

"It will be safer for everybody"



Piper, Officer Martin Bandvik, leads the Tenderloin's finest down Eddy Street for the opening ceremonies.

The Oct. 5 dedication of the new Tenderloin Police Station started a little late — the mayor was delayed — but the 1,000 or so people assembled were in good spirits, enjoying the sun. Rays of hope beamed from the crowd, hope that the police presence will change at least this part of the neighborhood.

"Yes, yes, I think it will be good for the neighborhood," said Jasmin Kostic, from Bosnia. He's lived in the TL for two years with his wife and two daughters, two and three years old, whom he cares for full time while his wife works. "They will help clean it up. Especially better for the children. Much safer."

Down the street at Eddy and Leavenworth, officers on foot — maybe half of the station's 90 officers — waited patiently in rows behind the piper, three officers on motorcycles and three on mounts. The horses were patient too, only occasionally pawing the pavement. Nearby, a Vietnamese child in his father's arms stared saucer-eyed at the sleek horses, then hid his face in his father's shoulder when the mounted officer said hello.

"They should have opened this station a long time ago," said May Keiser, 67, a 40-year resident of the Tenderloin who lives just down the street from the new station. "This is going to improve the whole neighborhood — I think it will get these drug

dealers off the street. When I first moved here — I thought it was 'temporary' — it was so safe you could leave your door unlocked."

Keiser's "adopted daughter," who lives in the same building, laughed at the idea of unlocked doors. "Now, you don't dare even go out at night," she said, "and you can't walk down the street without getting panhandled on every corner. It will be safer out now, I hope."

NEW POLICE STATION DEDICATED

by Marjorie Beggs

The piper tooted softly, warming up, waiting for the signal to begin the one-block parade.

Matthew Bryant lives on the outskirts of the TL but works at St. Anthony's. He said the station is "really much-needed. Now the people doing drugs will be seen all the time [by the police]. The old station [at Jones and McAllister] was close to the neighborhood, but this IS the Tenderloin."

Finally, half an hour after the ceremony was scheduled to start, the piper's stirring music filled Eddy Street. Everyone

clapped as the officers marched and rode by the new station.

Following the invocation by the police chaplain, Capt. Stephen Tacchini gave a brief history of the station, clearly proud of a project that had moved from a task force to a permanent, fully staffed police facility in the heart of the neighborhood.

The mayor praised the effort, and Chief of Police Fred Lau told the audience, "We're here because the community wants us here. That's what community policing is all about — you are the bosses."

Added Rev. Cecil Williams of Glide Memorial Methodist Church, "This is our community. We're not moving. We're glad you're here. We're sick and tired of drugs in our community. Glide and its 52 programs will make sure we'll all work together."

After Mayor Willie Brown cut the ribbon with a huge ersatz-scissors, everyone was invited inside to tour the station and have cake and coffee.

Across the street, at the 1½ year-old Eddy Barber Shop, it was business as usual, even during the ceremony, with barbers using real scissors to trim a few customers' locks.

"The station will be good for us," said barber Francis Tran. "More customers, I think. There will be better security. It will be safer for everybody."



Mounted officers from the new Tenderloin Police Station were standard-bearers for the Oct. 5 dedication.

Captain to community: At your service

AN INVITATION

by Capt. Stephen Tacchini



Capt. Stephen Tacchini

The opening of the new Tenderloin Police Station sends a clear message to the community: The Police Department is committed to providing superior service, developing a partnership with the community, and reducing crime.

The location of the station at the corner of Eddy and Jones streets is significant in itself. Centered in the district at a location historically troubled by serious crime, the constant presence of the police officers will prevent and deter criminal activity.

The station itself affords officers the necessary amenities to do their job more efficiently and expeditiously. The facility has easier access for parking and exiting to respond to calls. The presence of a booking area and report writing rooms reduces the time officers spend during the administrative portion of the arrest process. The station is staffed full time with an officer in the lobby to provide assistance or to take reports.

The community room is a tremendous asset that will allow us to meet on a more regular basis with all of the community groups. The room is also available for use by community groups as a place to conduct meetings to discuss community issues.

The Tenderloin Task Force has evolved into a permanent police station, which will be a community resource center for problems in the Tenderloin. I hope to be able to coordinate activities, programs, enforcement, education, and informational meetings with all segments of the community.

I want to hear from all residents, merchants, workers, and service providers as to what they need from the Police Department. I also want to know how the Police Department can coordinate with other city departments to resolve problems or improve conditions.

I know that police officers working at the Tenderloin Police Station do a tremendous job on a daily basis. It is a great help to me to hear from the community about what we are doing well and how I can work with the officers on ways of doing it better.



Chief of Police Fred Lau: "We're here because the community wants us here."

PHOTOS: CARL ANGEL