San Diego County Sheriff's Office First in California to Partner With ICE to Identify and Remove Criminal Aliens

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Until now, new inmates booked into the San Diego County Sheriff's Department had their fingerprints checked only for criminal history information. But now, each new inmate booked into one of the three largest jails in the County will now also have his or her fingerprints checked by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) biometric system for any immigration record.

The San Diego County Sheriff's Department is the first law enforcement organization in California to partner with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in their Secure Communities program. This comprehensive program is intended to streamline the process by which ICE determines if the screened inmate is a criminal alien, subject to automatic removal at the completion of his or her incarceration. Highest priority is given to inmate aliens who have been convicted of crimes such as rape, robbery, murder, kidnapping, and major drug offenses.

By implementing programs like Secure Communities in prison facilities and law enforcement organizations, ICE identified more than 221,000 potentially removable aliens incarcerated nationwide in fiscal year 2008. This fiscal year, the agency anticipates spending more than one billion to continue these programs. ICE currently partners with 50 counties and law enforcement agencies across the nation through the Secure Communities program and looks to expand the program to all law enforcement agencies throughout the United States.

More information about ICE's Secure Communities effort is available at www.ice.gov. Additional information about the San Diego County Sheriff's partnership with ICE may be found at:
http://www.ice.gov/pi/nr/0905/090526sandiego.htm.