



# Perris Press Release

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## Perris National Night Out an Unqualified Success

More than 1,500 Perris residents came to the community block party to learn more about public safety services provided by the City and to learn how they can help prevent crime in their neighborhoods.

The 30th "National Night Out" included police and fire department demonstrations, an appearance by McGruff the Crime Dog and the Perris Mounted Posse and plenty of volunteers eager to show visitors how they could join the City's Citizens Patrol, Neighborhood Watch, Police Explorer Program and other community-based programs.

Perris Police Chief James McElvain stayed cool throughout the warm event by getting wet in a dunk tank. He called the City's National Night Out event at City Hall an unqualified success.

"This gives residents a chance to see everything we do," McElvain said. "It brings everything we do to one location."

Fire engines and ladder trucks were on display. So were police cruisers, motorcycles, off-road vehicles and Humvees used by the Special Enforcement Team, traffic officers and the Bomb Disposal unit.

There were information booths about gang- prevention efforts. Perris Mayor Daryl Busch, Mayor Pro-Tem Joanne Evans, City Manager Richard Belmudez and members of the Public Safety Commission attended.

Dozens of people watched demonstrations from a police dog and firefighters, who practiced and extrication from a wrecked car.

Rudy, the four-year-old Belgian Malinois worked with police officers Matt Cramer and Kenneth Guilford to demonstrate how canines subdue and hold suspected criminals. Guilford, playing the part of a bad guy, put on a protective sleeve over his arm while Cramer barked order to the dog. When commanded Rudy sprinted toward Guilford and clamped on to the sleeve, immobilizing the officer.

During the fire department extrication, firefighters used saws and the "jaws of life" to pop open doors and cut off the roof of a damaged car to simulate pulling a victim to safety.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch called the National Night Out "as great annual event" made even better in 2011 as Perris is celebrating its Centennial. The City is in the midst of a year-long outreach to its residents. City workers and volunteers, as they have at every Perris-sponsored event this year, handed out goodies and answered questions about recreational and community programs during the National Night Out.

"This gives our residents a chance to see what police and fire departments are and who they are," Busch said. "It does a lot to build community spirit and lets people get acquainted with one another."

Mayor Pro-Tem Evans called National Night Out a "good family fun day" that allows Perris residents to learn more about their community.

"The more they come out, the more they'll get to know our City," Evans said.

City Councilman Mark Yarbrough provided a car used in the fire department demonstration. He said it is important for the public to see police and firefighters up close because public safety is the largest item in Perris' budget. He said that Perris leaders are committing to supporting public safety and praised the City's nearly 10 percent decrease in major crimes in the last year.

"People need to see what their tax dollars buy," Yarbrough said. "I believe we cannot do enough outreach to the public. I think our results verify that we are investigating wisely in our resources."

City Manager Belmudez said the get-together provided a chance for residents to ask questions to police, firefighters and public safety providers, learn about what sorts of careers they offer and decide if they want to volunteer with those departments or take part in a Neighborhood Watch or similar type program.

"It's really a great event," Belmudez said.

Those sentiments were expressed by Perris residents Rochelle Bernarte and Kelly Hillig. They came to watch the demonstrations and learn more about public safety in their City.

"It's a great outreach program," Bernarte said. "I had no idea the Perris Police had a mounted horse patrol. I learned a lot."

Hillig said she wanted to likes to familiarize herself with the people "who help our community." She came to the National Night Out with her daughter, Emily, 11.

"We just like to come out and see what's going on in our community," Kelly Hillig said. "There's a lot of interesting and fun events going on in Perris. The City has grown a lot and just keeps getting better and better. It keeps improving."



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch (right) was interviewed on camera about the City's National Night Out effort.



Perris Police Chief James McElvain gets dunked during the National Night Out.



Perris firefighters practiced extricating a victim trapped inside a damaged car during the National Night Out at Perris City Hall.



Perris Public Safety Commissioner Jennifer Bieger dropped by a City volunteer booth to chat with residents.



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough stopped by the National Night Out event and said hello to some local police officers.