



Perris News

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

Perris Depot Rededication



Railroad enthusiasts, historians, elected officials throughout Riverside County and the last station master will arrive in Perris Oct. 29 when the city rededicates its newly refurbished train Depot.

The rededication ceremonies begin at 12 p.m. at the Depot at 4th and C Streets in historic Downtown Perris.

"This is a red-letter date for our city," said Perris Mayor Daryl Busch. "The Depot was in a great state of deterioration before we were able to refurbish it. Everyone is really in favor what we've done with it and what we're doing."

The Depot for decades served as one of the hubs of Perris.

Trains from the California Southern Railroad and later the Santa Fe Railroad stopped to pick up loads of potatoes and grain crops and drop off passengers. Work on the Depot began in 1885 and was completed seven years later.

After its closure in the 1970s, the brick structure deteriorated, even as it made the National Registry of Historic Places.

When work began to repair the Depot, contractors had to keep its historic nature in mind. They retrofitted and strengthened the building against earthquakes, installed a new roof and new floor, redid the brick work, added air conditioning and new wiring.

"They basically took it down to its shell and rebuilt it," Busch said.

Cost to refurbish the Depot exceeded \$1 million and was funded by a federal grant and Perris redevelopment funds.

When it opens to the public, scheduled for January, the Depot will serve as home to the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association. The Orange Empire Railway Museum will also have room to display artifacts at the Depot.

Among the dignitaries scheduled to appear at Wednesday's rededication is Lloyd Higginson, who served as the last station master in Perris. Higginson arrived in Perris in 1952 and spent about 20 years as the station chief, where his duties included selling tickets, working the Western Union wire and making sure the freight left Perris in good order.

Higginson, 86, is making the trip from Northern California to attend the ceremony. He will receive a plaque commemorating his time in Perris.

"I'm looking forward to coming to Perris," he said. "I've got a lot of friends and a lot of memories from my time there."

The rededication of the Depot is just one of several major construction and improvement projects ongoing in the Downtown area. Work on a Metrolink station near the Depot could start early next year.

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