



Perris Press Release

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Perris Receives Helen Putnam Award for Enchanted Heights Outreach

League of California Cities representatives officially presented the City of Perris with the Helen Putnam Award won for its public outreach program that resulted in a new sewer system for the disadvantaged community of Enchanted Heights.

League representatives previously announced that Perris was the recipient of the Helen Putnam Award for Intergovernmental Cooperation for working with four regional and state partners to fund the \$15-million sewer project.

Perris officials were recognized in September at the League's annual conference in San Diego for winning the award and created a multi-media display explaining how the project went from drawing board to reality.

Last week, Erin Sasse, the League's regional public affairs manager, presented Perris City Manager Richard Belmudez and Assistant City Manager Ron Carr with the plaque that accompanies the Putnam award. Sasse praised the City for "the great work you have done" to alleviate potential public health concerns caused by leaking and outdated septic tanks.

Appearing with Sasse was Laurie Lofranco, an account executive for Keenan and Associates, a League partner who said the City of Perris' Enchanted Heights resulted in more efficient government and represents a creative solution to a vexing problem. Keenan and Associates provides insurance brokerage and consulting services.

In early 2011, City officials began an intense public outreach program to gain support for the new sewers in Enchanted Heights, a disadvantaged community largely made up of Spanish-speaking residents. The outreach effort included meeting with individual residents and their children, who eventually passed out flyers explaining the sewer project. City officials also met with small groups of residents on weekends and later helped organized a series of public hearings, which were attended by hundreds. The City's public information and information technology departments prepared press releases and PSA videos in English and Spanish.

The result: overwhelming support for the sewer project, which began in August 2011 and is slated for completion in mid-2013. The City is working with Riverside County, Eastern Municipal Water District, the California Department of Public Health and the State Water Resources Control Board to bring sewers to the 446-residences in Enchanted Heights.

Carr said the City's efforts succeeded because Perris officials realized that Enchanted Heights was "more than just a sewer project—it was a public outreach effort."

Belmudez thanked City staff who worked on the project and said "it is a great thrill to win this award."



Erin Sasse (third from right), of the League of California Cities, presents the Helen Putnam Award for Intergovernmental Cooperation to Perris City Manager Richard Belmudez and Assistant City Manager Ron Carr. With Sasse is Laurie Lofranco, of Keenan Associates, a league partner.