



Perris Opens New Downtown Public Safety Complex

The opening of Perris' new fire station and emergency operations center Tuesday provided the opportunity to look forward while reflecting on the past.

Perris officials and Riverside County firefighters cut the ribbon on the Downtown Public Safety Complex, a \$4 million complex that reaffirms the City's commitment to top-flight public safety and continues the transformation of the community's historic corridor. As planned, the ceremony took place on the 11th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and the memory of that terrible day resonated throughout the opening of City of Perris Public Safety/Fire Station No. 1.

City Manager Richard Belmudez said Perris chose the anniversary to remind everyone of the heroism displayed by firefighters and emergency personnel on Sept. 11 and in the days that followed.

"It's a very significant day in our country's history and for our City," Belmudez said. "On that day you saw the worst of human nature and in some aspects you saw the best of human nature."

Riverside County Fire Chief John Hawkins told the crowd of about 100 to "let there be no doubt—today, 11 years later, we stand tall as Americans." Hawkins noted that of the nearly 3,000 people killed in the attacks at the World Trade Center in New York, 343 were firefighters.

"God bless America, we are proud to be here today," Hawkins said.

Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans, a retired firefighter, led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance and in a moment of silence that followed, saying it is important to remember "those who were lost this day."

"May their souls rest in peace," Evans said.

As part of the ceremony, firefighters hoisted the American flag to the top of the station's flagpole, then lowered it to half-staff in commemoration of the 2001 attacks. A bugler played taps.

City, county, fire department and elected state officials praised Perris for bringing the new public safety complex from ground-breaking to ribbon-cutting in just 13 months. Perris officials worked under a tight deadline to fund the project with money from the City's former redevelopment agency, which the state later eliminated to help balance its budget.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch thanked City staff and architects for working together and creating a first-class facility despite the time pressures and for dedicating it on a day that few Americans will forget.

"Most of us



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch accepts a certificate of appreciation from State Assemblyman Jeff Miller, R-Corona, and State Senator Bill Emmerson, R-Hemet, both who supported the new public safety complex.

remember what happened that day," Busch said. "So it is special to be dedicating this facility on this day."

The public safety complex at 105 South F Street contains the latest in resource-saving technology, including skylights that take advantage of natural lighting, drought-resistant landscaping and solar carports that provide 8 percent of its electricity. The new center also boasts energy-efficient appliances, toilets and windows.

The new fire station/EOC takes the place of a much-older station that is hemmed in by narrow streets, homes, businesses, churches and a school and provides easier access to major thoroughfares like Perris Boulevard, D Street and Fourth Street. It is close to a newly renovated shopping center, Interstate 215, the historic Depot and Bank of Perris buildings, City Hall, Police Headquarters, the recently completed Mercado Apartments and under-construction Perris Station Apartments.

"This is a great addition to our City," Busch said. "It will improve our response times to fires, medical emergencies and traffic accidents and it will be a great place for our firefighters to work."

The 8,296-square foot facility includes two bays for fire engines and trucks, while allowing for future expansion should that become necessary. It also includes living quarters for the station's battalion chief, captains and firefighters—both men and women. There's also a weight room, kitchen and a laundry. The public entrance is on F Street.

In addition to the fire station, the new complex includes 560-square foot maintenance garage and the 1,200-square-foot emergency operations center.

The new EOC replaces a smaller facility in the City's Senior Center and includes radios and laptop computers for up to 12 first responders to crises like fires, floods and earthquakes. The center also includes high-speed Internet, cable television and a conference room. In the event of a major emergency, City officials and first responders would use the center to coordinate Perris' response.

Should the power go out, the center's backup generators will activate.

Mayor Pro-Tem Al Landers said the new fire station/emergency operations center "continues the resurrection of Downtown Perris."

In recent years, the City has renovated a major shopping center on Fourth Street, completed work on a new interchange at Interstate 215 and Fourth Street, opened the new Mercado Apartments for low-income residents, begun construction on the Perris Station Apartments for seniors and renovated the Bank of Perris, Depot and art deco Perris Theatre.

Landers said the new complex will greatly enhance public safety in Perris, the City's top priority.

"As we grow, we need to continue to improve our public safety and this new fire station and emergency operations center shows our commitment," Landers said. "Perris continues to be a progressive and aggressive City."



The new public safety complex includes bays for two engines and space to expand in the future.

Councilwoman Evans called completion of the new Downtown fire station the single most significant accomplishment in her four years on the Council. She said that when not in use during an actual emergency, the EOC will provide a great venue for training first-responders and citizen volunteers who want to help out. Combined with the new fire station, the complex promises to become another jewel for Perris.

"It's a tremendous thing for the City," she said. "Firefighters are pretty excited about it. Everybody wants to be assigned to the new station."

Evans was on duty when the terror attacks occurred and assisted the local Urban Search and Rescue team that was dispatched to New York to search for survivors. She was on duty when the team returned.

"It was quite emotional," she said.

Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough said he also believes dedicating the new fire station/EOC is the perfect way to honor public-safety workers, first responders and members of the armed forces. He said the dedication was personal for him too. His son, Schuyler, serves with the Marines while daughter, Andrea, is with the Army in Germany.

City Councilwoman Rita Rogers said completing the project in a tough economy shows Perris continues its commitment to keep moving ahead.

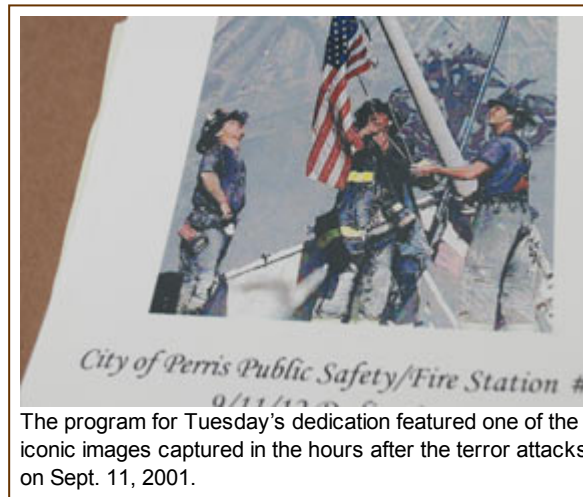
"We continue to move, we continue to advance and we continue to thrive," Rogers said. "We get results."



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch, City Clerk Judy Haughney, City Councilwoman Rita Rogers, City Councilwoman Joanne Evans, City Manager Richard Belmudez and City Councilman Mark Yarbrough stand in front of a large American flag supported by two fire engines as part of the opening of the City's \$4 million public safety complex.



Members of a Cal Fire honor guard lower the flag to half staff during the dedication of the new fire station/emergency operations center at 105 South F Street.



The program for Tuesday's dedication featured one of the iconic images captured in the hours after the terror attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch cuts the ribbon officially opening the new public safety complex. Standing next to him are Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers and Councilwoman Joanne Evans.