



Perris Press Release

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Perris Parade Perseveres

Rain, winds and even hail could not prevent the 10th Annual Black History Month Parade from taking place in Perris last weekend—and the people who came out said their enthusiasm wasn't dimmed despite the trying conditions.

About 30 entries, including a stagecoach wagon, equestrian units, marching bands and dance groups braved the wintry conditions to make the parade successful.

The theme of the 2011 parade was "Lifting Up the City of Perris," most appropriate since this also is the year Perris celebrates 100 years since incorporation as a municipality.

Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers said the black community has played a long and vibrant role in the City's history, through churches, arts and entertainment and military service. Hollywood legend Clarence Muse battle racial stereotypes during a 50-year career and called Perris home for much of it.

Perris Valley residents Gilbert and Yolanda Williams are spear-heading efforts to honor the Buffalo Soldiers with a monument at Riverside National Cemetery. Buffalo Soldiers, black troops sent out west to build roads, bridges and string telegraph wire, opened the American frontier to thousands of settlers at the end of the 19th Century.

"It is very vital that we celebrate all of our rich culture," Rogers said. "Black families have been here for many, many years and are a vital part of our community. Here in the City of Perris we celebrate each and every one of our cultures and it is wonderful that we have the commitment to celebrate that rich heritage."

Rogers spoke about parade grand marshal Andre Mitchell, a Los Angeles police officer who helped bring after-school sports and mentoring programs to Perris, programs now used by hundreds of youngsters and teen-agers. Those programs, which include football, boxing, martial arts and cheerleading, provide positive role models for many children from single-parent families.

"He's the kind of man who gives and gives and gives," Rogers said of Mitchell. "He is a special guy."

Conditions were blustery as the parade made its way from the American Legion Post on D Street to City Hall. At one point, fine pellets of hail fell from the sky but the dancers, marching bands and dignitaries who took part in the festivities went about their business without missing a beat.

"Rain or shine, here we come," said Perris Mayor Daryl Busch. "Black history is very important to us and our community and we are proud to celebrate it today, despite the weather."

Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Joanne Evans said the City is extremely diverse and that it honors each of its communities.

"We need to honor each and every one of us," she said. "And besides, a parade is always fun."

After the parade, hundreds of people gathered in the Bob Glass Gymnasium for an expo, which included art projects submitted by Perris middle and high-school students. The artwork drawings, painting and paper mache projects celebrating black history and culture.

Domonique Lipscomb, a member of the Perris Youth Council who helped organize the art expo, said the exhibit provides young and talented students a forum to display their work.

Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough said that despite the weather, the crowds who took part in the parade and expo expressed their appreciation for the City's art, culture, history and diversity.

"Everything we do in the City of Perris is special," he said. "Because this is our centennial, everything we do this year is extra special."



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch greets the crowd that gathered along D Street for the City's 10th annual Black History Month Parade.



Members of a military honor guard marched in the parade.



Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers and City Clerk Judy Haughney took part in the parade despite the rainy and cold weather.



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough drove a classic car in the parade.