



Transit Center Opens in Perris



Perris City Council members Al Landers, Mark Yarbrough, Joanne Evans and Mayor Daryl Busch look on while Riverside County Supervisor and Perris resident Marion Ashley cuts the ribbon, officially opening the new \$5 million transit center

Surrounded by regional transportation experts, political heavyweights, municipal staff and distinguished visitors, Mayor Daryl Busch and City Council members Monday cut the ribbon at the state-of-the-art Perris Station Transit Center.

The \$5 million center provides park-and-ride facilities for Riverside County Transit Agency buses and is scheduled to expand to provide Metrolink train service by late 2011. The new center, on C Street just west of City Hall, will transform Perris into a hub of mass transportation in Riverside County.

Unique to the Perris Station is artwork created by pioneering animator and cartoonist Ward Kimball, who worked beside Walt Disney for decades.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch speaks during the dedication of the Perris Station Transit Center.



John Kimball, son of pioneering animator Ward Kimball, says he is honored the City used his dad's artwork to adorn the Transit Center.

Replicas of characters Kimball created, including Jiminy Cricket and Tweedledum and Tweedledee, adorn the bus shelters at the center.

Kimball's son and daughter were on hand at the official opening and praised Perris for honoring their father's legacy.

Representatives from Riverside County, Riverside, Temecula, Corona, Moreno Valley, Canyon Lake, Calimesa, Lake Elsinore, Murrieta, Menifee and Banning were among the 200 people attended Monday's ribbon cutting. State and federal legislators sent representatives to congratulate Perris.

Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley, a Perris resident, said the site of the Transit Center was once a potato-packing warehouse. He worked at such a warehouse when he was a kid.

"In those days, we'd never thought we would see something like this," Ashley said. "This station is in the dead center of Riverside County. I am so thankful we have this. This is a great day for Perris."

RTA Chairman Jeff Comerchero, who also serves as mayor in Temecula, hailed the Perris Station, saying it will "change peoples lives" by allowing them to spend less time commuting in cars and will leave them with more time with the spouses and children. Comerchero said mass transportation is far more economical and environmentally friendly than private cars.

"This is a welcome addition to the City of Perris," he said. "It will connect Riverside County."

Mayor Busch told the crowd that the Transit Center started out with a \$1 contribution from the City, which sold land to the RTA for that token amount. Eventually the RTA helped contributed \$2.5 million toward the cost of the C Street Center, with the rest coming from federal monies.

"It's amazing what you can do for \$1," Busch said. "I'd say we got a good deal."

Busch said the Transit Center opens as other major improvements are taking place in the Downtown Area. He noted the 100-year-bank building, which the City has reconditioned and will turn into a repository of historic documents, will be unveiled to the public in the near future. Historic D Street is undergoing a major facelift. Work will begin later this year to redesign the I-215 interchange at Fourth Street. Less than a year ago, the City opened the historic California Southern Railroad Depot as a museum and tourist attraction.

Busch credited former Perris City Councilman John Motte with providing the inspiration for bringing the Kimball art work to Perris.

Motte met Kimball, an incredible train buff, on several occasions. Eventually, Kimball visited the Orange Empire Railway Museum in Perris and donated several steam engines and cars. Ward Kimball died in 2002 at the age of 88. Motte and Busch went to the Disney studio archives to survey Kimball's work. They convinced Disney to allow the artwork at the Perris Center.

"It's quite an accomplishment and we are happy to have it," Busch said.

City Councilman Al Landers predicted the Transit Center will attract business and visitors Downtown. "People will want to come down here and see what is happening," Landers said. "Our vision for Downtown is taking shape."

Kimball's son, John, and daughter, Kelly, attended the ribbon-cutting ceremonies and thanked Perris for the tribute to their dad.

"I like the way the station looks," Kelly Kimball said. "I'm very impressed. We'll keep coming out here." John Kimball said he also was pleased with the final results.

"Our family feels very honored at this tribute," he said. "My dad was always interested in transportation history. A transportation facility like this is what we need to get this nation back on track."

See a Short Video from the Open Ceremony



A bus pulls into one of the bays at the new Perris Station Transit Center.



Perris City Councilman Al Landers, Councilwoman Joanne Evans and City Clerk Judy Haughtney were among those who attended Monday's grand opening.



Ward Kimball's Jiminy Cricket is on display at the Perris Station Transit Center.

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Perris Station Transit Center by the Numbers

|   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Location:                               | C Street and San Jacinto Avenue    |
| Cost:                                   | \$5 million                        |
| Length:                                 | 900 feet from one end to the other |
| Shelters:                               | 5, each 20-by-60 feet              |
| Construction time:                      | About a year                       |
| Parking spaces:                         | 141                                |
| Bus bays:                               | 8                                  |
| Bus routes serving center:              | 7                                  |
| Tons of aggregate used in construction: | 4,900                              |
| Tons of asphalt used in construction:   | 2,500                              |
| Surveillance cameras:                   | 9                                  |
| Landscaping:                            | Includes 30 palm trees             |