



ISSUE

1

WINTER 2011

Inside this issue:

1. Grantee 2010 Statistics Preview—Page 1
2. Message from the Executive Director—Page 2
3. ATPA Highlights—Page 3
4. Mark Your Calendars—Page 3
5. In the News—Page 4 and 5

## 2010 Grantee Statistics Preview

The Auto Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA) law enforcement grantees had another successful year fighting auto theft in the Commonwealth. Funded law enforcement units were responsible for making and assisting in the arrests of 1,249 individuals. 83% of the individuals arrested were adults and 17% were juveniles. Of the arrest total, 1,158 were felony arrests, and 91 were misdemeanor arrests. The grantees were able to clear 971 cases by arrest. The units recovered 3,105 vehicles, with a value of over \$25 million. The grantees cleared 689 vehicles by arrest.



Prosecutors funded by the ATPA had 450 convictions with over \$2.2 million in restitution ordered. Of those individuals convicted, 362 were adults and 88 were juveniles. There were 226 individuals sentenced to jail time, 199 received probation, and 58 received ARD.

Funds provided by the ATPA support close to 100 investigators, prosecutors and support staff statewide. These numbers are pretty impressive for the number of people funded in Pennsylvania. In fact, the arrests involving ATPA grantees alone account for half of the auto theft arrests each year made in the state. When you consider there are over 30,000 full-time officers currently working in Pennsylvania, 84 of those officers made half of the arrests? Impressive work once again ladies and gentlemen! It is an honor to be working with such talented people with a dedication to fighting auto theft in the Commonwealth!

So, please keep your eyes peeled for the ATPA's 2010 annual report hitting your mailbox this April. We are excited to share the success of the cooperative effort in Pennsylvania through law enforcement and public education programs statewide.

## Message from the Executive Director



As we welcome the new year, temperatures have quickly dropped and remind us that Winter is here! Along with the winter weather, we also usher in a time of year when drivers put themselves at risk for becoming a victim of auto theft. We see an increase in drivers who warm their cars up in the morning and leave them running while they run into a convenience store or use an ATM. It only takes a few seconds to steal a running vehicle. Don't make your car an easy target.

We are preparing our 2010 annual report to the governor, legislature, and insurance industry for release in April. It is clear the coordinated effort in Pennsylvania is having an impact auto theft as we continue to see a reduction in the number of vehicles stolen in the Commonwealth. Preliminary vehicle theft rates from the Uniform Crime Report indicate that we may reach a 70% reduction in vehicle thefts in Pennsylvania since the Authority's inception in 1995. Great job everyone!

Even though the number of stolen vehicles has declined, we cannot let up the pressure ... not even for a second. Auto theft has changed — the investigations are more complex and time consuming due to the organized and skilled auto thieves working the streets today. Auto thieves are often part of larger criminal networks spanning multiple jurisdictions (county, state and sometimes international). Thieves are learning to outsmart the anti-theft systems on newer vehicles, and are often using stolen vehicles to fund other criminal activities. That is why it is even more crucial than ever that Pennsylvania has a highly skilled network of investigators in place to fight vehicle theft crime.

As you try to stay warm this winter season, remember the simple steps you can take to protect yourself from becoming a victim of auto theft. Resolve to make your winter travels smart and safe.

Michelle 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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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 REACHES OUT TO TEACHERS - YOUNG DRIVER AUTO THEFT ONLINE TRAINING

The Department of Education sent letters to all driver education teachers in Pennsylvania about the ATPA's online young driver auto theft training program late last year. We will be sending brochures to the teachers in March to remind them of the value of the training and reasons why they should include the online lesson plan as a homework assignment for young drivers currently enrolled in the driver education classes. At the start of the new school year, the ATPA plans to start a contest for teachers and students to increase usage and to ensure the auto theft message is taught to young drivers and the online module is used.

## ATPA SENDS GRANTEE LIST TO POLICE DEPARTMENTS STATEWIDE

In an effort to assist law enforcement agencies across the Commonwealth with auto theft investigative resources, the ATPA will be distributing a complete listing of grantee units to all police departments statewide. The list will include areas covered by grantees, as well as contact information for each unit. That way, if a local department has an auto theft investigation they need assistance with or has a stolen vehicle they need identified, they will have a list of highly skilled auto theft investigators to reach out to for assistance. In tough economic times, resources often become an issue for police departments. Having trained investigators who deal with auto theft crime every day will help lighten the burden for those departments strapped for manpower.

## 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

## Mark Your Calendars

*June 12-16, 2011*

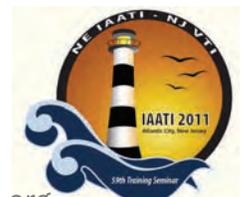
**Southeast Chapter of the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators (SE-IAATI) Conference**  
*Pigeon Forge, TN*



For more information, visit [www.seiaati.org](http://www.seiaati.org)

*August 14-19, 2011*

**Northeast Chapter of the International Association of Auto Theft investigators (NE-IAATI) Conference**  
*Atlantic City, NJ*



For more information, visit [www.neiaati.org](http://www.neiaati.org)

## Thieves target older cars for metal

One man's junk is another man's treasure—especially when it comes to older model cars.

According to Philadelphia Police, there has been a recent uptick in car thefts over the past four months. What makes this story unique is that the cars targeted are older models.

Investigators combed through area scrap metal yards looking for these old clunkers. You see, these old cars were made out of metal. Last year, scrap metal dealers paid a couple hundred dollars for a car. Today, those same scrap metal dealers are paying almost \$700 per car.

Fox 29 cameras were with detectives from the Major Crimes Unit as they searched two scrap yards in Kensington looking for crushed up stolen vehicles. Police told Fox 29 that in some instances, tow truck operators are boosting the vehicles, illegally, right off the street.

Deputy Commissioner Richard Ross told Fox 29 that prices for all kinds of metal is up across the board, and in this struggling economy, this may be what is driving this trend. Major Crimes told Fox 29 that they recovered 24 stolen vehicles in one day at several locations.

*myfoxphilly.com*

## Car theft ring busted

A month-long investigation into a series of auto auction thefts led police to make eight arrests. Credit was given to the cooperation several area police departments, which worked together to identify all suspects in the car theft ring.

An investigation began in December after police learned of several burglaries and car thefts that occurred at the Insurance Auto Auction in Plymouth Township. The thefts were organized and premeditated, and all took place under the cloak of darkness, between Dec. 29 and Dec. 31. In total, nine vehicles were stolen, equaling a value of \$57,247.

During the course of the investigation, detectives learned that similar thefts took place at the Insurance Auto Auction in Upper Merion Township, on Dec. 24. At least seven vehicles were stolen during these thefts, worth a combined value of \$44,611.

The Plymouth car thefts, combined with the Upper Merion incidents, resulted in an initial total loss of \$101,858

*MontCo Times*

## 2 new cars swiped from dealer lots

Two new cars worth a total of \$72,000 were stolen from Lehigh Valley Honda in Emmaus, police reported. The vehicles were light blue 2011 Honda Accord Crosstours. One was parked at the dealership's main lot at 675 State Ave. and the other in a lot at Williams and North streets, Emmaus police said.

The vehicles were reported stolen Jan. 14. Chief David Faust said the cars were discovered missing during a routine inventory check by the dealership.

The Lehigh Valley Auto Theft Task Force is assisting police with the investigation.

*The Morning Call*

## Easy car thefts on the rise, police warn

Like the commercial says, "Free is better." Well, if you leave your car unoccupied and running to warm it up on cold mornings or while stopping at convenience stores, you're making things better for car thieves. They're always on the lookout for free autos.

Capt. Francis Bachmayer, commander of the 15th Police District, said there is a citywide problem with cars being swiped when people leave them while they're running. When they leave their autos, police warn, motorists should turn off their ignitions, take their keys and lock their car doors.

Plenty of cars get stolen in Philly. In the first week of this year, 179 were stolen in the city, according to the police department's online crime statistics. More than 40 of those were wheeled away in the Northeast.

*Northeast Times (Zone 7)*



## Fugitive tracked down in W.Va.

A man being sought in a stabbing and three violent carjackings in Allegheny County was arrested in West Virginia, police said.

Morgantown police found the 27 yr. old at a city homeless shelter. He was being held at Doddridge Regional Jail in West Virginia.

A security guard at a hospital saw a photo of the assailant on the TV news and recognized him as a man treated for a cut on his hand and sent to a homeless shelter, Chief Leo McCarthy said. The man has an identifiable tattoo on the side of his neck.

"I'm very, very pleased he's been apprehended," McCarthy said. "I hope that the victims feel some peace of mind knowing this guy is in jail."

The 27 yr. old is accused of stabbing an unidentified man in Stowe. Police believe he is tied to the three carjackings the day before in Moon that victimized women along Brodhead and Purdy Roads. Police described him as a homeless fugitive, previously from McKees Rocks.

"I would call this a crime spree," McCarthy said. "I don't know what his motivation was."

Driving a pickup police said he stolen from a Stowe couple, the man rammed the vehicles of two women in Moon early in the morning before pulling a third woman from her Mini Cooper by saying he needed her cell phone, McCarthy said. "It's pretty nasty," he said. "We're really fortunate the women weren't injured or killed."

*Tribune Review*

### Monaca man accused of test drive truck theft

Arrest warrant issued for felon (Butler Twp.) - A customer made off with a nearly \$29,000 truck during a test drive; but authorities didn't have to look far to find their suspect.

Township police said the driver let the dealership make a copy of his driver's license before he took the truck. And it turned out the suspect is a felon who just three months ago was in jail in connection with two theft-related cases in Armstrong County, according to court records.

The assailant spoke to a salesman for nearly an hour before asking to take a vehicle for a test drive. He had his eye on a pewter-colored, 2005 Chevrolet 2500 HD pickup. The truck sold for \$28,900.

He handed the salesman his license, which was copied. After that, he was handed the keys to take the truck out, according to court documents; but, five hours later, he had not returned. The car lot owner then called police.

The thief already has a lengthy criminal record that spans three counties. Most recently, he served a seven-month sentence in the Armstrong County Jail on charges of receiving stolen property and theft of services in separate cases.

*Butler Eagle*

### Middletown man charged in more than 30 thefts, burglaries

Lower Paxton Township police say a Middletown man has been arrested for more than 30 incidents of burglary, auto theft and thefts from vehicles that occurred between over two months in Lower Paxton and Swatara townships and the Middletown area.

The 19-year-old male was arrested in a stolen vehicle following a hit and run, police say.

He was charged with 24 incidents in Lower Paxton Township, five in Swatara Township and five incidents in jurisdictions covered by state police. The charges include two counts of burglary, three counts of theft, one count of fraud and 27 counts of theft from a motor vehicle.

The assailant, who had been in Dauphin County Prison on a parole detainer, was arranged and returned to the prison on \$75,000 bail.

*Pennlive.com*

### 12 cars stolen from Earl Township site

New Holland police said a dozen vehicles were stolen from an Earl Township storage facility. The owner of the vehicles (a resident of Philadelphia) told police the cars were taken sometime between Nov. 7 and 14 from 3638 Division Highway.

The vehicle owner owns a collision repair business in the Philadelphia area, according to Detective Jonathan Heisse.

Only a few of the vehicles were in running condition, Heisse said. He said some were going to be used for scrap.

Because many of the vehicles wouldn't have been drivable, a vehicle trailer was likely used to remove them from the site, Heisse said. He said there were no signs of forced entry to the building.

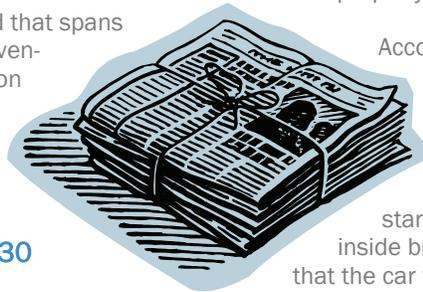
He also said the stolen vehicles have a value of \$13,200,

*The Patriot-News*

### Man charged in 2nd theft of vehicle left idling in city

A Reading man already charged with stealing a car that the owner had left idling has been charged in a similar theft, investigators said.

The 25-year-old thief was committed to Berks County Prison in lieu of \$50,000 bail after being arranged in Reading Central Court, and was charged with two counts of theft and receiving stolen property.



According to police, the assailant was seen driving a car in the city that was stolen minutes earlier in front of the owner's house. He was arrested after he ran into a vacant house in the city.

The car's owner, a 46-year-old man said he had started his station wagon and went inside. He was inside briefly when he looked out the front window and saw that the car was gone.

After the man was arrested, Officer Christopher J. Mayer, who is assigned to a regional auto theft task force, filed charges against the man in a Dec. 31 theft of a car in the city.

According to Mayer, a 35-year-old woman, was cleaning the interior of her car while the engine was running in front of her resident about 2 p.m. As she carried floor mats to her porch, her daughter yelled and pointed to the car. The woman turned as the thief got in and drove away. The car was found a short time later in Laureldale.

*Reading Eagle*

### Girl, 12, steals car, prompts pursuit

Police in Harrisburg say a 12-year-old girl is facing charges after leading officers on a high-speed chase in a stolen car.

Investigators say the girl stole a car early in the morning in Newport, Perry County, then drove to Harrisburg. Police there pursued the car, which reached speeds of up to 80 mph while sometimes traveling the wrong way on a one-way street.

Police say the girl struck three light poles before they took her into custody.

*The News-Herald*