



## Perris Press Release

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### Perris Welcomes New Councilmember Julio Rodriguez

As he prepares to take his spot on the Perris City Council dais, political newcomer Julio Rodriguez said several different thoughts and feelings run through his mind.

Rodriguez, who at 27 is one of the youngest elected City Council officials in the county and possibly the state, said he is "honored and humbled" at his triumph in the November municipal elections, which saw him outpoll the field of City Council candidates.

He's excited and nervous. And he's ready.

Rodriguez was sworn in as a councilmember Tuesday night in a ceremony at Perris City Hall attended by more than 50 family members, friends and supporters. His first official City Council meeting takes place Dec. 11.

Rodriguez said his election resulted from a desire by Perris residents to see a "different kind of candidate" making policy decisions. He's much younger than his council colleagues and is not a current or former business owner—as are the mayor and two council colleagues. He may also have benefitted from a voter-registration drive that targeted younger Latino voters looking for a "fresh voice and fresh perspective."

Perris' population is 71.8 percent Latino, and 61.9 percent of homes speak a language other than English primarily, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

His campaign made extensive use of facebook and other social media to tell voters about himself and encourage them to cast ballots. In the closing days of the campaign, his facebook page attracted 300 views a day and those visitors likely told their families and friends about Rodriguez and his quest for office.

He said his election is not a referendum on the quality of the candidates he beat—especially incumbent Joanne Evans, who he called a great "a great councilwoman."

"I think the electorate wanted a new kind of perspective on the dais," he said. "I am excited for the opportunity to bring further diversity to this council—not only because I am Latino, but because I am 30 years younger than my colleagues.

#### HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Rodriguez grew up in Perris, the son of immigrant parents from Mexico. His mother, Rosa, is one of 15 siblings. His dad, Salvador, works in a chicken-feed mill, rising from a laborer to computer-assisted machine operator. Rodriguez has three sisters; Anna, 25; Marylu, 24, and Karina, 17, a senior at Perris High School.

For years, the family lived in a one-room trailer near Rider and Harvil streets. By day, his dad worked on the property; by night he served as a security guard. Rodriguez slept on the floor. His shoes came from Payless, clothing from clearance racks.

Rodriguez attended Pinacate Middle School and graduated from Perris High School in 2003, earning Student of the Year Honors. As a high-school student, he worked and volunteered at a nursing home in Sun City, earning a paycheck as a food server and acquiring a priceless education in compassion by sitting and chatting with the infirmed elderly.

Following high school, he attended UCLA, graduating with in linguistics. He works as a medical interpreter and teaches catechism to fourth-graders at St. James Catholic Church in Downtown Perris.

Despite his modest roots, Rodriguez said he considers himself to have a lived "a privileged life," learning frugality from his parents, who now own three homes, and kindness from his high-school interactions with senior citizens.

"Life is fleeting," he said. "Always lend a helping hand, even if it's just to have a conversation with a senior citizen."

Rodriguez said he is pleased that the City maintains close to \$10 million in reserves and would not favor exhausting those funds until it can generate more revenue. Toward that end, he said he hopes to see Perris "redouble or retriplate" its efforts to land a new shopping center anchored by restaurants and a store like Trader Joes. He also said he will work with his City Council colleagues to improve sidewalks and create more bicycle lanes so students can travel to and from school.

"I do not want to be provocative or controversial," he said. "I know it will be difficult to attract new businesses, but difficult is not impossible."

#### PRAISE FOR CITY COUNCIL'S VISION

He praised the City for improving its freeway interchanges at Fourth Street and Ramona Expressway, for working to widen Interstate 215 from Scott Road to Nuevo Road and for the many improvements along D Street. Like other council members, he looks forward to the day when Metrolink trains will stop in Perris. He said he also enjoys many of the programs available to Perris residents, like the annual Tree Lighting ceremony, Breakfast with Santa, the Spring Egg Hunt, Movies in the Park, Fall Festival, and especially the parades. He's attended the annual Christmas parade with his family all of his life.

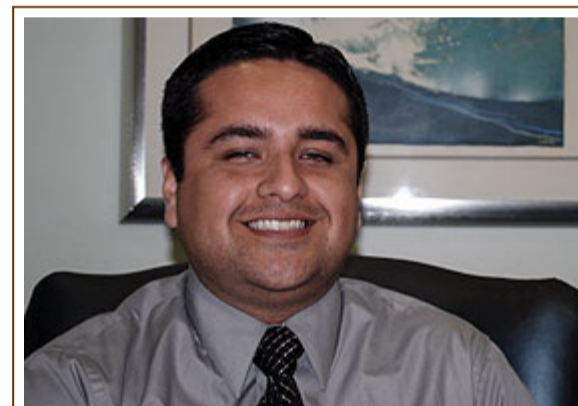
"These are opportunities for the City to provide events to the public that they are thankful and grateful for," he said.

Although new to elected office, Rodriguez said he is a quick study. He researched about 20 years of City records and archives and newspaper clippings about Perris prior to the election and has been familiarizing himself with City Hall since his victory. He said his actions as a Perris City Councilman will be guided by his core principals.

"I stand for equality, compassion and social justice guided by my faith, parents and life in general," he said.



New Perris City Councilman Julio Rodriguez in front of the iconic fountain at the City Hall Campus: "I stand for equality, compassion and social justice guided by my faith, parents and life in general."



New Perris City Councilman Julio Rodriguez grew up in a one-room trailer, learning frugality from his hard-working and thrifty parents, immigrants from Mexico.