



# Perris Press Release

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## Perris Posse Volunteers Provide Service to the Community

Members of the Perris Posse rode their horses to a recent City Council meeting to formally introduce themselves to elected officials and volunteer their services at community events in the coming months.

Members of the posse have taken part in City-sponsored parades and at events like the annual Snow Day and Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony, the time capsule ceremony on Perris' 100th birthday in May and recent National Night Out Against Crime.

They also provide crowd control at events and take part in searching for missing hikers.

But they said want to be even busier in the future and offered to provide assistance at shopping centers over the holidays and visit schools to talk about their community service.

"We want to expand our reach in the Perris community," said Linda Hughes, who addressed the City Council at its most recent meeting. "We have a real sense of accomplishment about our work and we want to do more of it. We are definitely looking to expand."

Hughes said volunteers on horses can see over much greater distances than police on foot or in a squad car. The added vision allows them, for instance, to see burglars breaking into vehicles in large commercial parking lots and lets them respond quickly.

"We are a highly visible deterrent to potential troublemakers," she said.

Horses are great ice breakers with crowds too. During the National Night Out, posse volunteers were stopped by hundreds of children and adults who wanted photos with the horses.

The Perris Posse boasts seven members, all experienced equestrians. They spend their own time working with their horses on training. They provide their own tack and trailers and receive no pay from the City for their efforts.

Linda Hughes works with her horse, April, a Tennessee Walker mare. She was accompanied to the City Council meeting by her husband, Ron, and his horse, Nifty, and fellow posse members Shannon Rolland and Christina Wood.

Perris Police Sgt. Danny Lingo, who is working with the posse, said the costs can be significant. Taking part in an event that lasts one or two hours, he said, can often involve a half day's travel and expense.

"These folks do this on their own time," Lingo said.

The program also enjoys the support of Perris Police Chief James McElvain, who called it "another opportunity to get involved and volunteer."

The group received a much-needed boost with the assistance of City Councilman Mark Yarbrough, who was able to obtain a \$2,500 private donation for use by the volunteers. Yarbrough said the donation came from a horse-lover who wanted to make sure at least some of the posse's expenses are covered.

Yarbrough called the volunteer posse "a powerful tool for fighting crime" and praised them for their efforts in supporting uniformed Perris police.

"They take high-profile to another level," he said. "It's a great program and we're hopefully going to see it expanded. We'll be able to build upon it. It's a great tool for law enforcement."

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch temporarily adjourned the meeting so he and other members of the City Council could step outside, meet other posse volunteers and get a photo with the horses. He said he appreciated the volunteers' willingness to raise their visibility throughout Perris.

"We surely appreciate it that you are keeping us better informed about what you do," he said. "We hope you can take part in more activities in Perris in the future."

Perris City Councilman Al Landers said he thinks the City should help posse members defray some of costs associated with their work.

"We need to help with their expenses," he said.

Mayor Pro-Tem Joanne Evans told members of the posse: "You guys do a phenomenal job."

More information about the Perris Volunteer Posse is available by calling the Perris Police Department at 951-210-1000.



Perris Posse volunteer Linda Hughes with some of the awards the volunteer group has received from the City of Perris.



Perris City Manager Richard Belmudez chatted with posse volunteer Shannon Rolland, who came to the City Council meeting on her horse, Knight.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch thanked the posse for their spirit and commitment to the City.



The Perris Posse says they want to increase their presence in the community.



Perris Posse volunteer Christina Wood appeared at the City Council on her horse, Just a Montana Jingle.