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City Lauds Long-serving Pair



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough and Mayor Daryl Busch hold decorative eagles presented to them during the November 28 Perris City Council meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Rita Rogers stands between Yarbrough and Busch.

The City of Perris this week bid a fond farewell to Mayor Daryl Busch and City Councilman Mark Yarbrough, two long-time public servants lauded for their commitment, determination, and passion to create a first-class community for its residents, visitors and businesses.

The pair, who together served more than 35 years on the City Council dais, received acclamations from regional elected officials and public agencies, business owners, non-profit organizations and residents during their final City Council meeting on November 28, 2016.

Speakers commended the pair's long list of accomplishments which, they said, have improved the lives of Perris residents in countless ways.

Those include the building of senior and low and moderate-income apartment complexes, Mercado Park, the Patriot Park sports complex, a solar-collection system at City Hall that propelled Perris to the lead in sustainable energy practices in California, new freeway interchanges at Fourth Street and Ramona Expressway and Metrolink train service to and from Perris.

Busch and Yarbrough also celebrated a pair of National League of City Awards for working to install a new sewer system in the disadvantaged Enchanted Heights community and for creating the ongoing Live Well Perris healthy- eating active-living campaign.

Yarbrough, a Perris High School graduate and owner of two small businesses, was first elected to the Perris City Council in 1996. Busch, a Navy veteran and retired restaurant owner, has served as mayor since 2000. Their last official day in office is December 13.

Praise from colleagues

Mayor Pro Tem Rita Rogers, who has served on the City Council since 1999, said it was a "bittersweet moment" to say goodbye to her longtime colleagues.

"I have been truly blessed to work with two outstanding gentlemen, Mark Yarbrough and Daryl Busch," Rogers said. "You have truly changed the face of this City. Your legacy will last many, many generations."

City Councilwoman Tonya Burke, who was elected in 2014, said working with Busch and Yarbrough "has been delightful." She added that "your dedication to the City will not change" after they leave the City Council, adding that she wishes them "peace and tranquility as you move into any endeavor you want."

City Councilman David Starr Rabb thanked Busch and Yarbrough for shepherding through the long list of accomplishments, from roads to rooftops to recreation services. As a kid growing up in Perris, Rabb said he has witnessed the City moving in the right direction.

"You have made a positive impact on the City of Perris," he said. "You have always had the City's best interests at heart. May God bless you and may God continue blessing the City of Perris. It has been a pleasure working with you."

Regional, community accolades

Plaques, certificates of appreciation, tributes and gifts poured in from former colleagues, government representatives, long-time residents, volunteers and business owners. The most poignant moment came when Mayor Busch's son, Barry, who works for Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley, presented plaques to Yarbrough and Daryl Busch.

"I'm Barry Busch and this is my dad!" he said as he presented a framed certificate to the Mayor. "When we moved here in 1975, Perris was barren. I thought it was the end of the earth. But it's the best thing that ever happened to our family."

Barry Busch said he expect his father to indulge in his favorite pastimes—playing golf and spending time with family.

Other regional representatives, former colleagues and City residents joined the chorus in praising Busch and Yarbrough.

Danielle Wheeler, executive director of the March Joint Powers Authority thanked Busch and Yarbrough for serving in the agency's commission, comprised of elected officials from communities surrounding the installation. The March Joint Powers Commission is credited with transforming property from the former March Air Force Base into an "economic dynamo that has created more than 3,000 jobs and generates more than \$460 million in economic activity a year," Wheeler said.

John Standiford, deputy executive director of the Riverside County Transportation Commission, praised the efforts of Busch in particular for his work to bring Metrolink train service to Perris, adding "you will be greatly missed."

John Motte, a colleague on the City Council with Busch and Yarbrough from 2000-08, praised them for putting the interests of Perris ahead of any personal goals, adding "I really enjoyed serving with you."

Lovella Singer, executive director of the City's Dora Nelson African-American Art & History Museum, thanked them for making possible major improvement to the site prior to this year's visit by dignitaries from Washington D.C.

Resident Flo Cohen told Busch and Yarbrough that "the legacy you leave will remain here for many, many years to come."

"Without the love, leadership and guidance you displayed, this City would not be where it is right now," Cohen said.

Perris attorney and resident Joshua Naggar summed up the series of tributes to the outgoing elected officials, saying: "I want to thank you for your commitment to my home, our home, our community. I love my community. I love Perris."

Commitment to service

After acknowledging the accolades, Busch and Yarbrough addressed a nearly-full City Council chambers, explaining why they sought office, thanking their supporters, praising municipal staff and expressing optimism that Perris will continue to prosper in the future.

Busch was operating a Downtown restaurant after working in the banking industries when in 2000, a group of residents sought him out and convinced him to run for Mayor.

"I've loved every minute of it," he said. "We've gone through some hard times but the hard times make you appreciate the good times a little more."

Busch said he is proud to have presided over the redevelopment at the former March air base, lots of new parks and playing fields and community improvement projects that have made life better for Perris residents. He said he is proud of those accomplishments, which resulted "because we loved our City, what we were doing and why we were doing it!"

Yarbrough said he has never considered himself "as anything more than a public servant."

"I have been truly honored to serve this community," he said. "The most important aspect in any public servant is how much you care."

He thanked the City staff for its commitment and results.

"On your worst day you are better than many other cities staff on their best day," he said. "We could not do what we do without a great staff. Thank you so much."

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