



# ***El Monte NEWS***

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **EL MONTE TO HONOR SLAIN POLICE OFFICER DONALD JOHNSTON**

EL MONTE, Calif. – The Mayor and Members of the El Monte City Council, along with Assembly Member Judy Chu, will join in a Memorial Dedication to slain El Monte Police Officer Donald Johnston. The Memorial Dedication will include designating a portion of Interstate 10 as the **El Monte Police Officer Donald Ralph Johnston Memorial Freeway**. This ceremony will take place as follows:

- **10 a.m. - Thursday, October 16, 2003**
- **El Monte City Council Chambers**
- **11333 Valley Blvd, El Monte CA 91731**

### **Details of the State Designation**

On August 25<sup>th</sup>, the State Legislature unanimously passed a resolution to designate the portion of the I.S. 10 Freeway, that runs through El Monte, as the **El Monte Police Officer Donald Ralph Johnston Memorial Freeway**. Assemblywoman Judy Chu was the main author of this resolution, and she received strong support from virtually all other legislators.

### **Background**

Don Johnston died in 2002 of complications from a gunshot wound he suffered on the job. His attacker was cashing a bad check when he saw Don arrive at the bank. When the suspect drew a gun, Don pushed an innocent victim out of the line of fire and out of harm's way. The suspect then shot Don through the neck. The bullet damaged Don's spinal cord, leaving him paralyzed and in a wheelchair. The shooter was subsequently captured, found guilty, and later committed suicide in prison.

Don's determination wouldn't allow him to give up serving the community of El Monte. He returned to work, conducting investigations from his wheelchair. He became El Monte's first assigned helicopter observer and developed a program titled STRIVE to help high school students reach their full potential. Don is survived by his wife, Ruth, and his son, Eric, who is also an El Monte Police Officer.

A video clip will be aired showing Ms. Chu's presentation in the Assembly. Light refreshments will be served directly after the ceremony.

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Page 2, continued

El Monte, a city incorporated in 1912 and home to more than 116,000 residents, is a full-service city located in the heart of the San Gabriel Valley. It is freeway-close to all of Los Angeles, bisected by Interstate 10 and abutting Interstate 605. El Monte is home to a mega auto mall and boasts the largest single car dealership in the world, Longo Toyota.

El Monte can be visited on the web at [www.ElMonteCA.gov](http://www.ElMonteCA.gov)

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