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Red Light Traffic Camera Program Terminated, Replacement Vendor Sought

The City's red light traffic camera enforcement program has been terminated against the City's wishes by the vendor, who plans to remove all cameras and equipment within 30 days.

Staff will prepare a request for proposals from other traffic camera companies before the end of the year, in an effort to resume camera enforcement. Traffic safety is a priority of the Santa Maria Police Department, and the 29-month-old red light camera program encouraged safer driving habits.

"We are very pleased with the results of the red light camera enforcement program," Police Chief Danny Macagni said. "With or without the cameras, our officers will always be out there on the streets, watching traffic and citing violators. I advise drivers to always be cautious and alert."

The penalty for a red light violation is \$406 and a point on one's driving record. The automated red light traffic cameras recorded video and took pictures when a vehicle entered an intersection on a red light. The photos and video were then reviewed by a police officer and a citation sent in the mail to the driver.

The City's program began on June 21, 2007 with activation of cameras at Betteravia Road and Miller Street, and expanded to the intersection of Miller and Stowell Road on June 1, 2008. The City planned to expand the program to other intersections based on traffic data including collision history.

Santa Maria became the first city within Santa Barbara County to use red light traffic cameras. The City Council approved the contract with red light camera vendor Nestor Traffic Systems in November 2006. In June 2009, that company was placed in a state court receivership. Following three months in receivership, Nestor's assets were acquired by American Traffic Solutions (ATS) in September 2009, which initially indicated its intent to continue Nestor's contract with the City. However, ATS changed its mind and notified the City that it will terminate the program.

Questions may be directed to the City Manager's Office at 925-0951 ext. 372.

Department:	City Manager's Office
Contact Person:	Mark van de Kamp, Management Analyst II
Telephone Number:	(805) 925-0951 ext. 372
Email Address:	mvandekamp@ci.santa-maria.ca.us