



Perris Press Release

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Small Business Summit Reaches a Wide Audience

Representatives of 200 small businesses across Southern California came to Perris Tuesday to learn how they can navigate the federal bureaucracy and land contracts to help their companies grow and prosper.

The first annual Small Business Summit, held throughout the City Hall Campus, was a team effort between the City of Perris, the Perris Valley Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Southwest Veterans' Business Resource Center.

The Center, which opened last year in an office provided by the City for \$1 a year, serves as a clearinghouse of resources for military veterans to create and expand their corporations. Officials at the Resource Center say Perris was chosen for the summit because the City businesses have traditionally failed to use their resources to land government contracts.

Retired Marine Albert Renteria, the founder and CEO of the Southwest Veterans' Business Resource Center, said Perris has been designated a "hub zone" in hopes that more businesses will relocate to the City and vie for government contracts and services.

Renteria said a wide variety of businesses took part in the summit, including healthcare, financial printing, real estate, environmental and video production. Representatives of the Marine Corps, the Veterans Administration, schools and cities also attended.

Workshops included ways to successfully market on the Internet, financing one's own business, tips about how to operate a home-based business and how to find contracts on which to bid.

Renteria said the Veterans Resource Center is grateful for the City's assistance in making the initial Small Business Summit happen.

"Without the City of Perris, we would not be here," Renteria said.

Mike Cleary, who served in the Air Force from 1956 to 1964 and now works for a Perris printing company, said he picked up some useful tips about Internet marketing.

"Internet marketing creates relationships without travel and related expenses," Cleary said.

Not everyone who attended was a veteran. Organizers said plenty of non-military types came to Perris to learn ways of sifting through what can be a daunting maze of regulations and agencies to achieve business profitability.

Perris resident Tim Rodgers, a leathersmith, said he learned a few good tips about how to market a business internationally. Every U.S. embassy abroad, has a marketing officer whose job includes helping American firms target their products to the local population. American embassies also provide information about what sorts of U.S. commodities are popular in countries overseas.

Ted Norton, CEO of the Perris Valley Chamber of Commerce, said he believes the time is right for Perris to become a hub of businesses, both veteran and non-veteran, and a place where commerce thrives. Norton said Perris is centrally located in the Inland Empire, with easy access to Interstate 215, Highway 74 and Interstate 15. The City soon will be serviced by rail service as well.

Norton said he would like the Small Business Summit to become an annual event in Perris.

"People are excited about Perris," Norton said. "It's time for us to blossom."



Former Marine Albert Renteria, the founder and CEO of the Southwest Veterans Business Resource Center, leads a discussion about Internet marketing during Wednesday's Small Business Summit in Perris.



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