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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Safe Routes to School lights send unfamiliar signals

MURPHY (February 4, 2016) Two pedestrian crosswalks along North Murphy Road are now equipped with traffic control light standards that may send signals with an unfamiliar sequence, says Police Chief Arthur Cotten.

“The two are part of the Safe Routes to School program that the City Council adopted two years ago,” he said. “They are, of course, principally designed to make it safer for students to cross Murphy Road.”

The two standards are near the intersections of Shirehurst Dr. and Windsor Dr. and were installed shortly after North Murphy Road was completely reconstructed. The two include clearly-marked stripes to indicate stopping locations. They operate in a similar fashion as traditional crosswalk signals, except for the cautionary flashing of the amber lights that start the process.

Essentially, a pedestrian will approach the activator on the sidewalk and push the appropriate button. That starts the amber lights flashing, sending a warning to drivers that pedestrians are in the area and that they should proceed with caution. After a brief period, the lights turn into a solid amber. This means that a stop is now imminent.

From solid amber, the lights begin to flash red. This is the same as a stop sign. Motorists must stop, look both ways and proceed with caution if the road is clear. Finally, the lights will burn a constant red. That, of course, means a full stop.

“Solid red means a full and complete stop, no advancement of any kind,” he said. “Then, and this is another major difference, there is no green light. So, as soon as the red light is extinguished, drivers may proceed as before.”

In addition to the lights on the poles, there are indicator lights buried in the roadbed, but these are only to warn drivers to look for the overhead lights. The buried lights do not change color.

Pedestrians approaching the intersections are provided a guide on these procedures on the pole, including a 30-second countdown until the lights are no longer active.

“These lights are provided for the safety of pedestrians, but they do not take the place of constant observation and vigilance,” said the Chief. “Even with the lights activated, it is important for pedestrians to keep their eyes on the traffic and ensure that drivers are indeed stopped.”

Police officers will be issuing citations to drivers who do not heed the rules, regardless of the time of day or night. “Students crossing during the day are our main concern,” he added. “But, these lights are valid traffic control devices whenever a pedestrian is intending to cross the street.”

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ABOUT MURPHY -- Murphy is a fast-growing community located in Collin County. The population is approximately 18,020, generally characterized as highly educated with a median household income above the state average. With more than 70 percent of the land developed, the community is dominated by single-family residences. City planners strive to preserve a country feel while exhibiting an aggressive economic development stance. The centrally-located municipal complex includes four buildings that house Fire, Police, City Administration and Public Works. Money Magazine has dubbed Murphy as the 27th Best Place to Live in America for small cities, and D Magazine placed Murphy as the fifth best suburb in the 2014 list, where it has consistently ranked in the top 10.