



Perris News

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Aerial Firetruck in the Works for Perris

The Perris City Council this week took the first step to bringing a state-of-the-art aerial firefighting rig to town.

Despite the current economic downturn, the Council gave approval to City Manager Richard Belmudez to sign a contract with the Nebraska-based manufacturer to purchase the truck.

Perris Battalion Chief Don Cockrum said the ladder truck, dubbed "the Tiller," is badly needed in Perris, which boasts about 12 million square feet of commercial and industrial development with millions more expected in the coming years.

Cockrum called the rig, which is manufactured by Smeal Fire Apparatus Co., said the truck will be vital in protecting warehouse operations like Lowe's and Ritchie Brothers and the recently opened Hanes garment locations in the event of fire.

The "rolling toolbox," as Cockrum called the vehicle, will also be sent to help extricate people from the roofs of burning buildings, those trapped inside wrecked vehicles and collapsed industrial trenches.

Firefighters assigned to the truck must undergo advanced training and Cockrum predicted the chance to work on such a rig will draw many seasoned firefighters.

"These are the Jedi Knights of the fire department," he said.

Riverside County has similar rigs in Moreno Valley, Menifee, Temecula, Indio and Palm Desert. A Tiller from Moreno Valley was on display in the City Hall campus prior to Tuesday's meeting, giving councilmembers and City staff an up close look at their investment. The truck is expected to be completed and in Perris by mid-2010.

Cost to buy and equip the 55-foot-long aerial platform will cost about \$1 million, which the City has set aside in a separate dedicated fund for that purpose. Staffing the rig is expected to cost \$1.7 million a year, with the City being responsible for about \$1.3 million while Riverside County picks up the difference.

"It's vital for the City to have this," Rogers said. "I'm very optimistic the economy will recover by 2010 or 2011. I fully support this."

Yarbrough said he too believes funding will be found to staff the engine and he believes that once residents see the rig, they will be thankful it is in Perris.

Busch said he too was "100 percent" in favor of purchasing the Tiller.

"I believe we will be able to put in place the mechanism to fund it," he said.

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The Perris City Council approved ordering a state-of-the-art firefighting rig like this, known as the Tiller, which should arrive by mid-2010.



The Tiller comes equipped with a 100-foot extension ladder for high-rise firefighting.