

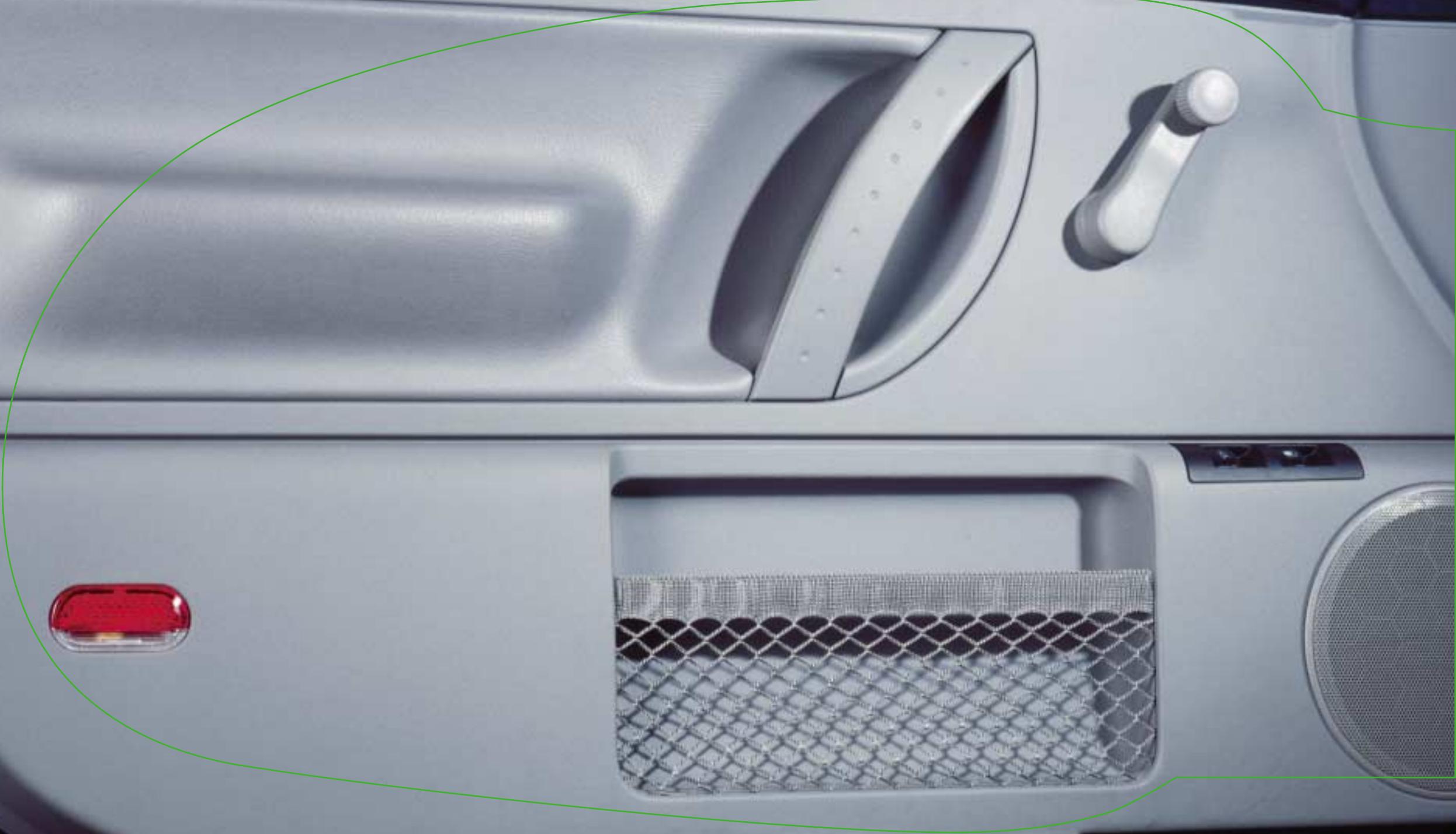


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theAUTHORITY
Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority

2000-2001 ANNUAL REPORT





To the Honorable Governor Mark Schweiker and members of the Pennsylvania Legislature:

With our sixth annual report, we wanted to again draw attention to the design with a unique shape and a familiar vehicle icon. The mirror allows us to reflect on another successful year for the Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority and its grantees.

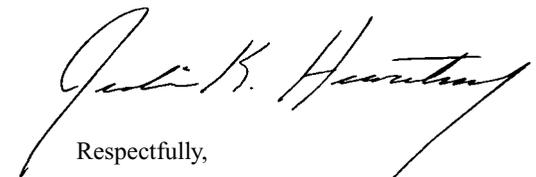
However, at the same time, the message on the mirror reminds us that there's still work to be done. So, while it's good to reflect on the accomplishments of 2000–2001, we must remain focused on ways to continue and increase the success the ATPA has enjoyed since its inception.

We'd like to congratulate our grantees on another successful year of accomplishments. While rates went up nationally, reported motor vehicle thefts in Pennsylvania declined for the sixth straight year from 36,904 in 1999 to 33,919 in 2000—the lowest level since the Pennsylvania State Police began collecting data on this statistic. The partnership between state government, prosecutors, law enforcement and the auto insurance industry is a large part of this steady decline in vehicle theft.

However, another critical element in this ongoing fight against vehicle theft would have to be our high-visibility public awareness campaign. Over the past several years, the ATPA has been developing an increasingly noticeable public presence with broadcast campaigns and public events that promote better vehicle theft prevention. The “50 Tips” brochure and a television campaign that appeals to the public's emotional connection to their vehicles continue to promote our message of vehicle theft prevention throughout the Commonwealth.

Unfortunately, there is still much work to be done. The 33,919 vehicles stolen in 2000 translate into one vehicle theft every 15 minutes and 30 seconds, an average of 93 every day. So, while rates continue to decline, we still have work to do.

I'd like to thank the Schweiker Administration and the Pennsylvania General Assembly for supporting the ATPA. The Authority's message of vehicle theft prevention and commitment to eliminating vehicle theft will continue to let thieves know they are not welcome here.



Respectfully,

Julia K. Hearthway, Chair

Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority

The background of the page is a photograph of the interior of a car, showing the leather seats and the dashboard. A green outline is drawn over the image, framing the text. The text is arranged in two columns on the right side of the page, with a section header on the left side.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Where the Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority began.

Auto theft prevention authorities (ATPAs) are the result of cooperative efforts between legislators, the auto insurance industry, police, prosecutors, the courts, and businesses affected by vehicular crimes, such as car rental companies. Since the first ATPA was established in Michigan in the late 1980s, nearly a dozen states have created authorities to collect and administer funds from assessments on auto insurance companies, vehicle registration fees, or other sources. These funds are distributed as grants to law enforcement, to prosecutors, and to programs aimed at reducing vehicle theft through public education, research, training and juvenile diversion.

ATPA in Pennsylvania: consistently driving auto theft down.

The Authority, created under Act 171 of 1994, has supplied thirteen police agencies and prosecutors' offices with grant funding since 1996. To date, these grantees have been awarded more than \$29.6 million to help local auto theft units add additional personnel and specialized equipment, as well as to alert the public to anti-theft measures.

The Uniform Crime Report (UCR), compiled each year by the Pennsylvania State Police, is the most complete indicator of criminal activity available. The 2000 UCR data, released in October, shows that motor vehicle theft declined in 2000 for the sixth consecutive year, roughly the same period the Authority has been in existence. Reported vehicle thefts dropped 8.1 percent from the previous year—more than double 1998's rate of decline—and have gone down 32 percent since 1995.

The background of the page is a photograph of the interior of a car, showing the front seats and the view through the windshield. The seats are dark leather with light-colored stitching. The windshield shows a bright, hazy outdoor scene. A thin green line is drawn across the top and bottom of the page, framing the text.

With Pennsylvania reporting the fewest vehicle thefts since the UCR's implementation in the early 1970s, it is apparent that the partnership is having an impact.

ATPA grantees' focused efforts bring rewards. During 2000–2001, the Authority awarded more than \$3.8 million in grants to auto theft units to help arrest and prosecute auto thieves. The graphs and charts later in this report give evidence of their impact.

Forty-four percent of the cases closed by the grantees during 2000–2001 were classified as “transportation” cases—vehicles were stolen by individuals who wanted to use them to get from one point to another, including so called “joy-riding” crimes by juveniles. “For-profit”

operations (commercial operations such as theft rings and chop shop operations) accounted for more than a third of all cases.

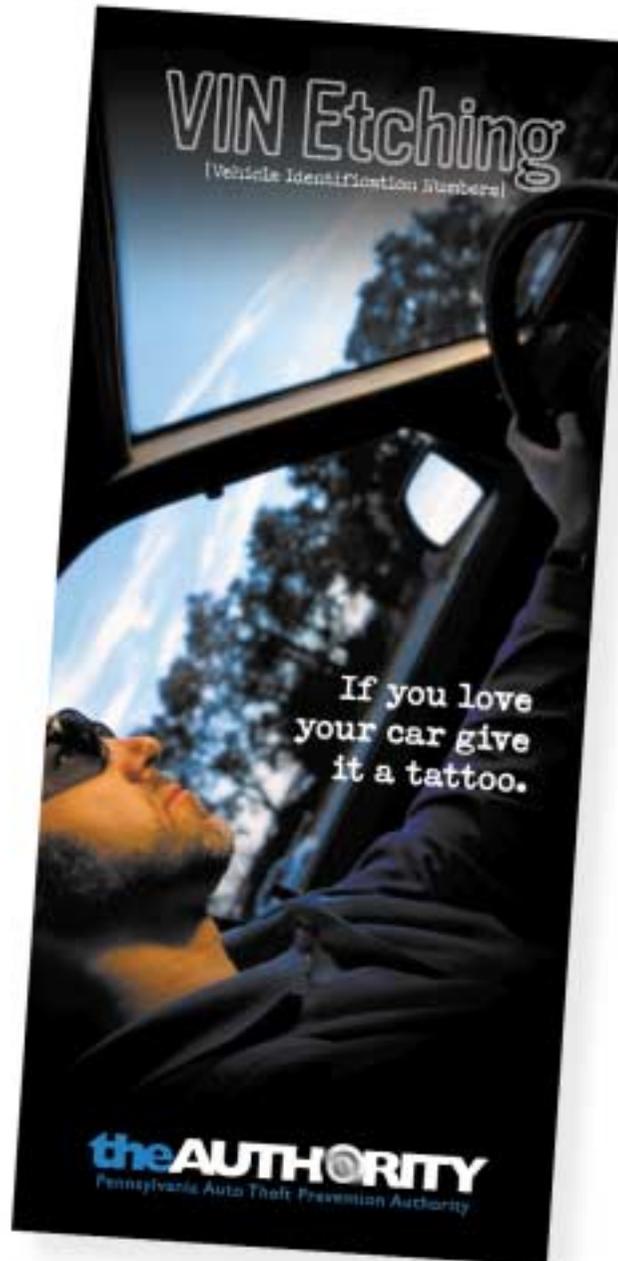
The grantees reported tremendous successes in recovering stolen vehicles and parts. During the past fiscal year, they brought in some \$29.3 million in recovered vehicles and \$1.5 million in parts. Their investigations and prosecutions led to more than \$1.2 million in restitution being ordered by the courts and nearly \$79,000 in fines and civil penalties.

These investigative units, since 1996, are responsible for recovering almost \$144.7 million worth of stolen cars and parts through June 2001. That's almost five times the total amount of the Authority's grants awarded—a very good return on the partnership's investment.

Another great year for VIN etching. Since the Authority, its grantees and local police agencies began offering free Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) etching in 1998, the number of vehicles carrying this added layer of protection has grown dramatically. VIN etching is a process of permanently marking a vehicle's unique number onto all of its windows, making it less desirable to thieves, who would have to replace the glass in order to resell it.

During 2000–2001 fiscal year, the Authority and local auto theft units etched 2,395 cars.

Local news organizations helped by promoting the events and, in some cases, covered the activities live. They also found other aspects of the anti-auto-theft education effort to be worthy of coverage.



VIN Etch Programs in 2000–2001

July 8	PA State Police Eastern Auto Theft Task Force (315 cars)
August 19	District Attorney's Office of Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties (275 cars)
September 23	Lehigh County District Attorney's Office (280 cars)
September 30	Cumberland County District Attorney's Office/PA State Police (201 cars)
October 21	York County District Attorney's Office/City of York (131 cars)
October 28	Philadelphia Police Northeast Detective Division (210 cars)
May 5	Delaware County District Attorney's Office (75 cars)
May 12	York County District Attorney's Office/Carroll Township Police Department (30 cars)
May 19	PA State Police Eastern Auto Theft Task Force (79 cars)
June 2	PA State Police Uniontown Barracks and Western Auto Theft Task Force/Independent Insurance Agents Association (50 cars)
June 9	PA State Eastern Auto Theft Task Force (85 cars)
June 16	Cumberland County District Attorney's Office (57 cars)
June 23–24	Millcreek Township Police /City of Erie Police (607 cars)

Shifting to a higher gear in the fight against auto theft.

The Authority is leading the way.

The partnership: police, prosecutors, the courts, insurers and the public. More than 400 auto insurance companies in Pennsylvania contribute all of the Authority's grant funds through a special annual assessment. The Authority's grants supply resources to auto theft investigation units in police departments and district attorneys' offices throughout Pennsylvania. The grantees fight crime in the streets, provide training to local police departments, support prosecutors in the court room, and enhance public awareness.

With more than 6,000 vehicles in Pennsylvania carrying VIN-etched windows (2,395 etched during FY 2000–2001), courtesy of the Authority and its grantees, public awareness has continued to grow.

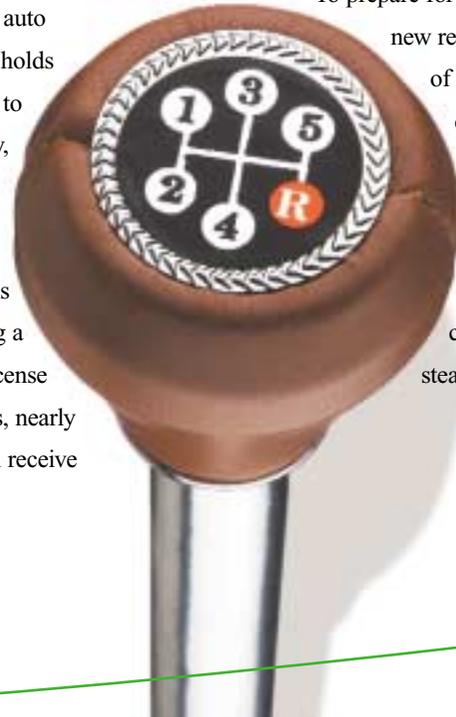
In partnership with Neiman Group, a Harrisburg-based agency, the Authority expanded its efforts to make the public aware of

effective theft prevention techniques. A 30-second spot and two radio commercials, produced in the fall of 2000, continued to air in major markets around the state. The 2001–2002 public education campaign is being built around the message, “You lose more than a car when you're a victim of auto theft.” To most vehicle owners, their car holds a deeper sense of value—their freedom to travel, their livelihood, their individuality, even their sense of security.

In 2001, PENNDOT is teaming up with the ATPA to help educate Pennsylvanians on how to protect themselves from being a victim of vehicle theft. By combining license plate mailings with the Authority's flyers, nearly 200,000 vehicle owners each month will receive

important anti-theft tips. And nearly 3 million vehicle theft-prevention flyers have been prepared by the Authority for distribution in 2001–2002.

To prepare for the 2002–2003 public awareness campaign, new research was conducted for the ATPA in the fall of 2001. The objectives of this latest study were to determine what people know and don't know about unsafe situations, and the gaps between “myth and reality” when it comes to auto theft prevention. For example, consumers were asked what they knew about the number of cars stolen, where vehicles were stolen and who steals them.



The most prevalent kind of auto theft in Pennsylvania:

- **For-profit, commercial operations** (including theft rings and chop shop operations) – particularly active in densely populated areas, such as the southeastern region of the state. For this reason, a large commitment of grant funds has been made to Philadelphia and surrounding counties, as well as Pittsburgh. With passage in 1999 of new, tougher chop shop legislation, our grantees have begun to target chop shop operations with increased intensity.
- **Owner give-up** – often involves leased vehicles with very high mileage whose turn-in costs are high, or owned vehicles whose owners no longer wish to make monthly payments. The lessee/owner arranges to have the car stolen or burned to collect the insurance, which adds the crime of insurance fraud to the illegal activity.
- **Juvenile theft** – for status or “thrills.” Juvenile thieves normally do not go to jail. This is an increasing problem. Too many vehicle owners leave their cars unlocked and the keys inside—juvenile theft is most often a crime of opportunity.
- **Cars for crack** – addicts loan their vehicles to drug dealers in exchange for drugs. The dealers use the cars to transport illegal drugs, or to commit other crimes, without fear of losing their own vehicles if caught. If lost, the “loaned” cars are reported stolen.
- **To commit other crimes** – These vehicles are used in drive-by shootings, robberies, burglaries, illegal narcotic transactions and other crimes.

Key tips from “50 ways to help stop auto theft”

1. Lock your vehicle, close all windows and sun roof, and take your keys.
 2. Never hide a second set of keys in or on your vehicle. Thieves know all the hiding places.
 4. Don't leave important documents such as bank statements, credit card bills/statements or other personal information in your vehicle. Thieves can use this information to steal your identity and access your bank and credit card accounts.
 7. Never leave your vehicle running unattended. Vehicles are commonly stolen at ATMs, convenience stores, etc.
 10. If you have a garage, use it. When parked in a garage, lock the garage as well as your vehicle and close the windows.
 11. Remove the electronic ignition fuse, coil wire, rotor, distributor, or otherwise disable your vehicle if you are leaving it unattended for an extended period.
 13. Engrave expensive accessories and major parts with your VIN or personal identification number. This aids police in tracing stolen items.
 17. Stolen vehicles are more easily traced when Vehicle Identification Numbers (VIN) have been etched on each of the windows. It also makes your vehicle less attractive to a professional car thief.
 18. Ignition kill switches* halt the fuel supply.
 25. Audio alarms* emit loud warning sounds when the doors, hood or trunk are opened.
 28. When buying from a private individual, make sure the title and registration match the name and address of the person selling the vehicle.
 29. Be cautious of a seller with no fixed address, place of employment, phone number or who only has a mobile phone or pager number.
 32. The VIN on the dash must match the VIN on the registration, title and federal safety inspection sticker on the driver's door.
- *See your local garage or accessory store about installation.

The Authority's Financial Picture

Treasury Account:

Assessments	\$5,250,751.00
Interest Earned	<u>\$325,451.00</u>
Total Revenue	\$5,576,202.00
Balance carried over from previous year	<u>\$2,367,633.00</u>
Total Funds Available	\$7,943,835.00
Grants Paid	(\$3,884,009.00)
Public Relations	(\$1,133,073.00)
Operating Account Transferred	<u>(\$271,770.00)</u>
Balance in Treasury Account	<u><u>\$2,654,983.00</u></u>

(to be applied to future grants)

Operating Account:

Beginning Balance	\$128,229.00
Funds Received from Treasury	<u>\$271,770.00</u>
Total Funds Available	\$399,999.00
Interest Earned	\$10,989.00
Personnel Expenses	(\$75,067.00)
Operating Expenses	(\$171,564.00)
Office Equipment Expenses	<u>(\$620.00)</u>
Total Operating Account Expenses	(\$247,251.00)
Balance in Operating Account	<u><u>\$163,737.00</u></u>

(to be carried over for next year's operating expenses)

Note: The Authority uses no tax dollars. It is funded solely through annual assessments paid by more than 400 auto insurance companies in Pennsylvania. The assessed funds are held in an account maintained by the State Treasury Department and transferred as required for grant awards, public education activities and operating expenses. The Authority's operating budget is \$400,000; 4.5 percent of the total assessment collected in FY00-01 went to operating costs, not including program expenses.



Taking it to the Streets

Grantees fight auto theft at the local level.

The Authority funds 13 law enforcement/investigative units, including the Pennsylvania State Police, which distributes its grant funds to three regional task forces and other investigative activities around the state. Authority grants also support public outreach activities by two organizations. The grants awarded through June 2001 total \$29.6 million to support activities through the year 2003.

Allegheny County District Attorney's Office – joined the list of grantee organizations in September 1998. The unit, which consists of an assistant district attorney and two paralegals, received a two-year grant renewal in June 2000 totaling more than \$287,200.

Cumberland County District Attorney's Office – received its first grant to establish an auto-theft unit in 1996. In 2001, the unit was approved for a one-year grant, totaling more than

\$145,700, to assure that this unit will continue into 2002. The unit includes an assistant district attorney, a detective and a secretary. It coordinates investigative efforts with local municipal police throughout the county and provides local police training sessions and public presentations.

Delaware County District Attorney's Office – received initial funding in 1997 and was awarded a two-year grant extension of more than \$400,000 in June 2001. An assistant district attorney, a detective and an analyst support the unit. Grant funds help pay overtime expenses for four police officers from local departments and a detective from the Pennsylvania State Police Eastern Region Task Force. They also cover equipment and coordination with local law enforcement units.

City of Erie Bureau of Police – initially funded in 1997, is operating with a two-year grant extension through mid-2002, totaling some \$269,500. The Erie Auto Theft Unit has two

officers working closely with the Pennsylvania State Police, Millcreek Township Police Department and U.S. Customs agents to investigate and arrest auto thieves.

Harrisburg Bureau of Police – has had an active auto-theft unit since it received its first grant in 1997. The unit is currently operating with a two-year grant of \$464,400 through June 2002. The unit's three investigators coordinate investigations and anti-theft measures in Harrisburg, where there has been a major juvenile theft problem.

Lehigh County District Attorney's Office – received an initial grant in 1996. Currently, it is operating its Auto Theft Task Force under a two-year grant renewal, totaling more than \$800,000, through mid-2002. The unit, which also has investigative powers in neighboring Northampton County, has a prosecutor, secretary, and four full-time investigators from local police departments.

Millcreek Township Police – Auto Theft Task Force, first funded in 1997, is operating under a two-year grant extension of more than \$362,000. The unit consists of two officers who work with the Pennsylvania State Police operating in Erie and Crawford counties. The unit is unique in two respects: it has been granted jurisdiction throughout Erie County, and its officers have U.S. Customs powers to assist U.S. Customs officers at the Port of Erie on joint investigations.

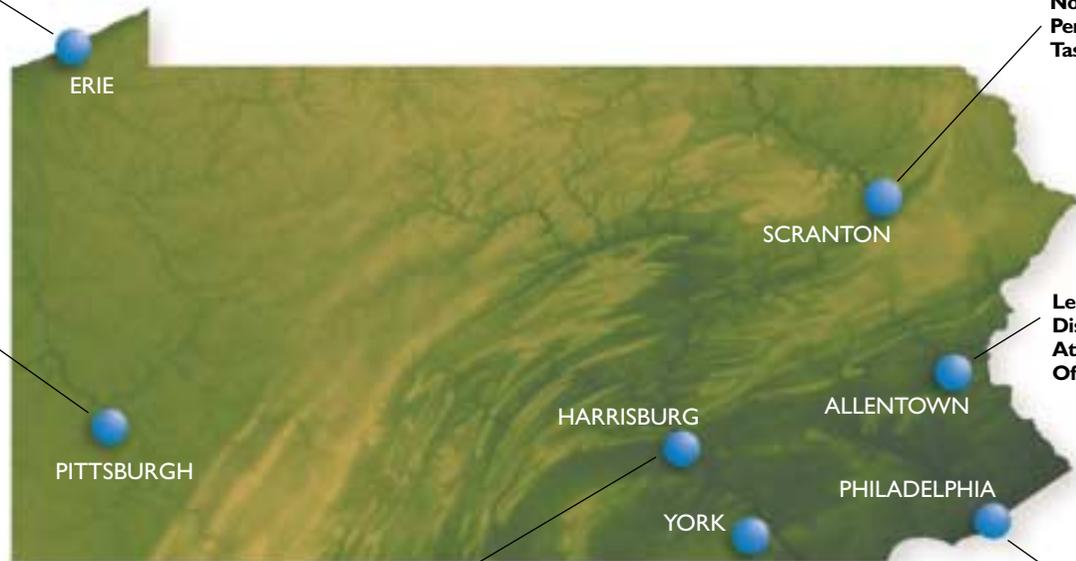
Northeast Pennsylvania Task Force – is a unique multi-jurisdictional program involving 11 counties, administered by the Lackawanna County District Attorney's Office. First funded in 1996, the unit is operating on a one-year grant of \$257,500 through June 2002. Supported by a district attorney, an administrator, two full-time and five part-time detectives and a secretary, this far-reaching investigative unit coordinates efforts in Lackawanna, Luzerne, Pike, Susquehanna, Bradford, Monroe, Wayne, Wyoming, Sullivan, Columbia and Carbon counties.

**City of Erie
Bureau of Police**

**Millcreek
Township Police**

**Allegheny
County District
Attorney's Office**

**Pittsburgh
City Police
Department**



**Northeast
Pennsylvania
Task Force**

**Lehigh County
District
Attorney's
Office**

**Cumberland
County District
Attorney's Office**

**Harrisburg Bureau
of Police**

Pennsylvania State Police
*(covers the entire state; operates
three regional task forces — Western,
Central and Eastern)*

**York County
District
Attorney's
Office**

**Delaware County
District Attorney's
Office**

**Philadelphia
District Attorney's
Office**

**Philadelphia Police
Department**



Pennsylvania State Police (Eastern, Central and Western Regional Task Forces) – oversees statewide, anti-auto-theft efforts. Initially granted Authority funds in 1996, the units received a two-year extension, totaling more than \$2.4 million through mid-2003. The regional task forces concentrate on high-theft areas around Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, central and northeastern Pennsylvania. The grant monies cover salaries of eight county detectives, as well as overtime costs for two State Police supervisors and eight troopers. They also pay for part-time clerical support in county district attorneys' offices, equipment, maintenance, vehicles and other expenses.

Philadelphia District Attorney's Office – initially funded in 1996, works closely with the Philadelphia Police unit through a two-year grant extension totaling nearly \$766,000 through 2002. The funds support one detective, two prosecutors and a law clerk.

Philadelphia Police Department – also funded initially in 1996, operates its Major Crimes Auto Theft Unit with a two-year grant extension totaling nearly \$2.1 million through mid-2002. One arm of the unit concentrates on chop shop and salvage yard investigations, while another investigates all other auto theft cases. Funding from the Authority adds eight police officers and three detectives — which doubles the resources available prior to the Authority's grant funding.

Pittsburgh City Police Department – received its first grant in 1996. Currently, it is using its \$339,500 grant extension through mid-2002 to supplement an existing computer database and criminal mapping system. The funding increased its auto theft squad by two detectives, modernized equipment, and paid for office space and automobiles.

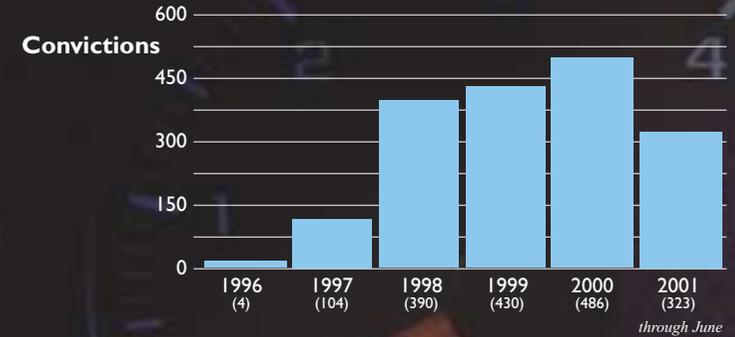
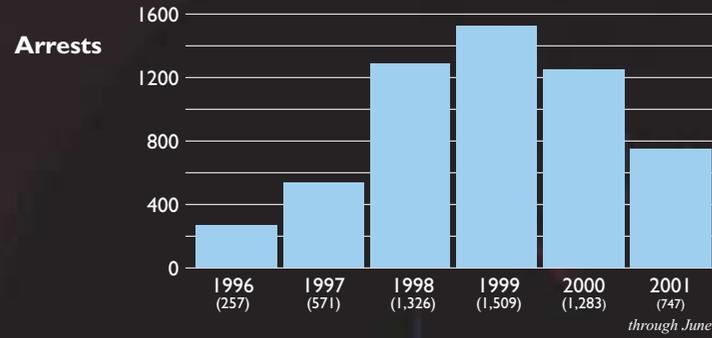
York County District Attorney's Office – first received funding in 1996 and was approved this year for more than \$167,000 to extend its operation through mid-2003. Supported by a detective and a clerical support staffer, the unit developed auto theft reporting, investigation and prosecution protocol for county-wide use. It also provides victim/witness services.

There are two public outreach programs funded by the Authority:

Boy Scouts of America, Cradle of Liberty Council – was first funded by the Authority in 1997. It received a grant renewal of \$211,400 for use through mid-2002. Cradle of Liberty uses the funding to teach boys and girls about auto theft prevention through its Explorer and Learning for Life programs. Tens of thousands of children and adults have been reached each year through scouting programs and presentations by law enforcement and insurance industry personnel.

Pennsylvania Anti-Car Theft Committee – received its first one-year grant in 1997 and is currently working under a two-year grant totaling \$109,000 through mid-2003. PACT operates a speakers' bureau and supports the Stolen Auto Verification Effort (SAVE) sticker program. It also sponsors "car stripping" events to raise public awareness of auto theft.

Impact of the Grantees' Combined Efforts



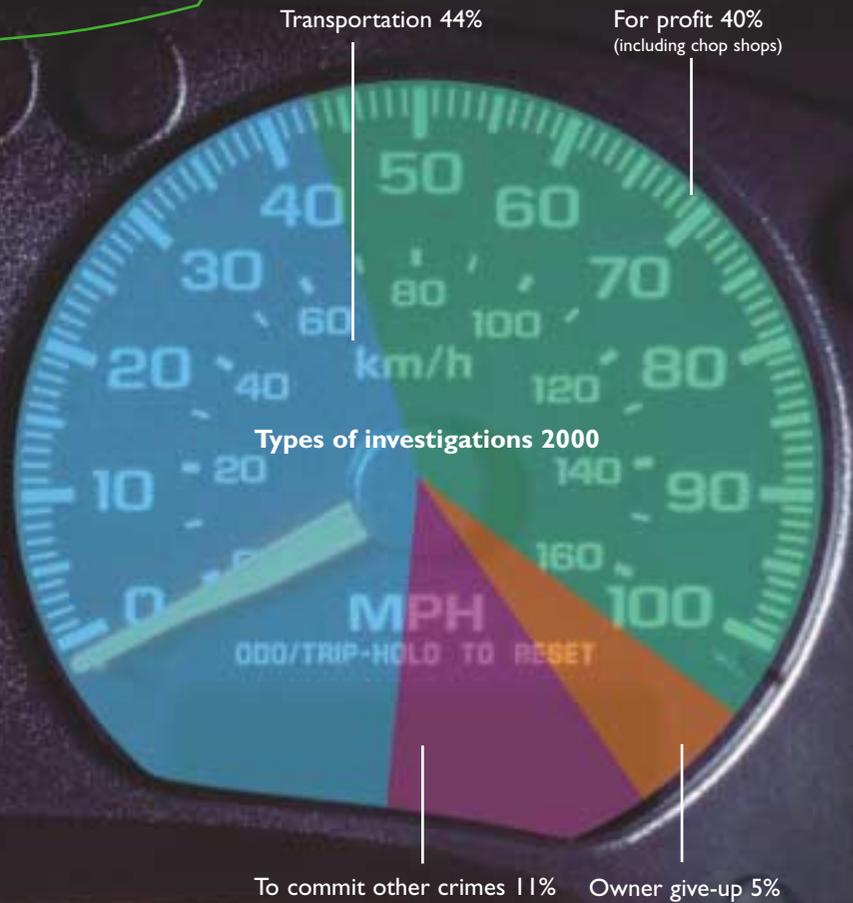
Grants awarded vs. estimated value of recovered vehicles, parts, restitution and fines

Grants \$29.6 M total grants 1996–2003

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001 <i>through June</i>	Total
Value of Recovered							
Vehicles	\$ 7.3 M	\$ 13.8 M	\$ 26.7 M	\$ 28.4 M	\$ 27.7 M	\$ 15.1 M	\$ 119 M
Parts			\$ 1.0 M	\$ 5.5 M	\$ 1.3 M	\$.6 M	\$ 8.4 M
Total value of recovered vehicles/parts 1996–6/01							\$ 127.4 M

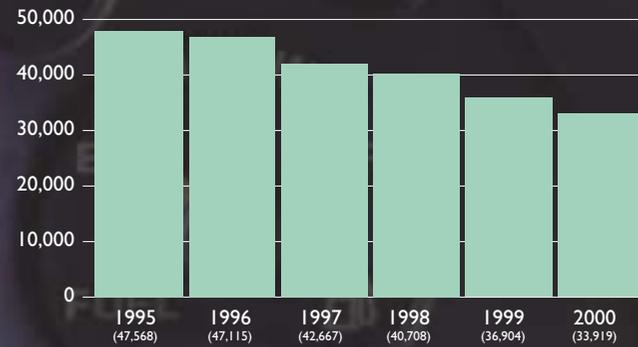
Sentences

Restitution	\$ 15,024	\$ 252,356	\$ 793,598	\$1,014,356	\$1,262,391	\$ 778,933	\$ 4,116,658
Fines	\$ 0	\$ 8,527	\$ 43,792	\$ 63,917	\$ 89,236	\$ 28,593	\$ 234,065



Motor Vehicle Thefts in Pennsylvania*

(Since the General Assembly enacted legislation in 1994 creating the Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority in 1995.)



Summary. In 2000, there were 33,919 motor vehicle thefts reported to Pennsylvania police departments, an average of 93 each day or one every 15 minutes and 30 seconds. This is a decrease of 8.1 percent from the 36,904 reported last year (and the lowest number of reported offenses on record).

(Source: *The Pennsylvania State Police*)

**Definition: Motor vehicle theft is the illegal taking of a motor vehicle, or driving the vehicle without the owner's consent. Attempted motor vehicle thefts are included. Includes theft of motor-driven vehicles, such as autos, trucks, buses, motorcycles, motor scooters and snowmobiles.*

The Most Commonly Stolen Vehicles 2000

Philadelphia

1. Honda Accord
2. Toyota Camry
3. Oldsmobile Cutlass
4. Nissan Maxima
5. Jeep Cherokee
6. Ford Taurus
7. Dodge Caravan
8. Dodge Neon
9. Plymouth Voyager
10. Chevy Celebrity

Pittsburgh

1. Chevy Cavalier
2. Oldsmobile Cutlass
3. Jeep Cherokee
4. Chevy Blazer
5. Dodge Caravan
6. Buick Century
7. Pontiac Grand Am
8. Plymouth Acclaim
9. Dodge Spirit
10. Ford Taurus

**Source: National Insurance Crime Bureau. These are the 2000 figures. Statewide data not available. Study is based on vehicles reported stolen to the NICB in 2000 by member insurance companies. Represents approximately 32 percent of all motor vehicles reported stolen nationwide.*

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