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## High-tech gear nabs NA ticket theft suspect

NA police use license plate reader

BY DAVID LINTON SUN CHRONICLE STAFF May 6, 2011

**NORTH ATTLEBORO** - A high-tech license plate reader police began using last November helped them locate a car for a wayward shopper and helped a citizen beat a parking ticket.

Now, for the first time, police say the automated license plate reader has helped solve two burglaries last month at the Tri-Boro Gulf station on Toner Boulevard in which more than \$15,000 in instant lottery tickets were stolen.

"It's the first time it's been used in a crime like this," Ken McCarthy, the police department's computer technician, said Thursday.

Police say in checking the license plate reader's computer, they discovered the car registered to a man police suspected of committing the break-ins was at Chestnut and Elm streets, about a quarter-mile from the gas station, on April 23, when the second burglary was committed.

Police also obtained videotape from security cameras at the Gulf station which show the same car pulled up at the station around 1 a.m. on April 1, when the first break-in occurred, and around 11:30 p.m. on April 23.

The tape also shows a heavy-set man wearing dark clothing and gloves break into the gas station, steal rolls of lottery tickets, then put them in his trunk and drive off, police said.

Police also were contacted by an investigator with the Massachusetts State Lottery who had information about a man seen on security videotape cashing in lottery tickets in Dorchester hours after the April 1 break-in and in Mattapan and Randolph the day of the April 23 break-in.

After an investigation by detectives Daniel Arrighi and Michael Elliott, police obtained a warrant for the suspect, Darnell R. Collins, 45, a Brockton man with an extensive criminal record who was arrested earlier by state police in connection with a similar crime in Plymouth County.

Collins was arraigned Wednesday in Attleboro District Court, where he was ordered held in jail on \$25,000 cash or \$250,000 surety after pleading innocent to breaking and entering, larceny and

vandalizing property in connection with the Tri-Boro Gulf break-ins.

"The investigators worked tirelessly on solving this case. This is a testament to how traditional methods of investigating in conjunction with utilizing equipment with the latest in technology can be very successful," Detective Sgt. Christopher Ciccio said.

Also involved in the investigation were officers David Lowe, Christiaan Grunewald and Kevin Silvestri, Sgt. Shane McKenna and McCarthy.

Collins is also suspected in a similar break-in April 16 in Somerset, in which a prescription bottle with his name on it was found at the scene, police said.

Ciccio said the case remains under investigation and suspects Collins could have additional charges lodged against him for similar crimes.

He is due back in court May 31 for a pretrial hearing.