

Perris News

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Christmas Trees for our Troops!

Perris officials joined with the military Friday to send season's greeting to U.S. troops in the Middle East and airmailed those soldiers 100 holiday trees that will arrive in time for Christmas.

City Councilman Mark Yarbrough, speaking at the DHL cargo hub at March Air Reserve Base, said despite the tough economy, area residents have much to be thankful for and owe American soldiers their gratitude for the freedoms many take for granted.

The City partnered with the March Joint Powers Authority to make the donation of holiday trees and decorations possible. Friday's ceremony included an honor guard from March, Riverside County and representatives from the offices of several state legislators.

"If you love your freedom, thank a soldier," Yarbrough said. "This is a particularly difficult time for them because we know their thoughts are with their families. A lot of people spend time in the desert with their recreational vehicles during the holidays but for our troops, the desert experience is very different. We hope this gift will help them know they are not forgotten during the holidays."

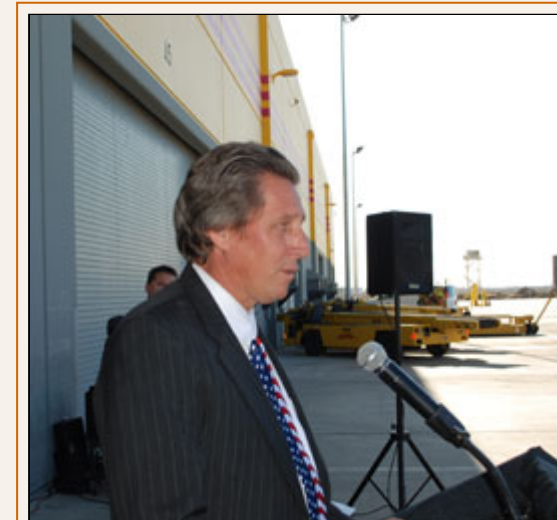
The evergreen trees will first fly aboard a DHL jet to Los Angeles, then make their way to New York and finally the Middle East.

March Air Reserve Base is the major west coast point for Marines traveling to and from Iraq. Hundreds of Perris residents work at March as civilians or members of the military.

Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley, who represents Perris, said DHL has sent Christmas trees to troops in Iraq for years. He thanked the generosity of area people who have made up thousands of holiday packages over the years for troops fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. Their spirit of giving embodies "the most generous country on the face of God's green earth," Ashley said.



A March Air Reserve Base honor guard carries the flag during the DHL "Trees for Troops" ceremony.



Perris City Councilmember Mark Yarbrough addresses the crowd, telling audience members that despite the tough economy, Americans have a lot for which to be thankful.

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