

THE SOUTHEASTERN CHRONICLE



Caption: Southeastern Division's front counter has a new look. We want you to feel comfortable when you visit.

From the Captain's Desk

By Capt. Vernon Peterson

Welcome to the second edition of The Southeastern Chronicle! I want to take a moment to reflect on the ongoing work we're doing to strengthen our connection with you — the residents we proudly serve.

In the last issue, I shared my commitment to transparency and open communication between law enforcement and the community. That remains a top priority.

In this edition, I'll be highlighting two important programs:

- "Lights On!", an equipment violation citation alternative program that helps drivers fix issues without financial penalties, and
- Take Me Home, a registry that gives officers quick access to critical information about individuals with disabilities in case of an emergency.

I also want to provide an update on the Smart Streetlights initiative.

Last time, I shared our Department had installed about 440 cameras citywide and was working to place the remaining 60.

Originally, 61 cameras were planned for District 4, which covers most of Southeastern Division. But due to infrastructure issues, only 55 were installed. Several additional locations within our division were later identified as potential sites for the remaining cameras.

To help determine where they should go, we held a community meeting on January 23 at the Bay Terraces Community & Senior Center. Now retired Captain Jeff Jordan, our subject matter expert, joined us to explain the technology and gather input.

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BEHIND THE BADGE WITH LT. NYDIA CASTRO

Hi, I'm Lt. Nydia Castro.

I was born on the beautiful island of Puerto Rico and raised in sunny Florida. My upbringing gave me an early love for different cultures and experiences – and great weather!

I started my journey in public service with the U.S. Marine Corps, which took me from South Carolina to California. I fell in love with the climate out here and decided to make it home, joining the San Diego Police Department back in 1998. Since then, I've been lucky to serve the Southeastern community in several roles –

officer, detective, patrol sergeant, and now lieutenant. This division has become like a second home to me, and I'm proud of the work we do every day.

Over the years, I've worked in some amazing and challenging units like the Gang Unit, Vice Operations, and the Sex Crimes Unit. Each role taught me something new and gave me a chance to make an impact in our community.

When I'm off duty, you'll probably find me out on a hiking trail or glued to a game – whether it's NFL, college football, or college basketball, I'm all in.



Family means the world to me, and I always try to treat others with the same respect and dignity I'd want for my own. That approach has helped me build strong connections and create a positive atmosphere, both at work and in life.



Capt. Vernon Peterson

From the Captain's Desk (cont.)

We also presented at the San Diego Black Arts & Culture District Advisory Committee meeting on February 18. After reviewing community feedback, crime data, investigator input, and high-traffic areas, we identified 11 new locations:

- Deep Dell Rd. & Paradise Valley Rd. – all four corners
- Euclid Ave. & Imperial Ave. – all four corners
- Alta View Dr. & S. Woodman St. – northeast and southwest corners
- Imperial Ave. & 68th St. –

southeast corner
Those cameras were installed and are operational. I sincerely thank everyone who shared their input. Your voices have been key in helping us place this technology thoughtfully, balancing safety and privacy. As we move forward, I encourage you to stay connected. If you have questions, concerns, or ideas, don't hesitate to reach out. Together, we can keep Southeastern a safe, welcoming, and vibrant place to call home.

SDPD offers repair vouchers through Lights On! Program

The San Diego Police Department is a proud participant in the Lights On! program, which offers repair vouchers instead of tickets for some broken vehicle lights. It's part of our effort to reduce the financial strain that citations can pose and strengthen community trust.

The program is active in San Diego, Chula Vista, and National City, thanks to support from the San Diego Padres Foundation, Scripps Health, and MicroGrants.

Here's how it works:

- Vouchers up to \$250 are given during traffic



stops. They're not available by request.

- The vouchers cover damaged headlights, taillights, brake lights, and turn signals.
- Extra repair costs or unrelated issues are the driver's responsibility.
- Vouchers cannot be exchanged for cash.
- Officers may still address other violations or check for warrants during the stop.

The program is expected to continue for about three years, depending on use.

Working together to bring loved ones home

In recent weeks, we've seen a concerning rise in missing persons cases, particularly involving individuals with memory-related conditions such as dementia. We know these cases are distressing, and our officers remain committed to bringing loved ones home safely.

That's why we want to remind our residents of the Sheriff's Department's Take Me Home program. This free, voluntary registry helps law enforcement quickly identify and assist individuals who may become disoriented or are unable to communicate.

Families can provide essential information such as photos, medical information, and emergency contacts to help speed up reunification if a loved one is found. We urge families with at-risk individuals to enroll.

Community participation plays a key role in protecting individuals who may disappear. If you encounter someone who appears lost or confused, contact law enforcement right away.

Learn more or register at:

www.sdsheriff.gov/takemehome



Southeastern Division was honored to help celebrate the birthday of an incredible young member of our community. It was a privilege to be part of this special day and bring some extra joy to an already wonderful occasion.

TALK TO US

Do you have ideas for our next newsletter? We want to hear from you! Email us at: SDPDSoutheastern@pd.sandiego.gov.