



## Perris Press Release

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### Perris Officials Give Local Students Career Insights

Perris elected officials, administrators and department managers took time out from their regular duties to speak to students at Lakeside Middle School, encouraging them to pursue college degrees while answering questions about their job responsibilities. City Councilman Mark Yarbrough, City Manager Richard Belmudez, Housing Manager Sabrina Chavez and Rene Avila, Perris Fire

Marshal and Assistant Director of Development Services, spoke to 22 seventh and eighth-graders as part of the school's career day. The event also featured law officers, military personnel, firefighters, nurses, photographers and lifeguards speaking about their duties and responsibilities.

"Believe it or not, we were once as young as you and sat in those seats," Yarbrough told the students in Amy Rodriguez's classroom. "My advice to you is to get involved in your community, stay in school and never be afraid to ask for help."

Yarbrough graduated from Perris High School and owns two businesses—an auto repair shop and towing company—in addition to his work on the City Council. He said his day jobs give him the chance to work on vehicles, which has been a lifelong passion. He also builds race cars and supports racing at the Perris Auto Speedway, where he is a long-time sponsor.

His job on the City Council also provides another motivation.

"It gives me the opportunity to give back to the Perris community," he said.

Belmudez said his job as City Manager requires him to serve as a conduit between the policy vision of the City Council and the staff members charged with making that vision a reality.

He said part of that vision is to undertake quality planning projects and provide for adequate police and fire protection.

Belmudez said the City already has scored several planning coups in recent years—the renovation of its City Hall campus, the opening this year of the Big League Dreams sports complex and the projected 2013 ribbon cutting of a new aquatics center/water park.

"We are really excited about having this project come to Perris," he said, referring to the aquatics center. "This is your City, you should really participate in all that it has to offer. Stay in school so one day you can take the torch from us."

Chavez said her responsibilities include working with builders to ensure smart, sophisticated and aesthetically pleasing designs. Among the elements she considers: traffic conditions, appropriate landscaping, building design and signage.

"You would not want a Starbucks with a pink sign!" said Chavez, who joined the City about eight years ago after earning a degree from USC.

Avila told the class his work involves some of the more subtle aspects of home and business construction, elements like building foundations, smoke detectors, sprinkler systems and windows large enough to allow people to escape during a fire or other emergency.

Like the other City staffers, Avila urged the students to think beyond high school. Get a college degree, he said. "You'll have more earning power, more opportunities," he said.



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough addresses a class at Lakeside Middle School while City Manager Richard Belmudez, Housing Manager Sabrina Chavez and Assistant Director of Development Services Rene Avila look on.



City Manager Richard Belmudez explains his duties and responsibilities to a class at Lakeside Middle School: "Stay in school so one day you can take the torch from us."