



Perris News

Contact: Joe Vargo, Perris Public Information Officer
Phone: 951-956-2120
jvargo@cityofperris.org

March Armed Forces Reserve Center Ribbon Cutting this Saturday

Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough is the keynote speaker in Saturday's ribbon-cutting at the Armed Forces Reserve Center near March Air Reserve Base, a facility expected to provide invaluable training and teaching opportunities to members of the military for decades to come.

The \$30 million, 130,000-square-foot complex includes simulated target ranges, a weapons storage vault, vehicle repair bays, a complete fitness center and library and classrooms to allow military personnel to continue their education.

Dignitaries from Perris, Moreno Valley and Riverside are expected for the ribbon-cutting. Maj. Gen. Bruce A. Casella, commander of the 63rd Regional Support Command, also will attend Saturday's ceremony.

Members of the California National Guard, U.S. Army Reserve as well as the Navy and Marine Reserves will utilize the center. It's a state-of-the-art training facility and one that community leaders and military officers say likely will replace the aging National Guard armories throughout Southern California. The Center is expected to become a hub of training activities for at least the next 20 to 25 years.

"This is an outstanding location to train and prepare our troops for the fight against global terrorism," Yarbrough said.

"I am pleased to be able to take part in dedicating this important cog in this war America simply cannot afford to lose. It is a great facility, one that does our military proud." Yarbrough said the Reserve Center took a long time to go from the drawing board to completion.

The site used to be part of March Air Force Base.

When March became downsized as part of the Base Realignment and Closure process in 1993, several federal "islands" remained, including the spot where the Reserve Center now stand.

In an effort to alleviate some of the checkerboard on the Northeast Corner of the base, the March Joint Powers Authority (March JPA) and the Department of the Army jointly requested that Congressman Ken Calvert sponsor legislation to authorize the Army, Navy, and California Army National Guard to swap their parcels for one consolidated parcel for a Joint Reserve Training Complex.

Yarbrough said he is pleased, but not surprised, that a spirit of cooperation helped bring the Reserves Center to the region. In addition to his role with the City of Perris, Yarbrough also serves as chairman of the March Joint Powers Commission, the JPA's sister agency which consists of elected officials from Perris, Moreno Valley, Riverside and Riverside County.

"This region has always supported our military, since March Air Force Base began operating on what was then known as the Alessandro Plain in 1918," he said.

"During the grueling BRAC process, which took place over a decade, the March JPA and its commissioners spoke constantly about the need to keep March open and viable. Today, the March JPA and Joint Powers Commission are working with the Pentagon to develop guidelines that will continue to ensure March's viability well into the 21st Century while allowing safe and sensible development around the base."

Yarbrough toured the Reserves Center earlier this week and said he came away very impressed with what he saw.

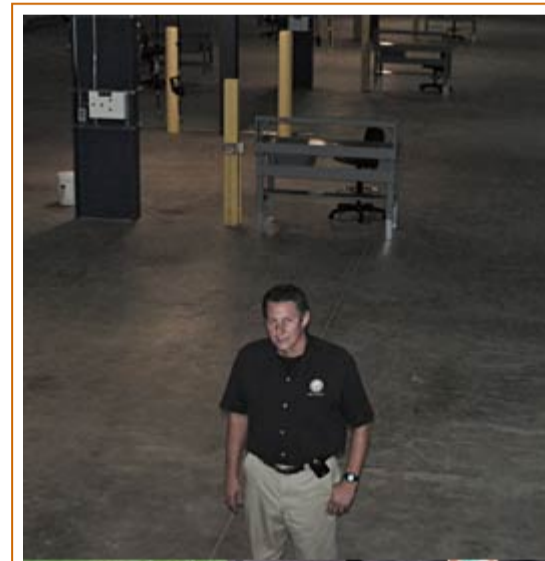
"It pleases me immensely to know our men and women in uniform will be honing their war fighting skills in a location that simply is second to none," he said.



Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough at the Armed Forces Reserve Center near March Air Reserve Base.



The \$30 million Center offers more than 130,000-square-feet of training space for Southern California military personnel.



A vehicle repair bay can accommodate Humvees, troops transports and other large vehicles.