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RED LIGHT RUNNING
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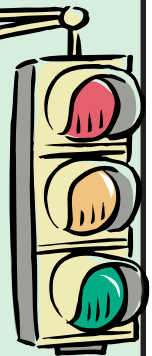
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RED LIGHT CAMERAS BEGIN CLICKING IN CARY, NC, While Chapel Hill Council Turns A Blind Eye To Red Light Runners

Red light cameras were turned on in Cary on January 31, only 3 days after the Town Council of Chapel Hill voted to remove its four month old program despite strong local support. The first of 16 Cary intersections slated to get the new enforcement tools over the next three months was activated in a move to reduce accidents, keep traffic flowing and efficiently expand police ability to enforce traffic safety laws 24/7.



“The SafeLight Cary program is in keeping with our designation as American’s 5th Safest City and as North Carolina’s Technology Town,” said Town of Cary Police Chief WJ Hunter. “We’re very optimistic that this public safety program will be of great benefit to our community.”

Cary was one of several municipalities that received permission from the North Carolina General Assembly in 2001 to create red light camera programs. Based on that Legislative authority, red light camera citations carry a \$50 fine with an additional \$50 penalty if the fine is not paid when due. However, no driver’s license or insurance points are assessed.

“SafeLight Cary really focuses on safety, not on generating revenues,” said Hunter. “Any profits go to Wake County Public Schools.”

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Cary is calling their program a "kinder and gentler" form of enforcement. First, only warning notices will be issued for the first 15 days of SafeLight Cary. Second, Cary is mounting a strong public education program to make sure folks traveling in and through Cary are aware of SafeLight Cary. Third, the Town has hired a retired police major to review all images before citations are issued. Fourth, Cary's notification forms are polite and friendly. Fifth, there is an office near Town Hall where folks can pay their tickets or discuss their citation with a live person. And finally, every person has the right to an appeal.

Other cities in North Carolina have embraced red light cameras as a viable and successful means of improving traffic safety. Charlotte introduced the first SafeLight program to North Carolina in August of 1998 with 82% of public support. Subsequently, Fayetteville, Greensboro, High Point and Wilmington followed that lead in installing programs. Durham also joined the traffic safety trend, as well as Raleigh, where 12 cameras are used in the fight against red light runners, garnering 76% of the public's support.

"We've learned a lot from other jurisdictions with red light cameras and our goal is to have the best program in the state," said Hunter of the Cary program. From 1992-1998, North Carolina ranked 20th in the nation for its fatality rate caused by red light running violations, with 147 fatalities.

Unfortunately, the Chapel Hill Town Council decided to terminate its *SafeLight* camera program in a close 5-4 vote on January 28, 2004, even after overwhelming testimony from residents of Chapel Hill, accident victims and traffic safety advocates, as well as the recommendation of the Town Manager and the unanimous support of the Transportation Advisory Committee. The fledgling program became a political football that was exploited by camera opponents. A low turnout of voters in the November 2003 election brought two new members to the Council who were determined to undermine the safety priorities of the previous Council that installed the program.

For more about SafeLight Cary, including how Cary's system works, visit SAFELIGHT CARY at www.townofcary.org.

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PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

CULVER CITY: A Tailored Program That Absolutely Works

Culver City, California is located in the heart of Los Angeles and operates one of the largest and longest-established red light camera programs in the nation supporting 19 fully operational camera installations that have been successfully curbing red light running since early 1999. Going on its 5th year of operation, the City has achieved truly industry leading gross crash reduction statistics at enforced intersections that are in the magnitude of 50% to 60% during each year of operation. These statistically significant findings are even more profound considering many of the enforced intersections offer countrywide leading daily traffic volumes which can be in excess of 60,000 vehicles a day.

These results have been achieved through collective efforts of the Police Department, City Engineering and County Courts. Since its inception, these three agencies have put forth concerted efforts to ensure program operation was structured and comprehensive, including feedback loops and knowledge sharing between each of the programs stakeholders, which instituted a model of continuous quality improvement.

Culver City is also a program that has been early adopters of the latest technologies. The program currently operates camera systems that include a combination of the latest technologies, including high-resolution digital still images, full-motion video, non-intrusive radar and traditional induction loops. Achieving over a 50% crash reduction; the City has worked closely with its vendor to develop a tailored solution that addresses the enforcement needs and constraints at the intersection level, which often requires specific technological configurations.

To learn more about Culver City's Red Light Camera Program, its technology or operational processes, please contact Sergeant Omar Corrales, Culver City Police Department @ (310) 489-2506.

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GHSA Calls for Action To Reduce Speeding-Related Crashes

The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) is calling on the nation to focus on the growing problem of excessive speeding and its repercussions. More and more traffic crashes are not survivable given the high speeds involved, according to association chairman Kathryn Swanson.

Swanson says speeding is the neglected “step child” of highway safety because it rarely get the attention and funding of more prominent issues, such as belt use, child passenger safety, and impaired driving.

State highway safety offices across the United States are experiencing increasing problems with speeders. For example, in Maine despite the 65 mph limit, a state police project determined that the average speed clocked was 85 mph. In Oregon, speed is the number one contributing factor to fatal traffic crashes.

Recent research by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) concurs with GHSA, showing that higher travel speeds on both rural roads and interstates are responsible for an estimated 35 percent increase in death rates.

There are several reasons for the increase in speeding. Since Congress repealed the national speed limit in 1995, much of the public has perceived speed limits as merely guidelines and not law. Drivers also don't think speeding is as dangerous a behavior as not using a safety belt or drinking and driving. In addition, the social stigma of speeding does not come close to these other behaviors and is considered “cool” on many instances particularly among young men, the type of driver most frequently involved in traffic crashes.

The states are taking various steps to reduce the speeding problem. For example, in Georgia a special, on-going emphasis has been placed on aggressive driving and speed violations. In Louisiana, large trucks are required to travel at reduced speeds in the right lane on all elevated sections of interstate highway. And in Ohio, officials developed a pilot project to reduce nonrush hour speeding in metropolitan corridors.

A sampling of state activities and additional summaries are available on-line at www.ghsa.org.

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Attention

The March newsletter will include a complete recap of the 2004 Transportation Research Board studies and sessions.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

If there is legislation pending in your state that is not listed here, please contact the Campaign at (202)828-9100 or khedding@blakey-agnew.com

California: S.B. 780, introduced by Senator Torlakson last year, passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate Transportation Committee but postponed by the Senate Appropriations Committee will carryover to 2004. It is sponsored by the California Peace Officers' Association. It requires automated enforcement system violations to be cited as civil violations, provides for owner liability, sets the fine limit at no more than \$200, and exempts those violations from a traffic violation point count process.

Indiana: H.B. 1225 (Representative Porter) was referred to the House Committee on Courts and Criminal Code. Rep. Porter is sponsoring the bill at the behest of Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson.

New York: AB 5651 (Lafayette) would make permanent in New York the traffic control signal photo monitoring system demonstration program (the red light camera program). It would also permit any municipality in the State of New York utilizing traffic-control signals to implement a red light camera program at intersections and at highway railroad crossings. The bill was referred to the Committee on Transportation in January.

South Carolina: S.B. 794 (Richardson) was approved by the Senate Transportation Committee on February 4, 2004. This bill permits statewide use of red light camera programs. It requires the camera to capture images of a vehicle's license plate and the red light. The bill now goes to the Senate for debate.

Virginia: H.B. 19 (Delegate McQuigg) was defeated in the House Committee on Militia, Police and Public Safety on January 30 by a vote of 14-8. The bill would have authorized statewide use of red light cameras and addresses several opponents' concerns with photo enforcement.

S.B. 92 (Senator Devolites) was passed out of Senate Committee on Transportation on January 22, 2004 and passed the full Senate by a vote of 38-0 on January 29, 2004. The bill now moves to the House for a vote. It authorizes statewide use of red light cameras and addresses several opponents' concerns with photo enforcement.

H.B. 370 (Delegate Rust) was referred to the House Committee on Militia, Police and Public Safety on January 20, 2004. It would repeal the July 1, 2005, "sunset" on photo red programs in Virginia.

S.B. 176 (Senator Stolle) passed out of the House Committee on Transportation on January 22, 2004 and passed the full Senate on January 28, 2004 with a vote of 28-10. The bill provides that no locality may begin a photo red program after June 30, 2005, but it would allow programs already in place at that time to continue.

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Alabama DOT Study Shows Benefits of Automated Red Light Enforcement

The Executive Summary Report of a red light running investigation, conducted by the Alabama Department of Transportation, found that 47,501 such crashes occurred in Alabama over a nine-year period, producing 16,306 injuries and fatalities. A red light camera systems installed in Tuscaloosa during this project confirmed the extent of the problem. It detected 13,647 violations out of 2,726,061 vehicles observed (about one out of every 200 vehicles).

The red light camera system stored the data on a web site, where it was available to the research team and City of Tuscaloosa officials. The researchers investigated how the camera system operated, verified its accuracy, evaluated data taken at three intersections, and established the system's cost effectiveness in reducing both red light running and red light running related crashes. The system was found to be highly effective, and the researchers made the following recommendations:

- An Alabama oversight committee should be formed to encourage adoption of red light camera programs.
- Legislation should be pursued in Alabama to enable automated enforcement of red light running.
- In selecting sites for red light cameras, the primary criteria should be crash history, violation history, opinions of local traffic engineers and law enforcement officials, and similar factors.
- Revenues collected from red light running camera citations should be distributed according to the provisions proposed in Alabama House Bill 683, introduced in the 2001 Legislature.
- If excess revenues (beyond the cost of the red light running camera program) are generated, they should be dedicated to safety and road projects in the host city.

The research staff strongly encourages the adoption of automated enforcement of red light running in Alabama, as a safety countermeasure to mitigate the approximately 5,278 red light collisions that occur each year, and to reduce the approximately 1,812 Alabama citizens injured and killed each year in these collisions.

More detailed descriptions of this subject and the project have been published in University Transportation Center of Alabama (UTCA) reports, all available in the UTCA web site:

http://utca.eng.ua.edu/projects/final_reports/00470FNLRPT.pdf



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Virginia (cont.): S.B. 132 (Senator Edwards) passed out of the Senate Committee on Transportation on January 22 and passed the full Senate on 01/28/04 with a final vote of 28-10. The bill extends the use of photo red to Roanoke.

Washington: H.B. 1324 and its companion bill S.B. 5369 have been carried over from 2003. H.B. 1324 will remain in the House Transportation Committee. The companion bill, S.B. 5369, passed out of committee last year and will be referred back to the standing committee for purposes of amendment. The bills include statewide authorization for red light cameras and railroad crossing cameras – but not speed cameras. They also provide for owner liability.

Missouri: S.B. 1145 (Senator Kennedy) introduced an act that authorizes cities and counties to adopt ordinances authorizing the use of automatic traffic control enforcement systems to catch drivers who run red lights on highways or roads within their jurisdiction. The city or county adopting the ordinance may enter into an agreement with the state highways and transportation commission regarding the use of such a system on a state highway within the boundaries of the city or county. No points shall be assessed for a violation obtained through the use of the automated traffic control system. The maximum fine imposed shall not exceed \$500.

SURVIVOR ADVOCATES NEEDED

Survivor advocates have suffered the personal consequences of motor vehicle crashes and have decided to work to protect others from the pain they have had to endure — they can become as involved as they would like in efforts to curtail red light running. No previous advocacy experience is needed. If you or anyone you know has survived a red light running crash or lost someone due to a red light runner and might be interested in working to make America's roads safer, please contact:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety
750 First Street, NE, Suite 901, Washington, DC 20002
202-408-1711 or 800-659-2247
Fax: 202-408-1699
E-mail: advocates@saferoads.org
Website: www.saferoads.org

All discussions and information will be kept confidential.

Attention Campaign Members!

Do you have friends, family or colleagues who would be interested in receiving our newsletter? Do you regularly forward the newsletter on to others who are interested? Help us increase awareness of the dangers of red light running by asking anyone who is interested to e-mail us at smenard@blakey-agnew.com to be added to our mailing list.

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