



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# News Release

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **Riverside Receives Platinum Fit-Friendly Award From American Heart Association**

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside received the American Heart Association’s 2014 Platinum Fit-Friendly Award and the Worksite Innovation Award for promoting a Health and Wellness culture amongst employees and implementing efforts to become a Fit-Friendly organization.

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Perry, on behalf of the City, received the award from Monique Stensrud, Heart Walk Director for the AHA, at a City Council meeting recently.

“This award recognizes the great strides the City of Riverside has made in creating a more healthy workplace for our employees,” Mayor Pro Tem Perry said. “The same commitment to healthy living can be found in the numerous programs that reach out and assist Riverside residents in their efforts to eat healthy and get more exercise.”

The Platinum level recognition is presented to companies and organizations that offer employees: physical activity support, increased healthy eating options at work, a wellness at work culture and implementation or access to programs that provide physical, nutrition and cultural activities. Platinum award recipients must demonstrate at least one behavior change, one cost savings outcome or a positive return on investment.

Riverside’s Human Resources Department is responsible for development and coordination of the popular wellness programs. Human Resources Director Brenda Diederichs said the program, which started in 2009, continues to grow and benefit more employees each year.

“Employees are actively engaged in a variety of competitive activities focused on getting healthier together, including an annual weight loss ‘Get Fit Challenge’ program where employees have lost 7,400 pounds in the last four years, and a new ‘Step Up Your Health’ Stairwell program where employees walked 94,835 flights of stairs during 2013,” Diederichs said. “Employees are making overall lifestyle changes that have provided measurable results, including reduced absenteeism and a reduction in healthcare costs.”

As a Fit-Friendly organization, the City of Riverside will receive recognition on the AHA website and throughout the Inland Empire at local AHA events and in AHA communications supporting

recognition programs. Riverside will have the right to use the AHA's Fit-Friendly companies Platinum seals on all internal and external communications to market the City as a Fit-Friendly employer.

"Fitness, healthy eating and exercise all are part of Riverside's Fit, Fresh and Fun approach to life," Mayor Rusty Bailey said. "This award is a testament to the hard work and the accomplishments from all over City Hall that are helping Riverside take the next step toward individual and community health."

The City of Riverside is proud to be one of only two Fit-Friendly companies in the Inland Empire that received the Platinum award. More information on Riverside's award winning Wellness program can be found at: [www.riversideca.gov/human/wellness](http://www.riversideca.gov/human/wellness)



This workplace has been recognized by the American Heart Association for meeting criteria for employee wellness.