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## Banners Honor Recent High School Graduates



Banners of recent Perris high school seniors now continuing their education in colleges and universities hang along Perris Boulevard.

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Banners honoring recent City high school graduates and are continuing their education in college have been attached to light poles along Perris Boulevard.

Crews installed 146 banners of Perris High School, Citrus Hill High School and the California Military Institute seniors who graduated in Spring 2017 along a stretch of Perris Boulevard north of Nuevo Road.

Perris City Council members authorized the banner program as a way to show support for high-school graduates who are pursuing post-secondary degrees and certifications.

The pilot program is open to all Perris residents who completed high school in the spring and are now enrolled in two or four-year colleges and universities.

Perris High School guidance counselor Richard Sweeney said the banner program is already a big hit with Panther students and parents. The pictures of this year's graduates provide role models for 2018- seniors to emulate.

"The banner program has instilled an even greater sense of pride in their educational accomplishments," Sweeney said. "It leaves a legacy for the next class of kids who see themselves on banners next year. It brings life to this City. It brings a face to this City. I'll be forever grateful to the City of Perris for supporting this program."

### Support from elected reps

Perris Mayor Michael Vargas called the banner program "a great way to acknowledge our students who will be continuing on to higher education."

"The ultimate vision is to see our youth succeed and hopefully return to Perris and give back to our community," he said.



The ultimate vision is to see our youth succeed and hopefully return to Perris and give back to our community," said the Mayor. Perris elected representatives say banners honoring recent graduates will encourage high-school seniors to study harder and earn their own banner as a reward.

Mayor Pro Tem David Starr Rabb is a Perris High School graduate (a co-valedictorian in 2004) who went on to earn a law degree at Stanford University and is now an Assistant Deputy District Attorney in San Bernardino County.

Of the banners hanging to celebrate recent grads, Rabb said: "It's a beautiful program that will highlight the great things Perris high school students have accomplished."

Perris City Councilwoman Tonya Burke said she often works with at-risk students who overcome major obstacles to complete high school and pursue collegiate studies. Such dedication requires a public shout out, she said.

"It is not an easy task to get into college these days," Burke said. "The banner program allows the whole community to celebrate their accomplishments. It's a great thing for the community to celebrate those who are going on to even greater accomplishments. The banners encourage the young folks to go above and beyond."

City Councilman Malcolm Corona graduated from Perris High School in 2003, earned a degree from UC Irvine and returned to his alma mater to teach math. He said displaying banner with the photos of recent graduates shows that "the City of Perris values education."

"It also inspires our young people throughout the City to go onto college and get recognized," he said. Corona said he's received many positive comments since the banners went up about two weeks ago, just in time for students applying for college in 2018 to see the recent grads and use their success to motivate themselves to achieve similar recognition.

City Councilwoman Rita Rogers said the banners boost the morale of family members, peers, friends and teachers and reinforce the commitment to "recognize and salute students who've achieved goals and accomplishments."

"It's a wonderful thing for our City to celebrate," Rogers said. "It's a proud moment when our whole community gets to celebrate students who've reached such an important milestone. It's a big deal."

The high schools represented in the banner-recognition program will determine their future participation. Parents, guardians and 2018 graduates are asked to contact representatives of their schools for more information about the banner program.



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