



## Perris News

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### New Veterans' Assistance Center to Open

A new veterans' assistance center will open Tuesday in a suite of offices in the building that houses the Perris Valley Chamber of Commerce.

The Southwest Veterans Business Resource Center, 227 North D Street, will bring together under one roof a myriad of agencies geared to support former military men and women as they try to transition to civilian life. Such agencies include the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Economic

Development Department, U.S. Vets, the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Riverside County Office of Veterans Services.

The official opening takes place at 12 p.m. Tuesday. Representatives of the Veterans Administration, support groups and City officials will be on hand.

"All I can is that it is about time," said Perris City Councilman Al Landers, a strong supporter of the center. "We owe so much to them, because they have given us so much of themselves. I believe Perris will become a hub City for this region's efforts to reach out to veterans. I am proud to be part of this effort."

Retired Marine Albert Renteria said the center—which is funded through private donations while it seeks federal grants—will concentrate on educating veterans, putting them in touch with prospective employers and when possible, assist them in starting their own businesses. The government can assist veterans in starting their own business through several programs. But most veterans don't know about such benefits, he said.

California alone is home to 2.1 million veterans, said Renteria, a 26-year Marine who served in the first Gulf War and retired as a Chief Warrant Officer-4. Many of those veterans suffer from post traumatic stress disorder or substance abuse as a result of their service. Others become physically disabled. About one-third of all homeless Americans are veterans.

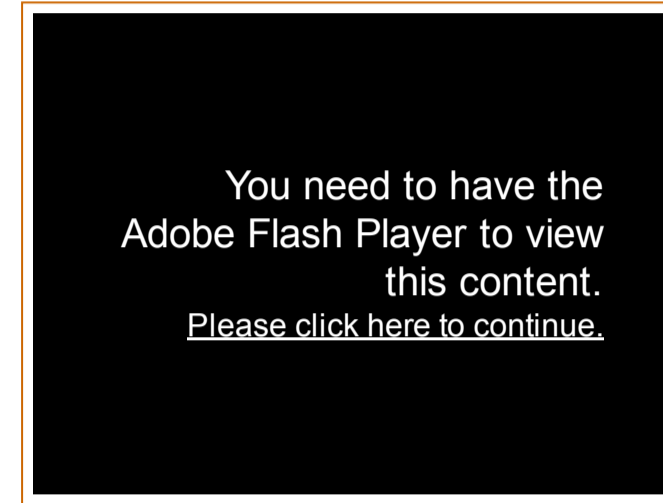
Renteria said he expects about 40 veterans a month to take advantage of the services provided once word of the location spreads throughout the Inland Empire.

"We want to help educate veterans about the benefits they have earned," Renteria said. "We are so grateful to the City of Perris for recognizing the challenges faced by many veterans and for rising to meet that challenge. We have signed a lease for \$1 a year. If there is a better example than that of the word commitment, I don't know it."

A wall hanging listing the names of all Perris veterans who have died will be unveiled during Tuesday's ceremonies, Renteria said. The list includes more than 2,000 names of those former soldiers buried in Perris.

Landers said his commitment to improving the lives of veterans is personal as well as professional. His brother, Richard, was killed in Vietnam in 1965 at the age of 19. His death continues to bother him decades later.

"I am glad the City of Perris had the foresight and the facilities to donate for veterans," Landers said.



Retired Marine Albert Renteria, CEO of the Southwest Veterans Business Resource Center in Perris, talks about the upcoming opening.



The center's logo.