

Amity Township police increase speed enforcement in residential areas

White markings on streets help officers track motorists

By **Kevin Duffy**
Reading Eagle

<http://pottsmmerc.com/articles/2011/07/25/news/sn0000012631117.txt>

Motorists in Amity Township might want to think twice before speeding on residential streets.

The township has more than 25 locations that police have identified as target spots for speed enforcement.

Each location is marked by a pair of white lines painted across the street and spaced 100 to 150 feet apart. The lines are used to calculate speeds of passing vehicles.

Many of the lines have been in place for years, while others have been added as more trouble spots were identified, said Amity police Chief Kent Shuebrook.

At a recent township meeting, Shuebrook presented supervisors with an analysis of 13 roads and intersections that recently have been identified as areas of concern from citizen complaints.

The greatest disparity between the average speed of vehicles and the posted speed was 5 mph at the intersection of Terry Court and Maplewood Drive, a residential street off Route 422. The speed limit there is 25 mph.

Like police in many Pennsylvania municipalities, Amity officers use a device called Tracker to calculate speed.

An officer, usually in a patrol car concealed from view, uses the device to record the time it takes a vehicle to travel the distance between the two white lines on the street. The device then automatically calculates the speed.

Shuebrook said his officers are not looking to put a dent in motorists' wallets by setting up the speed details.

"Writing tickets is not our goal," the chief said. "It's to educate (motorists) and alter their behavior."

He believes the system is effective in slowing traffic.

"I would postulate that it does have a deterrent effect," Shuebrook said. "Most Pennsylvania drivers, when they see the lines in the roadway, they know it's a place where cops will time speed."

Amity manager Charles E. Lyon commended Shuebrook for being proactive and conducting speed studies firsthand by observing motorists.

"He actually does his own analysis," Lyon said.



Reading Eagle: Jameson Sempey
A car travels over a speed-tracking line painted near the intersection of Maplewood Drive and Terry Court in Amity Township. Police have increased enforcement of speed limits in residential areas.

Sometimes, Shuebrook said, areas that receive a lot of public complaints aren't as bad as perceived.

For example, while monitoring a stretch along Old Airport Road at Loyalsock Drive, Shuebrook observed just two cars out of 4,000 that exceeded 60 mph in the 40 mph zone.

"Usually, what we find out is the driving behavior is not quite egregious as it's perceived to be," he said.

Pennsylvania is the only state in the country where municipal law enforcement officers cannot use radar. Hence, they use systems like Tracker and VASCAR (Visual Average Speed Computer and Recorder).

Contact Kevin Duffy: 610-371-5016 or kduffy@readingeagle.com.