

# Ellensburg Police Department

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## Press Release

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### Investigation into the Murder of KCSO Deputy Thompson

The Ellensburg Police Department announces the completion of the investigation into the murder of Kittitas County Sheriff's Deputy Ryan Thompson and the severe injury to Kittitas Police Officer Benito Chavez, which occurred on March 19, 2019, in the City of Kittitas.

The investigation found that the suspect, Juan Manuel Flores Del Toro, acted alone when he shot and killed Deputy Thompson and shot and seriously wounded Kittitas Police Officer Chavez. The investigation also shows that Kittitas County Sheriff's Deputy Jason Goeman immediately returned fire shooting the suspect who died from his injuries.

The investigation revealed that earlier in the day of March 19, the suspect had threatened to shoot a female acquaintance and her child prior to leaving in her vehicle. Based on witness statements the suspect stated he was en route to another address to shoot a second female acquaintance. The investigation further revealed that at 7:35pm on March 19, an uninvolved individual called in a driving complaint in the area of Moe Road. This turned out to be the suspect who made the threatening statements earlier in the day. The victim of those threats did not report them to law enforcement due to fears of retaliation from the suspect. Therefore, responding officers to the driving complaint were not aware of the earlier threats and the relationship of those threats with the reported suspect vehicle in the driving complaint.

A short time later Deputy Thompson attempted to initiate a traffic stop with the suspect vehicle related to the driving complaint, who failed to stop resulting in a pursuit. Kittitas Police Officer Chavez, with Deputy Goeman riding with Officer Chavez, joined the pursuit as a backup unit as the pursuit entered the city of Kittitas.

The suspect drove to a mobile home park in the area of North Pierce Street in Kittitas before abruptly coming to a stop, exiting his vehicle and immediately firing upon the pursuing officers, striking Deputy Thompson with a fatal wound and seriously injuring Officer Chavez. Deputy Goeman instantly returned fire striking the suspect with a fatal wound.

"The senseless murder of Deputy Thompson affected Kittitas County in two ways. It reminded our community that violent crimes still exist in Kittitas County, and that we are a community that comes together to take care of each other during tragedies. The love and support for the Thompson and Chavez families, and the first responders was truly appreciated. Although the investigation is over, the overwhelming feeling of loss remains." Ellensburg Police Chief Ken Wade.

