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## Ceremony Honors Perris Police Officers and Firefighters



Sheriff's Cpl. Veronica Amparano smiles as she accepts the Law and Order award presented by American Legion Post 595 in Perris. With her are Sheriff's Capt. Brandon Ford, Post Commander Michael Weir and Perris Mayor Michael Vargas.

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American Legion Post 595 in Perris honored two police officers and two firefighters during its "Law and Order" ceremony April 29, an event that drew several Perris elected officials, veterans and volunteers.

Perris Mayor Michael Vargas, City Councilman Malcolm Corona and City Councilwoman Rita Rogers led the contingent of elected officials and Perris Police Chief Brandon Ford delivered some keynote remarks.

Vargas said that as a retired law officer, he knows the stress cops and firefighters face daily and said he was proud the City honored its own.

"These are the people who work around-the-clock to keep us safe," Vargas said. "It's always important to honor those who put their lives on the line and to honor what they do. It sends the message that we respect and appreciate their work."

Corona said the Legion awards ceremony is "very important because we are honoring our heroes."

"It's important to show our appreciation for their hard work and sacrifice in keeping our community safe," he said.

Rogers called police, firefighters and other emergency responders "unsung heroes who put their lives on the line every day to protect us."

"I am delighted to be here for this important event," she said. "It's important to honor these unspoken heroes."



Riverside County Sheriff Deputy Brandon Cardinale holds the plaque awarded him by American Legion Post 595 during the April 29 Law and Order Ceremony. On stage with him are Sheriff's Capt. Brandon Ford, Post Commander Michael Weir and Perris Mayor Michael Vargas.

### The honorees included:

**Cpl. Veronica Amparano**, a patrol deputy at the Perris Station, who was honored for her "professionalism, leadership, integrity and exemplary performance." A 16-year veteran of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department (which serves Perris under a contract with the City) Amparano's duties include responding to critical incidents, assigning work schedule, reviewing reports and building a sense of teamwork among officers on her shift. In addition, Amparano was commended for her commitment to mentor new employees in the Perris station. In addition, she was honored with the Sheriff Department's Life-Saving Award for locating a missing 2-year-old child.

**Deputy Brandon Cardinale**, a member of the Perris station's Special Enforcement Team. Cardinale specializes in crimes that affect quality of life, such as auto theft and fraud and is also trained to deal with large-scale disturbances and provide protection to dignitaries. Cardinale was honored for cracking a kidnapping case in neighboring Menifee that required coordinating with several regional law-enforcement agencies, executing numerous search warrants at residences and for cell phone and social media accounts. The case resulted in the arrests of seven people, the safe return of the kidnapping victim and the seizure of a large amount of drugs. "Deputy Cardinale's commitment toward serving the citizens of Menifee and the surrounding communities exemplified a great law-enforcement partnership," according to his American Legion commendation.

**CAL FIRE Engineer Wendi Miller**, who began her career in San Luis Obispo in 1995 and moved to the CAL FIRE Riverside County in 2002. In 2006, she was promoted to fire engineer in the City of Perris. Miller is a Firefighter Counselor with Critical Incident Stress Management and an instructor at Camp Cinder, a firefighting camp for girls 14 to 18 years of age. "Wendi has a heart of gold with a compassion that exudes from her," reads Miller's citation from the American Legion. "Her passion is to help those in need. Wendi's thoughtfulness, caring and kindness toward individuals is truly unique and treasured by all!"

**CAL FIRE Communications Dispatcher Heather Prieto**. Prieto put herself through the dispatch academy and joined the Riverside County Fire Department in 2002. Two years later she was promoted to Certified Training Officer and since joining the department has played a vital role in numerous projects, including the Emergency Command Center Training Program as well as other department initiatives. "Her knowledge, responsibility and compassion toward her duties, the county and its residents and her co-workers exemplifies what we all strive to reach," according to her American Legion citation read at the awards ceremony.



Fire Engineer Wendi Miller accepts the Law and Order award from American Legion Post 595 during an April 29 ceremony. With her Riverside Sheriff's Capt. Brandon Ford, Post Commander Michael Weir and Perris Mayor Michael Vargas.

In his keynote remarks, Police Chief Ford praised the efforts of public safety officers, saying "law and order is at the core of sustaining our way of life." He called his invitation to address the awards ceremony "an absolute honor" and praised American Legion 595 for "taking the time to honor the public safety community."



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