



Perris News

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Inaugural Farmer's Market Exceeds All Expectations

Outstanding. Fabulous. Terrific. Wonderful. Exceeded all expectations.

Those were some of the sentiments to describe the City's first Farmer's Market, an event that drew between 2,000 and 3,000 people to historic D Street in search of food, fun and home-grown fruits and vegetables.

City officials have for years desired an event that would bring residents and visitors to Downtown Perris and serve as a showcase for local merchants and vendors. The weekly Farmer's Market will help raise the profile of historic D Street and highlight Perris' efforts to revitalize its central business district.

The City has restored the Bank of Perris Building, recently purchased and completed exterior improvements to the Perris Theatre and is funding (with funds that can only be used for such purposes) new facades for businesses along D Street.

City officials expect to restore the look D Perris Street sported in its early days, almost 100 years ago. New landscaping, trees and sidewalks also are part of the improved landscape.

Mayor Daryl Busch and members of the City Council came out on Thursday to observe the Farmer's Market, talk to residents and get their feedback. All came away very impressed.

"This is really great," Busch said. "It looks like people are having a really good time. I got a call at home from someone who was down here before I was and she told me how everybody was enjoying themselves. I am very pleased with the turnout and the event in general."

City Councilman Mark Yarbrough summed up his reaction succinctly: "It's about time."

"I've been waiting for this for a long time," he said. "This is perfect. As we develop Downtown, this event will get better and better. I know staff worked very hard to make this happen and I am very appreciative. This is not fancy, but it's real."

City Councilwoman Joanne Evans called the Farmers Market "awesome" and "phenomenal."

"I know where I will be going every Thursday," she said.

Event organizers paid attention to keep the "farmer" in "Farmers Market." There was plenty of fresh produce to select—cucumbers, cauliflower, zucchini, apples, cherries, carrots, beets, strawberries, radishes, Asian pears, raspberries, blueberries and more.

"We've always wanted something like this on D Street," said Midgie Parker, a member of the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association. "It's very nice and I think it will grow in the future. It brings people Downtown to see all the wonderful improvements."

Parker came to the Farmers Market with friends Katie Keyes and Dennise Manning. Both said they were elated at the variety of produce and other goodies—including barbecued ribs and kettle corn—offered for sale. The City sponsored pony rides for the kids. There was a petting zoo and jumpers too.

Manning could find only one fault: there was no fresh bread for sale. The vendor scheduled to participate was unable to make the first Farmers Market, said Michael McDermott, the City's Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager. McDermott said about 25 vendors took part in the first Farmers Fair. The City has already received interest from another 20 to 25 who want to come aboard, he said.

McDermott spent much of the Farmers Market chatting with vendors and visitors. D Street was packed most of the night. Some vendors ran out of wares well before the four-hour event ended at 8 p.m.

"I am really really pleased we can fill the street at 4:40 p.m.," he said. "Everyone is happy. They are pleased with the turnout."

Visitors like Melody Kidd remarked how good D Street looks thanks to the recent improvements.

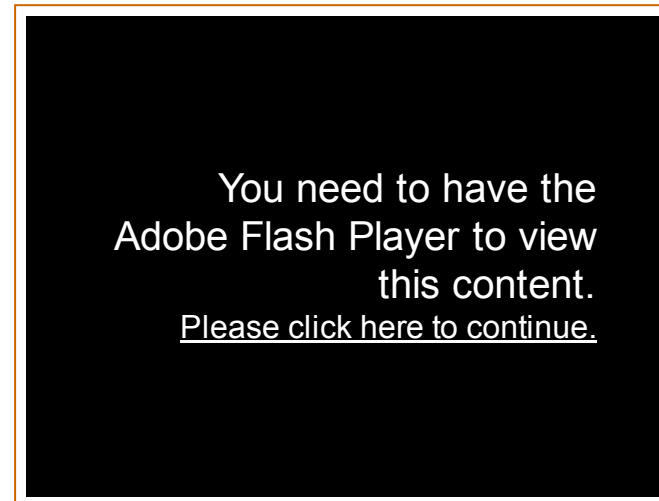
"This is exciting," she said. "I am amazed at how many people are here."

Helen Pedraza said she was born in Perris and has lived in the City most of her life. She could not say enough good things about the refurbished D Street.

"I love it, I love it, I love it so much," she said. "It's beautiful. I am so pleased."

Restaurant owner George Brown brought 30 pounds of ribs to the Farmers Market. It sold out in an hour. Brown scribbled a note reading "Thank you Perris" on his empty food cart.

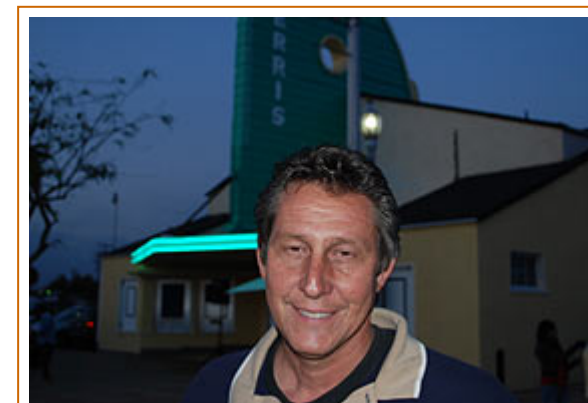
"I am embarrassed I sold out so early," Brown said. "The City of Perris is obviously doing outstanding work to attract so many people Downtown. This town is definitely being rejuvenated. I will double my total next week."



Dennise Manning looks over cucumbers at the first Perris Farmers Market.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch and City Manager Richard Belmudez scan the crowd. City officials estimate 2,000 to 3,000 people attended.



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough in front of the refurbished Perris Theatre, with its new neon lights.



George Brown's sign says it all. He sold out all his barbecued ribs in just an hour!