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## Newsletter

Christine McLain

Our mission is to enhance public safety and the quality of life in Lancaster by engaging the community and advancing current crime prevention strategies.

## Lancaster CSC Expansion Plan

When a Pittsburgh teenager was shot on Lancaster City's Green Street last month, a camera atop the Church Street Towers apartments captured the scene on film.

But the blurry images of the victim lying on the sidewalk were taken at maximum zoom. The closest surveillance camera was six blocks away.

It took police investigators a week to make an arrest in the fatal shooting.

"If we had cameras in that neighborhood, we may not have prevented that tragedy, but I think our cameras would have been in a better position to provide further evidence for the investigation," said Joe Morales, chief operations officer of the Lancaster Community Safety Coalition.

The network of cameras monitored by the non-profit coalition have helped police break up disturbances before they escalate into violence, catch fleeing suspects and respond to accidents and fires.

But none of the 62 cameras being watched 14 hours a day effectively reaches the southeast part of the city.

The coalition wants to change that.

Next week, the group will unveil a proposal to place 10 cameras in the area of South Duke, Rockland and North streets. Those cameras will allow coverage as far south in the city as Susquehanna Street.

Plans will be discussed at a public meeting at San Juan Bautista Catholic Church, 425 S. Duke St., on Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

The proposal is the first of a larger plan that calls for eventually having 160 to 165 cameras watching the city. In addition to the southeast quadrant, the coalition announced plans in June to place cameras in the downtown area.



Depending on funding, cameras could be installed within the next few months, Morales said.

But before that occurs, Morales emphasized that coalition leaders want to make sure the cameras are wanted. The plans to place them in the neighborhoods have not been made final, he said.

Morales acknowledged that "missteps" were made when the first cameras were installed several years ago. Some residents complained about the intrusive nature of cameras watching public spaces or were concerned about privacy being violated. Since then, the coalition has actively sought public input. Morales hopes to address questions and concerns at the meeting.

"The residents have to want this. We want to know what they think about the whole concept of cameras and this technique to address crime in the neighborhood," he said.

Morales himself was initially wary of cameras. He has come to accept being photographed regularly, as he walks into a bank, grocery store or on a sidewalk in many parts of the city.



**Lancaster  
Community  
Safety  
Coalition**

The Lancaster Community Safety Coalition will be sending a City wide mailing. We hope to inform everyone of our goals to help make Lancaster a safer place to live. To do that we do need your support! Please contact us if you are interested in more information at [www.LancasterCSC.org](http://www.LancasterCSC.org)

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**Upcoming Community Meetings:**

**PA College of Art and Design**  
Thursday September 18th at 7pm  
cameras to be installed on "Gallery Row"

**St Joseph's Church**—cameras to be installed in the South West. Check our website for date announcement.

The Lancaster Community Safety Coalition (LCSC) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a mission to enhance public safety and quality of life in Lancaster by engaging the community and advancing current crime prevention strategies. For more information—visit our website at [www.LancasterCSC.org](http://www.LancasterCSC.org)

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He believes that others also have come to accept cameras as commonplace. Their use as a crime-deterrent is also gaining recognition, Morales believes. He's not expecting many objections to their being placed in the southeast area.

"I anticipate that law-abiding citizens will be excited about the cameras. They say they want one on their block or they want one near their house," said Morales.

"I think people get (the connection) that reduced crime not only makes the quality of their lives better, but it has an economic impact in terms of the value of homes, rental properties, corner grocery stores," he added.

Morales emphasized that the coalition is a non-profit entity and not an arm of the police or the city. The cameras, at a cost of about \$5,000 each, are funded from foundation, corporate and government grants.

He sees the cameras as simply an electronic extension of a neighbor looking out their window to watch over the neighborhood. "This is about neighbors looking out for neighbors," he said.

*This article courtesy Lancaster Newspapers*

## Statue Vandalized at Rotary Park in Lancaster

Lancaster police are investigating an act of vandalism that occurred on June 15 at Rotary Park.

According to police, three unknown male suspects toppled a bronze statue at the park on the intersection of West James Street, Harrisburg Avenue and Prince Street.

The Lancaster Community Safety Coalition surveillance camera system captured the incident. The video showed the suspects patronizing a local downtown business - where they were also videotaped by the business's security system - after the vandalism.

One of the suspects is shown in the photo.

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to call the Lancaster City Police Department at 735-3356.



## Police Cruiser and Van Collide, Caught on Surveillance Camera



A camera that is mounted on the corner of West King and Water Street helped determine the outcome of an accident between a city resident and a police cruiser.

After reviewing the images obtained from the Lancaster Community Safety Coalition camera, investigators were able to determine the collision occurred because the minivan traveling east on King Street struck the side of the marked police cruiser heading south on Water Street. After colliding with the cruiser, the minivan struck a Ford F-150 pickup truck parked on Water Street causing extensive damage.

## Coalition Receives County UEF Grant Award

August was a good month for the City of Lancaster and the Lancaster Community Safety Coalition. Lancaster County's Urban Enhancement Fund program announced the awarding of grants totaling nearly \$2 million dollars to city and county-based projects. Mayor J. Richard Gray identified the LCSC's plan to place security cameras in and around the downtown as one of three city priorities submitted to the County Planning Commission for funding.

The awarding of \$250,000 to the Coalition's camera project was announced at the August 20th County Commissioners meeting. The direct link between low crime rates and economic development was a focal point of the LCSC proposal. This substantial grant will partially fund the installation of 50 surveillance cameras throughout downtown and the surrounding neighborhood.

## LCSC Assists in Reducing Crime— Summer 2008

Since 2005, surveillance cameras monitored by the Lancaster Community Safety Coalition (LCSC) have enhanced law enforcement efforts and served as a deterrent to crime and disorder. LCSC's services have proven to be an invaluable asset to both the community and police in response to the following types of incidents :

- **Vandals Destroy Rotary Park Statue** – Vandals destroyed the statue of a little girl in Rotary Park. LCSC video cameras caught the suspect running and “tackling” the statue until it broke. LCSC provided video to the Police. Police are still looking to identify the suspects.
- **Hit and Run** – County 911 dispatched a vehicle description for a hit and run accident in the 100 block of Howard Ave. LCSC monitoring staff spotted this vehicle a short time later in the 400 block of North Queen St. and alerted the county. Police were able to catch up with the vehicle and charge the driver with the accident.
- **Warrant** – LCSC monitoring staff spotted a suspect rolling a marijuana cigarette on the porch of a vacant house in the 400 block of Beaver St. This was called in to County 911

The total project cost is estimated at \$1.3 million and is scheduled for a February 2009 completion. LCSC Executive Director, Dale Witmer and COO, Joe Morales attended the Commissioner's meeting and thanked County officials for approving the UEF Committee's award recommendations. Witmer also reiterated the Coalition's commitment to deploying cameras in city neighborhoods beyond the current project area.

With more than 60 cameras currently operating, the LCSC has demonstrated the ability to save City and County tax dollars by serving as a force multiplier for police and saving the District Attorney's office an average of \$20,000 when video evidence helps prosecutors avoid the expense of a jury trial. The Lancaster Community Safety Coalition is grateful for the support of the City and County in our effort to keep residents and visitors safe to enjoy all that this community has to offer.



## Crime Prevention at Home

Crime is on the increase in most large U.S. cities. It is also becoming more prevalent in small communities. Thinking that it can only happen to someone else and doing nothing to prepare yourself or take precautionary measures in case makes you the perfect victim criminals are looking for.

Making yourself less of a target is simpler than you might think.

Use good lighting. With Fall coming it will start getting dark outside sooner, this is probably the single most important deterrent that you can install around your home. Whether their motion activated lights, or you program the lights on a timer premise is lighting significantly reduces the attractiveness of your home or property to criminals.

Dispatch. The suspect walked from the area and was spotted a short time later in the 300 block of South Queen. Police were directed to the location and the suspect was found to have a pending warrant for weapons from the Northwest Regional Police Dept.

- **Fire** –LCSC cameras caught a house fire on the 800 block of N Prince Street. LSCS monitoring staff sent live video to County 911 Dispatch. Dispatch was able

to convey the sense of urgency and dispatch the appropriate Police and Fire department personnel. The Bureau of Fire requested a video of the house fire to be used for training purposes.

- **Drug Possession** - A suspect was spotted in Farnum Park rolling a marijuana cigarette. Police arrived and took the suspect into custody for possession of a small amount of marijuana.
- **Copper Theft** - Video from LCSC was provided in the ongoing investigations of thefts of copper from the old Lancaster Press building on West Lemon Street. LCSC staff and a detective observed two suspects entering the vacant building. The building was surrounded by police and the suspects were arrested.



**Lancaster  
Community  
Safety  
Coalition**

## Public safety is everyone's business!

### Copper Theft Suspects Arrested

Alleged thieves spotted on security cameras caught by Lancaster City police. The two men arrested broke into the vacant Lancaster Press building on the corner of Prince and Lemon Sts. Miguel Angel Landrau-Melendez and Danny Espinosa were inside the building, attempting to steel copper wiring. Detective Hickey was reviewing previous video taken by the Lancaster Community Safety Coalition when he spotted the suspects entering the building on a live security camera feed. Hickey immediately called for backup.

About 10 officers surrounded the six-story building which has multiple exits. Officers and detectives entered the building and arrested Landrau-Melendez and Espinosa.

The surveillance cameras were installed by the Lancaster Community Safety Coalition in public streets to help keep Lancaster safer.



### LCSC Aids in Firearms Charge

As a result of the investigation into the shooting which occurred in 100 Blk E. Ross St on 3 March 08, one person has been charged with Firearms Violations thus far. The individual charged has been identified as Edwin Eugene Boyer, 26 of the 100 Blk E. Ross St. He has been charged with two different Violations of the Uniform Firearms Act. The charges were as a result of the investigation

conducted yesterday, which continued into last night and resulted in the search of two different residences and a vehicle by Detectives.

The investigation revealed that Edwin Boyer, who had been arrested in that area shortly after the shooting on unrelated outstanding warrants, possessed a .45 caliber semi-automatic handgun immediately after the shooting took place. Boyer was not in possession of the handgun at the time of his arrest, but it was determined that he had hidden the gun in his residence between the time of the shooting and when Police arrested him. Detectives searched the residence and located the weapon, which had been reported stolen to the Lancaster Bureau of Police in November 2007.

Detectives are currently following up on leads as to the identity of the shooter and those associated with him. This includes viewing Lancaster Community Safety Coalition Video in that area, which played a significant role in these charges and the recovery of this handgun.

## From the LCSC to the Ivy Leagues for Conyers

Mature, motivated, polished and professional are descriptors normally reserved for



the most accomplished adults, but at age 18, Corey Conyers has earned them as a student, community volunteer and crime watcher for the Lancaster Community Safety Coalition. Cory is not just talented; he is focused and his goals are clear. A career in the FBI and a future in politics are well within reach for the recent McCaskey High School graduate.

Graduating third in a class of 489, winning several community awards, being accepted to the University of Penn have put him on a path to success.

Corey first heard of the LCSC during a presentation made to McCaskey's chapter of the National Honor Society by Coalition Executive Director Dale Witmer in April 2007. Soon after that, Corey was hired and trained to monitor LCSC cameras on a part-time basis. He quickly distinguished himself as a reliable and techno-savvy employee.

"LCSC was my first employer. I chose to become involved because I like investigative work and trying to solve and prevent crimes. I also knew this job would become very beneficial to me as I have made valuable contacts with Lancaster City Police and other law enforcement agencies", he explained.

The LCSC's staff and Board of Directors wish Corey the best of luck in his studies at Penn and know that we can look forward to hearing of his continued success for years to come.

For more information about the **Lancaster Community Safety Coalition** please contact us online at [info@lancastercsc.org](mailto:info@lancastercsc.org).

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