



El Monte NEWS

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Retirement Party for Chief of Police Ken Weldon (and Fundraiser for Ortiz Gym)

El Monte, Calif. - El Monte is wishing a fond farewell to Chief of Police Kenneth Weldon, a thirty-seven year employee and lifetime resident of the City of El Monte. Chief Weldon retires December 30, 2008 but celebrates this milestone early on December 11, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. in the El Monte Community Center (3130 Tyler, El Monte) so residents, business owners and fellow employees can attend without impacting holiday parties and plans. Weldon looks forward to greeting each one personally and thanking them for their support over the years.

But what makes this retirement so special is that all proceeds will not be for Weldon's retirement gift. In fact, none of the monies raised will help Chief Weldon kick start his retirement plans. Instead, all monies collected will be donated to the Jerry Ortiz Boxing and Youth Fitness Gym, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the quality of life for San Gabriel Valley area children and at-risk youth, and in memory of boxing aficionado Sheriff's Deputy Jerry Ortiz, killed in the line of duty on June 24, 2005. Jerry Ortiz was an avid boxer who promoted boxing as a way for youth to create positive character, good sportsmanship and physical fitness, and the Ortiz Gym was established in his memory to continue his positive effect on San Gabriel Valley youth.

Chief Weldon retires after 37 years, but his most lasting impression on the Police Department is his nationally recognized community policing program, called IMPACT. IMPACT, which stands for Improving and Maintaining Public Awareness and Community Teamwork, began in concept over 30 years ago as a partnership with the El Monte Boys Club and the El Monte Police Department as a way to reduce and eliminate gang violence which had plagued the community for years. This community policing program, called "The El Monte Plan" back then, located and tracked at-risk youth leaders and encouraged them to find good jobs, establish homes, marry and raise a family. This program worked spectacularly in El Monte, and became a model for community policing when it became chic to have a community policing program in police departments in the 90's. El Monte's program has been awarded statewide and national awards for the success and impact on the local gang community, and is now emulated nationwide.

Chief Weldon will be roasted on a video presentation created by "well-wishers" in the community who made mock-presentations to cardboard cutouts of Chief Weldon. Over 800 people are expected to attend, and tickets are still available for \$30 by calling the El Monte Police Department at 626.580.2109. Those unable to attend but wishing to donate to the Ortiz Gym should contact Lieutenant Ken Alva at 626.580.2190.

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.