



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on November 24, 2013

Local Police Increasingly Subordinate to Homeland Security Department

Reports from towns and cities around the country prove that the federal government is determined to abolish the independence of local law enforcement.

Using “grants” and other economic incentives, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is paying police departments to become subordinate outposts of the increasingly militarized federal agency.

[The New American](#) has chronicled this dangerous trend for years and we’ve begun to notice the acceleration of the pace of DHS consolidation of control of local police departments and sheriffs offices around the country.

Financial grants earmarked for “improving homeland security” aren’t the only DHS carrot enticing cash-strapped police departments to subject themselves to federal management. DHS also uses the establishment of “buffer zones” and fusion centers to accomplish its surreptitious seizure of police forces.

It’s not enough, however, for Homeland Security to merely take control of local police. A primary focus of the plan is to enlarge the surveillance net by equipping squad cars and precincts with technology enabling them to target and track citizens whether at home or on the road.

From license plate readers to facial recognition software, from surveillance cameras to cellphone signal trackers, the Department of Homeland Security is providing police with all the gadgets, hardware, and software necessary to keep everybody under surveillance, without the targeted public ever realizing that it’s the Capitol, not the cops, that are behind the monitoring.

Local police who participate in the program will have access to a shockingly broad array of personal information of citizens. Facial recognition technology, license plate readers, and stop light camera video feeds will all be funneled to a Regional Operations Intelligence Center where FBI, police, and DHS agents can watch the live feeds.

Here are a few notices of the success of the plan as reported by local media:

This from the [Long Beach \(California\) Press-Telegram](#):

The Police Department will receive a \$40,954 grant from the Department of Homeland Security as reimbursement for the purchase of various law enforcement equipment over the past three years.

About \$23,619 will be used on automated vehicle license plate readers, which can be portable or positioned on a squad car.

The readers scan license plates on passing vehicles and check the information against local,





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regional and state criminal databases. Each plate is also compared with plate numbers associated with auto thefts, felony warrants, parking violations and Amber alerts.

The Police Department has two automated readers but hasn't decided how many new pieces of equipment to purchase, Police Chief Michael Langston said.

A total of \$12,500 will be used to upgrade the security camera system at Hilltop Park, 2351 Dawson Ave., and Discovery Well, 2200 Temple Ave., the two parks in the city with a security camera system.

And this, from the [Times-Tribune in Corbin, Kentucky](#):

During the regular monthly meeting of the Barbourville City Council, BPD Detective Steve Owens told council members that their department was tapped by the federal Office of Homeland Security.

"Basically, Homeland Security came to the Barbourville Police Department requesting an officer (to be a part of their) task force," Owens said.

Council members were required to approve a resolution that included a "memorandum of understanding" that established the partnership between the BPD and Homeland Security.

Owens added that the designated officer would have federal investigative powers. Owens explained that if the city's police department uncovers a crime that would lead to federal charges, that officer would be able to assist.

Owens also told council members that the city would receive a portion of any monies or property seized during the course of an investigation that leads to federal charges and/or convictions.

Still more evidence of the unconstitutional bribery of local law enforcement is found in this [story published by WBOC-TV in Salisbury, Maryland](#):

Keeping you safe through the eyes of a police car. New cameras have been added to some police cars in Salisbury.

Sgt. Scott Elliott of the Salisbury Police Department said that nine cars, including a K-9 and an unmarked patrol vehicle, are now equipped with small but powerful cameras.

The cameras are mounted inside of the windshield which also comes equipped with a speaker so that it can record any sound during traffic stops.

"There is an auto zoom function on the camera so as you are making your traffic stop it will actually zoom the camera in that will capture the license plate of the car you are pulling over," said Elliott.

Elliott said that it's been about eight years since the department even had cameras in their patrol cars. He said the department images captured and recorded into a squad laptop will help keep everyone safe.

"I don't think it made it difficult not having them," Elliott said, "the testimony of the officers has been doing a good job thus far, however having this added piece to it just makes the case that much more concrete."

Elliott said that the camera will not only keep a constant eye on what's happening during the day it will serve an even more useful purpose when night falls.

"If you're searching for a suspect in the area or someone that fled from you then in a low light situation the infrared camera will actually pick up body heat," he said.



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Elliott said, the entire system including hardware and installation cost about \$65,000. He said that money comes from various grants including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

And yet another report of a formerly independent local police department taking DHS grant money to improve its ability to “keep residents safe” by keeping them under constant federally-funded surveillance. This time, [a story published earlier this month in the *Deerfield Valley News*](#) in southern Vermont reports on the purchase (thanks to DHS money) of automatic license plate readers (ALPR).

One municipality that uses an ALPR system is Wilmington. According to town manager Scott Murphy, the ALPR was acquired nearly two years ago when police chief Joe Szarejko took advantage of a Department of Homeland Security grant that paid for the system. While Szarejko could not be reached for comment, Murphy explained that the device only makes the community safer. “We’ve picked up suspected felons, or stopped people speeding through town or who were speeding through another town,” said Murphy. “It’s a safety-related issue and regular police work, and we’ve done a good job of protecting residents and visitors who want to live and shop in a safe location.”

In Illinois, [reported MySuburbanLife.com](#), one local police department has decided to turn to the federal government for help in modernizing its facilities. DHS is all too happy to oblige:

Prompting the need for a feasibility study is the fact that the city intends to apply for a variety of grants to pay for any improvements or additions at the Police Department. The study provides the due diligence required during the grant application process.

Police Commander Tom O’Halloran said it wasn’t a matter of Homeland Security issuing directives in terms of how police departments are specifically equipped.

“But if you ask for grants, Homeland Security asks, ‘How are you securing your facility?’” O’Halloran said. “It’s part of the process. We can’t get over the first hurdle of what we need because they don’t have the study.”

With all due respect, Commander O’Halloran is living in a fool’s paradise if he thinks that there won’t be strings attached to a bag full of DHS cash.

Whether he and his fellow police commanders across the country realize it or not, when they accept federal gadgets and grants, they are surrendering their independence and their citizens’ civil liberties.

Joe A. Wolverton, II, J.D. is a correspondent for The New American and travels frequently nationwide speaking on topics of nullification, the NDAA, and the surveillance state. He is the host of The New American Review radio show that is simulcast on YouTube every Monday. Follow him on Twitter @TNAJoeWolverton and he can be reached at jwolverton@thenewamerican.com



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