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Traffic Ticket Camera Incidents Part 2

Legality of Florida Red-Light Cameras Challenged

(excerpted from TheNewspaper.com)

A July 2009 class action suit was filed against the Florida city of Temple Terrace for installing red-light cameras. The State of Florida does not recognize the legal status of photo enforcement programs. Temple Terrace put an American Traffic Solutions (ATS) camera program in place with expected revenues of \$3 million annually, mostly from vehicles turning right on red lights. The city created the position of red-light camera "hearing officer" despite Article 5, Section 1 of the Florida Constitution, which states, "No other courts may be established by the state, any political subdivision or any municipality." Legal challenges against Florida cities that installed traffic ticket cameras continue.

Camera Company's Profits are Down Because of Public Opposition

(excerpted from TheNewspaper.com)

Redflex Traffic Systems, the largest provider of traffic camera operations in the U.S., has seen their net profit drop by nine percent for the year ended June 30, 2009. Motorists refusing to pay photo-based traffic fines, public pressure to force cities to ban traffic camera programs, and related litigation costs were cited by the Australian company as contributors to the profit decrease. Despite that financial setback, Redflex managed to collect \$114.5 million from U.S. motorists this year. Drivers in Arizona and Virginia have discovered that they can throw away mailed photo enforcement tickets without penalty. Both states require such citations to be served in person to be valid. To offset lost income because of this, Redflex has recently added almost 400 red-light and speed cameras in the U.S.

Costa Mesa, CA Reevaluating Installation of Red-Light Cameras

(excerpted from the Daily Pilot)

Costa Mesa added ticket cameras in 2003 to monitor some of the busiest intersections in town. Since then, rear-end crashes are up 20% where the cameras have been installed, and the city has been losing money on the operation. Over the past six years, Costa Mesa paid Nestor Traffic Systems \$6 million to operate the camera program, and has received \$5.7 million in revenue from traffic penalties assessed to local motorists. The City Council will be deciding whether to retain Nestor's services, contract with a new camera company, or just do away with the red-light camera program in its entirety.

Fighting Over Camera Revenue in Nassau County

(excerpted from the MassapequanObserver)

Red-light cameras were installed and then removed recently at the intersection of Merrick Road and Park Boulevard in Massapequa, NY. County Legislator Edward Mangano said, "Soon after tagging the corner . . . county officials ordered the cameras removed when it was discovered that the site is within the boundaries of the Village of Massapequa Park. This would require that any fees collected from violators be turned over to the village rather than feeding the county coffers. Clearly, this shows that county officials are less concerned about public safety and more interested in collecting the dollars expected to be generated from the red-light camera program." Red-light tickets are expected to bring in \$4 million in total revenue for Nassau County during the last 4-1/2 months of 2009 and \$20 million in 2010.

Independent Test Shows Speed Cameras Don't Slow Arizona Drivers

(excerpted from TheNewspaper.com)

Arizona began utilizing speed cameras on freeways in 2008, and Scottsdale alone issued \$17 million in automated tickets before the state took over the camera program. Craig Peterson, the founder of RadarTest.com, measured traffic speeds one-half mile before and one-half mile after speed cameras during free-flow traffic. At least 200 speed measurements were gathered at various camera locations, and Peterson adhered to accepted engineering practices for performing a traffic speed study. Said Peterson, "Far from slowing traffic, the cameras had no effect on freeway speeds . . . Aside from a brief dab at the brakes by a few drivers in reaction to fixed speed cameras – frequently resulting in screeching tires from cars behind – most seemed oblivious to them. Hardly any slowed in reaction to the (photo radar) vans."