



Perris News

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Annual Christmas Parade Celebrates the Holiday Season

Under brilliant blue skies and Chamber of Commerce temperatures, the City of Perris celebrated its annual Christmas parade on Saturday, an extravaganza that featured floats, marching bands, classic cars, horses and a 4.5-ton elephant.

The big parade drew at least 2,500 people, organizers and Perris police who patrolled the route agreed. Mayor Daryl Busch said he and his colleagues on the City Council could not have been more pleased.

"This is another fantastic holiday parade," Busch said. "We have a marvelous day for a marvelous parade. It's the only parade I know that comes complete with an elephant. It's one of our signature events and I hope and expect that everyone will have a great day."

More than 80 entrants took part in the 2010 version of the Perris Christmas Parade. City Councilwoman Joanne Evans escorted parade grand marshal Mary Parks, a television journalist from NBC4 who works in Riverside. Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough and Mayor Pro-Tem Rita Rogers rode in classic cars. City Councilman Al Landers, as he has done for years, served as parade announcer along with City Clerk Judy Haughney.

Parks, a longtime Inland Empire reporter, posed for pictures with dignitaries and signed autographs as well. Parks said she enjoyed taking center stage in the Perris parade because she grew up in the small town of Edwardsburg, Michigan, and Perris reminds her of home.

"Just to be part of this parade in a community like Perris means so much to me," Parks said. "It means a lot to be asked."

Evans said the parade is a "great way to start the Christmas season."

"It's great for the kids, it's great for the bands, it's great for the community," she said. "This parade goes a long way in telling our residents that the City of Perris cares about them. With so much participation, they show us they care as well."

Mayor Pro-Tem Rogers commented that "it looks like the whole community has turned out to support our Christmas parade. Merry Christmas, Feliz Navidad, Happy Kwanzaa!" City Councilman Yarbrough rode in a 1956 P-1900 Volvo convertible, one of just 70 versions of that model ever produced. Only 33 are known to still survive.

"This is a great day," he said. "It's one of our biggest community events. I am so glad that we are able to share this with the community. From the sponsors who participate to our volunteers to the people who come to enjoy this magnificent event, I want to say thank you. This is what Perris is all about."

The parade route made its way from Perris High School to City Hall, about a mile away on Perris Boulevard. Observers lined much of the route, waving and smiling at friends or children walking past as members of marching bands, riders in floats or atop horses. The biggest participant led the way. She was Tai, a 42-year-old Asian elephant who came courtesy of Have Trunk Will Travel, a Perris elephant refuge. As she walked past the reviewing stand, Tai did a bow and drew the applause of the appreciative audience.

David Sosa, an instructor at the California Military Institute, said 200 students from the school took part in the parade. They marched and sang and carried flags as part of their commitment to making the parade as good as possible. Sosa said every cadet in the school is required to complete 60 hours of community service a year and the parade is a great way to get that job done.

"They are a fantastic group," Sosa said. "It's good to see so many people in the community out here. That lets the students know that their participation is valued."

CMI senior Angel Hernandez, 17, put some of the contingent through its paces during the parade. He said the students are proud to represent their school and show off their discipline while marching in unison.

"This is my last parade," said Angel, who wants to join the Marines. "I am very excited to be here. I think discipline is fun."

City Councilman Landers said he was pleased so many people showed their community spirit by attending the parade.

"This is truly the time of the year to celebrate families and I am so pleased so that such a multitude of families, the many floats and bands took time out to participate," Landers said. "It was a great, great parade. People really crowded the parade route. You could not keep them away."

Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley, a Perris resident, said the Perris Christmas parade is "becoming an awesome event."

"You feel the energy," Ashley said. "I am excited to be part of this parade. I attribute the success of this parade to the resilient City of Perris spirit. The City enjoys terrific grass-roots support. This shows the Perris City Council is listening to the residents of Perris and is working well with the community."



Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans and parade Grand Marshal Mary Parks of NBC4. Parks said she was honored to serve in the parade.



Parade Grand Marshal Mary Parks chats with Mayor Daryl Busch before the start of the parade.



Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Rita Rogers: "It looks like the whole community came out."



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough rode in a car driven by his son, a Marine home for the holidays.



Perris City Councilman Al Landers and City Clerk Judy Haughney announced the parade.