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Assistant City Manager Ron Carr Retires



Retiring Perris Assistant City Manager Ron Carr thanks Perris residents, elected officials and colleagues during a recognition ceremony Oct. 25 at the City Council meeting.

City elected representatives, administrators and staff said goodbye to Perris Assistant City Manager Ron Carr, who is retiring after 12 years that saw the community weather the Great Recession while expanding parks and recreation services and completing several major improvements that enhanced the lives of thousands of residents.

The City commended him for his expertise in municipal finance, for his ability to supervise the Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Public Works and City Clerk's departments for his "extraordinary commitment to public service."

Perris administrators noted that during Carr's tenure, the City has won three prestigious Helen Putnam Awards from the League of California Cities.

Those awards honored Perris for being one of California's first cities to install a municipal solar system at its campus, for improving the lives of Enchanted Heights residents by replacing leaking septic tanks in the disadvantaged community with a state-of-the-art sewer system and for creating the Live Well Perris healthy-eating active-living program.

The latter two projects also earned National League of Cities recognition.

Representatives of several agencies spoke during a brief ceremony at the Oct. 25 City Council meeting. All praised Carr for his financial expertise, but they also cited his calm demeanor, his respect for all points of view and his courtesy in dealing with critics and supporters alike.

Paul Jones, General Manager of the Eastern Municipal Water District, noted that Carr was "tough on the issues but easy on the people." EMWD board trustee Ron Sullivan called Carr the "go to guy who always got things done."

"We're truly going to miss you," Sullivan said.

EMWD was one of several agencies and individuals who presented Carr with a certificate of appreciation and recognition. Others included Assemblyman Jose Medina, D-Riverside, and Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley.



Retiring Assistant City Manager Ron Carr (second from right) holds a statue of an eagle presented to him during the Oct. 25 City Council meeting. With him are City Councilman David Starr Rabb, City Councilwoman Tonya Burke, Mayor Pro Tem Rita Rogers, Mayor Daryl Busch and City Councilman Mark Yarbrough.

Best days ahead

Carr's last day with the City was Nov. 3.

He and his wife, Barbara, will spend their retirement in Washington.

Avid hikers who have scaled Mount Whitney on more than one occasion, the pair will have plenty of peaks to traverse up north. In remarks at the recognition ceremony, he thanked the residents of Perris for their commitment and dedication to their hometown. He praised City Councilwoman Tonya Burke and City Councilman David Starr Rabb, who were elected in 2014 as the newest members of the council, saying "I know you will do great things in the future."

He thanked Mayor Daryl Busch, Mayor Pro Tem Rita Rogers and City Councilman Mark Yarbrough, who served on the council through his tenure, for their hard work in stabilizing municipal finances when the City tottered on the verge of disincorporation in the late 1990s.

"You helped turn this City around," he said. "I felt I was getting on the train as it left the station. I got a front-row seat and what a ride it has been."

Carr thanked City Manager Richard Belmudez for encouraging him to work on projects that took him outside his main area of financial expertise. Without such encouragement, he said he would not have organized the efforts to build the solar-collection grid, raised the quality of life for thousands of people in Enchanted Heights or taken part in the Live Well Perris effort, which has been hailed for encouraging residents to eat healthier and exercise.

"When you put people first, a lot of task work takes care of itself," Carr said. "You have created an environment that allows people to reach their full potential."

Perris has a great future, Carr said.

"The City's best days are ahead," he said. "I won't be here in person, but I will be watching and cheering. Although I am sad to leave the City, I'll always remember the people I met during my 12 years here. Perris is a great City and I wish everyone the very best."



Retiring Perris Assistant City Manager Ron Carr accepts a proclamation from Paul Jones, Eastern Municipal Water District General Manager and Board Member. Ron Sullivan. At right is Perris Mayor Daryl Busch.

Quiet dynamo, miracle worker, mighty force

Mayor Busch called Carr "a quiet dynamo" able to tackle a wide variety of challenges and opportunities but who always put the interest of Perris and its residents above all.

"He was a force for Perris, someone always looking out for our City," Busch said. "He will be a difficult man to replace."

Mayor Pro Tem Rogers called Carr a "miracle worker with City funds" who invested municipal money wisely so that it grew and bolstered Perris' financial reserves.

"He had a knack for making the right investments so that the City's money grew over time," Rogers said. "He knew good investment opportunities."

Rogers credited Carr with another miracle of sorts. He encouraged her to enter the City's "Biggest Loser Contest" as part of the Live Well Perris healthy-eating active-living initiative.

"He was the only man who could convince me to enter that contest—and I lost 16 pounds!" she said.

City Councilwoman Tonya Burke praised Carr's "motivation and dedication to serving the people of the City of Perris." She also noted his ability to encourage employees to challenge themselves and in that process gain valuable new skills.

"He allowed people to grow in their jobs," Burke said. "He's a quiet spirit and a mighty force. He's truly going to be missed."

City Councilman David Starr Rabb described Carr as "a jack-of-all-trades" instrumental in building Perris' budget reserves while at the same time able to shepherd projects like Live Well and Enchanted Heights.

"We will miss his advice and financial acumen," Rabb said. "He's a man who is passionate about his work."

City Councilman Mark Yarbrough presented Carr a statue of an eagle and said "you have made such a difference in our City." In later comments, Yarbrough called Carr a "model public employee who lived by the motto 'do the right thing.'"

"He served with humility," Yarbrough said. "He led by example."



Perris colleagues presented Ron Carr, an avid hiker, with a cake at his retirement recognition Oct. 25.

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