



home > city hall > press releases

New Eateries Perk up in Perris

Abby Silva grew up in Perris, graduated from high school in the City and now with her husband owns La Gare Coffee Roasters, a specialty bakery, coffee and sandwich shop that is Downtown Perris's latest eatery.

Silva says owning a business in the town she loves is "a dream come true" made possible in part by the City's "restaurant incentive program" operated by the Perris Community Economic Development Corporation. Silva and her husband, Odir, work every day at the restaurant and have hired a few City residents as employees.

"This is where we want to see our home town's business community grow and expand," Silva said. "The City of Perris has been a great help. They've provided great guidance to us. When a city works directly with businesses that makes us feel more confident and successful!"

Michael McDermott, chief operating officer of the Perris CEDC, said the incentive program rewards newly established restaurants in a variety of ways, all meant to encourage a wider variety of dining choices for City residents, business owners, vendors, and visitors.

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La Gare Coffee Roasters owners Odir and Abby Silva and Perris Community Economic Development Corporation Chief Operating Officer Michael McDermott stand in front of the specialty restaurant on D Street adjacent to Perris City Hall.

Family-owned establishment

City Councilwoman Tonya Burke said she is glad to see restaurants like La Gare succeed because it's a family-owned establishment operated by Perris residents with deep roots in the community.

She has used the restaurant for some of her informal meetings with constituents. Teen-agers from the City's Youth Advisory Committee also use La Gare for their monthly "open-mic" night performances.

"It's always great to give a helping hand to a small, family-operated business," Burke said. "It's great when we can invest in small businesses. We sow what we reap."

In the case of La Gare, the CEDC provided \$100,000 to build the business on D Street just south of City Hall and rented the space below market rates.

Corky's Homestyle Kitchen and Bakery at 3150 Case Road in Perris' south end, also benefitted with \$100,000 funding to build and another \$100,000 for tenant improvements like furniture, fixtures and equipment. That restaurant is scheduled to open April 6, McDermott said.

McDermott said one goal of the restaurant incentive program is to expand the variety of food choices to Perris residents and said the City is working to attract additional restaurants in the near future. A robust selection of restaurants benefits Perris in a variety of ways, he said.

"It provides more food options for Perris residents, it creates more local jobs, brings more tax revenues to the City and in the case of La Gare it attracts more people to Downtown," McDermott said.

More restaurants also serve as a magnet for other businesses to locate or expand in the City, he said.



La Gare Coffee Roasters features a variety of coffees from Central and South America and Africa.

Business improving

Abby Silva said business is on the uptick since La Gare opened in late November.

Odir Silva's family in Guatemala farmed coffee, one of the business's featured menu items. Coffees from Brazil, Ethiopia and Central America are part of the house fare. The menu will expand in the coming months. Silva thanked the City of Perris, its Community Economic Development Corporation and City staff for shepherding the business from conception to completion.

"We are pleased to be in business in the community where we live," Abby Silva said. "We're pleased and happy to be in Perris. This is our hometown and we're pleased to be part of its business community."



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