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Security cameras aid in arrest of man with stolen gun

By Mike Urban
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Reading Eagle: Ryan McFadden
Security camera feeds in the video safety unit in City Hall.

 - An eagle-eyed city worker monitoring Reading's security cameras noticed a man stuffing a gun into his waistband Thursday morning.

Four minutes later, police were there arresting Deishon S. Hunt, 21, address unavailable, who had a gun that was stolen from a Mount Penn home during a burglary in September, police said.

The unidentified employee saw Hunt with the gun in the 400 block of Penn Street about 2:20 a.m., said Chief William M. Heim.

Heim and city officials drew attention to the arrest to show the value of the security cameras, which they said have helped in several arrests since they were installed in November.

"It's like having a police officer on the corner," Heim said of the cameras, which are watched by police and the city's video safety department.

The .357-caliber handgun that was seized from Hunt could have been used in a homicide or other crimes, Heim said.

Hunt was charged with receiving stolen property and possessing a handgun without a license. He was arraigned by District Judge Stuart D. Kennedy and committed to Berks County Prison in lieu of $50,000 bail.

Hunt was with a group of males and showed the gun for only a moment before he jammed it into his pants, police said.

That an employee noticed that brief display of the gun shows how alert those workers are and how clearly the cameras show what is occurring, said Michael A. Garipoli, the police department's technology coordinator.

Other employees have noticed suspects handling drugs, leading to cocaine and heroin arrests, he said.

Those cases are easier to prove when there is video evidence, and a quicker conviction saves the city and Berks County money, he said.

Mayor Tom McMahon said there are 27 cameras around Reading and more are planned.

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