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Rams look built to win it all in their own stadium

WEEKEND
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Flock cameras
stir concerns

Opponents
worry about
privacy and
police misuse

N’dea Yancey-Bragg
USA TODAY

License plate readers have been shot at in Tennessee, hit with a truck in California, beaten with a baseball bat in Virginia, cut down with a saw in Texas and splattered with paint in New York. And they’ve been regularly blocked by a protester in Florida.

There also has been bipartisan criticism of a coast-to-coast network of cameras that continues trying to track the movements of vehicles.

People are raising privacy concerns as well as others about misuse, mistakes and road safety in city council meetings, lawsuits and a planned national week of action in late August.

Chad Marlow, senior policy counsel at the American Civil Liberties Union who focuses on privacy, surveillance and technology issues, said the technology triggers concerns about government overreach on the right and worries about who is being targeted on the left.

“For people in the center or the nonpolitically engaged are even like, ‘I don’t want to be tracked everywhere I go,’” he said. “And so there’s different reasons, but everyone is arriving at the same position, which is mass government surveillance in this country has gotten completely out of control and needs to be reined in immediately.”

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Flock cameras like this one on a utility pole in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, collect vehicles’ license plate, make, model and color, information that is searchable by law enforcement agencies.
PAUL EDWARD PARKER/PROVIDENCE JOURNAL FILE; GRAPHIC, GETTY IMAGES

Cities suing
residents
over data
centers

Petitions to ban larger
projects sending
communities to court

Bryan Richardson
Topeka Capital-Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The battle over data centers isn’t just in the streets or at government meetings.

It’s also hitting courtrooms across the state as cities are suing their residents who are filing petitions intended to limit the facilities.

The cities of Edgerton, El Dorado and Emporia want to halt citizen-led petitions that, if implemented, would ban data centers of a certain size via ordinance.

Residents are banding together in their opposition to large-scale data centers entering their communities. Edgerton resident Kimberly Twente, a co-defendant in one of the lawsuits, said she’s concerned about how city attorneys will treat citizen petitions in the future based on her having to go to court.

“This fight isn’t just about Carrie (Schmidt) and I. This fight is much bigger,” she said. “This fight is about every other city or township that has to go through something like this.”

Cities said in court documents that the petitions’ language doesn’t hold up legally, which they claimed would cause them harm since state law dictates a successful citizen-approved ordinance couldn’t be amended or repealed for 10 years unless there’s another vote.

“A special election with the ballot measure presented would enshrine fact findings and statements that are not true and pretend to powers that the City does not have,” Edgerton said in its lawsuit.

State law makes petitions
potentially possible

State statute allows residents to submit a petition to propose an ordinance outside of the typical actions taken by the local government.

Troy Harp, of Osawatomie, began working to take advantage of that provision after learning a proposed data center would essentially be in his backyard.

“I can’t just ignore this because I probably won’t be able to live here on my property if they put this right behind me less than 100 yards away,” Harp said. Project Catalyst — developed by

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South Carolina set to lead 2028 Democratic primary

Potential presidential contenders courting state’s voters

Swapna Venugopal Ramaswamy
USA TODAY

Since 1992, anytime a Democrat has won the White House, South Carolina primary voters have picked the winning candidate. Bill Clinton, Barack Obama

and Joe Biden were the top vote-getters in the state on their roads to the presidency.

As Democrats seek a path back to 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. in 2028, South Carolina will again be the first state in the nation to hold a Democratic presidential

primary – or at least the state sanctioned by party leaders to vote first. The Democratic National Committee officially confirmed Aug. 15 that South Carolina is the party’s choice to replace Iowa and New Hampshire, the traditional leadoff states, in two years to better reflect the party’s diverse voters.

Many potential presidential candi-

dates are already making pilgrimages to the state, even though the primary won’t happen until Jan. 22, 2028.

That includes multiple trips by California Gov. Gavin Newsom for the South Carolina Democratic Party’s “On the Road” series, an initiative designed to

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