



Perris Press Release

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Annual Multi-Cultural Festival is a Day of Fun and Celebration

The City's recent Multi-Cultural Festival was a fun-filled day that included dancing, visitors from Perris' sister city in Mexico, the appearance of cowboys and their horses and an open-air religious service that drew hundreds of people.

The fifth annual festival celebrated the rich diversity of Perris' population, including the many countries of Central and South America that contribute to the culture of the City's culture. Those include Mexico, Columbia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama and Brazil.

This year's festival also highlighted 30 years of service to the Perris community by TODEC (Training Occupational Development Educating Communities) Legal Center, which has worked with more than 80,000 immigrants to help them become economically, socially, educationally, and civically self-sufficient while enhancing individual self-esteem.



Members of the Knights of Columbus carry a statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe from Foss Field Park to the Bob Glass Gymnasium, where it went on display during the City of Perris' fifth annual Multi-Cultural Festival.

Perris City Council members Joanne Evans, Rita Rogers and Mark



A charro, or Mexican cowboy, puts his horse through the paces at the recent Perris Multi-Cultural Festival.

Yarbrough attended the festival along with City Clerk Judy Haughney and City Manager Richard Belmudez.

"It is wonderful to celebrate our rich diversity with such a great multi-cultural festival," Rogers said. "It's great to see visitors from our sister city, Cotija, in the state of Michoacan. It's fun to see all the people, the horses and the charros (Mexican cowboys), the music and the festivities. It's a great time with great food and great fellowship."

Evans said she liked the color and pageantry of the festival because "it fosters great community spirit."

"It's a great family atmosphere," she said.

Yarbrough said the historic City Hall Campus provided the ideal forum for the event. There was plenty of space for the visitors and horses and Foss Field Park provided an idyllic setting for the open-air religious service. Priests from Michoacan presided over the service and a statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe was carried from the park to the Bob Glass Gym for public display.

"This campus is the heart of Perris," he said. "We've got a great location, a great facility with plenty of parking and all the accessibility for the TODEC center to share their culture."

Luz Gallegos, daughter of TODEC founder Luz Ayala, said the organization has served 80,000 constituents in the last 30 years. Gallegos noted that Perris in 2012 is celebrating its 101st birthday—making it exactly half as old as the country of Mexico, which in 1810 began its war for independence from Spain.

She said Perris' multi-cultural festival allows natives of other countries to celebrate their heritage while they work to become part of the American fabric.

Carolina Zaragoza, the chief consul at the Consulate of Mexico in San Bernardino, has attended all the previous multi-cultural festivals in Perris.

She said authorities in Cotija have begun exporting tomatoes to California to provide workers jobs in Perris' sister city. In addition, Cotija officials are working on several community improvement projects, including a series of landscaping improvements to spruce up the look and infrastructure of the city.

Zaragoza said she loves coming to Perris because "the City is really engaged with its whole community" and supports Hispanic businesses as they strive for success.

"This is a great community," she said. "They make people feel welcome."



Josias Talavera, 13, of Perris, shows his prowess with a lariat during the City of Perris Multi-Cultural Festival on Sept. 30.



Perris City Council members Rita Rogers, Joanne Evans and Mark Yarbrough took the stage to welcome the participants who gathered at the City Hall Campus.



Members of a youth mariachi band perform during the City of Perris' fifth-annual Multi-Cultural Festival.