



Perris Press Release

Contact: Joe Vargo, Perris Public Information Officer
Phone: 951-956-2120
jvargo@cityofperris.org

Enchanted Heights Outreach Wins Award of Excellence

Southern California municipal officials have honored the City of Perris for its innovative and successful public outreach effort to bring a new sewer system to the disadvantaged community of Enchanted Heights.

The City also received a shout-out from the keynote speaker who addressed hundreds of city administrators and executive staff members during a conference in Rancho Mirage, saying that Perris is leading the way in its outreach to disadvantaged communities.

"It blows my mind that a city is getting an innovation award," said Larry Broughton, a former Army Special Forces member who now operates a string of successful hotels and serves as a motivational speaker.

"That just doesn't happen."

Broughton told the assembled crowd that they should study the example set by Perris and follow it.

"You need to ask yourself, what is the City of Perris doing that we're not doing?"



A close-up of the Organizational Excellence Award presented to the City of Perris for its outreach in Enchanted Heights.



Clay Curtin of the Municipal Managers Association of Southern California presents the organization's award for Organizational Excellence to Perris Assistant City Manager Ron Carr and Maria Elena Kennedy, the City's community liaison to Enchanted Heights.

Broughton said.

The Municipal Managers Association of Southern California presented Assistant City Manager Ron Carr with its 2012 Organizational Excellence Award for the City's year-long public education program to convince Enchanted Heights residents to allow contractors on their property to replace leaking septic tanks with a state-of-the-art sewer system.

The City partnered with Eastern Municipal Water District, the County of Riverside, the California Department of Public Health and the State Water Resources Commission and secured \$15-million in grants to fund the new sewer system. Work on the main sewer lines already has begun and construction to hook the 446-residences in Enchanted Heights to the system will begin in the next several months.

Carr led a team of Perris staff members who attended the awards ceremony.

Those included Maria Elena Kennedy, the City's point person on the project; IT manager Arturo Cervantes and contractor Marden De Castro, who specializes in graphic arts. De Castro and Cervantes created a webpage and a series of public service announcements in English and Spanish about the Enchanted Heights project.

"The award is a great honor, but I'm particularly gratified at how the City and its partners--EMWD, Riverside County, and the residents themselves, have collaborated to make this project a reality," Carr said. "Special credit also goes to the City Council and City Manager who have been especially supportive throughout the progress of the project." Kennedy called receiving the award an "amazing achievement for the City of Perris."

"It reaffirms the commitment the City of Perris has to Enchanted Heights residents," she said. "It was a very challenging situation filled with potential pitfalls. The outreach effort shows how communications in disadvantaged communities should be conducted. It is a model for the state of California. I applaud the City of Perris for its commitment to communicate with residents of a disadvantaged community in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner."

After finishing his remarks, Broughton chatted with Perris representatives, telling them that their approach in Enchanted Heights is one that builds trust and respect.

"Leadership is about building trust, articulating your vision and moving on," said Broughton, who served with the 82nd Airborne Division while in the Army. "Innovation comes from a team approach that speaks to the mindset of your entire community. Most cities try to force people into following. That's not leadership. Leadership is about trust."

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch said he was pleased the City has been recognized but wanted to thank Perris' partners at the local, regional and state level for their cooperation, without which the sewers would not be possible.

"It's a great project and we are pleased we are able to accomplish it," Busch said. "We are working with our partners to make it happen."

The Municipal Managers Association of Southern California is composed of more than 550 members representing local governments serving an estimated 15 million residents. The membership is composed of City Executives, Human Resources Directors, Analysts, Graduate Students, Interns, Executive Recruiters, Private Sector Consultants, Non-Profit Managers, County Administrators, and Special District professionals representing local governments within a nine-county area of Southern California.



The City team that made the award possible: Graphic artist Marden De Castro, Assistant City Manager Ron Carr, Maria Elena Kennedy and IT Manager Arturo Cervantes. Former special forces member Larry Broughton, the keynote speaker at the awards ceremony, is pictured between Kennedy and Cervantes.