



Perris News

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Perris Breaks Ground on a Long-Planned Sports Complex

Perris officials joined former Major League Baseball players to break ground on a new sports complex they say will bring thousands of athletes to the City, pump millions into the local economy and prove once again the City can thrive in the midst of the lingering economic downturn.

The \$24 million complex includes four baseball diamonds that replicate the famed venues of Boston's Fenway Park, New York's Yankee Stadium, Los Angeles' Dodgers Stadium and Anaheim's Angels Stadium.

It is the largest public works project currently going on in Riverside County.

In addition, the 35-acre complex on Trumble Road also includes two full-size soccer fields protected by an overhead pavilion, a restaurant and sports bar, a pro-shop, concession stands, two playgrounds, batting cages and 600-parking spaces. During the hot summer months, spectators will be cooled by a misting system. In addition, the athletic complex will host large-scale corporate and community events.

About 400 construction jobs will be created until the complex—known officially as the Big League Dreams Perris Valley Sports Park—is completed in a year. After that, 50 to 75 full-time positions will be created to support its ongoing operations.

The Perris Valley sports complex is the 11th to be developed by the Big League Dreams company, which includes former big-leaguers Jason Giambi and former Dodger greats Bill Russell and Derrel Thomas.

All three were on hand for Tuesday's ground-breaking. Some Big League Dreams venues are booked two years in advance for team tournaments featuring Little League and Pony League squads.

"This will help the youth of our community develop in life," said Perris Mayor Daryl Busch. "We know that sports help people develop in life and this complex will provide kids a terrific place to play."

Busch joined Mayor Pro-Tem Rita Rogers and City Council members Al Lander and Mark Yarbrough in the ceremonial ground-breaking. Other dignitaries included Riverside County Supervisors Marion Ashley and Jeff Stone, members of the Eastern Municipal Water District Board of Directors and elected officials from neighboring communities. Work on the project began about two weeks ago, and earth-graders moved massive amounts of dirt before and after the ceremonial ground-breaking.

"This field of dreams realizes a decade of dreams for the City of Perris," Landers said. "It's great for the City and it's great for our residents. We will be bringing thousands of people to our City for regional baseball tournaments. It's another great accomplishment for our City and I am proud to be part of this achievement."

City officials said Perris will reap bed tax and sales tax revenues from hotels, restaurants and service stations that will cater to athletes and their families. Ever mindful of its place as a leader in green technology, Perris officials worked with Eastern Municipal Water District to irrigate the complex with reclaimed water.

Rogers called the field complex a "first-class venue for sports lovers in our community." Noting that Perris already is known for its world-class skydiving, water sports and racing venues, Rogers said "this City is always on the cutting edge."

"We are getting noticed despite the economy," she said. "Tough times bring people together to achieve great results. We are excelling."

Yarbrough said the project once again demonstrates the City's ability to partner with various agencies for a common cause. He said the Riverside County Economic Development Agency is funding the project, EMWD provided the land and irrigation and the City will provide enhanced police and law enforcement services.

"It just doesn't get much better than this," Yarbrough said. "We have the ability to partner with anybody and everybody. Perris is about community. That is one of our greatest strengths."

Ashley, a Perris resident, said the county saved \$6 million on the project, a result of the economic slowdown and subsequent reduction in building costs.

"It will be a tremendous attraction," Ashley said. "It shows that Perris recognizes opportunities for economic growth and takes advantage of them."

Ashley and Supervisor Jeff Stone, who serves the adjoining district, said the field of dreams lies in an area home to a million people who live within 30 miles. They predicted baseball, adult softball and soccer teams from Temecula, Murrieta, Moreno Valley and other communities will line up to play in the Perris Valley. Both said they are working on other projects to improve the quality of life in this area, including a wellness center and aquatics complex.

Former Dodger shortstop Bill Russell, who played on four World Series teams and one World Championship team in an 18-year career, said the field of dreams complex will be an economic boon to Perris while providing state-of-the-art family entertainment.

Russell called upon adult softball players to see if they could knock one over the facsimile Green Monster in Fenway or out of Chavez Ravine, both which will be among those fields replicated.

"If you old guys think you can still play, come on out here," he said. "No one will make fun of you."



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch addresses the crowd of dignitaries at the ground-breaking: "This will help the youth of our community develop in life."



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough, Mayor Pro-Tem Rita Rogers and City Councilman Al Landers stand at attention during the National Anthem.



Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley answers a question from a reporter covering the ground-breaking.



Perris officials at the shovel: City Councilmen Mark Yarbrough and Al Landers, Mayor Pro-Tem Rita Rogers and Mayor Daryl Busch.



Giant earthmovers prepare the ground for the Field of Dreams.