

South Shore cops engage public in dialogue



South Shore law enforcement mingle with the public at Alpina Cafe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Traffic issues was one of the dominating topics at the “coffee with a cop” event on the South Shore.

“We are actively trying to come up with solutions that will work,” CHP Lt. Cmdr. Terry Lowther told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We are looking at where we can legally close roadways to funnel traffic the right way. We are using helicopters to see where the stoppage is.”

He is in charge of the Meyers office, which oversees a vast

amount of state highways.

One issue is people are using phone applications for alternative routes. This makes neighborhood streets unpassable and residents angry.

The helicopter can alert the boots on the ground to issues not readily known, like problems in the American River Canyon on Highway 50 or something in the Emerald Bay area. Information signs can change to alert motorists.

Lowther was at Alpina Café last week dispensing this information. Others from the California Highway Patrol and El Dorado County Sheriff's Office were also on hand.

"It humanizes us," EDSO Detective Damian Frisby told *Lake Tahoe News* of events like this. He was explaining to people what the various agencies in the basin do and how they work together.

Ruth Loehr, the local CHP public information officer, said meeting people like these helps to build relationships between officers and the public. So often the only interaction people have with law enforcement is when they see lights in their rearview mirror or on some other bad day.

For Lucia Angel, she wanted to meet the officers because one day she would like to be among their ranks. The 10-year-old has designs on becoming an FBI agent. She wants to "investigate murders, robberies and things like that."

She and Loehr are both fans of the TV show "FBI Files." Lucia also watches "Forensic Files" and "Unsolved Mysteries."

For Sue and Bill Krawetz, they were at Alpina just for coffee. They come up to Tahoe every so often from Sonoma County. They were appreciative of the outreach effort by the officers. They engaged an officer in a conversation about homelessness in Tahoe because they haven't seen much, and then asked about the

best places to go hiking.

These informal gatherings with cops occur throughout the country. The local CHP office is hoping to have five this year, three in the basin and two in Alpine County. The first Alpine County one was also last week.