



# Perris News

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## New Veterans' Assistance Center Opens in Perris

Local, state and national representatives of veterans groups hailed Perris Tuesday for the City's decision to donate a building and allow "veterans resources center" to begin working with veterans from the community and beyond.

"You owe yourselves a big round of applause," said Coreena Conley, program director of the Veterans Business Outreach Center in Sacramento, told the Perris City Council during a ribbon-cutting ceremony. "It is a phenomenal feeling to realize what this City has done to show its compassion for veterans. Programs like these will help veterans get back on their feet."

The new Southwest Veterans' Business Resource Center is housed in the City's Chamber of Commerce Building at 227 North D Street. The non-profit agency will bring together representatives of a myriad of agencies whose missions are to return current and former military men and women to productive lives and careers once they hang up their uniforms, said Chip Dykes, Vice-president of Business Development for the resource center.

Those include the Veterans Administration, California Department of Veterans Affairs, Riverside County Department of Veterans Services, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans and Economic Development Department, said Dykes, a former Marine Corps drill instructor.

Veterans who want to start or expand an existing business will receive tips about how they can accomplish those goals. Counseling will be available for veterans afflicted with mental-health issues, drug and alcohol-related challenges and post traumatic stress disorder.

The idea is to create a one-stop clearinghouse of resources in the same facility, Dykes said.

"We want to eradicate veterans' homelessness," Dykes said. "Our job is to take the veteran that you gave us and give him or her back to the community. Now it is up to that community to support the veteran. Thank you so much to the City of Perris for supporting the veterans in your community."

Keynote speaker Steve Muro, Acting Undersecretary of Memorial Affairs for the VA, said the resource center will help Perris by helping its veterans.

"It's about taking what they've learned in the military and helping them get jobs in the community," Muro said. "The City has donated this building because they have compassion for the veterans of Perris."

Perris becomes the fourth city to host a branch of the Southwest Veterans Business Resource Center, joining Fallbrook and communities in Washington and North Carolina. A fifth branch will open soon in Anchorage, Alaska. Perris Mayor Daryl Busch, City Councilmen Al Landers and Mark Yarbrough, City Councilwoman Joanne Evans and City Manager Richard Belmudez led the City's contingent of representatives at the ribbon cutting.

Mayor Busch, a Navy veteran, said the City Council was united in approving a portion of the Perris Valley Chamber of Commerce building for the new agency. The City has leased office and administrative space to the center for \$1 a year.

"There are a lot of veterans in our community who I know will take advantage of this facility," Busch said.

Councilman Landers spoke about the loss of his brother, Richard Landers, who was killed in Vietnam in 1965. The family grieves for him to this day, Landers said, adding that he is committed to do whatever necessary to help returning soldiers, sailors, Air Force personnel and Marines adjust to civilian life.

"I know what it is like to see families with broken hearts," Landers said.

Information about the resource center is available by contacting founder Albert Renteria at 760-468-1315 or via email at [arenteria@svvbc.org](mailto:arenteria@svvbc.org)



Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans, Councilman Mark Yarbrough, VA Undersecretary of Memorial Affairs, Mayor Daryl Busch and Councilman Al Landers cut the ribbon, officially dedicating the new Southwest Veterans Business Resource Center.



Mayor Busch, Councilwoman Evans, Councilman Al Landers, Councilman Mark Yarbrough and Steve Muro of the Veterans Administration stand in front of the memorial wall.



Members of the California Military Institute stand at attention as they prepare to carry the colors at the start of the dedication ceremony.



The Wall of Honor commemorating 2,000 Perris veterans who have died.