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## High School Students Learn How City Hall Works

The Perris City Hall Campus became the nerve center for a high-school "job shadowing" day Feb. 2, an event that allowed teen-agers to experience a variety of potential careers, from municipal administration to manufacturing to hospitality to civil engineering.

About 75 high-school juniors and seniors from Perris High School, Val Verde High School and the California Military Institute spent several hours observing and asking questions of their working professionals.

The City opened its doors and offices, making experts from several departments available for the teen-agers to watch and quiz. Several other businesses and agencies also took part in the first annual Youth Job Shadow Day.

Perris City Councilwoman Tonya Burke welcome the group upon arrival at the Bob Glass Gymnasium. Burke, a career vocational counselor for the State of California, urged the students to observe and "listen, listen, listen" to the advice and counsel they heard from the pros.



Perris City Councilwoman Tonya Burke addresses the crowd of students who took part in the Feb. 2 Job Shadow Day in the City. Her advice to the youth: observe and listen, listen, listen.

"Take advantage of this day, understand how important this experience is and take it seriously but have fun," Burke said. "This is a rare opportunity to get a look into the world of work."

Burke said she would like to see Job Shadow Day become an annual event.

City Manager Richard Belmudez spent part of his morning with Perris High School senior David Gomez, 17, and junior Rebecca Martinez, 16. Belmudez explained that the prime mission of any city is to provide public safety, parks and recreation programs, roads and infrastructure and activities that meet the needs of its population.

Municipalities also work with each other to solve regional challenges and encourage businesses to locate within their borders. The latter is becoming more challenging as more and more customers are choosing to shop online instead of at brick-and-mortar locations. No city can force a business to build or relocate within its boundaries.



Perris City Manager Richard Belmudez (right) talks to Perris High School students Rebecca Martinez, 16, about the City's ongoing efforts to attract businesses and programs that enhance the quality-of-life for Perris residents.

Belmudez said he enjoys his job because every day "provide the opportunity to make this community better." He urged Gomez and Martinez to pursue college and earn a degree. Both plan to make higher education a goal. Gomez plans to study business and communications in college; Martinez may seek a medical-related degree.

Both students said they found the time spent with the City Manager enjoyable and educational. Gomez said he learned that "attracting businesses to the city is a two-way street."

"A business has to want to come to a city," he said. "It's fun to go behind the scenes and get the inside scoop about how cities operate."

Information Technology Manager Arturo Cervantes and IT tech Chris Velasquez hosted Carlos Magana, 15, and Verence Perez, 18, both of Perris High School. The City employees explained the workings of the department—keeping everyone's Internet connection, email, telephones and computers working, monitoring social networking traffic, televising public meetings through the city's website and posting public service announcements and staff-produced videos to the City's Public Access Channel 3.

Both IT specialists encouraged the high-schoolers to pursue a college degree. In the high-tech world, that's the key to punching a ticket for success.

"It opens a lot of doors," Cervantes said. "This event shows the future generation some of their career options."

Both students said they were impressed that 2016 technology can be programmed and operated from a single location, often times by typing in a few keystrokes.



Perris High School students Carlos Magana, 15, and Verence Perez, 18, listen while Information Technology specialist Chris Velasquez and IT Manager Arturo Cervantes explain the workings of the equipment used to televise public meetings during the Feb. 2 Job Shadow Day in Perris.

Perris Public Works employees showed students how their department keeps the City looking spic-and-span. The department provides animal control services, parks and facilities maintenance, graffiti-removal, flood control and tree-trimming.

Public Works Supervisor Arturo Garcia took Perris High School student Deion Martin to several locations throughout the City, introducing the 18-year-old to a morning in the life of a maintenance crew. Garcia showed Deion a drainage ditch cut by public works employees to alleviate flooding in a field east of Perris Boulevard. Then it was off to a tree-trimming crew working on Indian Avenue.

Deion said he was impressed with the Public Works employees commitment to keeping Perris clean. He hopes to study kinesiology in college.



Public Works Supervisor Arturo Garcia shows a drainage ditch constructed by municipal employees to prevent flooding while Perris High School student Deion Martin looks on.

Other City departments taking part in the job-shadow day included Planning, Finance, Economic Development, Human Resources and Building. Perris businesses and agencies taking part in the activity included Inland Boat, the Lake Perris State Recreation Area, the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, Lowes, CalFire, Maribel Paralegal, Sizzler, Hanes, CR&R, Stretch Forming and Tri-Lakes.

Val Verde High School senior Andres Florentin, 18, said the day's experience would resonate with him for a long time. He is planning to study civil engineering in college. Florentin spent the day with Perris City Engineer Habib Motlagh.

"It's a wonderful thing the City is doing," he said. "It's made a big impact on me. It was a good day."



Perris high school students stop by military recruiting displays during the City's Job Shadow Day.

After providing lunch to the high-schoolers, Perris Mayor Daryl Busch and City Councilman Mark Yarbrough visited with several businesses and military recruiters who attended a job expo as part of the job-shadowing day. Both addressed the students before they left to return to school.

"I hope you enjoyed yourself and I hoped you learned something," Busch said. "We've had a great turnout and we thank you for taking part."

Busch said the City continues progressing, continues to build and continues to seek out new businesses and restaurants.

"We are still growing and we are proud of what we're doing to make the City better," Busch said.

Yarbrough urged the students to find a career they love and pursue it passionately. He said he realized his childhood dream of working on cars and racing them. He called job-shadowing day "a great opportunity" not be wasted.

"There's a lot to look at, a lot to choose from and a lot to consider," he said. "Study the choices and the opportunities."



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch and City Councilman Mark Yarbrough stand between Army recruiters who participated in Job Shadow Day on Feb. 2.

**Media Contact**  
Joe Vargo  
Public Information Officer  
951-943-6100  
[jvargo@cityofperris.org](mailto:jvargo@cityofperris.org)



**Perris City Hall**  
101 N. D Street  
Perris, CA 92570

Hours: Mon. - Fri. 8 am - 6pm

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