



## Perris Station Apartment Project is Underway

Perris officials broke ground Wednesday on a \$28-million, 84-unit senior apartment complex they predicted would spur commerce and economic activity while serving as an anchor and a gateway to the City's historic Downtown corridor.

The ceremonial ground-breaking at the Perris Station Apartments culminates a seven-year dream to revitalize a dilapidated former service station/mechanic garage and continues the revitalization of D Street, Mayor Daryl Busch told the crowd of about 75 dignitaries who gathered for the occasion.

"It has been a long-time coming," Busch said. "As times this project sat idle but everyone kept on point and it was never forgotten. We look forward to seeing the building go up and the business come on in. We are glad that we have reached this point and can bring this project forward. We are moving forward."

The Perris Station Apartments, at the southwest corner of San Jacinto Avenue and D Street, will consist of three stories—two levels of residences above a level of parking and 9,300-square-feet of retail/office space. The complex also includes a 16,000-square-foot second-story open space courtyard.

Work on the apartment/retail complex is expected to wrap up in about a year.

It is right across-the-street from Perris City Hall and the Perris Senior Center and within a minute or two walk of the library, the Metrolink multi-modal transit center and a healthcare clinic.

About \$6-million of the funding will come from City redevelopment money with the rest coming from private-development monies and federal tax credits.



City officials toss the first ceremonial shovels of dirt at the ground-breaking of the Perris Station Apartments Wednesday afternoon.



Perris Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager Michael McDermott and Perris Mayor Daryl Busch chat before the official ground-breaking.



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough answers a question from a reporter at the ground-breaking for the \$28 million, 84-unit Perris Station Apartments.

Michael McDermott, the City's Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager, said the Perris Station Apartments "epitomize what redevelopment was"—removing blight, cleaning up contaminated property and turning it into beautiful and badly needed affordable housing. Since the State of California has ended redevelopment agencies, the Perris Station Apartments marks one of the last RDA projects for Perris.

In 2005, the City acquired a blighted service station and mechanics garage and the residence of former Perris City Clerk BetiAn Hynes, who lived around the corner from the businesses. In 2006, conceptual designs began to take shape. Economic, environmental and financial challenges delayed the project and removing contamination from the two former businesses eventually reached \$1.3 million. But determination by staff, administrators and City elected officials never gave up on seeing the project through to completion, McDermott said.

Perris City Manager Richard Belmudez agreed that the many "trials and tribulations" experienced from ground acquisition to ground-breaking made it seem at times that the project would never take place. He credited McDermott for keeping focused on the final result, saying "without his tenacity, this project would not have happened."

Belmudez said the Perris Station complex "completes a big piece of the puzzle" as the City continues developing its Downtown core. Several nearby D Street businesses have received new facades in recent months, the art deco Perris Theatre has undergone extensive renovations, the Perris Bank and Perris Depot have been restored and reopened for use and the Mercado Apartments at the south end of D Street is nearly finished and accepting applications.

The Perris Station Apartments will anchor the north end of D Street by providing housing to a senior population that has traditionally been underserved and by bringing people to Perris.

"It will become an economic engine and make this Downtown the real viable community we think it can be," Belmudez said. Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley, who grew up in Perris, congratulated the City for continue to upgrade its facilities and services despite ongoing economic difficulties.

"What used to be a dilapidated gas station will become a beautiful apartment complex," Ashley said. "The whole face of Perris is being renewed and that makes me feel good."

In addition to D Street development, new freeway interchanges are going in along I-215 at Fourth Street and at Ramona Expressway. The freeway is being widened through Perris, the Big League Dreams sports complex recently opened and ground will break later this year on a regional aquatics center.

"The City is doing a wonderful job all the way around," Ashley said. Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans said she is glad the waiting to break ground is over.

"It's about time this has come to pass," she said. "It is finally here. I love it. It's going to be a hub for our City." Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough said the City wanted to build something nice for its senior citizens.

"This is going to be nice," he said. "You get frustrated when things take so long to move forward but we are launching it—finally. It completes a huge piece of our D Street development and compliments the rest of the development. This is our gateway—one that we are very proud of. We knew we had a need for senior housing and we met it."

Hynes said her family has lived along the D Street corridor since 1936. She said she is delighted that selling her house to the City helped make the new apartments/retail center a reality.

"This is a quality project that will contribute to Perris," she said. "I'm downright excited to see it."



Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans stands at attention during the playing of the National Anthem.



A schematic of the apartment complex at D Street and San Jacinto Avenue.



Perris City Manager Richard Belmudez addresses the crowd during ground-breaking ceremony. The new apartments will "make this Downtown the real viable community we think it can be."