



Perris News

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Festival and Parade Celebrate Cultural Diversity in Perris

More than 3,000 people braved scorching temperatures to take part in dancing, singing and a celebration of culture during Perris' third annual TODEC and Conorco de Michoacan Multicultural Parade & Festival.

The highlights of the day-long celebration included a visit from several dignitaries—politicians, business leaders and clergy— who made the trek for Cotija, Perris' sister city in Mexico and the appearance of a statue of the Virgin of San Juan del Barrio.

Many residents of that city as well as immigrants now living in the U.S. revere the Virgin of San Juan del Barrio and pray to her in times of sickness and sorrow.

The senior priest from Cotija, Padre Jose Cruz Moreno, made the trip to Perris and accompanied the statue as it went on display during the parade along D Street to the Bob Glass Gym. Other dignitaries from Cotija included Mayor Jose Mendoza Morfin, who said he enjoyed visiting the City and the people who put on the multi-cultural festival.

"Perris a nice place," Morfin said. "When you come here, you feel a lot of fun. It's a nice town with a lot of nice people."

Morfin traveled the parade route along through Perris' historic Downtown business district, taking his place with dozens of other dignitaries, dance troupes, Mexican charros on horseback and marching units. Crowds lined both sides of the parade route, taking photos and waving at parade entrants.

The City of Perris was well represented by Mayor Daryl Busch, Mayor Pro-Tem Rita Rogers, City Council members Al Landers and Mark Yarbrough, City Clerk Judy Haughney, Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager Michael McDermott and Redevelopment Project Coordinator Veronica Arana. City Councilwoman Joanne Evans could not attend but said she supported the festival.

Public Works staff who helped make the parade and festival possible with their behind the scenes work included Arturo Garcia, Juan Lemus, Allen Yun, Raul Castillo, Jose Zelaya and Steve Pedigo.

Mayor Busch said the City is proud of its diversity and celebrates the various communities who call Perris home. He addressed the crowd who gathered at Foss Field Park after the parade and extended a "special welcome for our special guests."

While Sunday's festival celebrated the City's Latino heritage, Busch said Perris also hosts a Black History Month Parade in February, a Veterans Parade in November and a Christmas Parade in December.

"We are truly a multi-cultural town that reaches out to all its communities," he said.

Rogers said the parade and festival "contribute to the richness that is the City of Perris."
"Perris a great about celebrating its diversity," she said.

Landers said events like the parade and festival help bring the community together and show that Perris has "one heart, one soul, one mind."

"It is heart-warming to experience the spirit of our City," he said.

Yarbrough said he is pleased to be part of a City Council that welcomes foreign dignitaries and rolls out the red carpet to welcome them.

"The City looks forward to supporting this multi-cultural event," he said. "I am glad that we are able to celebrate it with our community."

Evans said the day's events bring people together for the benefit of the entire City.

"It's a great thing to see everybody get together," she said. "I am glad to see us working with our friends and neighbors from Mexico."

Foss Field Park was chock full of vendors offering a variety of ethnic foods and trinkets. The City's stage served as the venue for several bands and disc jockeys, who kept the music and entertainment flowing throughout the day. Inside the Glass Gym, a luncheon was held for members of the Sister City contingent and other officials who came from Mexico, including the Mayor of the City of Juarez in the state of Michoacan. Perris resident Luz Ayala, who founded the community-based TODEC legal center to help immigrant communities become self-sufficient, welcomed the visitors and took photos with them when they were presented certificates from the Perris City Council and Riverside County Board of Supervisors. About 20 Perris teen-agers and young women represented the various states in Mexico and they also received certificates from Perris officials and the Mexican Consulate in San Bernardino.

The City's Veronica Arana presented gift bags to the foreign dignitaries.

They handed out samples of white cheese from Cotija, which was recently declared in a European competition as the world's best cheese.

Consul Carolina Zaragosa Flores, of the consulado de Mexico, said Perris should be proud of its commitment to diversity.

"It represents the best of how local authorities can work with the community," she said. "It's shows the unity of the City. You feel welcome in Perris."



American and Mexican flags were on display during the City's multicultural festival and parade Sunday.



These parade participants are dressed as native dancers.



The statue of the Virgin of San Juan del Barrio was carried from Mexico to Perris for display during the multicultural festival.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch, City Clerk Judy Haughney, Councilman Al Landers, Mayor Pro-Tem Rita Rogers and Councilman Mark Yarbrough listen to the opening remarks of the multicultural festival.



The Mayor of Perris Sister City in Mexico, Cotija in the State of Michoacan, is photographed in front of a Mexican flag.