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Orange Avenue Revamp Kicks off Perris Proud Week



Volunteer Payton Babb works on a Sept. 10 beautification project that included planting numerous kinds of vegetation along Orange Avenue in Perris.

Dozens of volunteers installed drought-resistant landscaping along a stretch of Orange Avenue in Perris Sept. 10, creating an attractive vista along a major traffic corridor.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch led a team of about 50 volunteers from local congregations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints as they planted bamboo, oleander, garlic ivy, sycamore and crepe myrtle plants and trees along Orange just east of Perris Boulevard. They were joined by resident volunteers and City of Perris employees.

Within three hours, they had transformed an empty strip along Orange into a colorful and eye-pleasing community enhancement. The volunteer effort kicked off the beginning of "Perris Proud Week" which continues this Saturday with four additional beautification projects, each under the supervision of a Perris City Council member.

Busch said Perris Proud Week is meant to instill community spirit. City Manager Richard Belmudez, Deputy City Manager Darren Madkin and Assistant Director of Public Works Daryl Hartwill led a team of Perris municipal workers who rolled up their sleeves, grabbed rakes, shovels and wheel barrows as they planted the assortment of live plants.

"I am very pleased with today's turnout," Busch said. "We have really, really good participation and we appreciate everyone's commitment and willingness to serve our community. Today is important because it's helping to clean up Perris by getting different groups of people to volunteer and show their community spirit."



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch holds a sign to slow traffic through the work area.

LDS volunteers from Perris and Menifee stakes took part in Saturday's project. Lesa Sobek, a public affairs representative for the church, said volunteerism represents a major pillar of the faith.

"Part of our faith is to give back," Sobek said. "There's a need and we're here to help. We're here to do good."

Joshua Bigelow brought his family, Sons Bentley, 13, Hudson, 10 and daughter Brighton, 7, all pitched in to plant landscaping.

"Many hands make light work," the elder Bigelow said. "If we all pitch in we can make the work of everyone else a little lighter. And it makes Perris look beautiful!"

Bentley Bigelow said he likes to volunteer because "it benefits everyone."

"You don't have to get paid to lend a hand," he said.

Younger brother Hudson said he likes to help people.

"It just doesn't help the community but it might encourage other people to do the same thing," he said.



Brothers Bentley (closest) and Hudson Bigelow plant drought-resistant landscaping along Orange Avenue as part of the Perris Proud improvement effort.

Amanda Burris and Payton Babb are serving a two-year mission as part of their religious development. Both volunteer at a weekly community food bank, distributing packages to needy families. They also volunteer to help construct homes for Habitat for Humanity and work at the Orange Empire Railway Museum beautifying the grounds.

"It's fun to see the progress we're making and letting other people see the progress too," said Babb, 20, who lives near Seattle. "There's a lot of joy in seeing improvements in the community."

Burris, 20, whose home is in Castle Rock, Colo., said her reward comes from knowing her community services makes Perris a better place.

"I am happy to help out," she said. "I feel it is an expression of love for the community and the people who live here."



Volunteers from the local LDS community took part in the Sept. 10 landscaping project along Orange Avenue near Perris Boulevard.

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