



Perris News

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Perris Community Partnership Hires New CEO

Norman Towels sees his new job is really all about pulling loose threads together.

The new chief executive officer of the Perris Community Partnership, Towels takes on a role in which he will be responsible for fund-raising on behalf of an umbrella of non-profit agencies while developing plans to help them gain exposure and publicity for the causes they represent.

The Perris Valley is home to a wide variety of non-profits, like the Perris Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Perris Valley Historical & Museum Association, the Dora Nelson African-American Art and Museum and the March Field Air Museum.

In addition, Perris and surrounding communities are home to visitor attractions and museums at the 1886 Southern Hotel, the Depot Building, the Ya'i Heki' Regional Indian Museum at the Lake Perris State Recreation Area, the Western Science Center at the Diamond Valley Lake and a private museum of historic Indian motorcycles.

Towels sees himself as a conduit, working on behalf of all community and non-profit groups, while raising their profile, raising necessary funds to promote their programs and keeping them financially solvent so they can thrive and prosper.

"Perris has a huge opportunity to emphasize and focus on museums," Towels said. "I can't think of a community that has so many museums in its nearby proximity. I see the (Perris Community Partnership) working with the historical society to create an umbrella to highlight all museums. I see us assisting them in getting grants."

Towels said he has already spoken to the Perris Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Perris Valley Historical & Museum Association and a recent Cops and Clergy meeting. He wants to explore holding a combination church/youth concert, possibly at the Lake Perris State Recreation Area. He also wants to work with The Oasis youth job program on an oral history program in which youngsters would interview senior citizens about their lives and experiences.

He has a goal of raising \$100,000 by June 30.

Towels recently retired from the Val Verde Unified School District as Assistant Superintendent of Student Services. He had previously served as Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Assistant Superintendent of Personnel Services, Director of Personnel and Director of Educational Services. Other experience includes working as a Special Projects Coordinator, a teacher and teaching mentor. Towels also served as a counselor at Riverside Juvenile Hall for 26 years. He also started and directed the Val Verde Student Success Academy, an alternative school that graduated more than 200 at-risk students in the last five years. Seventy-five percent of those students passed the state's High School Exit Exam.

The Perris Community Partnership works in conjunction with the Perris City Council. The City's long-term strategic plan includes emphasizing the City's historical preservation efforts.

Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers, a member of the Partnership's Board of Directors, said Towels brings "passion to the mission of the Perris Community Partnership, a strong dedication to helping the youth of this community succeed, a wealth of knowledge about the workings of non-profit agencies and outstanding leadership abilities."

"We are very pleased he has come on board," Rogers said.

Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans, another member of the Partnership's Board of Directors, said Towels is well-known throughout the community.

"He brings a feeling that he can make the Partnership a success and that's the kind of spirit we need," Evans said.

"He's very thorough. He brings a lot of talents as a leader."

Towels said his 40 years as an educator will serve him well in his new job. Working with students, parents, faculty, administrators and politicians requires an ability to listen to all parties, balance the needs of everyone, compromise when necessary and come together for a common purpose. That often meant meeting with all parties face-to-face.

It's a practice Towels will continue at the Perris Community Partnership.

"I plan on spending time in the community," he said. "I am not going to spend a lot of time behind the desk. I have never been a desk person."

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Norman Towels at the offices of the Perris Community Partnership. "I see myself as a conduit," he said.



Norman Towels addresses the Perris City Council after being named Chief Executive Officer of the Perris Community Partnership.



As director of the Val Verde Unified School District's Student Success Academy, Norman Towels took at-risk students to China and Costa Rica.