



PENNSYLVANIA AUTO THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY

ANNUAL REPORT

2019

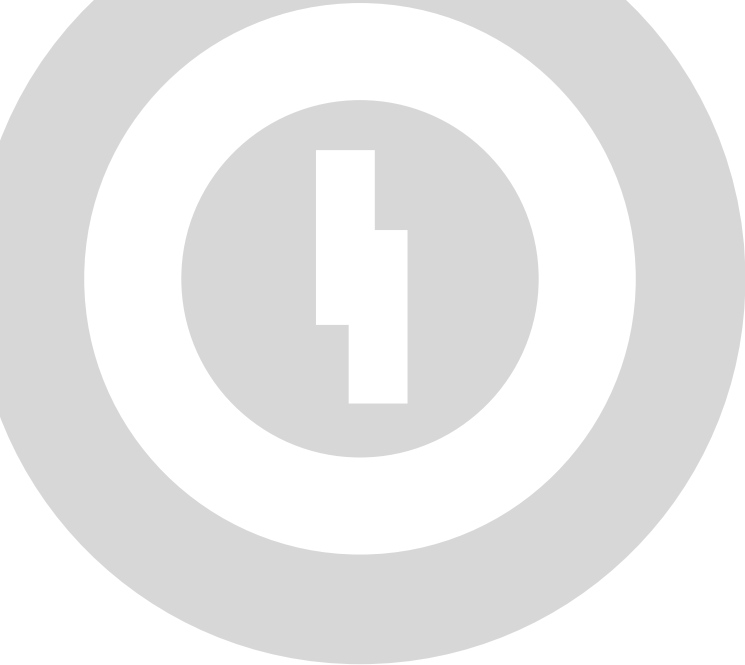
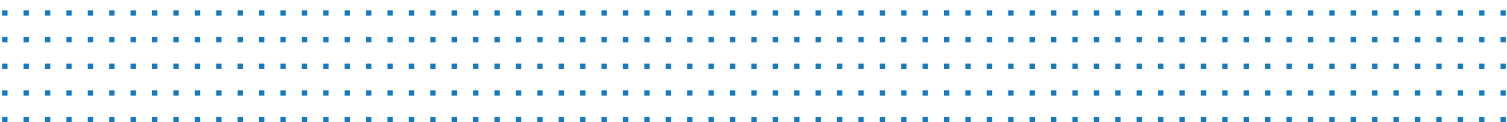






TABLE OF CONTENTS

	03.	LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR
04.		WHAT IS THE PENNSYLVANIA AUTO THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY?
	06.	FUNDING & SKILLS
	08.	GRANTEES
	12.	PUBLIC EDUCATION
	16.	TRAINING OVERVIEW
18.	20.	ATPA IMPACT CASE HIGHLIGHTS
	29.	BOARD MEMBERS



TO THE HONORABLE GOVERNOR TOM WOLF

AND MEMBERS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

In 2019, we at the Pennsylvania Automobile Theft Prevention Authority marked a great milestone in our history: 25 years of reducing vehicle crime in the Commonwealth. Since our inception, and through strategic funding, we've helped realize a 79 percent reduction in vehicle theft in the Commonwealth, compared to the national decrease of 51 percent.* While nationwide vehicle crimes have been on the rise since 2015, Pennsylvania's rates continue to decline.

In 2019, ATPA grantees contributed to:

- Recoveries of \$32 million in vehicles and parts
- 700 arrests associated with auto theft-related crime
- 1,077 convictions related to auto theft-related crimes
- Court-ordered restitution of \$2.1 million to the victims of those crimes

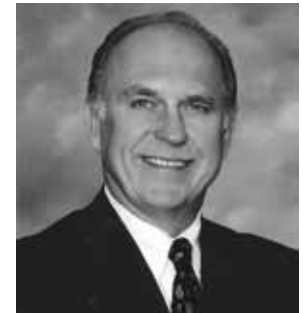
This success is significant to every Pennsylvanian, as vehicle crime reduction not only prevents costly increases in insurance premiums but also significantly impacts community safety. While some vehicles are stolen as a crime of opportunity for the thief to "get across town," many are stolen by complex, 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, leading to the dangerous and costly ripple effect of the subsequent crimes.

The Pennsylvania Automobile Theft Prevention Authority is a legislatively mandated, public-private entity that cannot and does not use tax dollars. Pennsylvania insurers fully fund the organization through yearly assessments. Grants are distributed to law enforcement agencies based on need and utilization plan. Grant renewals are contingent on audits and results. For every dollar assessed since inception, we have realized a \$6.36 return — all without cost to the Commonwealth.

You can be certain of our continued diligence in reducing any threat to our collective safety and financial security that vehicle crimes pose. We look forward to serving the citizens of the Commonwealth for another 25 successful years as we support our grantees, educate the public, and train law enforcement to detect and solve these ever-evolving crimes. We are grateful for the opportunity, and we thank you for your support.

*According to the Uniform Crime Reporting Program maintained by the FBI and the Pennsylvania State Police — theft rates from the FBI are only available through 2018 at the time of publication.

LETTER TO THE
GOVERNOR **03.**



Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ronald W. Kosh". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Ronald W. Kosh
Chairperson

04. WHAT IS THE PENNSYLVANIA AUTO THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY?



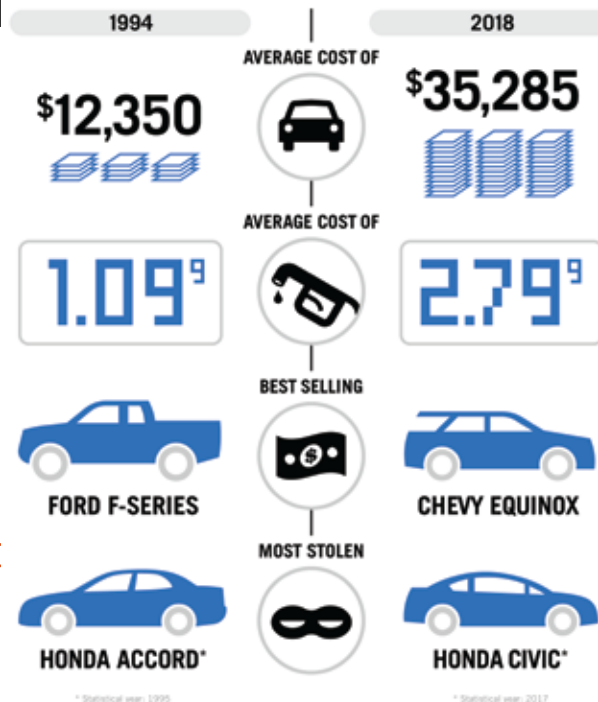
The ATPA is a statewide network of nearly 100 highly skilled police officers, state troopers, detectives, prosecutors, paralegals, and support staff who work together to prevent, detect and prosecute auto theft.

The General Assembly created ATPA in 1994. Twenty-five years later, Pennsylvania remains one of the only states in the country to dedicate this level of expertise and commitment to fighting vehicle theft. It's proven to be a wise investment.

Since its inception, our organization has reduced theft rates in Pennsylvania by 79 percent, with ATPA grantees recovering more than \$682 million in stolen vehicles and parts.

THE MISSION OF ATPA IS TO ENFORCE, PROSECUTE AND PREVENT AUTO THEFT.

THEN & NOW



* Statistical year: 1995

* Statistical year: 2017



WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT AUTO THEFT?

Auto theft affects everyone, whether your car is stolen or not. Theft impacts your safety, the safety of your community, and your wallet.

- 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 community.
- If you leave your mail, bills, car registration, work files, or other sensitive information in a car, you also become **vulnerable to identity theft and burglary of your home**.

FUNDING

\$6 RETURN ON INVESTMENT

We do not use tax dollars. Our funds come from an annual assessment of 356 insurance companies that insure Pennsylvania drivers. The funding provides grants to investigative and/or prosecutorial units statewide, including the Pennsylvania State Police, regional task forces, district attorneys, police departments, and public information campaigns. Our team consists of a board of directors, an executive director, and a grants analyst. An effective steward of the insurance industry assessments, our organization uses only 5.2 percent of its funds for administrative costs. The funds are devoted to investigation, prosecution, equipment, training, public awareness, and prevention. **For every dollar assessed, we have realized a \$6 return on that investment in reduced theft rates and recovered vehicles and parts.**

SKILLS

SPECIALIZED EXPERTISE

Theft is only one aspect of vehicle crime. Pennsylvania ATPA grantees have specialized skills. They know how to detect and solve crimes that range from title washing to insurance fraud, cargo theft, VIN altering, odometer fraud, carjacking, and more. Many violent crime sprees often start with the theft of a vehicle. Only investigators and prosecutors with unique training and experience can keep this wide range of thieves and schemes at bay.

PENNSYLVANIA MOTOR VEHICLE

THEFTS

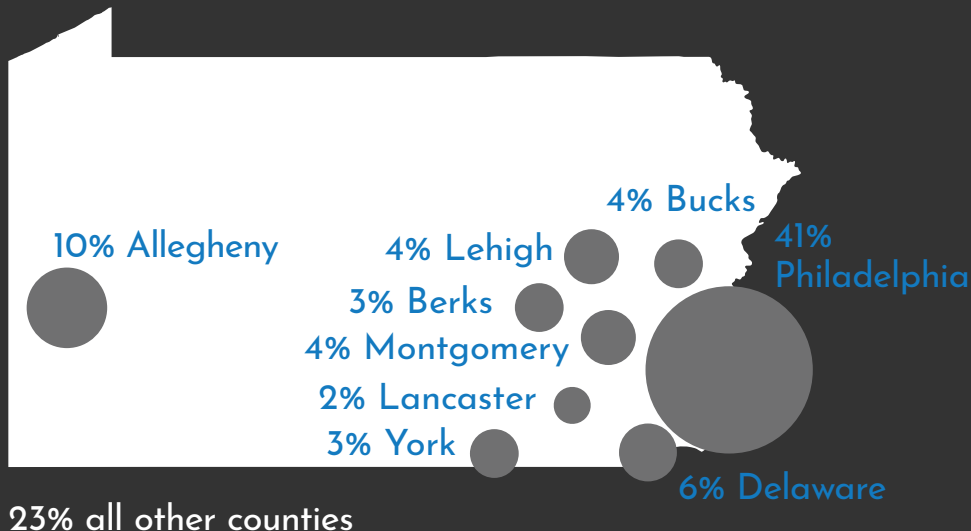
1994

54,153

2019

11,124

AUTO THEFTS BY COUNTY



A hand wearing a blue nitrile glove is holding a piece of light-colored paper. The paper has a faint, abstract, brownish pattern that resembles a stylized 'X' or a map. The background is dark and out of focus, with some blue light visible.

GRANTEES

OUR GRANTEES SHARE AN IMPRESSIVE COMMITMENT TO

OUR MISSION

In 2019, ATPA grantees made 700 arrests, reported 1,077 convictions, and recovered \$35 million in vehicles, parts, and restitution.

The grantees span the state and are awarded funds following an application and board vote. Funds are awarded based on need and the grantee's plan for how the funds will be used. Grant renewals are contingent upon audits and results.

Many municipalities have slashed their police department and law enforcement budgets, making this support more important than ever. Grant monies may be used to cover salaries for detectives, prosecutors, and specialized support staff, as well as training and equipment.

In some cases, law enforcement agencies contribute to matching resources. In other cases, ATPA funds cover overtime costs to expand the capacity of the team. Funding models serve to multiply resources and streamline our investigative-prosecutorial approach.



PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE (PSP)

- 11 detectives from county and municipal police departments across the state (fully funded)
- 13 state troopers (overtime only)
- 4 state police supervisors (overtime and equipment only)
- 1 clerk (fully funded)

POLICE DEPARTMENTS

PHILADELPHIA POLICE

- 8 police officers (fully funded)
- 4 detectives (fully funded)
- 6 division detectives (overtime only)
- Major Crimes Auto Squad (overtime only)
- Tow Squad (overtime only)

PITTSBURGH POLICE

- 2 detectives (fully funded)
- 2 detectives (partial overtime and expenses)

LANCASTER CITY POLICE

- 2 detectives (fully funded)
- 1 assistant district attorney (50% funded)
- 1 sergeant (50% funded)

DISTRICT ATTORNEY OFFICES

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

- Assistant DA (fully funded)
- Paralegal (fully funded)

DELAWARE COUNTY

- Assistant DA (50% funded)
- Detective (fully funded)
- Analyst (50% funded)
- Overtime for assisting officers

PHILADELPHIA

- Assistant DA Juvenile Division (15% funded)
- 2 Senior SIU Assistant DAs (fully funded)
- SIU Paralegal (fully funded)
- SIU Investigator (fully funded)
- Investigator (20% funded)

LACKAWANNA COUNTY*

- Assistant DA (50% funded)
- 1 part-time detectives from local police departments (partially funded)
- Secretary (50% funded)

BUCKS COUNTY

- 2 Assistant DAs (fully funded)

LEHIGH COUNTY

- Chief deputy DA (50% funded)
- Secretary (50% funded)
- 4 detectives from local police departments (fully funded)

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



What's a **PUFFER?**

**PUFFERVERSE
FILMS**

SPOT THE PUFFER

AUTO THEFT PREVENTION TIPS

ABOUT

VIDEOS

PHOTOS

SPOT THE PUFFER AND WIN!

DETAILS BELOW.



THIEVES STEAL 209 VEHICLES PER DAY BECAUSE OF OWNERS LEAVING THE KEYS INSIDE.*

Part of our mission is to prevent vehicle crime. Besides the grantees, the biggest allies in this effort are Pennsylvania drivers themselves. The simple habit of locking the car and taking the keys with you will significantly reduce the likelihood of having a car stolen. While this may sound like common sense, the data indicates that it's not common practice. ATPA grantees report that more than 50 percent of the state's stolen cars were left unlocked and/or with the keys inside.

We continue to spread a simple, clear prevention message across the state, while also focusing on our highest crime areas during peak theft months. In 2019, we engaged in two major annual campaigns, reaching millions of drivers.

*Source: Carsurance.net



A “puffer” is a car left running, unlocked, and unattended. It’s the easiest and most opportunistic way to steal a car. While puffer thefts are clearly preventable, they remain a persistent problem. Drivers often leave their cars alone to warm up or cool down. They may feel safe leaving them running and unattended “for just a minute,” but they are putting their vehicles and their community in jeopardy.

Our 2019 anti-puffer campaign raised awareness through social media conversation and sent users to the “No Puffers” campaign website and “Click a Pic” contest for additional message engagement. In less than three months, the campaign reached nearly one million Facebook users, with more than half of them engaging with the messages. The campaign also included the deployment of 11 creatively wrapped vehicles throughout Philadelphia to spread the prevention message. The wrapped cars generated more than 1.6 million impressions per month.





Gas Up and Go.



GREAT GASOLINE GIVEAWAY

Through social media, email marketing, and a sponsorship with the Philadelphia Phillies, we relayed theft prevention tips and motivation to adopt good prevention habits during the summer months. Our campaign reached more than two million Facebook users (nearly doubling last year's reach), hundreds of thousands of Twitter users, and hundreds of thousands of Phillies fans through radio broadcasts, social media, and email. Weekly and monthly "Great Gasoline Giveaway" winners received gas gift cards, and the grand prize winner won a year's supply of free gas.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Chemically etching the vehicle identification number (VIN) onto all vehicle windows deters auto theft, as perpetrators would need to replace all of a vehicle's glass before trying to sell it. This year, several VIN etching events were held in Allentown, Levittown, Philadelphia and Whitehall. ATPA grantees and partner organizations etched more than 200 vehicles.

FREE VIN ETCHING



OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

the AUTHORITY
Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority



25 YEARS

OF AUTO THEFT PREVENTION

TRAINING

Auto theft is complex and ever-evolving. It requires unique training and skills to stay current on theft trends and technology. Therefore, patrol officers and prosecutors must be trained on the most current information regarding stolen vehicles, identity theft rings, and prosecution for auto theft cases. ATPA grantees both receive and provide specialized training throughout the year.

FOR GRANTEES

This year, the ATPA partnered with the Northeast Regional Chapter of the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators and the Pennsylvania Auto Crime Investigators Association to present a seminar on vehicle finance fraud. Attendees learned different ways to determine if a crime has been committed, by what means, and what resources are available for the investigation of these schemes.

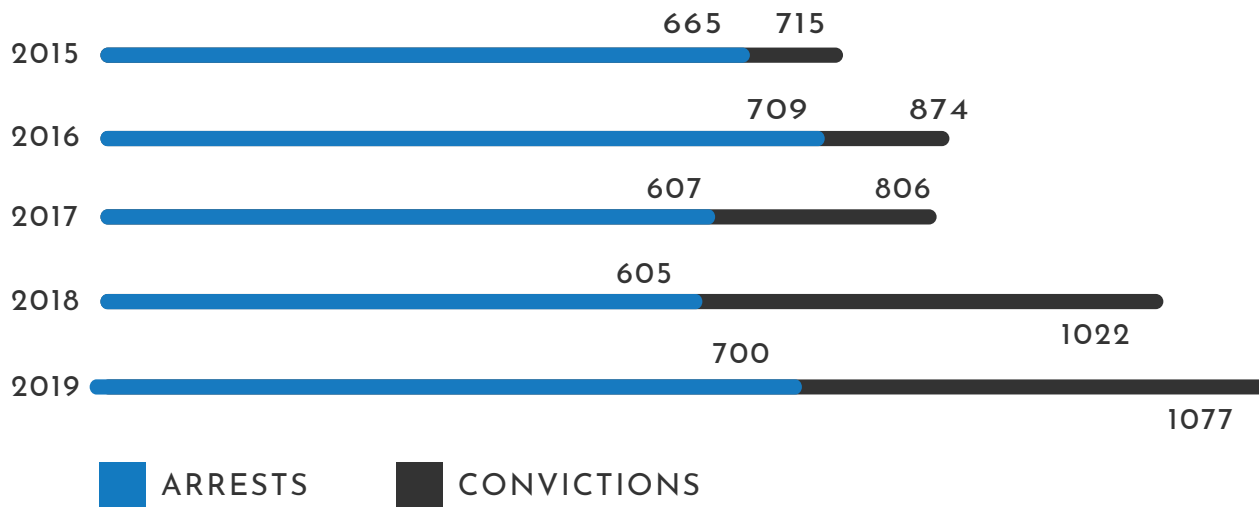
In April, ATPA hosted a heavy equipment theft investigation seminar. The informative session focused on ways enforcement personnel can develop cooperative relationships and identify clues regarding the theft of heavy equipment.

BY GRANTEES

The Lehigh County Auto Theft Task Force routinely engages in training and outreach. This year, the Task Force instructed cadets at the Allentown Civilian Police Academy about the divisions within the criminal justice system and auto theft prevention. The task force led several presentations geared toward school students. In May, they participated in Nazareth Area School District's Police Boot Camp Program. In June, the Bethlehem Police Department sponsored an auto theft class at the Junior Police Academy.

18. ATPA IMPACT

ATPA IMPACT INDIVIDUALS **ARRESTED** AND CONVICTED



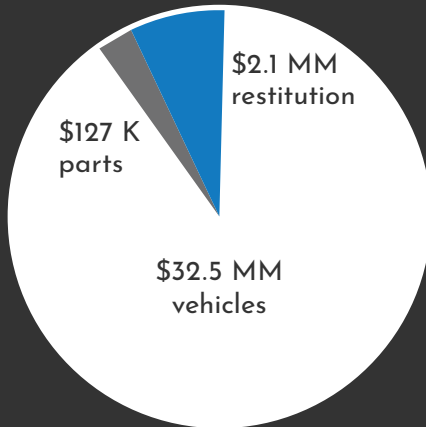
VALUE OF RECOVERIES

\$6.36

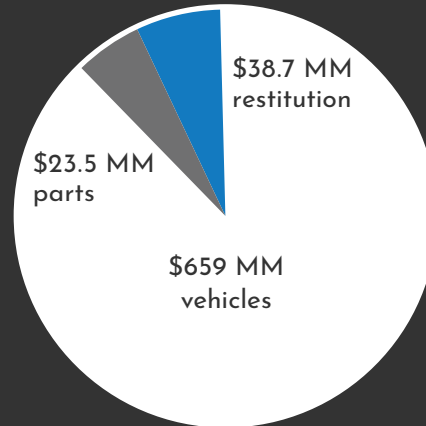
RETURN

ON INVESTMENT SINCE INCEPTION

2019



INCEPTION



TOTAL VALUE OF RECOVERED VEHICLES
AND PARTS SINCE INCEPTION IN 1994

\$682.5 MILLION



PENNSYLVANIA

AUTO THEFT UNITS' CASE HIGHLIGHTS



BUCKS COUNTY

CRASH AND GO

Thieves in Bucks County stole three cars from a dealership's lot on two different nights. In September, they stole one car off of the lot. A few nights later they came back and stole two more. This time they escaped by smashing a car through the exit gates. Their luck ran out when detectives from the Bucks County District Attorney's office discovered surveillance video that showed three suspects driving the cars off the lot. Detectives then tracked and located one of the vehicles in New Jersey. Both suspects pleaded guilty to multiple charges including theft by unlawful taking, receiving stolen property, and criminal conspiracy.

ADDICTION CONTINUES TO FUEL AUTO THEFT

The Bucks County District Attorney's Office reports that both addiction and mental health problems continue to fuel auto theft in the county. In the first quarter of 2019 alone, 13 of the 30 cases that were prosecuted under the Auto Theft Prevention, Awareness, and Education Program either involved drug possession or were fueled by the defendant's drug addiction. Most defendants received sentences with conditions designed to address those issues.

PSP WESTERN AUTO THEFT TASK FORCE

SUMMER SPREE STOPPED

Over the summer, residents in Allegheny County reported more than 80 vehicle break-ins and 23 stolen cars. Spearheaded by the PSP Western Auto Task Force, 35 police officers from 17 different departments united to form an informal task force to combat the problem. The departments included, Pennsylvania State Police, Monroeville Police Department, Plum Police Department, Castle Shannon Police Department, Ohio Township Police Department, North Versailles Police Department, Wilkins Township Police Department, Cranberry Township Police Department, Sewickley Police Department, South Fayette Police Department, Franklin Park Police Department, Fox Chapel Police Department, City of Pittsburgh PD, Mt. Lebanon PD, Dormont Police Department, Northern Regional Police Department, Hampton Police Department, and also assisted by the Western Hazards Fusion Center (Pennsylvania Criminal Intelligence Center).

The units worked together to conduct interviews, view surveillance video and review phone evidence. They identified suspects for each crime and arrested 10 juveniles and six adults. All 23 stolen vehicles were recovered. The total value of the recovered cars and property totaled more than \$230,000.





OPERATION BRIGHT NIGHT

The PSP Western Auto Theft Task Force conducted a nine-month investigation in conjunction with multiple federal, state, and local law enforcement officials to take down thieves that stole cars from 18 dealerships across four states over the course of three years. Police determined that the primary suspect and several co-conspirators stole \$750,000 worth of heavy equipment, trailers and off-road vehicles. They resold them through their corrupt organization. To date, police have recovered approximately \$175,000 worth of vehicles. Two suspects were arrested and charged.

ATV DEALERSHIP THEFTS

Off-road vehicle dealerships in Erie and Crawford Counties experienced 12 break-ins and the theft of 13 ATVs, six motorcycles, and seven zero-turn riding mowers -- all valued at about \$150,000. The PSP Western Auto Theft Task Force analyzed nearly 60 hours of surveillance video from nearby convenience stores. They were able to identify five suspects who have been charged by a grand jury with several felonies including criminal conspiracy.

PHILADELPHIA MAJOR CRIMES AUTO SQUAD

WRECK CHASERS

Philadelphia Major Crimes Auto Squad is battling an ongoing trend among thieves in what they call the "Wreck Chaser Business." They allege towing businesses have been overcharging both victims and insurance companies without consequence; and they estimate the number of dollars lost is in the millions. The Auto Squad, along with the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, have been investigating the problem for the past two years leading to a grand jury investigation. Arrests have been made and with more indictments expected.

STOLEN SCRAP

The Philadelphia Major Crimes Auto Squad worked to apprehend a thief who was selling stolen cars as scrap. In January, the squad investigated the theft of 12 stolen Hondas - all sold to the same metal shop. Detectives identified the perpetrator because he used the same Virginia driver's license each time he sold a stolen vehicle. The suspect pleaded guilty and is facing up to two years in prison and was ordered to pay \$2,500 per car in restitution to the victims.

CHOP SHOP TAKE DOWN

The Philadelphia Major Crimes Auto Squad arrested two suspects for operating a chop shop in the city. Detectives identified 14 stolen cars and many parts at a salvage yard. Both suspects pleaded guilty and were ordered to pay more than \$30,000 in restitution.



LANCASTER

TEAMWORK PAYS OFF

A Lancaster man trying to sell his car through Facebook Marketplace contacted the Lancaster County Auto A Philadelphia-based buyer, who said he sold the car to the owner of a garage that was found to house multiple stolen vehicles. Soon after the discovery of this garage, Lancaster detectives received a call from New York City Police about the same suspect who allegedly stole another car using a fraudulent check. That stolen vehicle was also found in the same Philadelphia garage. Two of the cars were worth more than \$70,000. Police used surveillance video to identify and arrest the suspect.



TRUCKS & MORE

The Lancaster Auto Crime Task Force and the PSP Western Auto Task Force coordinated an effort with several other agencies leading to the identification and arrest of two thieves who allegedly stole more than 50 vehicles worth more than one million dollars. The investigation began after two Ford trucks valued at \$150,000 disappeared from a Lancaster County car dealership. The investigation led them across state lines where they recovered the trucks in Maryland. The scope widened and they worked with investigators with the Maryland State Police, Montgomery County Auto Theft and Howard County Auto Theft in Maryland, Newark Delaware Police Department, New Jersey State Police, Radnor Police Department, and Pittsburgh Police Department. The task force led the multi-agency plan to prosecute the suspects. Two suspects have been charged and more are expected.



LEHIGH COUNTY

POWER THEFTS

Between May and August, the Lehigh County Auto Theft Task Force along with the Pennsylvania State Police worked to investigate a string of nighttime burglaries during which thieves cut the power in order to gain access. Most of the 24 affected businesses were auto shops. In most instances, the thieves either disabled or removed electric power meters. They then broke through glass doors, smashed windows, removed air conditioning units or otherwise forced their entry. Five cars were stolen along with inspection/emission stickers, automotive related equipment, audio/video equipment, guns, vehicles and money. Two suspects have been arrested.

LACKAWANNA COUNTY

A SUNDAY DRIVE

The Lackawanna County District Attorney's Office, PSP Eastern Auto Theft Task Force, and the prosecutor of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Auto Theft Task Force worked together to track down thieves who had a very specific modus operandi. Defendants would travel from New York in a white Mercedes into Pennsylvania on Sunday afternoons. That white Mercedes was spotted whenever Ford trucks were stolen from various dealerships in several states. As those trucks were driven back to New York, the white Mercedes would follow. Five trucks were stolen. Two suspects have been arrested and charged.

PITTSBURGH

BREAK-INS & CAR THEFTS

Pittsburgh Police noticed a pattern of home break-ins by adults and juveniles. Perpetrators stole not only firearms, but also, keys and vehicles. In one case, a juvenile who was wearing an ankle monitor for previous offenses, posted to Facebook from inside a car that had been reported stolen hours earlier. Police were able to make the arrest of two juveniles in the case. One of the juveniles has admitted to six burglaries involving seven cars. Police believe these suspects are responsible for a total of 25 vehicle thefts.



FINANCIAL

Fiscal year 2018 - 2019

Assessments	6,989,826
Interest earned	5,598
Miscellaneous	1,250
Due from Treasury	4,867
Realized gain on disposal	0
Total revenue	7,001,541
Balance carried over from prior year	8,634,352
Total funds available:	15,635,893

Program expenses

Grants paid	(6,328,062)
Grant reviews	(75,418)
Public awareness	(391,099)
Training	(11,500)
Total	(6,806,079)

Operating expenses

Personnel expenses:	(221,475)
Operating expenses:	(140,409)
Total	(361,884)

Net effect of balance sheet changes: (2,154,506)

Year-end balance: **6,313,424**
(to be applied to future grants and operational expenditures)

ATPA operated at 5.2% of the total assessments collected.



Ronald W. Kosh
Chairperson



Celeste C. Dodson
Secretary

Claims Manager – SIU,
State Farm Insurance



Scott P. Sherry
Treasurer

Associate Vice President
Personal Lines Claims -
Field, Nationwide



James Fitzpatrick

Chief Deputy Attorney
General, Office of
Attorney General



Frank J. Noonan

Retired Pennsylvania
State Police Commissioner



Frank E. Pawlowski

Retired Pennsylvania
State Police Commissioner



Jeff VanSteenbergen

Pennsylvania Material
Damage Manager, AAA

STAFF

Steven R. Wheeler
Executive Director

Alissa Temperine
Grants Analyst



5 Kacey Court, Suite 201
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
watchyourcar.org | 1-888-777-ATPA