

Randolph Police Launch a Voluntary Video Surveillance Program

By Henry M. Holden

The Randolph Township covers approximately 21-square miles with an estimated 25,746 residents. It has 36 full-time sworn officers, and six civilian employees. With over 9,000 households and 95-percent of them with internet access the township police are dedicated to employing every resource to prevent and solve crimes, and to protect residents and their property. Among those resources is the Internet's Wi Fi which is a game-changer, and a crime-solving resource.

Most of us have heard of thieves who steal packages ordered online. Around the holidays, there is an increase in the number of packages shipped and the number of packages stolen off the porches of some residents. A few residents have resorted to revenge by placing a box with animal droppings or household trash for the thieves to steal. However, the smart ones are signing up with the Randolph police department's voluntary video surveillance program.

"Since more people have security cameras these days, and other police depart-

ments in the area are looking into surveillance cameras, we thought it would be a good resource to help the police department and also help the residents of the town," said veteran patrol officer Michael Shoudy, of the Support Services Unit. "If we were doing an investigation in a certain area, say for example, a burglary, or a car theft, we see if the area has registered video cameras. Officers and detectives can use the registry to identify cameras in the vicinity that may have gathered activity of evidential value."

"If something happened on a street, we have a phone number and an email for them so we can contact the person right away."

"We're asking residents and businesses to register their privately-owned surveillance camera systems. This is a voluntary program aimed at creating a partnership between the residents and the police department to help solve crimes more quickly. These cameras may capture persons and events without the owner's knowledge."

Residents will only be contacted by the Randolph Township Police Department if there is an incident within the vicinity of a camera system. Officers or detectives may request to view the footage in order to as-

sist in their investigation, and they will only contact residents at reasonable hours. The residents can drop out of the program if they wish. "We can ask them to show us some video footage and they can decline. It's completely voluntary in every aspect of the program."

"The program is relatively new," said Shoudy. "We started in late October, and we have a few dozen residents already signed up. We're trying to get the word out because we think it's a win-win opportunity. The residents will feel safer knowing there is electronic coverage in the area and the police can use the resource to more quickly identify and arrest the criminals. We stress that this program is completely voluntary. If we call them, they can say no. There is no obligation in any way."

To sign up for the Video Surveillance Camera Program, please complete the Video Surveillance Camera Registration Form. This is a fillable form which may be filled out on a computer, saved to a hard drive and/or printed out. Once completed, please e-mail the form to mshoudy@randolphnj.org, fax to 973.659.9939, or pick up the registration form at the records bureau window at the police department, and drop off at the police department.



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