



## Perris Press Release

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### Mercado Apartments Open to Rave Reviews

The City of Perris celebrated the official opening of the Mercado Apartments on D Street, a project so successful that all the units were leased and occupied before Wednesday's ceremony and prospective tenants told they would have to wait two years before any space becomes available.

Property manager Yennie Valladares said she continues to receive inquiries from people interested in calling the Mercado Apartments home, and to date estimates that 1,000 people—parents and children—on the waiting list.

"The residents really enjoy living here," Valladares said. "They have waited a long time to find apartments like these."  
Perris Mayor Daryl Busch led a contingent of City staff members at Wednesday's ceremony.

Other dignitaries included City Councilwoman Rita Rogers and Councilman Mark Yarbrough; City Clerk Judy Haughney; Planning Commissioners Dwayne Hammond and Jose Marin; Public Safety Commissioner Joseph Dapice; City Manager Richard Belmudez; Assistant City Manager Ron Carr and Deputy City Manager Darren Madkin.

"This project is just outstanding," Busch said. "I am exceptionally pleased with what we have done at the Mercado. It is tremendous housing for low and moderate-income residents. This is a nice facility where people can become part of the community. This it is something we can be proud of for a long time."

The Mercado represents one of the City's last redevelopment projects, begun before the state of California killed off those agencies in an attempt to ease its own financial crisis.

Busch said the City would like to build Phase II of the complex next to the existing apartments but faces additional funding challenges without redevelopment. Still, he said the City's commitment to complete affordable housing remains undaunted and predicted Perris officials and their partners would find some way to get the next phase built.

"We are committed to doing everything we can to make this the best possible City for all our residents," Busch said. "Our City has done a terrific job during these difficult economic times. We have accomplished a lot."

Ana Cabrales, 36, told the audience which also included apartment representatives and dignitaries from the construction team and project developer, said she and her family were living in a trailer before moving into their two-bedroom apartment at the Mercado. Winters were drafty inside the trailer; summers hot. Chickens roamed outside.

Obtaining an apartment at the Mercado proved a godsend to her family, Cabrales told City officials and others who attended the official opening.

"Because of you, a family like ours can live in dignity," said Cabrales, who lives with her husband, Ramon, and 11-year-old daughter and 2-year-old son. "We are really happy to be here. There are plenty of families like ours who are struggling in the current economy. We are very pleased to live here."

The City broke ground in October 2010 on the 60-unit \$14-million Mercado Apartments, which include many upgrades, like energy-efficient appliances, recessed lighting, granite countertops.

The complex also features a swimming pool, already well in use, barbecue islands, laundry-mats on each floor, a game room, and theatre-seating in a television viewing room. Solar panels add to the energy efficiency of the complex.

The site of a park across the street from the complex has been cleared in preparation of future building. Some amenities seem almost unique to the Mercado, including after-school tutoring and English-as-a-second-language classes.

The Mercado Apartments features one, two and three-bedroom units ranging from 849 to 1,115-square feet. Because they are considered affordable housing, rents generally are below market value, ranging from \$422 to \$829 per month.

To ensure the success of the project, City officials forged a relationship with a private developer, the Agoura Hills-based AMCAL Multi-Housing and Las Palmas Foundation, which along with the defunct-redevelopment agency provided the funding for the Mercado Apartments.

The Mercado Apartments feature Mediterranean-style architecture. Views from third-floor balconies provide panoramic looks at much of the City.

Project manager Matthew Segerdal said the apartments are "rich in amenities, design and character" and will improve the lives of the people who live there. He said that without City help, the project would never have gotten off the drawing board.

"This is something special," he said.

The dedication of the Mercado Apartments continues the renaissance of Perris' historic D Street corridor. Many existing D Street buildings have received new exterior facades, part of a City renovation project. Perris officials recently cut the ribbon on a new senior/teen center and broke ground on the \$28-million Perris Station Apartments, an 84-unit complex for senior citizens.

The exterior of the art deco Perris Theatre has been renovated and the Bank of Perris building reborn as a City archive. City Manager Belmudez said Perris planners and building officials are working hard for several years to complete the renovations on D Street, a two-mile thoroughfare vibrant with commerce long before the City incorporated in 1911. The Mercado Apartments marks the completion of the first new project in that ongoing effort.

"It's one thing to rehabilitate an existing building and restore its character," he said. "But a new building creates its own character."

Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough noted that the City began as a railway stop for trains that ran parallel to D Street. What was old is new again, he said.

"The City literally was born within blocks of this location," Yarbrough said. "This project addresses a huge need for affordable housing. It's a great place for families and it will only get better when the park is built. It is within walking distance of an elementary and middle school and our new teen center. It anchors the south end of D Street."

City Councilwoman Rogers said many Perris families would benefit from more projects like the Mercado.

"Our demographics show we need more affordable housing," Rogers said. "I look forward to more of these types of projects in our community."

Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans called the Mercado Apartments "one of the finest things we've accomplished in Perris, adding "so many families need a decent place to live where they can raise their family." Evans said that teamwork among the City Council, administration and staff provided the necessary combination to bring the Mercado to reality.

"I am proud of the team we have that is able to make things happen," she said.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch addresses the crowd Wednesday at the official opening of the 60-unit, \$14-million Mercado Apartments: "This is something we can be proud of for a long time."



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch receives a framed picture of the Mercado Apartments from Percival Vaz, Chief Executive Officer of AMCAL Multi-Housing.



Mercado Apartment resident Ana Cabrales, 36, said she and her family lived in a trailer before moving to the complex.



An exterior view of the Mercado Apartments at 832 D Street.



Perris City Manager Richard Belmudez said Perris officials are working hard to renovate historic D Street and that the Mercado Apartments are a vital part of that effort.