



Perris News

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Maintenance and Improvements Reduce Flood Damage

The City of Perris has devoted considerable time and millions of dollars to building new roads and bridges, improving existing streets, cleaning and expanding drainage ditches and canals and constructing detention basins—all with the goal of reducing flooding during heavy rains.

Those efforts paid off handsomely during the recent series of storms that dumped almost eight inches of rain in two weeks.

Although a stretch of San Jacinto Avenue was damaged because the deluge undermined the road's base, the other traditional problem areas came through the storms in excellent fashion.

"Our staff did a great job," said Public Works Manager Daryl Hartwill. "We fared very well."

Hartwill said Public Works staff was out in force, placing barricades along San Jacinto and a portion of Ethanac Road that did flood as well as placing warning signs on stretches of other streets where rain runoff flowed across the pavement.

In addition, City workers and contractors quickly repaired hundreds of small potholes caused by the storm, using more than 40 tons of aggregate to fill them.

Perris has committed more than \$6 million to help reduce flooding over the short and long term. In anticipation of the rainy season, the City allocated \$100,000 to clear storm drains and clean catch basins, channels and storm pipes.

Major renovations took place at the Avocado Channel near Perris Boulevard and Orange Avenue and at the Evans Channel at Evans Road and Citrus Avenue. As part of the annual clean-up, nearly 600,000 pounds—300 tons—of rocks, mud, trash and vegetation was removed from catch basins and drainage canals throughout Perris.

"Our maintenance program has two major goals," said Capital Improvement Project Manager Michael Morales.

"(Those include) protecting residents and property from powerful flood water during major rain events and removing the tons of pollution deposited into the storm drain system everyday from run-off from parking lots, roadways and minor rainfalls, in order to protect the water supply in and around Perris."

The City has also undertaken a years-long plan to control flooding and improve rain runoff.

Perris continues with its slurry seal program, a multi-million effort funded by gas taxes and Measure A money, enables the City to apply new layers of asphalt and sealant to prevent potholes and preserve roadway integrity. The City also has constructed a series of detention basins to trap runoff and keep it from undermining Perris roadways.

Detention basins were constructed at several City parks, including Metz, Morgan and Paragon and provide dual benefits to Perris by providing widely-used recreational facilities and flood-control basins.

Other long-term construction efforts include building a new bridge over the San Jacinto River at Orange Avenue, more than doubling the width of Orange Avenue at the river, excavating the channel to improve water flow and repaving the roadway. Nearby streets like Evans Road and Nuevo Road were repaved and engineers constructed a new concrete-lined flood control channel to replace the former dirt channel along Nuevo between Murrieta Road and

El Nido Avenue, which often clogged with debris caused by runoff.

That \$5 million project, paid for through developer fees negotiated by the City, has greatly reduced flooding in the City's east side. City engineers say the upgrades will keep roads open even during a 100-year-flood.

Near Goetz and Mapes roads on the City's south side, work finished last year on newly installed drainage pipes and an improved floodwater channel near the world-renowned Perris Valley Airport, a mecca for skydivers the world over. The \$533,000 upgrade, paid in full by revenues and transportation funds dedicated to funding road improvements, proved its worth in this season's storms.

The intersection took on some water but remained passable even during the worst of the rains. Other flood-plagued thoroughfares, like Goetz, Mapes, Perris Boulevard, Rider Street and Ramona Expressway, also remained open to traffic.

Mayor Daryl Busch said he spoke to representatives of other cities, which were swamped by widespread flooding and reports of motorists being stranded. That did not happen in Perris.

"We have a plan in place, we are implementing it and it is working," he said. "It is a comprehensive approach and it is paying off. The fruits of our labor are paying off during this rainy season. We had only minor flooding."

Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough said Perris faces challenges in controlling rain runoff simply because of its geography. Much of the City is flat and water tends to pool. Conditions are made worse by March Air Reserve Base and from Interstate 215, which sit on higher ground and were designed to channel flood runoff to lower areas.

"We are constantly looking for solutions," Yarbrough said. "It's a challenging issue but we are committed to maintaining and improving our roads whenever and wherever possible. It's a matter of smart planning and budgeting. If you take care of them, roads can go a long, long way."

City Councilman Al Landers thanked Perris employees for "responding with foresight" to the recent rains and for setting out a long-term vision to address flood-related issues.

"The City staff has spent many hours upgrading the drainage and flood-control systems," Landers said. "Thanks to them, we did not see a lot of flooding. We continue to work on problems and do our best to solve them. We continually think about ways to not only maintain the system, but to upgrade them. We are doing our best."