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Modesto Crime Cameras Effective

Police Say Dozens Of Crimes Stopped

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MODESTO, Calif. -- Police have solved, and in many cases, stopped dozens of crimes in Modesto with surveillance cameras scattered throughout the downtown entertainment district.

Thursday through Saturday nights one officer constantly monitors 10 cameras from an office at the main police station.

"The ability these cameras give us, it's like putting 10 more cops downtown," Modesto Police Department Capt. Ron Cloward said.

Cloward showed KCRA video of fights, drug deals and car burglaries. He said the cameras have caught some of the most viscous assaults he's seen.

"What they don't know, is an officer is watching the entire thing," Cloward said.

This year, Modesto police have intercepted at least 17 crimes with the use of the cameras.

One of the most recent led to the arrest of four suspects for an attempted homicide and sexual assault.

"After what happened and knowing the surveillance cameras caught them, makes you feel safer being downtown," Modesto resident Samantha Minami said.

"These cameras are a necessary evil. We need these cameras down here because we have a lot of crime in Modesto," Modesto resident Carousel Burger said.

"So, when you look at it that way, I would say successful, yeah," Cloward said.

Cloward said the department has reduced the number of officers assigned to the downtown area and cut back on overtime related to investigations and trials since installing the cameras just under one year ago.

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Other cities in the region are surveillance cameras as a force multiplier as well.

Sacramento recently received a grant for surveillance cameras. They are still decided where the cameras will be best served. However, the department does not plan to monitor the cameras like Modesto police do.

Stockton has nearly 200 cameras that have been in place for over five years. The police department said it may lose the ability to monitor those cameras because of upcoming budget cuts.

Ripon has a several surveillance cameras monitored through out their city.

Manteca and Sacramento County would like to start using surveillance cameras but do not have the funding.

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