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Dayton, Ohio, Using Cameras to Curb Illegal Dumping.

Illegal dumping has cost the city of Dayton, Ohio, more than \$1 million in cleanup in the last three years, so the city is installing more hidden surveillance cameras to crack down on the unlawful activity.

The city's public works department is adding 18 cameras to its current supply of 23 in order to identify and prosecute more people who illegally discard trash along city streets, alleys, abandoned properties and other places.

"These are cameras we use in a variety of places to find the people who are throwing trash in our neighborhoods and doing illegal dumping," said Tim Riordan, Dayton city manager.

Public works receives complaints about illegal dumping virtually every day. Staff members then investigate the complaints and evaluate the sites to determine whether surveillance is needed.

The city began using 23 cameras in April 2013, and the city since then has monitored 46 dumping sites, said Fred Stovall, the city's director of public works.

Public works staff review about 600 photos each day from the cameras, which are mobile, motion-activated and work in the dark.

Photographic evidence from the devices has resulted in dozens of prosecutions for illegal dumping and unlawfully transporting tires, Stovall said. The charges have led to 20 misdemeanor convictions and five property seizures. Some prosecutions stem from citizen complaints and police traffic stops.

"It's an ongoing battle," Stovall said. "We have seen some positive results: When we put cameras up, we do see less dumping at that particular site."

Officials hope to get an upper hand in the ongoing battle with the installation of 18 more cameras.

City commissioners on Wednesday approved spending more than \$14,000 to purchase the equipment.

The investment is minor compared to the costs of cleaning up dump sites.

The city last year spent about \$522,350 on labor and trash-removal fees associated with cleaning up improperly discarded trash, Stovall said.

The city spent about \$445,700 cleaning up trash on abandoned properties in 2012 and \$386,190 in 2011.

Photos from the cameras show people throwing old recliner chairs and piles of trash on abandoned lots.

Some people back their trucks into an empty lots and drag bags of trash from the vehicles.

Some people who engage in illegal dumping live a stone's throw from the sites.

"They live right across the alley, and they want to walk across the alley and dump the trash out," Stovall said. "It makes no sense to me because you have a trash can, so all you have to do is put the trash in your container and we'll pick it up every week."

Dayton recently started installing security video cameras downtown to deter and prosecute criminals in strategically selected areas.

BY CORNELIUS FROLIK, MCCLATCHY NEWS SERVICE / JUNE 13, 2014

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