The Next Evolution in Mounting Camera

By Charles M. Mitchell, Town of Addison Traffic Signal Technician

The Town of Addison, Texas recently resurfaced approximately two miles of Belt Line Road, a major east-west arterial roadway. The existing road surface, including all approaches at each intersection had to be ground down in order to insure good contact with the new surface overlay. This would destroy nearly all of our inductive vehicle detector loops at nine signalized intersections. Replacing over one hundred detector loops would be an expensive process and would involve impediments to traffic and the “mess” of sawing the slots in the pavement for installation.

Our Streets Department Superintendent instead used this opportunity to upgrade our detection systems from inductive loop detection to video vehicle detection on this arterial roadway. By going forward with this idea we were able to convert all nine affected intersections to video detection prior to the surface overlay project with a minimum of “disturbance” in our signal operations.

Earlier installations of video detection systems involved strapping a simple J-bracket to the signal pole above the mast arm. The next generation in the evolution of camera mounts typically used a Pelco AstroBrac, a fifty-eight inch gusseted tube threaded on both ends and a camera-mounting bracket installed on top of the tube. This called for an extra AstroBrac to be mounted on the mast arm for each approach that would be using video detection.

There had to be a way to reduce that expense and eliminated the need for a portion of the mounting hardware (not to mention the clutter); and I figured it out! Since all of our traffic signal heads are mounted using Pelco hardware (AstroBrac, Gusseted Tube, Mounting Arm Set, etc.) it occurred to me that the signal head mounting hardware could be combined with the mounting hardware for the video detector cameras. By simply dismounting the selected signal head and adding a seventy-two inch gusseted tube, reinstalling the signal head, the camera could be mounted atop and above the signal head.

By using this next evolution in mounting the cameras we were able to reduce the cost of the hardware for camera mounts by about $1800. This may not seem like much, but in this day of more acute budget considerations, any savings in a project is certainly worth consideration.