

# WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Request to name U.S. Highway 12 & State Route 124 Overpass  
in Honor of Walla Walla County

Deputy Sheriff Michael Estes



An aerial photograph of a large highway interchange. A red circle highlights a specific overpass structure where a road crosses over the main highway. The surrounding area includes green fields, trees, and a body of water in the background. The text "Proposed Naming Of Overpass" is overlaid on the image.

Proposed Naming  
Of Overpass

US Highway 12/State Route 124 Interchange  
Completed June 2012

## Walla Walla Deputy Dies From Car Crash

BURBANK, Wash. - A Walla Walla Sheriff's Deputy hospitalized from a car crash is now dead. 43-year-old Deputy Michael Estes died Wednesday morning at Kadlec Medical Center.

He suffered severe head trauma when a truck collided with his patrol car on February 6th. But he never recovered. As you can imagine this is a tough day for everyone who knew Deputy Estes.

He never planned to get hit by a truck. And if you're his family you can't prepare for that phone call. All we can do now is grieve and remember.

The crash scene on February 6th was filled with twisted metal when a flat bed truck crashed into Deputy Estes patrol car.

Paramedics rushed him to Kadlec Medical Center. But after a week in a critical condition he never recovered. At 10:30 a.m. he passed away.

"He was a fine officer, he represented law enforcement well. He was part of our family. He will be missed," said Sheriff Mike Humphreys, Walla Walla Sheriff's Office.

Estes was born in Hermiston in 1963. He was a decorated member of the Oregon National Guard. He worked as a corrections officer at the State Penitentiary in 2003. And he got hired as a deputy in 2005.

"He had a man of big stature, good officer presence yet he had the gentleness of a teddy bear," said Humphreys.

Every day Estes stayed in the hospital. Local law enforcement were by his side.

"It's important to send the message to the sheriff's office and the Estes family whatever they need we'll help them get. And we know that that favor will ultimately be returned some day," said Capt. Mike Cobb, Richland Police Department.

Sheriff Humphreys said Estes is the only Walla Walla deputy ever to lose his life in the line of duty. And it will be tough work without him.

"We're strong. We'll work through this and life will go on, but Mike will be missed," said Humphreys.

KNDU also talked with his peers from the Oregon National Guard. They said they're sorry to lose him. He was an outstanding soldier and it was a privilege to serve with him.

## **Sheriff's Deputy killed in the line of duty**

WALLA WALLA, Wash. - The funeral for Sheriff's Deputy Michael Estes who died being in critical condition for the last week will be held in Spokane next Wednesday at the Opera House. 43-year-old Estes was taken off life support Wednesday morning by his family.

Estes was in a horrible car accident last Tuesday. His patrol car was broad-sided by a delivery truck in Burbank, at the intersection of Highway 12 and State Route 124. The Walla Walla Sheriff's Department is still asking witnesses of the accident to come forward.

The funeral for Walla Walla County Deputy Sheriff Mike Estes, who died yesterday as a result of a duty-related traffic collision, will be held on Wednesday, February 21, at 1100 hours in Spokane. The service will be held at the Spokane Opera House, located at 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd. Internment will follow at the Spokane Memorial Gardens, 5909 S. Cheney/Spokane Road. There will be a viewing at the Spokane Opera House from 0900-1045 on Wednesday, prior to the service.

Henessey-Smith Funeral Home, 2203 N. Division, Spokane, is handling the arrangements. Memorial donations can be made to Concerns of Police Survivors, the Law Enforcement Memorial Project of Spokane or the Federated Order of Police, Blue Mt. Lodge #9 through the funeral home.

Deputy Estes grew up in Sprague, went to Valley Christian High School in Spokane, and much of his family lives in Spokane. Family members say they want to extend their overwhelming gratitude to the law enforcement community around southeastern Washington.

We're told that 24 hours a day since the accident, Walla Walla deputies have kept vigil by Michael's bedside. He is the only Walla Walla Sheriff's Deputy to be killed in the line of duty.

### ***Biography***

Michael Orville Estes was born 11-22-63 in Hermiston, OR to Orville and Judi Estes, who now reside in Spokane. Mike graduated from Valley Christian High School in Spokane in 1982. He then attended Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, Alberta, Canada, for two years, majoring in Religious Education.

In May of 1984 Mike joined the US Army, remaining in the Army until November of 1996. During his 12-plus years in the service, he was stationed in various states and abroad, including New York, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Germany and Egypt. He was working as a recruiter in Menomonie, Wisconsin, at the time of his discharge, having earned the rank of a SPC (specialist) E-4.

Mike remained in Wisconsin for a time after his discharge, working various jobs including private security and correctional officer for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections.

In 2002 Mike returned to Washington State, and settled in Walla Walla where his parents were then living. He went to work for the Washington State Penitentiary as a Correctional Officer in January, 2003, and remained there until being hired as a Deputy Sheriff with the Walla Walla County Sheriff's Office on July 15, 2005.

Mike attended Session 591 of the 720-hour Basic Law Enforcement Academy in Burien, WA, graduating in May, 2006. He was assigned as a resident deputy in Burbank, and moved there in October, 2006, working from that area until the time of his death.

Mike was also a member of the Oregon National Guard at the time of his death, having joined Detachment 1, 1186T - Military Police, out of the Milton-Freewater Armory, in July, 2003.



## Washington State Legislature

July 31, 2013

Washington State Transportation Commission  
PO Box 47308  
Olympia, WA 98504-7308

Dear Washington State Transportation Commission,

We are writing you with our wholehearted support for renaming the US Highway 12/State Route 124 overpass in Burbank, Washington in honor of Walla Walla County Deputy Sheriff Michael Estes, who passed away on February 14, 2007.

Michael Estes served in the US Army from May of 1984 to November of 1996, and had been a member of the Oregon National Guard since 2003. He served Walla Walla County for one year and six months, and is the only deputy to ever lose his life in the line of duty in Walla Walla County. On February 6<sup>th</sup>, Estes was heading south on US Highway 12 in response to a 911 hang-up call in Burbank, when he collided with an eastbound flatbed truck traveling down State Road 124. He was rushed to Kadlec Medical Center, where his fellow deputies kept vigil over him 24 hours a day until he passed away eight days later.

We believe Michael's significant contributions to the well-being of our state and nation through his service in the Army, National Guard, and as a police officer make him more than deserving of being honored by having this overpass named after him.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sen. Mike Hewitt  
16<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

Rep. Maureen Walsh  
16<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

Rep. Terry Nealey  
16<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

# COUNTY OF WALLA WALLA

## STATE OF WASHINGTON BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

July 30, 2013

Washington State Transportation Commission  
PO Box 47308  
Olympia, WA 98504-7308

Honorable Commission Members:

We are writing you with a request special to our county and its citizens: **To rename the overpass at Highway 12 and State Route 124 in honor of Walla Walla County Deputy Sheriff Michael Estes**, who passed away on February 14, 2007 as a result of injuries sustained while on duty.

At the time of his death, Deputy Estes had been assigned as the resident deputy in Burbank, and was living there. Deputy Estes was responding to an unknown emergency situation resulting from a 911 hang-up call when he was involved in a collision at the intersection of U.S. Highway 12 and State Route 124. He was rushed to Kadlec Medical Center where his fellow deputies from Walla Walla and surrounding counties kept vigil over him 24 hours a day until he succumbed to his injuries, aka "end of watch", eight days later. He served Walla Walla County for one year and six months, and is the only deputy to ever lose his life in the line of duty in Walla Walla County. Former Walla Walla County Sheriff Mike Humphreys said at the time "He was a fine officer, he represented law enforcement well. He was part of our family. He will be missed". Walla Walla County recognizes his loss every year in May as part of National Police Week and Peace Officers' Memorial Day.

Deputy Estes served in the U.S. Army from May of 1984 to November of 1996, and was a decorated member of the Oregon National Guard, serving since 2003. Prior to becoming a sheriff's deputy in 2005, he worked as a corrections officer at the Washington State Penitentiary.

The roadway improvements that are part of the U.S. Highway 12 widening project are wonderful. These changes add poignancy to our request, however, as undoubtedly the death of Deputy Estes and the others who lost their lives there reflected the increased need for these safety improvements.

We consider the significant contributions made by Deputy Michael Estes to the well-being of our county, state and nation through his service in the Army, National Guard, and as a law enforcement officer to make him more than worthy of having this overpass renamed in his honor.

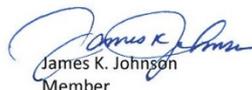
Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

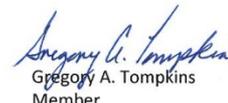
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WALLA WALLA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH AND LEGISLATIVE BUILDING - 314 WEST MAIN  
P.O. BOX 1506 • WALLA WALLA, WASHINGTON 99362-0316 • [wwccommissioners@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:wwccommissioners@co.walla-walla.wa.us)  
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District No. 3  
GREGORY A. TOMPKINS



**John A. Turner**  
Sheriff

## WALLA WALLA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

240 West Alder Street, First Floor  
Walla Walla, WA 99362-0220

Sheriff's Office (509) 524 - 5400  
Corrections Division (509) 524 - 5430  
Fax (509) 524 - 5480  
Dispatch (509) 527 - 3265  
Burbank Dispatch (509) 545 - 8441  
Toll Free (866) 527 - 3268  
Email: sheriff@co.walla-walla.wa.us

Edward L. Freyer *Undersheriff*  
John W. King *Chief Operations Deputy*  
Keilen L. Harmon *Chief Corrections Deputy*  
Shanda J. Zessin *Chief Administrative Deputy*

July 30, 2013

Washington State Transportation Commission  
PO Box 47308  
Olympia, WA 98504-7308

Dear Commission Members:

**We would like to add our support to the local effort seeking to have the Commission, as part of its powers, rename the overpass at Highway 12 and State Route 124 in honor of Walla Walla County Deputy Sheriff Michael Estes, who passed away on February 14, 2007 as a result of injuries sustained while on duty.**

From J. Michael Humphreys, honorably retired Walla Walla County Sheriff (1998-2010): Deputy Mike Estes was serving under my command at the time of his death and living in the area where this accident took place as part of his official duties. He was an excellent officer who should have had a long and meritorious career in law enforcement with the county. His has been the only loss of life of a law enforcement officer while on duty in our county, and I sincerely hope that statistic remains the same forever. I was privileged to attend, along with his family, the events held in Mike's honor, as well the national one in memory of officers lost. I have never forgotten the huge turnout of fellow officers from throughout the state for Mike's funeral, and then the memorial procession in Washington, DC as part of National Police Week. Deputy Estes also served his state and country well with his military service and other activities. Renaming the overpass in Mike's honor would be fitting, I believe, as a tribute to him and his family who suffered his loss, as well as a reminder to all of the services provided by law enforcement officers every day.

From Walla Walla County Sheriff John Turner: Although I didn't personally know Deputy Estes, past and current members of local law enforcement remember him well and with honor. His death and the safety of that highway continue to resonate with the Sheriff's Office to this day. Deputy Estes served with pride and by all accounts was a good officer. Every year this office pays tribute to him during National Police Week and Peace Officers' Memorial Day. I join with Sheriff Humphreys in asking the members of the Transportation Commission to please rename this Highway 12 overpass in honor of Deputy Michael Estes.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

J. Michael Humphreys  
Walla Walla County Sheriff (Retired)

John A. Turner  
Walla Walla County Sheriff



August 8, 2013

Washington State Transportation Commission  
P.O. Box 47308  
Olympia, WA 98504-7308

Dear Washington State Transportation Commission:

On behalf of our 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative District members and Walla Walla County, the Port of Walla Walla respectfully requests the Washington State Transportation Commission rename the U.S. Highway 12 and State Route 124 overpass in Burbank, Washington after the late Walla Walla County Deputy Sheriff Michael Estes.

We believe our request meets the criteria used by the Transportation Commission in the renaming of State Transportation facilities.

The attached letters of support and news articles tell the story far better than we can. Simply stated, Walla Walla County Deputy Sheriff Michael Estes died in the line of duty on February 14, 2007 as a result of a car crash at the intersection of U.S. Highway 12 and State Route 124. Sadly, he was responding at the time to a 911 hang up call.

At the time of the fatal car crash the interchange was at grade with signalization. Last year a grade separated overpass was constructed. His sacrifice should be recognized with the renaming of the U.S. Highway 12 and State Route 124 overpass.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

PORT OF WALLA WALLA COMMISSION

  
Paul H. Schneidmiller

  
Ronald W. Dunning

  
Michael Fredrickson

# Overpass might be renamed for fallen deputy

Deputy Michael Estes died after a crash at US Highway 12 and State Route 124.

By VICKI HILLHOUSE  
of the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

BURBANK — An overpass constructed to improve safety along U.S. Highway 12 could serve also as a memorial to a fallen deputy.

The Port of Walla Walla wants to rename the overpass at U.S. Highway 12 and State Route 124 in honor of the late Michael Estes, a Walla Walla County sheriff's deputy who was killed after a crash at the intersection in 2007.

Commissioners Mike Fredrickson and Paul Schneidmiller will consider authorizing a request to the Washington State Transportation Commission to rename the overpass during the Port's 6 p.m. meeting Thursday at the agency's administrative office, 310 A St. Commissioner Ron Dunning will be absent.

The two commissioners who will attend said this morning they plan to support the initiative.

"I think it highlights the overall project and salutes a man who gave his life in service to the county," Fredrickson said.

"We just feel it's the right thing to do in honor of a deputy who lost his life at that intersection," Schneidmiller added.

In a 12-year period, six people had been killed on that stretch of highway and 56 had been injured.

"Tragedies that were needless — and now we have the ability to go over the highway," Fredrickson said.

Estes was responding to a 911 hangup call with his lights flashing when his patrol car was struck

See ESTES, Page A5



By Vicki Hillhouse

As of Wednesday, August 7, 2013

## ✓Estes was killed in line of duty

Continued from Page A1

on the passenger side by a commercial flatbed truck at the intersection. He died eight days later on Feb. 14. He was 43, and is the only Walla Walla deputy to lose his life in the line of duty.

His death punctuated the significance of the \$22.2 million construction that replaced two stoplights on Highway 12 — one at Humorist Road and the other at the State Route 124 intersection — with overpasses.

The work was part of the ongoing four-laning of the highway spearheaded by the U.S. Highway 12 Coalition.

Naming or renaming state transportation facilities is a stringent process with numerous guidelines. Walla Walla resident Anney Haley is one of the seven representatives on the state commission.

The memorial tribute has support from Walla Walla's legislative delegation who have given "wholehearted

support" in a letter to the commission.

"We believe Michael's significant contributions to the well-being of our state and nation through his service in the Army, National Guard, and as a police officer make him more than deserving of being honored by having this overpass named after him," read a letter from Sen. Mik Hewitt, and 16th District Reps. Maureen Walsh and Terry Nealey.



Port of Walla Walla

July 31

The Port is currently working to rename the U.S. Highway 12/State Route 124 overpass in Burbank in honor of Walla Walla County Deputy Sheriff Michael Estes, who was killed at the intersection in 2007. We are working with state and local gov... See More



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Judi Estes, mother of the late Deputy Estes, attends Burbank Interchange Dedication in June 2012.

Thank you for your  
Consideration

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