



City of Burnsville

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ENFORCEMENT LIGHT HELPS POLICE ENFORCE RUNNING THE RED

Burnsville and Mn/DOT announce first areas in Minnesota to utilize new technology to improve intersection safety

Two key intersections in Burnsville are now outfitted with new technology to help police enforce running the red light thanks to a cooperative program with the Minnesota Department of Transportation it was announced today.

A new tool, called an “Enforcement Light” has been installed at the high volume intersections of Highway 13 and County Road 5 and Highway 13 and County Road 11 in Burnsville. These are the first locations in Minnesota to have this technology.

“Crash reduction is our goal and it’s a real positive for us to be the first Minnesota city to implement this technology,” commented Burnsville Mayor Elizabeth Kautz. “We value our partnership with Mn/DOT and we hope these areas can serve as a model for other cities and counties in Minnesota.”

The Enforcement Light, which turns the blue when the traffic light turns red, enables police to observe violators and issue citations more effectively and more safely. The light is mounted at a 90 degree angle to the traffic light and is visible to officers parked near the intersection. The system allows police to observe the offense, a legal requirement for issuing a ticket, and then pursue violators after they have passed through the intersection. The program is based on similar technology that has been used successfully in Florida and Texas.

Minnesota Department of Transportation Engineers worked cooperatively with City of Burnsville staff as part of a coordinated effort. The Burnsville locations will help Mn/DOT engineers gauge how effectively they work and their durability in extreme weather conditions in addition to using them as a demonstration area to other jurisdictions that want to use the technology. The low-cost lights cost about \$250 each and take under one-hour to install.

The Burnsville City Council authorized and supports a coordinated Traffic Safety Program based on on-going citizen concern with traffic issues. Using a “3E” approach – engineering, enforcement and engineering – Burnsville’s efforts have resulted in lower speeds and increased safety on city streets. The effort to reduce crashes at intersections is consistent with this effort.

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Photos of the Enforcement Light at Trunk Highway 13 and County Road 5



ENFORCEMENT LIGHT FACT SHEET

The Traffic Signal Enforcement Light provides a law enforcement officer with a chance to witness a vehicle running the red light. The light is positioned at a right angle to the red light and is not visible from the approaching side of the signal. Instead of the traditional method of officers pursuing violators through intersections, now the officer can monitor intersections from a safe, downstream location. The blue light is activated at the same time as the red signal light.

The Minnesota Strategic Highway Safety Plan has identified red light running as one of the key factors contributing to severe intersection crashes in the metropolitan area.

Six Months of Research

The City of Burnsville and Jerry Kotzenmacher, Traffic Systems Specialist for the Mn/DOT Traffic Safety and Operations Division began working together on the installation of enforcement lights to aid officers in red light running violations in October 2007.

Research included discussions and meetings with Florida engineers who implemented a similar program successfully, finding the proper positioning of the light on the semaphore, experimenting with the color of the light and changing it from bright white to blue, determining power and electrical requirements, and conducting before and after research with the University of Minnesota.

Running the Red Crash Data

In 2002, there were 207,000 red-light running crashes nationwide. Of the 207,000 there were 920 deaths, and 178,000 injuries.

Burnsville Crash Data

Burnsville averaged 950 crashes per year from 2002-2006, with 38%, or 360 crashes per year at intersections. Of these, about 70 were right angle crashes at signalized intersections and most likely associated with red light running. Traffic engineers identify intersections as the point at which traffic movements most often have conflict.

Burnsville Enforcement

Two locations. Trunk Highway 13/County Road 5 and Trunk Highway 13 and County Road 11. Advance signs warn approaching drivers with signs that read "Red Light Violation Reduction Site".

Coordination with the Courts

Burnsville prosecuting attorneys have coordinated communication with District judges and Chief Judge Bill Macklin.

Project Partners

Minnesota Department of Transportation, City of Burnsville, Dakota County, University of Minnesota, Minnesota Local Road Research Board, and CH2M Hill, a traffic consulting firm.

Grant Funding

The City of Burnsville received a grant from the Minnesota Local Road Research Board in the amount of \$8,000.