



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

Police Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 29, 2006

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NEW AIR SUPPORT FACILITY TO BE DEDICATED

(San Diego) Mayor Jerry Sanders, SDPD Chief William Lansdowne and members of the SDPD Air Support Unit will dedicate the new Air Support facility on Friday, September 29, 2006 at 10:30 a.m. The facility is located at 4141 Kearny Villa Road, in the Kearny Mesa area.

The original Air Support Unit facility had been in use for the past 16 years and consisted of 4,500 square feet. The new home of the Airborne Law Enforcement helicopters (ABLE) includes 12,500 square feet of office and hangar space, four helo-pads and a significantly enhanced mechanic's bay.

The unit currently has two fixed-wing planes and will eventually have four newly-outfitted helicopters. At this time, one of the helicopters is completely outfitted and pilot training for the new aircraft is ongoing. Staffing in the unit has grown as well, from seven members to 14 during the past 10 years.

The current fleet of helicopters is the oldest in use by law enforcement in the nation. Once the four new helicopters are complete, SDPD's fleet will be the newest and most state-of-the art in the world. A few of the enhancements are: the ability to fly higher because of more high tech equipment which allows viewing from greater distances; greater weight carrying capacity which will allow for deployment of command personnel to critical incidents, and rescue capability; radio communication enhancements which will allow pilots use of their radio at the same time passengers are communicating using a separate radio; and fire suppression capability. The ABLE team will continue to assist other local agencies in their law enforcement efforts.

The new fleet of helicopters represents a total cost of approximately \$12.5 million.

Special Note: Please have photographers arrive at the event at 10 a.m. to photograph the new helicopters prior to the beginning of the news conference.

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