
MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: Marty Piepenbrok, Community Relations Manager
Tel: (559) 665-8615, ext. 110
Fax: (559) 665-7418
Email: mpiepenbrok@ci.chowchilla.ca.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chowchilla Renames Park after Edward Ray

Community honors the legacy of a hero from the 1976 bus kidnapping

Chowchilla, CA – February 12, 2015

The Chowchilla City Council recently voted to rename the City's Sports & Leisure Park after Mr. Edward Ray. Edward "Ed" Ray is regarded as a local hero from his role as the driver of the school bus with 26 children who were kidnapped on July 15, 1976. The kidnapping launched Chowchilla into national headlines and created a day that many still would like to forget.

The children and Mr. Ray were driven around for 11 hours in two vans before being entombed in a moving van buried in a Livermore rock quarry. Fortunately, Mr. Ray and some older boys pried open the weighted roof lid and escaped after being underground for 16 hours.

Mr. Ray passed away a few years ago and shortly after the City Council voted to name a park in his honor. At the January 27, 2015 Council meeting the elected officials finalized the idea and voted to rename the popular Sports & Leisure Park in honor of Edward Ray. This park is home to many youth sports leagues and activities, along with family picnics, and is a perfect match for Ed Ray's legacy.

On Thursday, February 26 at 4:00pm, a dedication ceremony will be held at the park on 15th Street at Sonoma Avenue in Chowchilla. The community is invited to join with City officials and members of the Ray family to attend the unveiling of a sign denoting the park henceforth as the

Edward Ray Park. It is anticipated that Odessa Ray, Edward's wife, will attend the dedication ceremony. The City is preparing for a large turnout of area residents who have expressed their strong support for honoring a man who is regarded as a hero and are grateful for ensuring his legacy through the naming of Edward Ray Park.

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