



Perris News

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American Legion Convenes in Riverside June 18 - 21

More than 2,000 American Legion delegates will arrive in Riverside shortly to attend their annual convention, a get together that features flag-waving, Americanism and calls to respect the sacrifice and service of the nation's military veterans.

Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans will be in the middle of everything.

Evans served six years in the Marines and has remained active in veterans' affairs since most of her life. She has held numerous local and regional positions with the American and has served on the state and national level as well. She has been a state Vice Commander and is the Adjutant to the National Commander for Public Relations.

That job fits her well. Evans retired from CalFire as the department's spokesperson. She and her husband, Iral, a Navy veteran, have lived in Perris more than 40 years.



Evans salutes the flag during the playing of the National Anthem.



Riverside County Sheriff Stan Sniff with City Councilwoman Joanne Evans during a recent American Legion awards ceremony

"We come together for camaraderie and to show our patriotism and love of country," Evans said. "The only reason we can drive wherever we want to or even walk down the street is that someone fought to give you that right. We understand each other. It's a habit. You stay with it."

Members of the Legion keep abreast of the latest developments concerning military veterans their families, including employment opportunities, disability claims, post traumatic stress disorder and, one that's been affecting Iraq war servicemen and women, traumatic brain injury. The Legion also supports the Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Eagle Scouts programs.

American Legionnaires speak to school children about the importance of military service, present scholarships to deserving high schoolers and run Boys State program throughout the country. Boys State is a summer education program held near Sacramento.

High school juniors from all over California, who are chosen by local American Legion posts, take part in a model state government, complete with governing bodies and elected municipal leaders. Boys State programs take place throughout the country. Former President Bill Clinton was a Boys State participant.

Evans said politicians from Riverside, Sacramento and Washington are expected to send proclamations of support to Legionnaires. State and federal dignitaries will address convention-goers. The annual gathering takes place June 18 to June 21 at the Riverside Convention Center.