



Christmas Parade Wraps a Year of Centennial Celebrations

The annual City of Perris Christmas Parade is usually marked by the appearance of one elephant from the group Have Trunk Will Travel.

This year, the huge crowd that gathered along Perris Boulevard was treated to a bonus—a second elephant marching at the head of the parade.

Under mild temperatures and a brilliant blue sky, the City's 23rd annual Christmas Parade proved a fitting conclusion to the series of events marking Perris' Centennial. Crowds lined the parade route, several deep in some places, to glimpse the elephants, marching bands, classic cars and floats as they moved past. This year's parade drew a record 11 marching bands.

Grand marshal Mary Ashley, a native of Perris whose family roots go back generations, provided the perfect link to the City's early days.

"What a great day," said Mayor Daryl Busch. "We had one of the largest crowds I've ever seen. Our grand marshal is an icon of our City. It was an outstanding event and everyone who came seemed to really enjoy it."

Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Joanne Evans said she was pleased to see so many families take part in watching the parade. And the throng didn't leave early, sticking around to see Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus who were the last parade entry.

"Wonderful event," Evans said. "The kids were amazing. It was great to see them still cheering at the end of the parade. That's what this season is all about. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah or something else, this is a season of families."

City Councilman Mark Yarbrough said the parade put an exclamation point on the City's year-long celebration of its incorporation. Other signature events included burying a time capsule at City Hall, creating a Centennial display that drew rave reviews when it was displayed at the Southern California Fair in September, construction of a Habitat for Humanity home, a multi-cultural festival, a gala fashion show and a July 4th fireworks extravaganza at the Perris Auto Speedway.

"It was one of our biggest events, and because it's our last Centennial celebration, it was extra special," Yarbrough said. "It was an outstanding, crowd-pleasing event."

Yarbrough thanked City staff for working to complete paving the stretch of parade route between Jarvis Street and San Jacinto Avenue in time for the big event. He also said several nearby parking areas made available on City property for parade-watchers provided easy access for the audience.

As he has for many years, Perris City Councilman Al Landers served as parade announcer. He said that from the announcing stand, he could see people lined up all along the parade route. Crowd estimates put the number of participants and observers at 4,000-plus.

"It was a fabulous event," Landers said. "It makes me proud to be a resident of the City of Perris."

Landers said the City Council and staff take great pride in hosting events like the Christmas Parade. He thanked those who worked on floats, marched in bands and rode horses—those civic-minded citizens who worked behind the scenes—for making the parade an unqualified success. Landers said Perris officials know that things are difficult in California and look forward to giving residents a chance to celebrate with their loved ones.

Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers said one of the aspects of the parade she likes best is that it "is truly community event." The parade draws schools, businesses, churches and volunteer organizations.

"I am proud to be part of this City and City Council as we continue to provide tremendous events for our residents," she said. "The City's Centennial celebration could not have ended on a better note. It was an awesome last hurrah!"



An elephant from Have Trunk Will Travel led the annual City of Perris Christmas Parade. (photo by Ted Norton)



Perris City Councilman Al Landers and City Clerk Judy Haughney announced the 23rd Annual Christmas Parade. (photo by Ted Norton)



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch waves to the crowd during the parade. The Mayor called the parade "an outstanding event." (photo by Ted Norton)



Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers on the parade route. (photo by Ted Norton)



Dora the Explorer and Sponge Bob made an appearance at the City of Perris Christmas Parade. (photo by Ted Norton)