

Niagara County Sheriff's Office partnering with automated license plate reader company

Submitted by the Niagara County Sheriff's Office

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office is announcing a partnership with Flock Safety, a company that provides an automated license plate reader (ALPR) service. The installation of cameras will include 67 locations strategically located throughout Niagara County.

These cameras provide law enforcement with real-time data to capture the make, model, color and license plate from the rear of vehicles traveling throughout Niagara County. They capture actionable evidence and send real-time alerts if a wanted or stolen vehicle passes by these cameras. The alerts are sent to all law enforcement agencies within seconds.

The cameras are not used for traffic enforcement, they do not take photos of the vehicle occupants, and there is no facial recognition technology.

Additionally, when new technology is introduced, there is generally a question whether it's tracking citizen movement. This system is not. The data is securely stored in the cloud, automatically deleted every 30 days on a rolling basis, and is not sold or shared with third parties.

Niagara County law enforcement will be able to use this system for both proactive and reactive crime fighting. This system will also provide valuable information when investigating crime, providing much-needed leads to help solve criminal offenses.



Camera image courtesy of Flock Safety

The Flock Safety cameras are just one more tool to assist law enforcement across Niagara County solve and prevent crime. As technology and crime trends change, these ALPR cameras allow law enforcement to remain at the leading edge to continue to provide safety and security for Niagara County.

Sheriff Michael Filicetti said, "These cameras will be a game-changer for law enforcement in this county. Many communities have seen a reduction in crime by utilizing this technology as a crime-fighting tool."



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Wheatfield Town Board clears hurdle to allow cannabis sale

BY KAREN CARR KEEFE
Senior Contributing Writer

Wheatfield is one step further in the process to allow retail and on-site consumption businesses to sell marijuana to adults in properly zoned areas of town.

The Town Board on Monday adopted a local law that adds "adult-use cannabis" to the town's zoning code.

The board determined through the SEQR process that the proposed adult-use cannabis law would not adversely affect the environment or the safety and welfare of the public.

Once New York legalized marijuana, municipalities across the state could adopt a local law to opt out of retail sales and on-site distribution if they voted to do so before Dec. 31, 2022. Wheatfield did not vote to opt out.

No adverse comments were received at a public hearing last month about potential marijuana-related businesses operating within the town. The board had previously referred the matter to the Planning Board in accordance with General Municipal Law.

Supervisor Don MacSwan said that, at the previous public hearing, "We had the law available for people to review and we had very few comments at all."

He said people just asked a couple of minor questions: "I think people have accepted the fact that it's legal in New York state. People have to go

"There's many stipulations in the law but, basically, we allow it in a commercial zone, only, and then they still have to abide by distance from schools, distance from playgrounds – things like that, which all are regulated through New York state and the Town of Wheatfield."

through a lot of hoops just to go through New York state before they can even get a permit, and then they have to abide by our law, of course."

"This has been ongoing for quite some time. We made some minor modifications of the law," he said. "We adopted it."

MacSwan said he is sure there will be those interested in operating marijuana-related businesses within Wheatfield's approved commercial areas, but such applications would be handled through the state.

"Once they get their permits from New York state, they still have to abide by our town law," he said. "But we have to be very careful. We can't make it more stringent than what the state requirements are."

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from playgrounds – things like that, which all are regulated through New York state and the Town of Wheatfield."

Towns that allow the business to operate, according to state and local law, get the benefit of a share of tax revenue generated by those businesses.

In other business, MacSwan said there currently is a shortage of water meters in the town.

"We have a lot of new homes going up – we're hoping that we get them soon, because we may not have the adequate water meters for the new homes going in," he said. "We ordered them last year, and we haven't received them yet."

He said the town decided that, if they don't have the meters in time, they will put in what's called "a jumper" without a meter, and homeowners would pay the minimum fee until meters are available. A jumper is a basically a piece of pipe between the town line and the new house line.

MacSwan said he talked to town's water superintendent, who is trying to find some alternative meters that would work in the town's system. He said Wheatfield has gone through "a really huge growth period" in previous years. "And now, with sewers available in most of the town – at least 95% – of course it's growing. And I would say right now we're probably one of the fastest or largest-growing communities in Niagara County, for sure."

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