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Florida town to use blanket of surveillance cameras

MANALAPAN, Fla. (AP) — One of the nation's wealthiest towns will soon have cameras and computers running background checks on every car and driver that passes through.

Police Chief Clay Walker said cameras will take infrared photos recording a car's tag number, then software will automatically run the numbers through law enforcement databases. A 911 dispatcher is alerted if the car is stolen or is the subject of a "be on the lookout" warning.

Next to the tag number, police will have a picture of the driver, taken with another set of cameras — upgraded versions of the standard surveillance cameras already in place.

If there is a robbery, police will be able to comb records to determine who drove through town on a given afternoon or evening.

"Courts have ruled that in a public area, you have no expectation of privacy," said Walker, one of 11 sworn officers who protects Manalapan's 321 residents. Still, Walker says Manalapan's data will be destroyed every three months.

Manalapan's town council authorized \$60,000 in security upgrades last week after three burglaries this winter robbed residents of \$400,000 in jewelry. The town averages two or three burglaries per year and residents demanded swift response, Town Manager Gregory Dunham said.

The 2000 Census listed Manalapan, about 15 miles south of West Palm Beach, among the nation's richest cities, with two out of every three homes worth more than \$500,000.

Contributing: Information from: The Miami Herald.

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