



Perris Press Release

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Perris Honored For Preserving Historically Significant Buildings

The City of Perris was honored Sunday by the Old Riverside Foundation for its continuing commitment to preserving and protecting its historically significant buildings.

Members of the foundation, which is dedicated to preserving and conserving the region's historic structures, neighborhoods and landscapes, heaped praise on the City of Perris for its success in restoring the historic Train Depot and Bank of Perris buildings and for initiating a façade-improvement program to restore D Street structures to their historical appearance.

"Perris is unique in its attitude about historic preservation," said Dave Leonard, president of the Old Riverside Foundation. "It's much cheaper to bulldoze them than to preserve them. We do not give awards for mediocrity. I believe Perris will reap the rewards in the future for its commitment in the present."

Foundation vice-president Joanne Pease-Simpson was equally effusive in her praise for Perris. In 2009, the foundation presented an award to Perris for preserving the 1892 Depot Building. Last year, the organization presented Perris with another award for its restoration of the Bank building, which is being turned into a City archive center.

The City took home a "Special Recognition Award" this week in honor of its Centennial and for its "devotion to the preservation of its historic downtown."

Pease-Simpson said preserving historic buildings is significant because "it's important to have a link to your past."

"Cities that have no old buildings have no soul," she said. "People feel comfortable around old buildings. People like to walk around old buildings. New buildings are less personal. I love Perris. You've got a lot of great things going on there. It is one of the best cities about preserving buildings with historical pasts."

Mayor Pro-Tem Joanne Evans accepted the award on behalf of the City.

"I am thrilled to accept this award for the City," she said. "It's a neat honor. There is still a lot to be done but I think the changes are visible."

Evans said that much of the Downtown development—including restorations to several D Street businesses—is being paid for through use of redevelopment funds, which are set aside specifically for those sorts of improvements.

Other recent improvements include the opening of Rio Ranch Market on Fourth Street and the ground-breaking on a new fire station/emergency operations center on San Jacinto Avenue. Both were made possible with redevelopment funds.

The art deco Perris Theatre is slated for major restorations in the future.

The City Council recently gave the go-ahead to continue exploring plans to renovate the 80-year-old building. A plan presented to the City Council calls for the theatre to be greatly expanded, made accessible for people with mobility limitations and augment the existing site with another stage available for small concerts and performances by high school bands and local musicians. The plan is preliminary and no date has been set for construction to begin.

Even without the theatre renovations, Evans said she sees a new pride in Downtown Perris.

"The people who don't live Downtown are noticing how good it looks," Evans said. "The people who do live Downtown are being given a sense of pride by the improvements."



Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Joanne Evans receives a Special Recognition Award from Dave Leonard, president of the Old Riverside Foundation, for the City's continuing commitment to preserve historic buildings.