# Police in Calumet City to get camera-eye view

**By James D. Wolf Jr.**
Special to the Tribune

Calumet City police will soon monitor potential trouble spots from the top of a light pole.

While joining Chicago and Chicago Heights in deploying surveillance cameras, Calumet City might take its program a step further: into existing equipment at banks, schools and businesses.

It would be the first municipality in the region to allow police to see what is happening inside buildings, officials said.

Under the plan, police would be able to access certain camera views in buildings whose occupants have given permission if an alarm sounds or if a password is given to a 911 operator.

The individuals and businesses would pay $5,000 in infrastructure costs, Police Chief Pat O'Meara said.

The City Council last week approved spending as much as $70,000 to buy and install two high-tech cameras that can be moved to different areas of the city.

The action was mulled for nearly three years, but officials had been concerned about the cameras' legality.

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## CAMERAS:
## Police have control from station, car

Court challenges to their use have been upheld elsewhere, prompting Mayor Michelle Markiewicz Qualkinbush to push the proposal forward.

"It's definitely going to address some of our hot spots in town," she said.

Police officers will be able to control the cameras from the police station or a squad car blocks away. Chicago uses similar but less complex cameras.

City officials will post signs around town warning people the cameras are watching, O'Meara said. The cameras could be in place by the end of the month.

Because courts have upheld use of the cameras, civil libertarians said they are powerless to stop their proliferation.

"The controlling notion is you don't have a right to privacy in a public place," said American Civil Liberties Union spokesman Ed Yohnka.

Still, cameras cannot be manipulated to peer into people's homes, cars or personal belongings to gather information on anything that is not in public view, Yohnka said, because that would raise serious questions of unreasonable search and seizure.