

# SAFETY FOCUS

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*This issue focuses on the continuing expansion of red light safety cameras in the U.S, an update on the legislative situation in Ohio, several new survivor stories and a review of all pending automated enforcement legislation.*

## Over 150 U.S. Communities Now Using Safety Cameras

The use of red light cameras for traffic enforcement has reached a new milestone with 150 communities in 20 states and the District of Columbia, an increase of over 100 percent in less than four years.

This number includes the red light camera systems that have been approved or are now operational in eight of the ten largest cities in the U.S. -- New York City, NY; Los Angeles, CA; Chicago, IL; Houston, TX; Philadelphia, PA; Phoenix, AZ; San Diego, CA and Dallas, TX.

While much of the growth is occurring in California, where red light cameras have been operating for years, a significant number of the new programs are in states like Texas, Tennessee and Missouri. In these states, red light cameras can operate under "Home Rule" authority.

In Texas alone, cities using red light cameras increased from one to nine in just two years. Missouri has five programs either operational or approved by city ordinance. Georgia has seen its list of red light camera communities double from six to 12 since 2004.

Some of the largest new programs approved in recent months are in the Texas cities of Dallas, El Paso and Houston. Dallas is planning to add up to 60 red light cameras, El Paso is installing an initial round of 12 cameras and Houston is placing cameras at nine intersections.

The statewide red light camera expansion laws approved in Washington and Rhode Island in 2005 are expected to result in several new programs over the next year. Some communities in Washington have also expressed an interest in speed limit enforcement cameras.

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Inquiries about establishing red light camera systems have also been received by communities in the eight Illinois counties that have recently been given state approval to establish camera programs.

"We have been very pleased by the increased interest in red light cameras and the growing number of U.S. communities moving to establish their own programs," said Leslie Blakey, Executive Director of the National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running .

"Red light cameras have become an integral part of traffic enforcement in some of our largest urban and suburban areas because the technology works and drivers will be held accountable for their actions," Blakey said.

Red light cameras established under "Home Rule" authority may also be operational soon in Louisiana and Massachusetts.

Blakey hopes the coming state legislative season will see new authorization laws for cameras in states like Florida and Nevada, along with the restoration of red light cameras in Virginia.

## New Camera Cities

**Here are some of the communities that have approved red light camera programs within the past two years**

**CALIFORNIA:** Bakersfield, Escondido, Millbrae, Modesto, Poway, Santa Clarita

**COLORADO:** Aurora

**GEORGIA:** Atlanta, Athens, Duluth, Gwinnett County

**IOWA:** Clive, Council Bluffs

**MISSOURI:** Arnold, Florissant

**NEW MEXICO:** Albuquerque

**NORTH CAROLINA:** Knightdale

**OHIO:** Cleveland, Columbus, Springfield, Trotwood

**TENNESSEE:** Gallatin, Knoxville, Red Bank

**TEXAS:** Dallas, Denton, El Paso, Frisco, Houston, Plano, Richardson, Rowlett

**WASHINGTON:** Auburn, Seattle

## May I See Your License and Registration?

A survey conducted in 2002 by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics questioned motorists who had been stopped by law enforcement officers.

Here are the reasons given for why they were stopped:

### **54.8 percent were stopped for speeding**

11.5 percent were stopped for a check of the vehicle registration, insurance coverage, or driver's license

9.3 percent were stopped for a burned out headlight, a loud muffler, or some other vehicle defect

### **7.1 percent were stopped for a stop sign or stoplight violation**

4.9 percent said they made an illegal turn or an illegal lane change

4.4 percent were stopped for a seatbelt violation

1.3 percent were stopped at a roadside check for drunk drivers

4.2 percent said they were stopped for some other traffic offense

### **Over 83 percent of the respondents said they believed they had been stopped for a legitimate reason**

Source: U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Contacts Between the Police and the Public - Findings from the 2002 National Survey, 2005*

# Ohio Safety Camera Programs Still In Jeopardy As Senate Reconvenes

The drawn-out fight to preserve the right to use automated red light and speed limit enforcement cameras by Ohio communities is liable to continue for a while longer.

The Chairman of the Ohio State Senate Committee on Highways and Transportation has now forwarded an 11th version of the original House prohibition bill.

As in many of the previous versions of the bill, the latest one corrected a few of the more egregious problems with the bill approved in May, but retains the prohibition on the use of speed cameras and would require all cities to establish a flat-fee contract with camera vendors.

The bill would also now require communities to suspend the use of a specific camera every 24 months while the state conducted an analysis on the effectiveness of the camera in reducing crashes.

The Senate will be in session until the end of the year, but the results of the upcoming election could have some bearing on the level of interest among legislators in finally approving a bill.

The legislature may also decide to wait for

## Columbus Cameras Producing Results

*The Columbus Dispatch* recently reviewed the six month results from the initial set of red light cameras installed by the city.

Among the findings--  
There has only been **one** red light running crash at the two intersections equipped with cameras. Previously each intersection has recorded between 5 and 14 crashes per year.

Violations have dropped from **1,684** violations in March to **477** in August.

The average violator has been entering the intersection **more than two seconds** after the traffic light turned red.

some of the local legal challenges to the camera programs to be settled before they try to establish state standards for the future use of the technology in Ohio.

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## NOTABLE QUOTES

**“My mom is the nicest person in the world. She’d give you her last dime. Anything you need, she’ll be there. That’s why I don’t understand why it happened to her.”**

-- Katrina Smith of Omaha, NE, expressing her feelings to a *WOWT Channel 6* news reporter. Smith's mother, 51-year-old Clara Dawson, remains in a coma after her vehicle was struck by a red light runner on Sept. 16th.

**"I liked that truck."**

-- Ron Herrell, a candidate for the Indiana House of Representatives, quoted by an *Associated Press* reporter, after learning that his Chevy Silverado truck sustained severe damage in a red light running crash that sent him to the hospital with minor injuries. (See related story on Page 4)

## Red Light Runner Almost Derails Political Race

A candidate for the Indiana state legislature is lucky to be alive after a red light runner almost permanently ended his political aspirations.

Ron Herrell, a former state representative trying to regain his seat, was briefly knocked unconscious and partially ejected from his pickup truck after a car ran a red light and plowed into his vehicle just north of Kokomo, IN.

According to *Associated Press* reports, Herrell sustained a broken rib and head and face injuries in a Sept. 19th accident, which occurred as he and his campaign manager were on their way to an afternoon of door-to-door campaigning.

Police said Randall J. Blue, 38, of Kokomo, ran a red light at an intersection on U.S. 31. Herrell, who was wearing a seat belt, was partially ejected through the driver's side window.

According to the media report, Herrell is in the midst of what is regarded as one of this year's closest Indiana statehouse races.

In the 2004 election, he was unseated by Republican John Smith. Herrell had held the seat since 1998, when he defeated incumbent Republican Karen Burkhardt.

## Arizona Playwright Struck By Red Light Runner

A Phoenix playwright and actress remains in serious condition after being hit by a red light runner while riding a bicycle on September 16th.

According to news coverage in *The East Valley Tribune*, Terry Earp, 58, is best known for her historical stage plays performed with her husband Wyatt Earp — great-nephew of the Old West lawman.

Earp, along with her husband and a friend, had left their north Phoenix home on bicycles and were going to breakfast when police say she was struck by a 2003 Honda Pilot that ran a red light at Union Hills Drive and Central Avenue.

Although Earp was wearing a helmet, she was taken to John C. Lincoln North Mountain Hospital in critical condition.

By Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>, Earp had successfully undergone seven surgeries to address the reconstruction and stabilization of her neck and spinal cord, along with a knee, hand and foot. According to her agent, there is still the possibility that there will be some paralysis as a result of the crash, but that it is still too soon to know how fully she will recover.

Her family has been regularly updating their business website with updates on her condition at [www.wyattearp.biz](http://www.wyattearp.biz).

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## Lafayette Is First Louisiana City To Approve Cameras

The Lafayette City-Parish Council has approved an ordinance which would make it the first city in the Pelican State to use red light cameras for traffic enforcement.

The council voted on Sept. 19th to approve the measure, which would eventually place cameras at the 25 most dangerous intersections in the city identified in an engineering study.

According to media reports, the city is hoping to have the cameras operational by 2007, following an extensive media campaign to educate motorists about the new system.

Baton Rouge had considered a similar ordinance earlier this year, and the Louisiana legislature failed to act on a bill last year which would have established a pilot red light camera program in New Orleans.

# MD County Seeking Safety Camera Managers

The Montgomery County Police Department in Maryland has just announced two new job opportunities in their growing red light and speed limit enforcement safety camera programs.

Applications are being accepted for the positions of Field Operations Manager and Field Operations Supervisor until Oct. 3rd.

The manager position, with a salary range of \$47,000 to \$77,000 per year based upon experience, would be responsible for all functions of the county's automated enforcement program.

The supervisor position, with salary range of \$37,000 to \$61,000 per year, would be responsible for maintenance and quality control for the county's expanding network of red light

and speed camera locations.

Both positions require a bachelor's degree, drug and alcohol screening and the completion of a background investigation.

The full job announcements can be viewed on the police department's website at: [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/police](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/police).

## Legislative Update — October 2006

*If there is legislation pending in your state that is not listed here, please contact the Campaign at (202)828-9100 or [info@stopredlightrunning.com](mailto:info@stopredlightrunning.com).*

### **RED LIGHT RUNNING SAFETY CAMERAS**

**Michigan:** SB 1098 (Hammerstrom) would allow up to 10 communities to establish red light camera enforcement systems as part of a 5-year pilot project. Cameras could only be installed at intersections with a history of red light running violations. Introduced on 2/28/06 and referred to the Senate Transportation Committee.

**North Carolina:** S35 (Hoyle) would clarify the definition of "clear proceeds" to allow NC cities with camera programs to cover red light camera program costs before calculating the share to be given to local school districts. Introduced on 2/1/06 and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary on 5/2/06. **Legislation died when the session ended on 7/31/06.**

S271 (Boseman) would clarify the definition of "clear proceeds" to allow the city of Wilmington to cover the costs of their red light camera program. Introduced on 3/1/06. Approved by the Local Government Committee on 5/25/06 and approved by the full Senate on 5/26/06. Referred to the House Committee on Local Government on 5/31/06. **Legislation died when the session ended on 7/31/06.**

**Ohio:** HB 56 (Raussen) would ban the use of automated enforcement technology. The House Transportation, Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee approved the bill on 4/4/05. The full House approved the legislation on 5/18/05. Referred to the Senate Committee on Highways and Transportation. Hearings were held on 10/18/05, 11/2/05 and 3/14/06. A 10th substitute version of the legislation was approved on 5/24/06. The legislation was forwarded to the Senate Rules Committee, however, an 11th version of the legislation has been drafted and circulated.

### **SPEEDING SAFETY CAMERAS**

**California:** SB 466 (Kuehl) would allow the use of photo radar in residential areas. Amended to only allow enforcement in school zones and residential areas with posted speed limits under 30 mph. Referred to Senate Transportation and Housing Committee on 1/4/06. No further action.

**New Jersey:** A2064 (Gusciora) would give the authority to use photo radar to police agencies in localities that have passed authorizing ordinances. Automated violations would be treated the same way as traffic violations issued by patrol officers. Drivers would not be identified in the photographs. The bill was introduced on 1/26/06, approved by the Law and Public Safety Committee on 5/11/05 and amended on the Floor of the Assembly on 5/22/06.