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## Corky's Opening Ceremony in Perris



Perris Mayor Michael Vargas (center) prepares to cut the ribbon at the grand opening of Corky's Homestyle Kitchen & Bakery April 26. Standing to the Mayor's left are owners Michael and Jennifer Towles.

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Perris officials welcomed Corky's Homestyle Kitchen & Bakery to the City Wednesday, cutting the ribbon on the restaurant that already is attracting large numbers of patrons and generating sales above expectations.

Mayor Michael Vargas, City Manager Richard Belmudez and representatives of the City's planning and economic development team and Perris Valley Chamber of Commerce were on hand to congratulate Corky's owners Mike and Jennifer Towles on the opening of their 10th family style, always open restaurant.

Corky's is located at Ethnacad and Case roads in the Perris Crossings shopping center and lies next to Interstate 215.

"This is a great day for Perris," Vargas said. "It's fantastic for our community. We need more eateries in our City. They provide more options for our residents and allow local tax dollars to stay here."

While Wednesday's ceremony marked the official opening, Corky's has been serving customers since March 29, when a large crowd waiting in the parking lot walked through the doors. Vargas and his wife have dined at Corky's on several occasions, enjoying huevos rancheros and patty melts for breakfast and lunch and have enjoyed the food and atmosphere.

The Towles welcomed such comments. Mike Towles predicted additional restaurants will flock to Perris.

"We are super happy to be part of your community," he said. "This is a growing community and there is a lot of traffic on I-215. I believe this market will expand."



Perris Mayor Michael Vargas chats with Corky's owners Michael and Jennifer Towles at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. "This is a great day for Perris."

### Honoring grandma

Corky's is named for Mike Towles' grandmother, Corky Hayes, who grew up in Oklahoma, migrated to California to pick oranges during the Great Depression and encouraged Mike and Jennifer Towles to live out their dream of opening a family restaurant.

The first Corky's opened in 2007. The company is headquartered in Rancho Cucamonga. Corky Hayes' recipes for biscuits and gravy and chicken-fried steak found their way onto the restaurant menu.

Other legacies include the mismatched coffee cups found at every table. Corky Hayes never owned a complete set of china and made do with cups from various sources. The restaurant continues that legacy and receives cups from other vendors and individuals.

Jennifer Towles said that shortly before her death, Corky Hayes inspired her and Michael Towles to make a reality their goal of becoming restaurant owners.

"She told us that life is short and that we should pursue our dream," Jennifer Towles said.

Three of the five Towles' children work at various Corky's locations.



Corky's Homestyle Kitchen & Bakery opened recently in the Perris Crossings Shopping Center and already has drawn many repeat customers from the City of Perris and beyond.

### Seeking additional employees

Corky's general manager Erica Balding said the restaurant employs about 100 people, most from the Perris Valley, and is seeking additional workers, including high-school and college students looking for summer jobs. Job seekers can contact her at [Erica@oveeasyinc.com](mailto:Erica@oveeasyinc.com).

In the short time since opening, Balding said the restaurant has developed many repeat customers and is frequented by police, firefighters and paramedics and military personnel from nearby March Air Reserve Base.

Balding said customers have expressed their appreciation for a family-style restaurant that is open 24 hours, serves large portions and boasts signature menu items like fried chicken, chicken pot pies and several varieties of cheesecake.

"We appreciate the City of Perris for making us feel welcome," Balding said. "That makes us feel great."

Property landlord and developer William Rothacker Jr. said the City's Economic Development Corporation shepherded the 200-seat restaurant through the development process.

The City provided the developer with \$200,000 of financial support--\$100,000 in permit fees and \$100,000 toward the project to defray overall costs.

"The City's development team helped us expedite the process which was essential for us to open on time," he said. "Business so far has exceeded expectations. The future definitely looks bright for Corky's in Perris."



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