

# 2016

## ANNUAL REPORT

# AUTPA



# WHAT'S INSIDE

- 01** Letter to the Governor
- 02** Who is the Authority?
- 04** Authority Impact
- 06** ATPA Grantees
- 08** 2016 Case Highlights
- 11** Public Education
- 12** Financial Overview
- 13** Board and Staff

## TO THE HONORABLE GOVERNOR TOM WOLF AND MEMBERS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

Pennsylvania continues to be a leader in auto theft prevention. Since inception, our efforts have helped to realize a 77% reduction in vehicle theft in the Commonwealth, some 42% greater than the national decrease!\*

Last year was another exceptional year for the Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA) and our grantee partners. I am pleased to report that the efforts of our grantee network contributed to the recovery of more than 2,500 vehicles worth nearly \$27 million. In addition, our grantee prosecutor partners convicted 874 individuals on auto theft related crimes and obtained orders for more than \$1.5M in restitution to the victims of those crimes.

While we are proud of the progress, our work must continue with vigor. Auto theft and vehicle crime pose a threat to the personal safety and economic security of our communities. While some vehicles are stolen as a crime of opportunity for the thief to "get across town," many are stolen by complex, professional theft rings whose tactics often involve violence, financial fraud, identity theft, and international trafficking. Perhaps most importantly, many crime sprees begin with the theft of a vehicle, which leads to the dangerous and costly ripple effect of the subsequent crimes committed with that stolen vehicle.

ATPA is self-funded through an assessment of insurance companies that conduct business in Pennsylvania and we use no tax dollars in our efforts. For every dollar assessed, we have realized a nearly \$7 return on that assessment since inception in 1994.

Our mission is to prevent and combat auto theft. We will continue to support our grantees, educate the public, and train law enforcement to detect and solve these crimes. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve Pennsylvania's citizens and we thank you for your support.

Respectfully,

Ronald W. Kosh  
Chairman

\* According to Uniform Crime Report (UCR) maintained by the FBI and the Pennsylvania State Police. Theft rates from the FBI are only available through 2015 at the time of publication.



# WHO IS THE PENNSYLVANIA AUTO

# THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY?

## HISTORY

The Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA) was created by the General Assembly in 1994. Since then, ATPA grantees have recovered stolen vehicles and parts worth \$589 million. In that same period, theft rates in Pennsylvania decreased by about 77%, compared to a national decrease of 54%\*. The Authority is guided by a board of directors and employs an executive director and a grants analyst.

## FUNDING

ATPA uses no tax dollars. Our funding comes from an annual assessment of more than 369 insurance companies that conduct business in Pennsylvania. Through this funding, we award grants to 10 investigative and/or prosecutorial units statewide including the Pennsylvania State Police, regional task forces, district attorneys, police departments and a youth diversion program.

## CHALLENGES

With dwindling law enforcement budgets, many municipalities don't have the money to train their officers and detectives in the basics nor the nuances of the ever-evolving crimes of auto theft, heavy equipment theft, trafficking, vehicle identification number (VIN) fraud, and other schemes. ATPA's role is more important than ever.

## RESULTS

Our grantees work together to prevent, identify, and prosecute auto theft crimes while also assisting and training any other law enforcement partner agencies across Pennsylvania. ATPA grantees' commitment to our mission is impressive and unwavering. In 2016, ATPA's grantees made 709 arrests and convicted 874 thieves, while recovering \$28.7 million in vehicles, parts, and restitution.



The Authority supports a statewide network of nearly 100 highly skilled police officers, state troopers, detectives, prosecutors, paralegals, and support staff who work together to deter and attack vehicle theft across Pennsylvania.

## WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT AUTO THEFT?

Auto theft affects you. More than 12,366 motor vehicles were stolen in Pennsylvania last year. Even without experiencing it firsthand, you are touched by the ripple effect of insurance rates and violence:

- > When vehicles are stolen, **insurance rates increase** and we all pay the price.
- > Stolen cars are often used to commit **other violent crimes** that impact your neighborhood, your community.
- > If you or someone else leaves your mail, bills, car registration, work files or other sensitive information in a car, you are now also **vulnerable to identity theft and burglary of your home**.



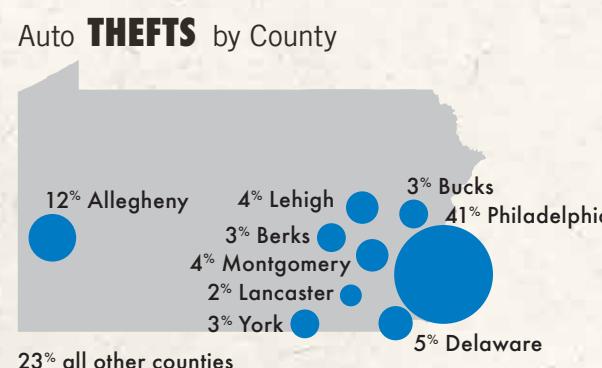
Motor vehicle  
**THEFTS**  
in PA

**54,153**

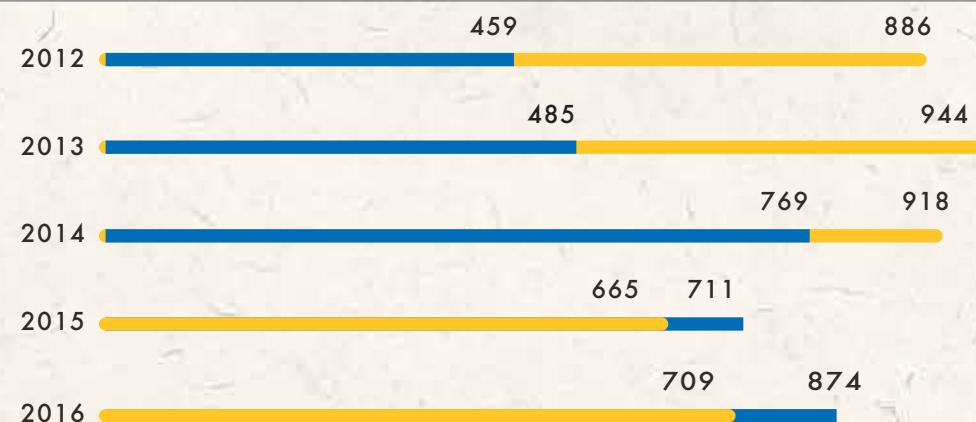
In 1994

**12,366**

In 2016

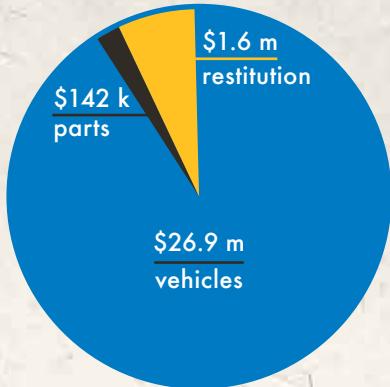


Individuals  
**ARRESTED**  
& Convicted

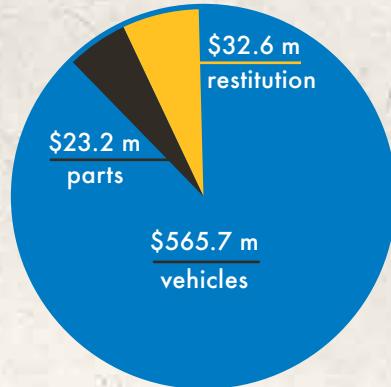


Value of  
**RECOVERIES**

**2016**  
\$6 million grants paid



**INCEPTION**  
\$111.4 million grants paid



TOTAL VALUE OF RECOVERED VEHICLES  
& PARTS SINCE INCEPTION IN 1994

**\$589**  
MILLION

**\$7 RETURN**  
ON INVESTMENT SINCE INCEPTION

# AUTO THEFT AFFECTS EVERYONE

People sometimes tell us that auto theft does not affect them. This crime impacts everyone. More than 12,366 motor vehicles were stolen in Pennsylvania in 2016. Even without experiencing theft first-hand, you are also touched by the ripple effect of insurance rates and violence.



## DISTRICT ATTORNEYS OFFICES

### > Allegheny County

Assistant district attorney (fully funded) and paralegal (fully funded).

### > Delaware County

Assistant DA (50% funded), detective (fully funded), analyst (50% funded), and overtime for assisting officers.

### > Lehigh County

Senior Deputy DA (50% funded), secretary (50% funded), 4 detectives from local police departments (fully funded).

### > Lackawanna County\*

Assistant DA (50% funded), 2 part-time detectives from local police departments (partially funded), and secretary (50% funded)

\*Serves 10 counties: Lackawanna, Luzerne, Pike, Susquehanna, Bradford, Monroe, Wyoming, Sullivan, Columbia, and Carbon.

### > Philadelphia District Attorney's Office

Assistant DA Juvenile Division (15% funded), Assistant DA (Adult) East Division (fully funded), Assistant DA (Adult) Northeast Division (fully funded), law clerk (50% funded), and investigator (70% funded).

# GRANTEES

## PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE (PSP)

13 Detectives from county & municipal police departments across the state (fully funded), 17 state troopers (grants pay overtime only), 4 state police supervisors (grants pay overtime and equipment only) and clerk (fully funded).

## PHILADELPHIA POLICE

8 Police officers and 4 detectives (fully funded by grant), 6 division detectives (overtime only), Major Crimes Auto Squad (overtime only), and Tow Squad (overtime only).

## PITTSBURGH POLICE

2 Detectives (fully funded), and partial overtime and expenses for 2 detectives.

## LANCASTER CITY POLICE

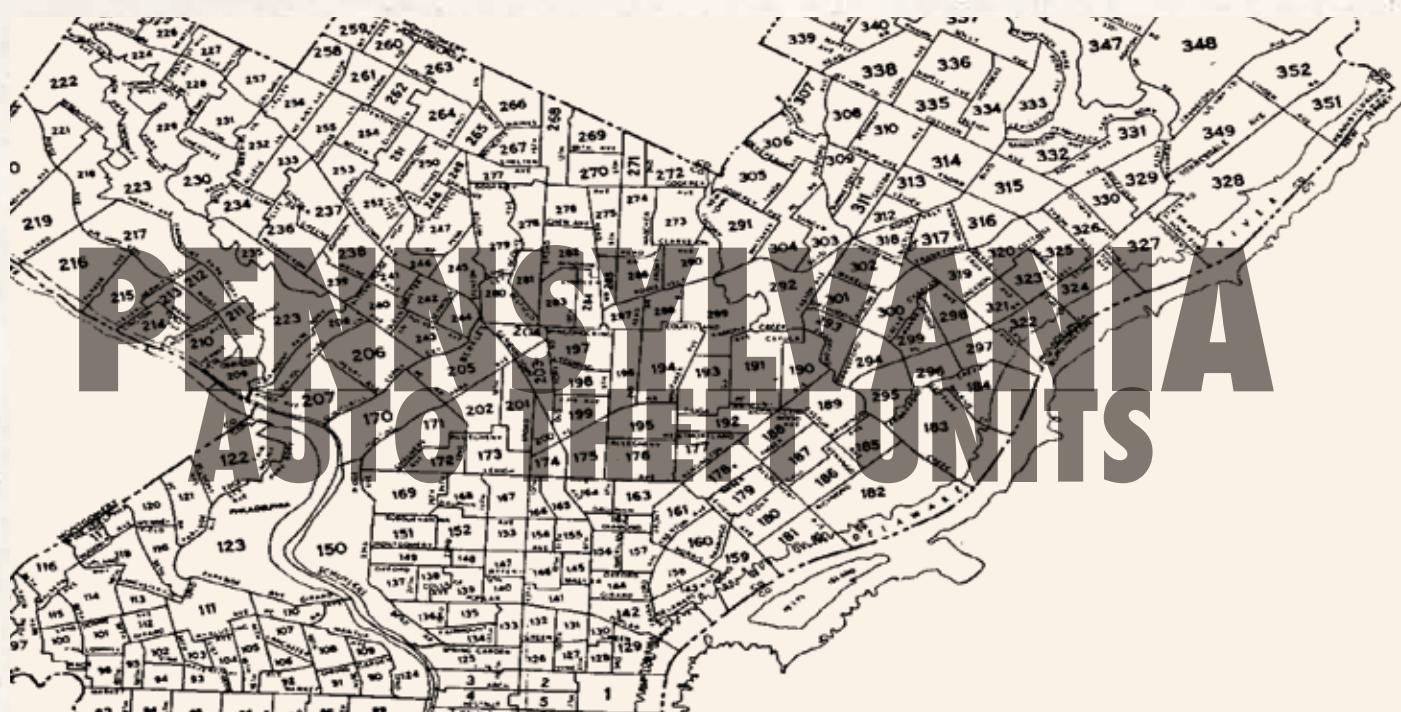
2 Investigators (fully funded), assistant DA (50% funded) and sergeant (50% funded).

The Authority provides grants for personnel costs and other expenses for detectives, prosecutors, and specialized support staff. In some cases, law enforcement agencies contribute matching resources. In other cases, ATPA funds overtime costs to expand the capacity of the team. All of these models serve to multiply resources and streamline our investigative-prosecutorial approach.

## GOOD SHEPHERD MEDIATION PROGRAM

Good Shepherd Mediation Program delivers an ATPA-funded program, "Impact of Auto Theft" for first time offenders referred from the Philadelphia District Attorney's youth aid panels and to juveniles who have been offered consent decrees, have been adjudicated for auto theft or have been referred by a probation officer. Participants discuss the impact of auto theft and future consequences that they could face along with ways to make positive decisions in the future. In 2016, 27 youth completed the program.





## STOLEN Trucks

### PSP Central Auto Theft Unit - Guilford Township, PA

Two Peterbilt wreckers worth \$600,000 were stolen from a dealership in Guilford Township in July. An investigator with the PSP Central Auto Theft Task Force obtained surveillance video and created a PA Crime Stoppers bulletin. He received numerous tips that the trucks had been taken to Florida or Georgia. With the help of the FBI cargo office in Lakeland, Florida, a suspect was identified and one truck located. The other truck allegedly had been "chopped" and shipped in pieces to Puerto Rico. Work continues to recover the second truck.

## Left UNLOCKED

### PSP Eastern Auto Theft Unit - Montgomery, Chester and Bucks County, PA

Between late July and mid-September, 26 vehicles were stolen from Montgomery, Chester and Bucks counties. The thieves were also burglarizing homes and stealing items from cars overnight. Investigators from the Pennsylvania State Police and Eastern Auto Task Force solved the case, identifying two suspects who later admitted to stealing cars and selling them to support their heroin addiction. They told investigators that they went out at night looking for unlocked vehicles. If a car was unlocked, they would search for the keys, sometimes entering the home to find them. The total value of the stolen property was \$453,135. Most of the vehicles have been recovered.

## Title FRAUD

### PSP Eastern Auto Theft Unit

A state trooper with the Eastern Auto Theft Unit recovered 52 vehicles worth more than \$1 million related to an alleged title fraud / lien washing scheme. Through investigative work and assistance from the National Insurance Crime Bureau, PSP tracked most of the vehicles to New York and Florida and worked with the Miami-Dade Police Department to recover many of them from shipping ports headed to the Dominican Republic.

## MONSTER Stolen Tractor Trailers

### PSP Northeastern Auto Theft Unit - Hazle Township, PA

In April 2016, investigators from the PSP Northeastern Auto Theft Task Force responded to a report of two stolen tractor trailers and their \$140,000 load of Monster Energy Drink from Hazle Township. Investigators solved the case within days. Through cooperation with the New York Police Department, New Jersey Police, and the FBI, PSP investigators uncovered a theft ring spanning three states and recovered \$219,000 in stolen property, including \$70,000 of Bumblebee tuna that had been stolen from Orange, NJ earlier in the month.

## Checking THE VIN

### PSP Northeastern Auto Theft Unit

A PSP Northeast Auto Theft Task Force investigator has reinvented how auto theft investigators identify fraudulent titles. Working with Carfax for more than a year, the task force officer is notified anytime a Pennsylvania vehicle (with more than 5,000 miles) comes through Carfax for the first time. He checks the vehicle identification number (VIN) in a national claims database to see if it's legitimate. He has found numerous incidents where the VIN used to enter PA is fraudulent. He has recovered 13 vehicles valued at \$415,173 and in the process, has identified straw purchasers and other schemes.

## RING Theft

### PSP Western Auto Theft Unit - Monroeville and Marshall Township, PA

After Land Rover SUVs were stolen from dealerships in Monroeville and Marshall Township on the same day in 2015, seasoned investigators with the Western Auto Theft Task Force had a hunch it was the work of a theft ring outside of Pennsylvania. For the past year, members of the Task Force worked with the FBI and United States Attorneys' Offices in Pennsylvania and Georgia to uncover evidence and identify suspects allegedly responsible for more than \$5 million in high-end stolen vehicles from dealerships across the country. The US Attorney's Office in Georgia is set to prosecute the case.

## CAUGHT On Surveillance

### PSP Western Auto Theft Unit

After weeks of physical and electronic surveillance, the PSP Western Auto Theft Task Force arrested the suspects allegedly involved in a criminal organization that targeted businesses after hours to steal equipment, vehicle parts, and firearms. The Task Force caught the suspects as they were stealing truck tires from a dealership. Investigators seized 19 firearms and marijuana, and recovered more than \$250,000 of vehicles and tools including two large farm tractors with attachments, a trailer, skid steer, and Harley Davidson motorcycle. This investigation cleared 12 cases across Pennsylvania State Police Troops A, B, and C. The Pennsylvania Attorney General's office is prosecuting.

## Stolen RENTAL

### Philadelphia Major Crimes Auto Theft Squad

The Philadelphia District Attorney's Office charged 32 individuals and three corporations in an elaborate auto theft and insurance fraud ring. The defendants allegedly stole, then replated, relisted and resold 45 vehicles. The replated vehicles were disguised with repurposed VINs from salvaged vehicles. All but eight of the stolen vehicles were owned by local Hertz, Enterprise, Alamo, National, Avis, Budget and Dollar/Thrifty car rental branches. After being replated and relisted, the stolen vehicles were often sold to unsuspecting buyers. The alleged scheme cost rental car companies more than \$500,000.



## LOCK YOUR CAR. TAKE YOUR KEYS.



### Stolen PUFFER

#### [Lehigh County Auto Theft Task Force - Allentown, PA](#)

In May, the Lehigh County Auto Theft Task Force tracked down a "puffer" reportedly stolen from north 7th street in Allentown. The car's owner said she "just left her car for a minute." The thief was allegedly involved in a hit and run accident shortly after it was stolen. Police tracked down the thief and discovered a handgun in his backpack, which he admitted to stealing in a home burglary just minutes prior. Once in custody, the suspect reportedly admitted to nine burglaries and two stolen cars.

### Honda THEFTS

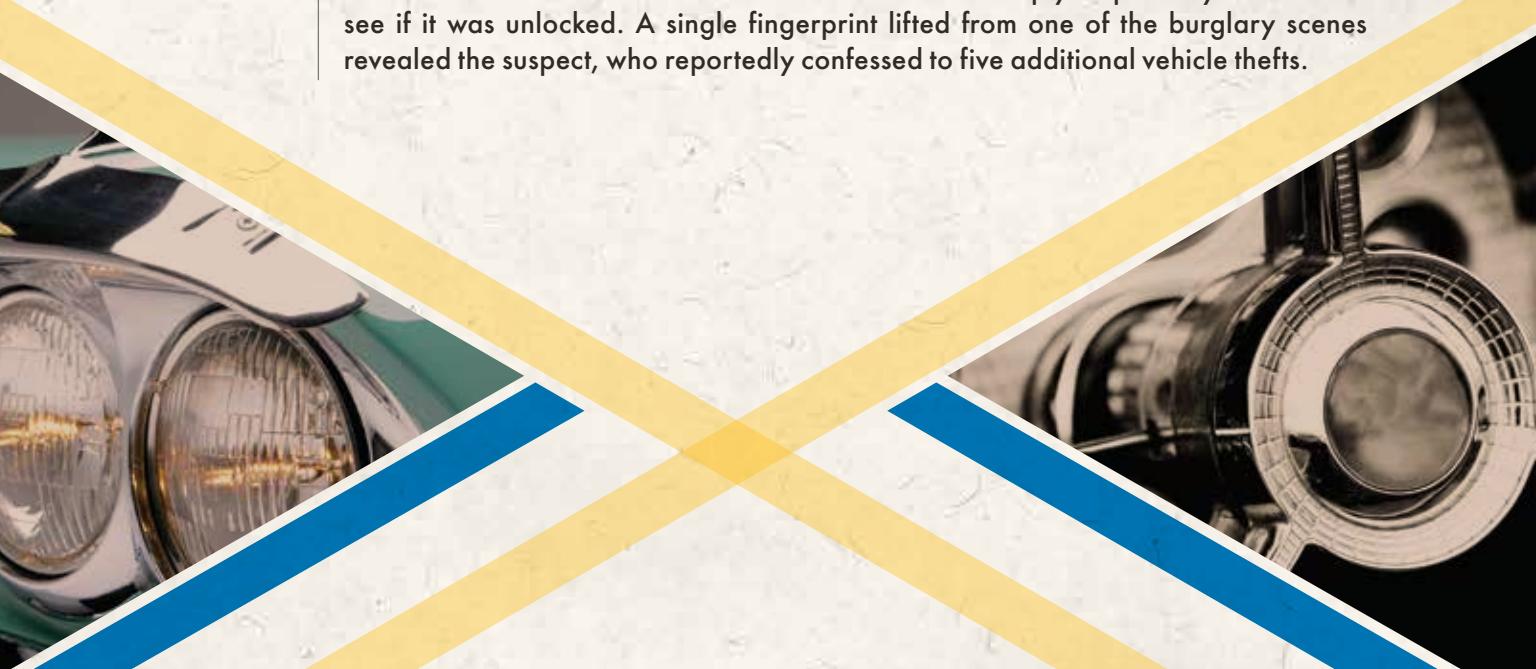
#### [Lehigh County Auto Theft Task Force - Allentown and Quakertown, PA](#)

In December of 2015, the Lehigh Valley experienced a spike in Honda thefts that lasted into the middle of January of 2016. Several Hondas were stolen from the Allentown area and Quakertown. On December 26th, an Allentown police officer attempted to stop a white Honda Accord that had been listed as stolen just a few hours prior. Four occupants bailed out of the vehicle and the driver took off in the stolen car. Two of the occupants were stopped and interviewed by police. They identified the driver and said he used a "wiggle key" to start the stolen car. Honda thefts continued to climb across the area until the suspect was arrested on January 11th, 2016, and admitted to the thefts of 10 Hondas. Evidence inside his phone showed pictures and numerous messages about vehicles he had stolen.

### Flipping HANDLES

#### [Lehigh County Auto Theft Task Force - Allentown, PA](#)

In the spring of 2016, the Lehigh County Auto Theft Task Force detectives noticed a trend of stolen vehicles from the western part of Lehigh County being recovered on the west side of Allentown. These vehicles were being stolen because the owners were leaving the keys inside them with the doors unlocked. The thief would simply "flip" or try the car handle to see if it was unlocked. A single fingerprint lifted from one of the burglary scenes revealed the suspect, who reportedly confessed to five additional vehicle thefts.



## PUBLIC OUTREACH

One simple act can significantly reduce your likelihood of having your car stolen: lock it. What sounds like common sense, is not common practice. Auto theft detectives tell us more than 50% of the state's stolen cars were left unlocked and/or with the keys inside. Our public education programs are designed to impart this message and reach Pennsylvanians in our highest crime areas during peak theft months.



## "NO PUFFERS"

ATPA led a statewide effort to coin the term, "puffer" — which is a car left running, unlocked, and unattended. In February, we traversed the state, partnering with grantees, district attorneys, and police departments to engage the public and reduce cold weather theft. Holding news conferences and live interviews in Pittsburgh, Johnstown, Harrisburg, Lancaster, Allentown, Scranton, and Philadelphia, our prevention message was covered by nearly all news outlets across the state. We also distributed 800 "No Puffers" ice scrapers and 1,000 posters to local police departments for distribution within the community.



## GREAT GASOLINE GIVEAWAY

To draw attention to summer theft, ATPA conducted its first gasoline giveaway sweepstakes and digital marketing campaign to reach a new audience with our prevention message. We primarily targeted southeast Pennsylvania, which has the highest theft rate in the state. Through social media, email marketing, mobile display, radio, and a sponsorship with the Philadelphia Phillies, we offered theft prevention tips and motivation to adopt good theft prevention habits. The campaign reached about one million people in the greater Philadelphia area. The 2016 grand prize winner, from Easton, PA, won a year's supply of gasoline. Sweepstakes winners from Fleetwood and Royersford each won \$500 gas gift cards.

## TRAINING

Auto theft is complex and often part of other violent crime. It requires unique training and skill to stay current on theft trends, as well as to teach patrol officers and prosecutors how to spot stolen vehicles, identify theft rings, or prosecute auto theft cases.

This year's ATPA Grantee Training Conference included: evidence of fraud in auto transactions and finance schemes, legal methods and techniques used in investigations, international vehicle trafficking, and communication strategy.



# Fiscal Year 2015-2016

Assessments	\$6,989,826
Interest Earned	\$4,954
Miscellaneous	\$443
Realized loss on disposal	(\$180)
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$6,995,043</b>
Balance carried over from prior year	\$2,100,609
<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>\$9,095,652</b>

## PROGRAM EXPENSES:

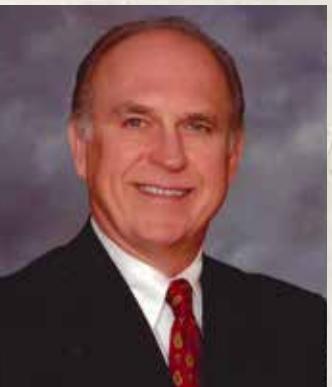
Grants Paid	(\$5,867,295)
Grant Reviews	(\$66,047)
Public Awareness	(\$288,755)
Training	(\$5,901)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(\$6,227,998)</b>

## OPERATING EXPENSES:

Personnel Expenses	(\$198,658)
Operating Expenses	(\$128,002)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(\$326,660)</b>
<b>Net Effect of Balance Sheet Changes</b>	<b>\$84,975</b>
<b>Year-End Balance</b>	<b>\$2,456,019</b>
(to be applied to future grants and operational expenditures)	

**ATPA operated at 5% (\$326,660) of the total assessments collected**

## BOARD MEMBERS



**Ronald W. Kosh**  
Chairman



Director,  
AAA Mid-Atlantic  
Southeast Pennsylvania



**Celeste C. Dodson**  
Secretary



SIU Claims Manger,  
State Farm Insurance



**James Fitzpatrick**  
Chief Deputy Attorney  
General, Pennsylvania  
Office of Attorney General

## STAFF



**Alissa Temperine**  
Grants Analyst



**Steven R. Wheeler**  
Executive Director



5 Kacey Court, Suite 201  
Mechanicsburg PA, 17055  
[watchyourcar.org](http://watchyourcar.org) | 1-888-777-ATPA