

KEVIN VALINE    OCTOBER 30, 2014

# Modesto's Red-light cameras will remain off

## HIGHLIGHTS

Drivers who run a red light at a Modesto intersection with a red-light camera still don't have to worry about getting a citation in the mail. The Police Department has decided to keep the red-light camera program on hiatus as it continues to talk with the camera provider – Reflex Traffic Systems – about paying less for the cameras under a new contract.

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A city employee services a camera used to catch motorists running red lights at the intersection of Sylvan Avenue and Coffee Road on Tuesday afternoon (10-01-13). Modesto

The department suspended the program for six months in mid-May over concerns that it did not have the staff to review the pictures to determine whether a citation could be issued, as well as the cost of the cameras.

Police Lt. Craig Gundlach said the city and Reflex have agreed to suspend the cameras for an additional six months to May 2015. He said if a new agreement is reached, it will have to go before the City Council for approval. He declined to say when a deal could be reached.

“We are still in the state of determination,” he said. “We want to make sure this is the right thing. We are looking at safety and the cost.”

The cameras are at four intersections, and Modesto had been paying Redflex \$5,658 per month for each camera plus the cost of utilities before putting the program on hold. Modesto paid Redflex \$274,654 in 2013. Modesto pays Redflex from the money it receives from the red-light camera tickets.

The cameras are at Briggsmore Avenue and Sisk Road; Briggsmore and Prescott Road; Briggsmore and Oakdale Road; and Coffee Road and Sylvan Avenue.

The red-light cameras are not popular with many motorists. The Modesto Bee reported a year ago that the tickets with court fees cost \$500. And some experts have questioned whether the cameras make intersections safer.

Gundlach said he believes the cameras have made a difference. He cited Police Department data that show the number of traffic accidents at the four intersections has roughly dropped in half since the cameras were installed about a decade ago.

In other city news, it was a big moment for South Modesto Business United when the City Council on Tuesday approved two proposals to beautify and promote Crows Landing Road.

One will let SMBU operate an 18-foot-by-20-foot electronic message board at Crows Landing and West Hatch roads. The sign would provide information about community events. The other will let SMBU install banners on Crows Landing Road streetlights that promote the holidays and events of community interest. SMBU will bear all of the costs for both projects.



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It would be much smarter for Modesto permanently end their camera program.

These 69 California cities were reported to have dropped red light cameras, or prohibited them before any were installed. Anaheim, Bell Gardens, Belmont, Berkeley, Burlingame, City of Orange, Compton, Corona, Costa Mesa, Cupertino, East LA, El Cajon, El Monte, Emeryville, Escondido, Fairfield, Fresno, Fullerton, Gardena, Glendale, Grand Terrace.