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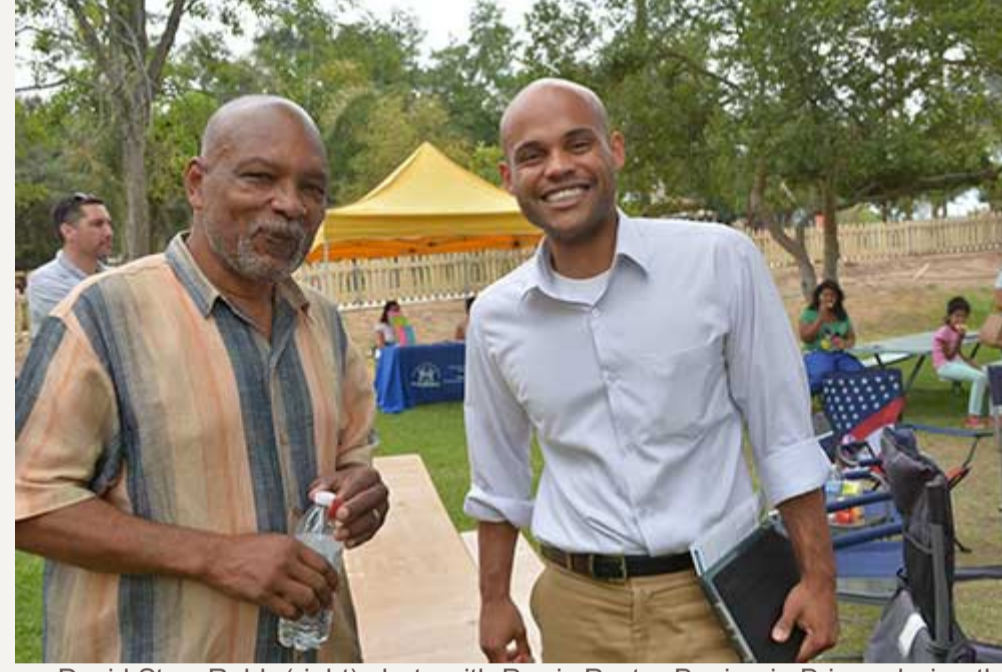
## City of Perris Holds Juneteenth Celebration

The City of Perris marked Juneteenth this year with a celebration consisting of dancing and praying, personal testimonials, recognizing the contributions and wisdom of African-American elders and remarks by members of the Perris City Council.

Juneteenth commemorates the day in 1865 when slaves in Galveston, Texas, learned of the Emancipation Proclamation, signed into law by Abraham Lincoln more than two years earlier. For many African-Americans, Juneteenth (June 19th, 1865) marks the end of the Civil War.

This year's celebration at the Orange Empire Railway Museum was organized by the Perris Valley African-American History Committee. The day's activities also included remarks from representatives of the African-American Historical Society of Riverside, who spoke about the contributions of the U.S. Colored Troops during the Civil War and how African-Americans have for hundreds of years to defend America.

Margaret Briggs, committee president, said that history is important because people who do not remember the past can be "crippled as they move into the future."



Perris City Councilman David Starr Rabb (right) chats with Perris Pastor Benjamin Briggs during the June 27 Juneteenth celebration at the Orange Empire Railway Museum.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch and City Council members David Starr Rabb and Rita Rogers attended the event.

Busch said Juneteenth represents a celebration of history, culture, progress and family. He urged young people in the audience "to become your family's scribe" and record the significant events in that history.

"This is a historic event that we are making people aware of and we are here to celebrate it," Busch said. "The City of Perris is a very diverse and multicultural place and we support all organizations that contribute to that diversity."

Rabb said that African-Americans have achieved great success since the end of the Civil War, going from slaves to being elected president of the United States. But more work remains, he said, citing the recent shootings of nine members of a Charleston, S.C. church during Bible studies as a reminder that prejudice remains a powerful motivation for some misguided people.

Rabb said Perris serves as an example of a city that is "committed to highlighting its various communities."

"That makes me very excited," he said. "I think we're the most progressive City in the Inland Empire in that regard."

Rabb said further that major developments happening in Perris—like the arrival of Metrolink and the opening of a Super Walmart later this year—will add to the economic vitality of the City.

"A lot of great things are happening in this City," he said.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch and City Councilwoman Rita Rogers greet Alberta Mable Kearney during the Juneteenth ceremony, where Kearney was recognized for her wisdom as an African-American elder.

Rogers called the Juneteenth celebration a "tremendous occasion" that grows every year. Part of this year's celebration included presenting about 30 elders with certificates of appreciation for their wisdom and contributions to the African-American community. Rogers and Mayor Busch presented certificates to those elders in attendance.

"I would like to thank each and every one of you for the legacy you have forged, it impacts all of us," Rogers said. "We love you, we honor you, we thank you for your legacy."

Bobby Johnson, treasurer of the African-American History Committee, said the group has participated in many activities in Perris, including hosting 11 Black History Month Parades, five job fairs and 11 community expos. Those events increase awareness about health, employment and cultural issues, he said.

Perris, Johnson said, has always welcomed that kind of support.

"The City has allowed to do what we do—celebrate," Johnson said. "This community has embraced me. This is a place where you can come to fulfill your dreams."

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