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**DISTRICT ATTORNEY JIM MARTIN ANNOUNCES FREE VIN-ETCHING EVENT IN ALLENTOWN**

District Attorney Jim Martin has announced that the Lehigh County Auto Theft Task Force has scheduled a free Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)-etching event in Allentown.

The event will be held 10 a.m.to 2 p.m. Sept. 23 at the AAA at 2072 Downyflake Lane. The event is free and available to all vehicle owners in Lehigh County and there is no limit to the number of vehicles that owners may bring to the event.

VIN-etching is the process of chemically etching a vehicle’s unique identification number on all windows and the sunroof. The process doesn’t damage the windows and doesn’t detract from the appearance of the vehicle.

Detectives use a special software and dot-matrix printer to create stencils with the identification number on them. The stencils are applied to each of the windows and dabbed with an etching solution. The stencils are removed and the glass is cleaned. The number remains lightly etched into the window glass. The entire process takes about five minutes, depending on the number of windows.

VIN-etching deters thieves from stealing a vehicle. If someone steals a VIN-etched vehicle, the thief will have to replace all the windows or deface the glass to remove the etching so the vehicle can’t be identified as stolen.

Task Force Detective Salvatore Aprile said vehicle owners can save money by going to the free VIN-etching event. Vehicle dealerships may offer similar etching services, but those can cost between $300-$500, Aprile said.

“I want to commend AAA, Chief Deputy District Attorney David Mussel and the Auto Theft Task Force for doing their part to discourage crime and protect Lehigh County citizens,” Martin said. “I hope residents take advantage of this free event to safeguard their vehicles against theft.”