



Perris News

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"Jump for the Cause" to Set a Record

Women skydivers from around-the-globe are heading for Perris for fun and fund-raising.

More than 180 female parachutists are scheduled to take part in what is being hailed as the largest-ever formation skydive for women.

The parachutists will be arriving in the City over the next three weeks to attempt the world-record skydive while they raise money for breast-cancer research.

They've set a lofty goal: \$1 million.

But based on their previous efforts, which included a 150-women jump in 2005 that netted \$500,000 for research and awareness, event coordinator Mary Tortomasi is confident about this year's "Jump for the Cause." Tortomasi works at Skydive Perris, located at the Perris Valley Airport on Goetz Road.

Tortomasi is being sponsored in part by the City and said Perris is the only airport in the world where such an ambitious skydiving record could be attempted. Perris airport is the busiest skydiving airport in the world, and individuals, private groups and elite military units by the tens of thousands come to the City to train and jump.

"No other jump zone in the world could put on this unique event," she said. "It's got the weather, the hotels, the community support, the entertainment nearby. Perris has the whole package."

Tortomasi said competitors will begin arriving in Perris by mid-September.

The "Jump for the Cause" will begin on Sept. 21 with smaller groups of parachutist practicing for the big dive, which will take place sometime on Sept. 24 through Sept. 27, depending on conditions and the results of the earlier jumps. The final jump is supposed to resemble a snowflake when all the participants join up while descending to earth.

Tortomasi said it will be an impressive sight.

Parachutists from the U.S., Canada, Australia, Great Britain, Spain, Germany, Russia, Finland, Brazil and Venezuela will jump out of airplanes at 20,000 feet – that's nearly four miles above the earth --- and link up in formation while falling. They will free fall to 2,500 feet before pulling their ripcords. Divers will don oxygen masks for the jump. Many will be wearing hot-pink jumpsuits.

"This is such an important cause," she said. "Breast cancer affects everybody. You should hear the stories. I'm thrilled to be a participant."

Tortomasi said skydivers from 20 to almost 70 years of age will take part in the world-record attempt. Nine airplanes are flying in from around the country to ferry the skydivers to jump altitude. The least experience jumper will have 400 skydives; the most experienced, about 20,000.

Dan Brodsky-Chenfeld, another event organizer, said the airport is buzzing prior to the big event.

"If this was just an attempt to set a new world record, that alone would cause major excitement," he said. "But to know that a world record is being attempted in conjunction with this most worthwhile event doubles the excitement."

The public is invited to watch the week of skydiving in September. The public also is invited to a fund-raiser Sunday (Aug. 29) from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the Perris Valley Skydiving Center, 2091 Goetz Road, entitled "Dancing under the Stars."

The event features dining, wine-tasting, a silent auction and live jazz performances. The admission price is \$25. Information: www.jumpforthecause.com ; www.skydiveperris.com and 1-800 SKYDIVE.



"Jump for the Cause 2009" coordinator Mary Tortomasi displays the hot-pink jumpsuit that many participants will wear when they attempt a world record skydive to raise money for breast cancer awareness. Tortomasi, who works for Skydive Perris, is a veteran of more than 2,000 jumps..



An up-close look at the event logo.



Tortomasi displays a photo of an earlier jump to support breast cancer research.