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National Night Out Builds Bonds between Residents and Public Safety



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch accepts a Certificate of Appreciation from Perris Police Chief Brandon Ford while Mayor Pro Tem Rita Rogers and her grandson, Jordan, 4, look on during the National Night Out celebration.

The 33rd annual National Night Out gave Perris residents the chance to meet and chat with local cops, firefighters and emergency medical personnel while providing public safety representatives a chance to display the tools of their trade.

Gadgets on display included armored vehicles used in hostage rescues, motorcycles for off-road vehicle enforcement, the county dive team's boat, robots used in surveillance and bomb disposal and police dogs trained to sniff for people and subdue criminal suspects.

Riverside County Sheriff's Capt. Brandon Ford, who serves as the Police Chief in Perris, Menifee and Canyon Lake, said the idea behind National Night Out is to put cops and civilians in a setting where both feel comfortable and relaxed.

That makes sense, he said, because cordial police/public relationships enhance public safety officers and the people they serve.

"The National Night Out movement is about getting people out of their houses and away from their computers so they can get to know their friends, neighbors and cops," Ford said. "People can't rely on government to solve all their problems. They need to step up and pitch in."

Ford said Perris and the other communities in his jurisdiction enjoy great public support. More than 200 volunteers donate time to the Perris station through working in the office, taking part in Citizens on Patrol, Neighborhood Watch, crime watch and Explorer programs. Officers based in Perris provide service for 250,000 people over 250 square miles, Ford said. Last year, Perris police responded to more than 125,000 calls for service.

Ford thanked all the volunteers and elected leaders for their stout support of law enforcement.

"We can't do our job without your help," he said.

Ford also thanked the community for its "tremendous support" in the wake of a series of deadly attacks on law officers in recent weeks.



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough talks with SWAT officer Jason Newstrom, whose duties also include off-road vehicle enforcement, during the National Night Out.

Perris well represented

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch, Mayor Pro Tem Rita Rogers and City Councilman Mark Yarbrough attended the National Night Out. Busch and Rogers received an award for the City's support of its cops.

"It is a pleasure to be here and to show our support for law enforcement," Busch said. "This event is great because it helps the public understand where some of their dollars go—to protect you."

Rogers said the City's public safety "is very much a top priority" with elected officials. National Night Out provides the chance for residents to get an up-close look at the people and equipment aimed at keeping them safe.

"It's great the people can get an up-close look at all the demonstrations of all the great equipment used by our public safety professionals," Rogers said.

Yarbrough chatted with members of the SWAT team, who serve high-risk search warrants and respond to hostage situations, barricaded suspects and active-shooter situations. They also respond to reports of illegal off-road racing and riding. The officers showed off their armored car and motorcycles they employ to get the job done.

"Police and public-safety officers have a difficult job," he said. "It is imperative they have all the resources to get that difficult job done."



Police officer Todd Garvin and his bloodhound, Inga, get ready to do some tracking during a demonstration at the National Night Out on August 6.

Dogs at work

Some of the most popular demonstrations featured officers who work with canines. Officer Todd Garvin showed off the skills of a bloodhound named Inga, who is credited with using her extraordinary sense of smell with saving three people in her 10-year career. Bloodhounds have a sense of smell a million times more acute than humans, Garvin said, and are relentless trackers. Their large feet and ears and wrinkles on their skin all collect the scents they are employed to track.

To demonstrate, Garvin called a youngster from the crowd, asked to borrow his cap, let Inga sniff his clothing, told the youngster to move out of sight and released Inga to locate the source of the scent. She tracked down the boy, who was sitting among others in the crowd, in about a minute. She got a treat for her work.

Another canine, a Belgian Malinois named Renzo, showed off his prowess at subduing uncooperative suspects. Renzo is new to the Perris Police Department, having been on the job only about a month. In that time, he's already been called out on suspect searches.

Most suspects, notified there is a canine on their trail, give up without further incident, said Tim Quick, Renzo's handler.

In the National Night Out demonstration, Renzo was called upon to restrain an unruly suspect. Given a command in Dutch by his handler, Renzo charged the man, leaped into the air and sank his teeth into the protective suit clothing him. Renzo held the man in check until Quick called for him to back off. Renzo did and the crowd cheered.



Renzo, a Belgian Malinois patrol dog, latches on to a suspect wearing protective clothing during a demonstration at National Night Out.

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