

NoiseTracker aims to reduce road noise pollution

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Credit: University of New Mexico

Nick Ferenchak isn't just an assistant professor in the Gerald May Department of Civil, Construction & Environmental Engineering at The University of New Mexico, he's also the president of Not-A-Loud, a local company creating noise cameras.

When a loud vehicle drives by, and a certain decibel threshold is passed,

Ferenchak says it triggers the noise [camera](#), captures the license plate on the vehicle, and then can, if the city desires, send a citation in the mail.

"We love hiking in the Sandia Mountains, and when you're out in the Sandia Mountains you can't see the city at all, it's so beautiful, but then you can still hear the road noise, you can hear the vehicles racing up and down Tramway at all hours of the night," he said.

Ferenchak decided to do something about it between noisy hikes and sleepless nights.

"I do a lot of traffic safety research so I know about speed camera programs, and I just thought well, if we can catch vehicles speeding, why can't we catch vehicles that are making noise," he said.

In late 2019, Ferenchak put together a patent application, and early prototypes, where he's continually refined the technology over the last few years. Now, he says the noise cameras are ready.

"It's an important issue, there's lots of literature out there connecting [noise pollution](#), specifically road noise pollution, to [health issues](#), stress if you're waking up multiple times in the middle of the night," he says. "Then there's also the [economic impact](#) of it, if you own a business right on a busy road that's really loud, people might want to go to a different business."

Ferenchak believes his team is doing some of the first research in Albuquerque connecting road noise with [vehicle](#) speeds and crash rates.

"If we can crack down on that [road](#) noise, I think we can also crack down on traffic safety issues."

According to Ferenchak, dozens of cities across the U.S., such as New

York City, have run pilot programs and are exploring different versions of noise camera technology. However, there hasn't been widespread implementation just yet.

"We've had this technology four or five years now, and just over the last year we've been running pilot programs here in New Mexico, Albuquerque, and Santa Fe," Ferenchak said. "It's been really good for us that now we can say, yup, we've got a month of data out on the street, and this is what we're seeing."

He's named his technology "NoiseTracker." So far, most issues captured are modified sports cars racing around.

Ferenchak says the next step for his company is installing the technology, with many more ideas in the pipeline.

"The reaction has been positive, people are excited about it, and many are interested in it," he said.

Provided by University of New Mexico

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