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## Perris Proud Week Volunteers Pull It off Perfectly

City-elected representatives and administrators fanned out recently with more than 130 volunteers to complete a series of community improvement and beautification projects from one end of Perris to the other.

The daylong effort Sept. 17 wrapped up the highly successful "Perris Proud" week that began with the City offering residents the chance to host yard sales without the usual permits and included a free trash disposal day courtesy of CR&R, the community's solid waste hauler.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch kicked off Perris Proud week Sept. 10 when he led volunteers as they planted landscaping along a section of Orange Avenue just east of Perris Boulevard.

His colleagues—Mayor Pro Tem Rita Rogers, City Councilwoman Tonya Burke, City Councilmen David Starr Rabb and Mark Yarbrough, and City Clerk Nancy Salazar—kept the ball rolling as they rolled up their sleeves to remove blight, assist individual home and business owners and a non-profit agency, and spruce up a popular Perris park.

Elected reps were joined by City Manager Richard Belmudez, Deputy City Manager Darren Madkin, City Attorney Eric Dunn, Director of Development Services Clara Miramontes, Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager Michael McDermott, Assistant Director of Housing and Community Services Sabrina Chavez, and Isabel Carlos, Assistant Director of Administrative Services.



Perris Mayor Pro Tem Rita Rogers with the Galindo family at Paragon Park on Sept. 17 as part of Perris Proud Week. The family includes Brian Galindo, Felicia Galindo and their children—Isabella, 20, Rebekah, 17, Marcus, 13 and Angelica, 7.

### Paragon Park improvements

Mayor Pro Tem Rogers joined with about 35 volunteers, many from Temple Baptist Church, to paint the basketball court, handrails, bollards and light posts at Paragon Park. Rogers commended the commitment of the volunteers, who ranged from 4 to 86 years old and didn't let hot temperatures keep them from completing their work.

"What great community spirit we have on display here!" Rogers said. "They have turned out in very significant numbers to improve this park. Perris residents always turn out for a good cause and today is no exception. I am very grateful."

Brian Galindo worked despite confinement to a wheelchair. So did his wife, Felicia and children—Isabella, 20; Rebekah, 17; Marcus, 13, and Angelica, 7.

"Taking care of the City is everyone's responsibility," Brian Galindo said. "Take pride in your community. If we don't do it, nobody will. Many hands make light work."

Felicia Galindo agreed.

"This is our community," she said. "We have to make it look beautiful. We have to set an example."



Perris City Councilwoman Tonya Burke gives the thumbs-up as she works on a solar panel project as part of Perris Proud Week. With her are fellow volunteers David Olmedo and Alex Rodriguez.

### Solar panel installation

City Councilwoman Tonya Burke strapped on a safety harness, climbed two stories to the top of a residence in north Perris and assisted in the installation of a solar panel array as her contribution to Perris Proud week. It wasn't her first time. Earlier this year, Burke helped install another solar system in Perris.

"Any time we can help one of our residents, that's a good thing for the family and the community," Burke said. "I would like to see the solar program in the City expanded. That would provide great benefits to a lot of people. I greatly appreciate the volunteers who have turned out to support all our Perris Proud activities. You can't do anything without community support."

Homeowner Alfonso Castaneda said he appreciates how the City works with GRID Alternatives to install solar systems, which he expects will save his family hundreds of dollars annually. GRID is a state-funded free solar program to income-qualified families.

"The City of Perris is great—it's a nice community," said Castaneda, who is disabled. "It's wonderful they provide assistance for low-income people."

Volunteer David Olmedo, who joined Burke on the roof, said he appreciates the City of Perris launching pride week.

"It's a really good thing and I want to be involved," he said.



Perris City Councilman David Starr Rabb plants drought-resistant landscaping Sept. 17 at Ferrellgas on South D Street as part of Perris Proud Week.

### Planting and picking

Perris City Councilman David Starr Rabb wasn't satisfied to finish just one project. After working with members of the City's Youth Advisory Committee to plant landscaping at a D Street business, Rabb and about 25 volunteers picked up thousands of plastic shopping bags from a vacant lot at Perris Boulevard and Orange Avenue.

"It's important to ensure pride in our community," Rabb said. "I'm looking forward to working with everybody today. It's important to clean up the community, instill pride and make our City look good."

Rabb began his day by planting agave, drought-tolerant grasses and ground cover at Ferrellgas, a propane provider at Eighth and D streets. Courtney Hamilton, 15, a newly appointed member of the YAC, was among the volunteers lending a hand.

"I want to be the change that I want to bring about," said Courtney, who attends Rancho Verde High School. "I appreciate how the City puts time into bringing people together to help Perris look better."

After wrapping up at Ferrellgas, Rabb headed to Perris and Orange where he was joined by students from Citrus Hill High School who picked up trash—mostly plastic shopping bags—from the vacant lot.

"I think we had a really great day and I want to thank all the volunteers who came out to make Perris a cleaner, better place," Rabb said.



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough paints a panel for a mural at American Legion Post 595 Sept. 17 as part of Perris Proud Week.

### Murals at the American Legion

City Councilman Mark Yarbrough joined Perris veteran and mural artist Tony Serna at American Legion Post 595 to paint the first of five-planned mural panels depicting the history of Perris and the role the military has played in the community's development. The public art will be visible to train travelers passing nearby on Metrolink, which will spread the word about the City's past and present.

"We want people to know what Perris is all about and these murals will accomplish that," Yarbrough said.

Yarbrough noted that Perris was an incorporated City years before March Air Force (now Reserve) Base opened.

"We have a long and proud history of supporting the military in this City and we proud to display and celebrate it," Yarbrough said.

Serna, an Army veteran of Operation Desert Storm, said the remaining panels should be finished and displayed by mid-October. As he painted the first panel, Serna learned he had been named grand marshal of the City's annual Veterans Day Parade in November.

"I grew up in Perris," he said. "Perris has always been in my heart. Perris will always be my home."

### Removing blight

City Clerk Nancy Salazar took on the task of removing handbills and signs from signs and posts at several locations in Perris. She was accompanied on her rounds by Perris Public Works employees.

"It's always great to get a chance to beautify our City and to see so many volunteers coming out on a Saturday morning to lend a hand," Salazar said. "It shows there's a great sense of community spirit in Perris."

Salazar and crew started from City Hall, moved up Perris Boulevard to Nuevo Road and Redlands Avenue, removing many yard sale signs and other handbills. They also discovered discarded clothing and other items that were hauled away by Public Works employees.

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