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NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release:

After a year, department discontinues use of red light camera

Following a review period of more than a year, the Redlands Police Department has terminated use of the red light camera installed last year at the intersection of University Street and Citrus Avenue.

On Jan. 15, 2008, the City Council approved an agreement with Redflex Traffic Systems to install a photo-based traffic safety system to monitor red light runners for westbound traffic on Citrus Avenue at University Street. The system became operational on May 5, 2008, and following a 30-day warning period motorists began receiving citations for red light violations in June 2008.

The intersection saw a 42 percent decrease in collisions during the past year, but Police Chief Jim Bueermann said that decrease could not be attributed solely to the presence of the red light camera.

"While we did realize a significant reduction in traffic accidents at the intersection -- and a dramatically decreased number of red light violations -- I cannot definitively represent that this reduction was the result of the red light camera," Bueermann said.

Bueermann said other actions taken at about the same time, including a change to the length of the yellow phase of the signal, likely contributed to the reductions.

The five-year contract with Redflex included a provision to cancel after one year if the system did not meet the City's expectations. The city paid the company a flat fee of \$6,000 a month for the single monitored intersection. If the number of traffic violations was reduced to a level where the amount of money paid to the city in fines was less than the \$6,000 monthly fee, the city could terminate the contract after the first year.

Bueermann said the best the red light system ever did was break even and recently the cost of maintaining the system far outweighs the revenue being generated. However, he added that law enforcement efforts should not be directly linked to revenue generating activities.

"I don't find an ethical consequence if general fund revenue is generated as an indirect consequence of our enforcement activities," Bueermann said. "However, I feel strongly that justice issues should be pursued because we have a thoughtful intention to uphold the law, or solve public safety problems, not to specifically generate revenue in the form of traffic fines."

The department worked with Redflex over the past several months to identify another intersection where the camera could be installed, but none justified the monthly expense.

Last week the department notified Redflex it was discontinuing the red light system.

Chief Bueermann said the trial period with the red light camera was justified.

"Not all of the approaches we take will work," Bueermann said. "However, I am proud of our success rate and understand that innovation requires some degree of trial and error and does not always result in the achievement of expected goals. I pledge my commitment to discontinue those programs that do not demonstrate their effectiveness while continuing to pursue innovative public safety strategies."

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