construction Ahead of Schedule

Construction is ahead of schedule on a new sewer system in Enchanted Heights, heartening residents in the disadvantaged community who are eagerly awaiting the day they can finally be rid of outdated septic tanks that often flood.

Backhoes and trenching machines are hard at work in the neighborhood on Perris' western border laying main lines in the first phase of construction on a \$15-million sewer system.

Work on the system's lift station that will carry wastewater out of the community continues to progress.

Enchanted Heights residents are monitoring construction with great interest, and say they are thrilled by the work completed thus far.

"The new sewers will greatly enhance the quality of life for us," said Martha Ceja, a longtime resident of the area. "It's a great improvement over the way we have been living for many years."

Ceja and other Enchanted Heights residents have been front-and-center in an innovative community participation program conducted by the City of Perris.

City administrators and elected officials have spent countless hours talking to individual residents and small groups of

Enchanted Heights homeowners to educate them about the need of replacing septic tanks with state-of-the-art sewers. Those small-group meetings preceded public hearings attended by hundreds of Enchanted Heights residents who signed "right of entry" forms to allow construction crews onto their property to hook individual homes to the main sewer lines.

Although there was initial apprehension about the cost of the sewer system, residents say they were assured by the continuing City outreach program that their costs would be minimal. The City of Perris, working with Eastern Municipal Water District, the County of Riverside, the State Water Resources Control and the California Department of Public Health, secured funding for the onsite construction and connection fees.

The outreach won praise last year at a statewide conference on disadvantaged communities sponsored by Cal State Fresno.

Originally begun as a retirement community in the 1970s, the character of Enchanted Heights has evolved over the decades and it now consists of low-income and immigrant families. Larger households have strained the ability of septic tanks, which often overflow and spill raw sewage on roadways and fields.

Maria Elena Kennedy, the City's point person on the Enchanted Heights outreach effort, recently visited the community along with Perris Assistant City Manager Ron Carr to monitor construction progress. At several locations, they met with Enchanted Heights residents who expressed their appreciation for bringing the sewer project to reality. Construction began in August and is expected to wrap up in late 2013.

"It is great to see the project progress smoothly and the residents so happy," Kennedy said recently.

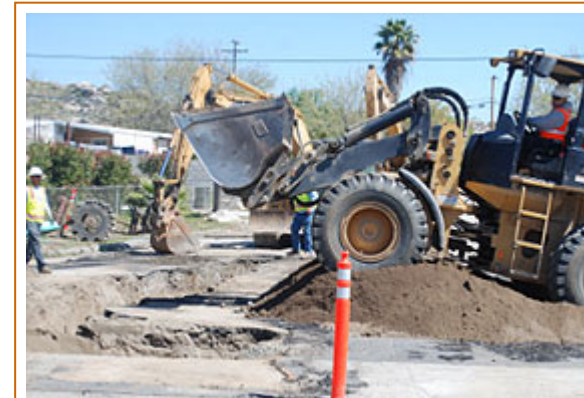
Enchanted Heights resident Roscoe Howard said he hears the "boom-boom-boom" of construction equipment outside his residents at La More Road.

"I think about the new sewer I will have," Howard said. "2013 is right around the corner." Howard said his concerns over possible exposure to polluted wastewater will be over once sewers are installed.

"I am so pleased the City of Perris is taking care of us," Howard said.



Maria Elena Kennedy discusses the most recent construction during a recent tour of Enchanted Heights with Assistant Perris City Manager Ron Carr. Work is underway on a \$15-million sewer project to replace inadequate septic tanks in the disadvantaged community.



Construction crews at work in the Enchanted Heights community of Perris. Workers already have installed sewer main lines as part of a new sewer system.



Enchanted Heights resident Aurelio Lopez gives the thumbs up on the new sewer system as Assistant Perris City Manager Ron Carr and Maria Elena Kennedy during a recent visit to the community.