



home > city hall > press releases

Perris Lake High School Students Get VIP Tour of City Hall



Perris City Manager Richard Belmudez addresses the group of Perris Lake High School seniors who toured the City Hall Campus. "This is your building."

Twenty-five seniors from Perris Lake High School got a VIP look inside Perris City Hall recently, chatting with elected representatives and senior administrators, getting the inside scoop about several departments and checking out the community new Teen Center at the Statler Youth Building.

The group met with City Manager Richard Belmudez, Assistant City Managers Darren Madkin and Clara Miramontes, and several other department heads during the Oct. 18 visit. They got to see the City gym and toured the Perris Green City Farm Program, the campus' community garden.

City Councilwoman Tonya Burke also encouraged them to stay abreast of current events and get practical experience about how Perris addresses issues of importance by joining the City's Youth Advisory Committee.

Belmudez addressed the youngsters from inside the City Council Chambers. He urged them to get and stay involved with local Perris issues and said they, like all residents, have the right to address elected leaders about issues and concerns.

"This is your building," Belmudez said. "Every individual has the right to come here and voice their opinion."

Priceless artifacts

The visit to the City Clerk's office drew a lot of curiosity. Many pairs of eyes turned to the large safe that houses priceless material. Not cash, bonds or diamonds. But City resolutions, ordinances and meeting minutes dating back to 1911 when Perris incorporated.

Assistant City Clerk Judy Haughey pulled out the City's first-ever ordinance, written by hand on now-faded paper and approved just months after incorporation. Like other historical documents, it's stored in a climate-controlled environment to preserve it.



Assistant City Clerk Judy Haughey (right) explains that the functions of her office include storing City resolutions, ordinances and minutes from public meetings.

"If something were to happen to any of these items, we could not replace them," Haughey said. "They are priceless."

Chief Information Officer Arturo Cervantes showed the students the City's television studio and Information Technology Server room.

Several students noted how chilly conditions were inside the server room. The reason, Cervantes said, is that computers generate a lot of heat when operating.

"I really enjoyed visiting with the Lake Perris High School folks," Cervantes said. "It's always nice to demonstrate our job and how we work behind-the-scenes at making Perris the great City it is."

Advice from the dais

Councilwoman Burke didn't mince words in her remarks to the Lake Perris High School contingent: "You are our future leaders," she said.

"This is your home," Burke said. "Please be involved."

The high school crowd was impressed with what they saw and the courtesy extended by Perris staff, administrators and elected reps.



Perris City Councilwoman Tonya Burke urged the students to learn about their City and make it a better place through their participation.

Robert Bryant, the school's College Career Coordinator, said he was "very grateful" to the City for making welcome his students.

"It was great to see how a City is run," he said. "I hope it inspires them to seek jobs in public service. The City has been most welcoming. I'm really happy for this opportunity."

Senior Cassandra Magana, 17, said she had never been to City Hall before visiting her peers. She was thrilled to take a seat on the City Council dais and pleased to learn that any resident can address elected officials at every City Council meeting.

"It was really cool to see the different departments at City Hall and what people do," she said.

Aubreyana Parga, 17, said she was impressed with how City staff to explain their individual jobs.

"I like how very informative they were to take time out of their day to talk to us," she said.

Dominique Herzog, 17, said she learned a lot about gardening techniques at the campus, which include hydroponic and aqua-ponic growing towers. She said she learned that Public Works employees toil very hard to trim trees and maintain Perris streets.

"I never knew how much work went into maintenance," she said. "I'm very thankful the City reached out to us. That's what's going to get us involved later in life."

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