

ISSUE



### PENNSYLVANIA AUTO THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY

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**SUMMER 2010** 

# ATPA Launches New Public Education and Prevention Campaign

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The Authority is launching its public education and auto theft prevention campaign for fiscal year 2010-2011, which includes two new, exciting partnerships for the summer. Both involve messaging to educate vehicle owners on protecting themselves from vehicle theft during the peak months of the year for auto theft. The new campaign is designed to deliver creative, multi-layer auto theft prevention messaging to a captive audience to increase awareness and engage people to take action.

The first partnership involves teaming with the National League Champion Philadelphia Phillies. Our campaign includes a text-to-win contest with exposure on the Phanavision stadium big screen at Citizens Bank Park. Our contest participation has been good with an average of 700 participants per home game. If you listen to games on the radio, you will hear our message! We have rotating



radio spots and a special post-game feature called, the "PA Auto Theft Prevention Authority's Lock of the Game." The Phillies' radio announcer highlights the key player of the game and reminds listeners to lock their vehicles and prevent auto theft. We also have an ad appearing in the Phillies magazine and rotating signage in the ball park. Go Phillies!



ARTIST POWERED Y FAN DRIVEN

o Our second partnership this summer allows us to spread our auto theft prevention message through a partnership with Live Nation at First Niagra Pavilion in Pittsburgh, Hershey Park Stadium, Toyota Pavilion at Montage Mountain, and Festival Pier at Penn's Landing in Philadelphia. We are running auto theft trivia and myths/facts on big screens at certain venues. We have street teams to engage

concert goers, and well-placed signage. McDonald's, Live Nation, and ATPA are partnering to promote our text-to-win contest. The grand prize is a VIP trip for two to a Live Nation concert in the city of the winner's choice. You can see the contest promoted at Live Nation's website and venues, on signs placed in all seven Baierl car dealerships in Pittsburgh, as well as on trayliners at 159 McDonald's stores in northeast and central Pennsylvania. We are hoping concert goers will "Lock, Rock & Roll" this summer.

#### Message from the Executive Director



Summer is finally here! And with the high temperatures that come with it, we also usher in the season of the year with the highest auto theft rates. June and July usually maintain 2nd and 3rd place rankings for high theft rates, with August having the highest auto theft rate in Pennsylvania. With the increased risk, the Authority is taking this opportunity to remind vehicle owners to

take steps to protect themselves from becoming a victim of auto theft through a new public education and prevention campaign. We will be delivering messages about theft prevention through activities usually associated with the summer season – baseball games and concerts. By delivering our prevention messaging to a captive audience, we are hoping to increase the number of people who hear/see the message to increase action on their parts to take steps to protect themselves from becoming an auto theft victim.

Please enjoy the summer and all of the opportunities the great weather offers – vacations, day trips, baseball games, concerts, etc. But, please also remember to lock your car, take your key and hide your valuables. These are very simple and free steps vehicle owners can take to prevent vehicle theft. Vehicle owners are more active this time of year, but so are the auto thieves. Become proactive and take the extra steps to protect yourself and your vehicle.

Sincerely,

Michelle L. Staton

M. L. Staton

Executive Director, PA Auto Theft Prevention Authority

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#### THE AUTHORITY

is published by the Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority. The Authority and its grantees receive operational funding from nearly 400 insurance companies operating in Pennsylvania. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact us at:

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### **ATPA Grantees Win NE-IAATI Awards**

Two units from the ATPA grantee family were presented awards from the NE Chapter of the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators Association (NE-IAATI). The awards were presented at the NE-IAATI's annual conference held in Cleveland, OH in May. The NE chapter president, Eileen Langer-Smith, presented the awards with over 300 auto theft investigators in attendance. "It was an honor to see investigators from Pennsylvania recognized for their hardwork and dedication in front of so many of their peers. Nice work gentlemen!" Michelle Staton, ATPA Executive Director.

Anthony Kane Award
Trooper Kevin Mills, Pennsylvania State Police
Officer Joe Reilly, Bensalem Police Department



**Lojack Award** *Lehigh County Auto Theft Task Force* 



### THE AUTHORITY'S GRANTEES

Allegheny County District Attorney's Office

Delaware County District Attorney's Office

Good Shepherd Mediation Program

Lancaster City Police

Lehigh County District Attorney's Office

Northeast Regional Task Force

Pennsylvania State Police Auto Theft Unit (Central Region)

Pennsylvania State Police Auto Theft Unit (Eastern Region)

Pennsylvania State Police Auto Theft Unit (Western Region)

Philadelphia District Attorney's Office

Philadelphia Police Department

Pittsburgh Police Department Auto Squad

### **Top 10 Stolen Vehicles Program**

The Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority is teaming with the Delaware Valley Crime Commission and Lojack to offer vehicle tracking systems at reduced rates for vehicles in Southeast PA that top the list of the most frequently stolen vehicles in Pennsylvania.

- 1. Honda Accord
- 2. Honda Civic
- 3. Toyota Camry
- 4. Dodge Caravan
- 5. Jeep Cherokee/Grand Cherokee
- 6. Ford Taurus
- 7. Ford Explorer
- 8. Oldsmobile Cutlass
- 9. Plymouth Voyager
- 10. Ford F-150 Pick-up

During the month of August, vehicle owners who live in the Southeast PA area (Philadelphia, Delaware, Montgomery, Chester, Bucks, Berks, Lehigh and Northampton Counties) and have one of the vehicles on the top 10 stolen vehicle list in PA (2006 model or older), can sign up to have a Lojack tracking device installed on their vehicles for \$199 (a cost savings of \$496). The reduced price is being offered as a community service to combat the serious crime of auto theft in Southeast PA, where more than 50% of the auto thefts in the state occur. For more information:

1-800-838-1177, extension 3887 (Please mention promotion code PRTPA199) Or visit www.lojack.com/store

To find out more about the Delaware Valley Crime Commission and Lojack, please visit their websites: www.crimecommission.org and www.lojack.com

The ATPA continually strives to find new ways to combat and prevent auto theft in Pennsylvania. Here are a few note-worthy highlights.

# **ATPA Highlights**

ATPA URGES POLICE OFFICER TRAINING AT CHIEFS OF POLICE CONFERENCE The ATPA once again participated in the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police annual conference held in Lancaster, PA in July. A presentation was made during one of the organization's informational sessions on police officer training offered by the ATPA. All police departments in the state are encouraged to utilize the free auto theft training taught by the ATPA's training instructor, Joseph Boyd, who is a retired PA State Police Lieutenant. Courses range from basic VIN identification and titling to motorcycle, ATVs, truck, tractor and semi-trailer identification. To schedule a training session, call the ATPA at 717.591.7097.

### ATPA SPONSORS FREE VIN GRAVING EVENTS

The ATPA continues the VINgraving program launched several years ago in an effort to reduce auto theft in Pennsylvania, with several free events held in York, Philadelphia and Lehigh Counties this Spring. VINgraving is the process of chemically etching a vehicle's VIN onto all windows of the vehicle. If an auto thief wants to steal a vehicle to resell it or dismantle it and sell the parts, they would have to replace all windows of a vehicle that has been VINgraved. Replacing the glass could be quite expensive for an auto thief to do to conceal a VINgraved vehicle's identity, which may deter them from stealing it and they may move on to a vehicle that isn't VINgraved. Events are tentatively planned for the Fall in Hanover, Harrisburg, Lancaster, Reading and Philadelphia. Please check the ATPA's website, www.watchyourcar.org, for the schedule of events. If you cannot make one of the events, you can also order free do-it-yourself VINgraving kits on our website.

ATPA HOSTS HEAVY EQUIPMENT THEFT AND IDENTIFICATION CLASSES In June, the ATPA hosted two classes for law enforcement on identification of heavy equipment and theft investigations. Classes were held in Cranberry Township and in Bensalem, with more than 100 officers receiving training on identifying stolen heavy equipment and investigating stolen heavy equipment. The instructor, George Kleinsteiber, is a world-renowned expert in heavy equipment, and has taught this class on several occasions in Pennsylvania.

## ATPA PARTICIPATES IN TWITTER CHAT SESSION

On July 1, 2010, the ATPA's Executive Director participated in the first-ever Twitter chat session to launch National Vehicle Protection Month. The session was hosted by NICB and Lojack, and also included representatives from the Texas Auto Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority. The group discussed National Vehicle Theft Protection Month, as well as auto theft prevention tips, top stolen vehicles, auto theft trends, anti-theft devices, etc. The chat session is available through Twitter on @WatchYourCarPA, @Lojack, and @NICB.

### **Mark Your Calendars**

August 23-27, 2010 International Association of Auto Theft investigators Conference Orlando, FL

For more information, visit www.iaati.org

October 20-21, 2010 ATPA Fall Grantee Conference (Cargo Theft) Gettysburg, PA

### Two face charges in carjacking-kidnap

Two people were charged with going to an Atlantic City casino, carjacking and kidnapping a North Jersey grocer whose body may have been found near a farm field. The victim disappeared from a parking garage at Trump's Taj Mahal Casino.

The victim disappeared minutes after dropping his wife and daughters off at the casino and then driving alone into the self-parking area. His white luxury sedan was found engulfed in a fireball several hours later in Gloucester Township, about 50 miles from Atlantic City.

What could be the remains of the victim were found two days later. Charges against the two individuals could be upgraded to homicide if the remains are positively identified.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

### PennDOT vehicle titling system unveiled

The state Department of Transportation has fully implemented the federally mandated National Motor Vehicle Titling Information System, providing one more tool to aid Penn-DOT's extensive efforts to mitigate the risk for vehicle fraud and protect consumers from unsafe or stolen vehicles.

NMVTIS is a consolidated database of vehicle titling information compiled by participating state motor vehicle agencies. It allows for the vehicle titling history to be accessible to motor vehicle departments and consumers to verify key vehicle titling information, including vehicle identification number, odometer information and state "brand" information describing the vehicle's current or prior condition, such as "junk", "salvage" or "flood".

Thirty-four states, including Pennsylvania, currently supply information to NMVTIS.

Through NMVTIS, PennDOT will be able to verify a vehicle title by immediately checking electronically against the titling history of approximately 81 percent of the motor vehicles in the U.S. If the information returned by NMVTIS raises any questions, the vehicle will not be titled until further research is conducted to mitigate the potential for fraud.

More information about NMVTIS is available at www.nmvtis.org.

The Progress

### Man, 72, charged in Corvette theft ring

When the 72 year old man walked into the Car Connection Superstore in New Castle last summer to check out a 2003 Chevrolet Corvette, the salesman noted the man's appearance. He described the customer as being "an older gentleman." He was wearing bib overalls, looked in ill health and stood out especially because he was wearing a surgical mask across his mouth and nose.

But the salesman noted it was around the time H1N1 was making its rounds, so he didn't give it much thought. "It's the oddest person you would think would steal a car." the salesman said.

But, according to the 72 year old man's own account, that's exactly what he did – more than 100 times.

He was indicted in June in federal court in Cleveland on charges of interstate transportation of stolen property and aiding and abetting a chop shop. He was arrested and is in custody in Cleveland awaiting trial.

According to an affidavit of probable cause in the case, the 72 year old, of Akron, Ohio, told investigators, that during his career as a car thief, he'd stolen more than 100 Corvettes.

In recent years, he would steal them for people running chop shops, he said, often filling orders. He'd steal the cars, turn them over and get paid \$1,200 for his efforts.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

### Juvenile faces charges in theft of police car

A juvenile is facing driving under the influence and related charges for allegedly stealing a Seven Springs police car. The juvenile was found acting erratically and smelled of alcohol near a disabled vehicle driven by another individual.

When an officer got out of his patrol cruiser to assist the owner of the disabled vehicle, the juvenile jumped into the squad car and drove off, eventually crashing it.

The juvenile was taken to Somerset Hospital for treatment of minor injuries.

The Daily Courier