



Perris Press Release

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Perris Auto Speedway lands Turkey Night Grand Prix

The Perris Auto Speedway will host the 72nd running of the Turkey Night Grand Prix—the oldest and one of the most prestigious midget races in the country—this Thanksgiving.

The upcoming event marks the first time in 16 years that Turkey Night will take place on a dirt track, considered the only racing surface by many traditional open-wheel fans. The Perris Auto Speedway hosted that event in 1996.

For the last 13 years, Turkey Night has been held at the paved Irwindale Speedway, which closed earlier this year amid declining crowds and sponsorships.

Track promoter Don Kazarian and race promoter J.C. Agajanian Jr. made the announcement during an intermission in Saturday's sprint car racing program.

They said the return of the race first held in 1934 is sure to elevate the City of Perris and the Perris Auto Speedway in the eyes of the racing community.

"It will put this area on the map for the rest of the country," Agajanian said. "This facility is a class act."

Agajanian, whose family has promoted the event since the 1950s, said several race tracks in California and Arizona offered to host the race but Perris was the only one he seriously considered. The half-mile Perris Auto Speedway is considered one of the finest short-track ovals in the country and routinely attracts visitors from all over the country and as far away as Australia.

"There was no choice, there was no decision, Perris was it," Agajanian said. "Perris is the center of racing in Southern California. There was no choice but to bring this race to Perris."

Within minutes of the announcement, midget car fans from several states who had been watching Saturday's race on the Internet, emailed the track to let them know they would be spending Thanksgiving 2012 in Perris.

Agajanian said the Turkey Night Grand Prix began in 1934 and was promoted by the AAA and the Southern California real estate industry as a way to attract people stuck in the snowy mid-west and East Coast in November.

Over the decades nine different racetracks have hosted the Thanksgiving night show and legends of the sport-- Bill Vukovich , A.J. Foyt, Parnelli Jones and Tony Stewart—are among the greats who've won Turkey Night. For decades, the grand prix was 100 laps in length but that was shortened to 98 a few years ago in honor of J.C. Agajanian Sr., who fielded No. 98 cars at Indianapolis and other legendary speedways from the 1950s to 1970s.

Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough said he was delighted when the news was announced. He said the City of Perris wants to become a premiere destination for recreational activities by 2015. Developing motorsports is a key component of that goal. The City works closely with the speedway to promote the track's annual July 4 Independence Day program.

"This is the Super Bowl, the World Series, the NBA finals and the Stanley Cup rolled into one and put on wheels," he said. "I am delighted to see this incredibly important race come to Perris. I can't think of a better venue. I know the people who come out on Thanksgiving night will not be disappointed."

Agajanian thanked the City for supporting the speedway and singled out the City Council for doing so.

"City support is crucial," he said.

PAS promoter Kazarian said tickets to the Nov. 22 Turkey Night Grand Prix went on sale Monday. For more information about the event, visit the speedway website at www.perrisautospeedway.com



Legendary midget-car promoter J.C. Agajanian Jr. and Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough are all smiles after the announcement that the Turkey Night Grand Prix will be returning to the Perris Auto Speedway.