



## Perris Press Release

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### City Expands Enchanted Heights Spanish Language Outreach

With construction moving along ahead of schedule, Perris officials expanded their Spanish language outreach in the disadvantaged community of Enchanted Heights in order to ensure that residents are kept apprised of the construction's progresses. A new sewer system is being built in order to replace worn-out septic tanks which often fail and improve the quality of life in the neighborhood.

The bilingual outreach campaign being conducted by the city of Perris includes Spanish language media briefings as part of the effort to engage the residents of the largely Hispanic area. Recently, the city facilitated interview opportunities with a reporter from the Riverside newspaper "La Prensa" with the residents of Enchanted Heights. The residents reiterated their approval of the new sewer system and praised the City of Perris for its continual public effort, which began more than a year ago. Perris officials are also contacting other Spanish language media outlets.

During a recent tour of the Enchanted Heights community, Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough spoke with the residents and saw first-hand construction crews installing main sewer lines in the 446-home community on Perris' western edge. Perris Assistant City Manager Ron Carr and Maria Elena Kennedy, the City's liaison with Enchanted Heights residents, also spent the morning chatting and providing updates on the project.

"Things are going very well," Yarbrough said. "We are realizing a community's dream. This is not just a City of Perris project; it's a community project. We are ahead of schedule. As members of the City Council, I believe this project shows we are in touch with our community and are determined to improve the lives of people in this community."

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch agreed that Spanish-language outreach is crucial for success in Enchanted Heights.

"Public outreach is a big part of our efforts to keep the residents informed about what is happening," Busch said. "And of course, Spanish-language media is a big part of our outreach."

The City of Perris partnered with the County of Riverside, Eastern Municipal Water District, the State Water Resources Commission and the California Department of Public Health on a \$15-million sewer system for Enchanted Heights. Originally conceived as a retirement resort, Enchanted Heights has evolved into a family community.

Septic tanks designed to accommodate one or two person homes failed as the number of residents expanded.

In recent years it was not uncommon for failing septic tanks to overflow and send raw sewage into streets and fields.

Last year, City officials launched a multimedia bilingual public outreach campaign which has won praise from state and federal officials. The public outreach campaign includes one on one communications with the residents of Enchanted Heights, public service announcements in English and Spanish which air on the city's public access channel and website.

The Spanish language outreach also includes small-group meetings in Enchanted Heights where residents are able to discuss concerns and voice praise directly with elected officials and city administrative staff. Last year, the city hosted four formal community meetings at Enchanted Hills Elementary school in order to gather "Right of Entry" signatures from residents. The "Right of Entry" signatures are necessary for the contractor to build the onsite portion of the sewer system. Enchanted Heights resident Yolanda Hernandez has lived in the community for 12 years. She and her neighbors await the completion of the new sewers with great anticipation.

"I'm very happy with the project because it will benefit our community greatly," Hernandez said. "We won't have to worry about sewage anymore. We are happy that the City of Perris has kept us apprised of the project and that the City Council is concerned about our well-being."



Enchanted Heights resident Yolanda Hernandez (left) discusses the sewer project with Maria Elena Kennedy of the City of Perris.



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough recently toured Enchanted Heights to observe progress on the new sewer system: "We are building a dream for this community."



Construction crews have been hard at work installing main line sewers in Enchanted Heights.