



# Perris Press Release

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## Perris Centennial History Display Attracts Thousands at the Fair

The City of Perris Centennial Exhibit proved a huge hit with visitors attending the Southern California Fair as more than 1,000 people walked through Harrison Hall viewing the photographs, documents, mementos and personal recollections from a century of the City's history.

Volunteers from the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association, working in conjunction with the City, spent months culling archival material and organizing it into a fast-paced, fun and interesting exhibit for presentation during the annual Southern California Fair.

The exhibit begins by taking viewers to a time when miners extracted millions of dollars of gold from the Good Hope Mine west of Perris and concludes with a look at the modern City with its many conveniences and recreational activities like skydiving, sailing and auto racing.

In between, the exhibit relates the story of Perris agriculture and how the City proved a bread and fruit basket for decades, thanks to its abundant potato, alfalfa and citrus harvests. Visitors learned that Perris residents took turns scanning the skies from a watchtower in search of Japanese airplanes during World War II.

They crawled on vintage tractors used to bring the agricultural bounty to harvest and got a close-up look at one of the first potato diggers in the U.S. created by machinist Harry Schroeder, a cantankerous sort who operated his shop at 7th and D Streets in the 1930s.

Midgie Parker, a volunteer who is working the Fair and answering questions from exhibit visitors, said she is "pleased and excited" about the overwhelming success of the Centennial display.

"We have been getting a lot of compliments," Parker said. "Some of the long-time residents who stop by are looking for their relatives in old photos and newspaper accounts. The newer residents are learning about the rich history of their City. The feedback has been very nice."

The exhibit is open daily until Oct. 16.

Virginia Williams, who has lived in Perris more than 30 years, said she found the exhibit "informative, visually pleasing and chronologically arranged" to give visitors the maximum viewing experience in a short time.

"I'm learning things I never knew about the community where I live," Williams said.

She said she discovered that far from being only an agricultural community, Perris in its early days thrived with all sorts of other businesses, including hardware, dry goods, manufacturing factories and clothing stores. She said that although the

City grown and changed with the passing decades, Perris retains its small-town friendliness.

"It's a City not impacted by huge throngs of people," Williams said. "It's a friendly City, and that friendliness comes through with this exhibit."

Williams was one of several people who said she hoped the City could find a spot to permanently display the Centennial exhibit.

Lena Neal compared the Centennial Exhibit to a "trip down memory lane," to a time when Perris had few stop signs and fewer traffic signals. She has lived in Perris for almost 20 years.

"It brought back a lot of memories," Neal said. "The City has changed a lot."

Audrey Cilurzo said she was impressed with the collection of dolls from around the world belonging to her friend, Nan

Sanders. Sanders served on school boards in Perris for more than 60 years. Nan Sanders Elementary School in the City is named after her. Sanders collected the dolls from China, Japan and other parts of the world.

Cilurzo called the Centennial Exhibit "wonderful."

"I can't believe the City did all this," she said. "It was really, really well put together. It's not just about Perris history but it also tells the history of Southern California."

Cilurzo said she hopes Perris school children can visit the display at some point to learn about the history of their City.



Katie Keyes, a member of the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association, looks over a display piece that is part of the City's Centennial Exhibit at the Southern California Fair.



This display saluting the Perris Raceway includes a poster board and motorcycle.



Midgie Parker, a museum volunteers, explains that during World War II, Perris residents scanned the skies for enemy planes from a watchtower near March Air Force Base.



Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers strolls through a recreation of a 1930 kitchen that is included in the Centennial Exhibit.