



ISSUE

3

SUMMER 2011

theAUTHORITY

PENNSYLVANIA AUTO THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY

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ATPA introduces new Board Chairperson

On behalf of the board and staff, it is with great pleasure we introduce our incoming Chairperson, Alan Demers. Mr. Demers has been an active member of the board since 2002, making him our most senior member. Alan served as Secretary on the board for several years before his election to the Chairperson position in June. As Vice President of Nationwide Insurance, Alan brings with him 26 years of insurance and claims experience.

"I would like to continue to build upon the record success that has been realized by the ATPA, especially over the last five-to-six years, in which, auto theft rates have dropped significantly," says Demers. He plans to continue strong partnerships with law enforcement grantees, foster innovation in theft prevention, and maintain accountability among stakeholders at all levels.



Alan becomes the third Chairperson since the ATPA's inception in 1996. He follows Julia Hearthway, who served as Chairperson for 14 of her 15 years on the board. Julia resigned from the board after her appointment to by Governor Corbett as Secretary for the Department of Labor and Industry in May.

Message from the Executive Director



Summer is finally here! And with the high temperatures that come with it, we also usher in the season of the year with the highest auto theft rates. June and July usually maintain 2nd and 3rd place rankings for high theft rates, with August having the highest auto theft rate in Pennsylvania. With the increased risk, the Authority is taking this opportunity to remind vehicle owners to take steps to protect themselves from becoming a victim of auto theft through a public education and prevention campaign. We will be delivering messages again this year about theft prevention through activities usually associated with the summer season—baseball games and going to the movies. By delivering our prevention messaging to a captive audience, we are hoping to increase the number of people who hear/see the message to increase action on their parts to take steps to protect themselves from becoming an auto theft victim.

In this issue, we have a few changes to the ATPA's Board of Directors. First, we introduce our new Board Chairperson, Alan Demers. I have worked with Alan for several years and believe he will do a phenomenal job in his new role on the board. Second, we introduce our new Board Secretary, Ms. Celeste Dodson. Celeste has been on the board for a few years, and was elected to the Secretary position when Alan was elected Chairperson. Lastly, we welcome our newest board member, Colonel Frank Noonan. Colonel Noonan was appointed State Police Commissioner by Governor Corbett in January, and appointed to the ATPA Board in May. I look forward to working with Colonel Noonan and the expertise he brings to the board and the ATPA effort overall.

Please enjoy the summer and all of the opportunities the great weather offers – vacations, day trips, baseball games, concerts, etc. But, please also remember to lock your car, take your keys and hide your valuables. These are very simple and free steps vehicle owners can take to prevent vehicle theft. Vehicle owners are busy this time of year, but so are the auto thieves. Become proactive and take the extra steps to protect yourself and your vehicle.



Michelle L. Staton
Executive Director
PA Auto Theft Prevention Authority

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THE AUTHORITY

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Training Instructor



ATPA introduces new Board Secretary

The ATPA introduces Celeste Dodson as the new Secretary on the ATPA's Board of Directors. Ms. Dodson was elected to the Secretary position in July. Celeste has been on the ATPA Board since 2009. In her role as Operations Manager with State Farm Insurance, Celeste leads the PA Auto Underwriting Department and Market Insights Team. She is responsible for auto trend and risk analysis, as well as rate and policy adjustments. Celeste's prior experience includes serving as Chair of the Maryland/DC Anti-Car Theft Committee 2000-2004.

ATPA welcomes newest Board Member

The ATPA welcomes Pennsylvania State Police Commissioner Colonel Frank Noonan to the board. Governor Tom Corbett nominated Colonel Noonan to serve as head of the state police in January, and was appointed to the ATPA Board in May. Colonel Noonan brings his vast experience in criminal investigation and law enforcement to ATPA. He began his career as an FBI agent in 1971. Following his retirement from the FBI in 1998, Colonel Noonan was appointed Northeast Regional Director for the Attorney General's Bureau of Narcotics Investigation. He was promoted to Chief of Criminal Investigations for the Office of Attorney General in July 2009.



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

New summer auto theft message



August is typically the highest auto theft month of the year. In an effort to thwart that trend, ATPA launched a summer public education/awareness campaign to remind drivers to protect themselves

from becoming a victim of auto theft. A creative 30 second commercial ran on movie screens for five weeks in June and July. The spot featured a male actor who parked his car in a parking space and walked away, leaving his keys in the ignition and the car unlocked. The car then speaks to him in a feminine voice, as though she is a heartbroken girlfriend being left alone for another man to possibly "pick her up." The car owner then re-enters the car to take his keys and lock the car. Viewers are reminded that half of Pennsylvania's stolen cars were left unlocked.

Forty theaters ran the spot on hundreds of movie screens, with an anticipated audience of more than one million viewers. The campaign also included running auto theft "trivia" on hundreds of movie theater lobby screens. The trivia and theater spot ran during debuts of the hottest movies of the summer: *Cars2*, *Transformers: Dark of the Moon*, *Captain America: The First Avenger*, and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*.

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 Presents Stolen Vehicle Recovery Award to Allentown Police Officer

Michelle Staton, ATPA Executive Director, presented the first-ever stolen vehicle recovery award to Sgt. Eric Hecklen with the Allentown Police Department. The nomination for the award came from the Lehigh County District Attorney's Auto Theft Task Force. Sgt. Hecklen is a 15-year veteran with Allentown Police, who supervises approximately 25 patrol officers. Despite the challenging and stressful duties that accompany this position, he has made it his personal mission to identify and locate stolen vehicles throughout the city. His skills are legendary. Known affectionately as the "HAWK," Sgt. Hecklen possesses the ability to spot stolen vehicles from blocks away. He routinely studies the latest hot sheets and when freshly stolen vehicles are added to the sheet, he will hunt it down. Sgt Hecklen has an uncanny ability to find stolen cars, such to the extent that other criminal investigators use his talents to spot vehicles that are wanted in connection with other types of criminal activity. His record speaks for itself as he has personally recovered well over 500 stolen vehicles.



Pictured left to right: Sgt. Eric Hecklen, Michelle Staton, and ADA David Mussel and Det. Sgt. Sal Aprle from the Lehigh County DA's Auto Theft Task Force

ATPA Supports PA Chiefs of Police Association Conference

The ATPA once again participated in the PA Chiefs of Police Association's annual conference this year held in Lancaster in July. Because the ATPA believes training and education are important in law enforcement, the ATPA was again a training sponsor of the conference. A class was held during the conference on auto theft trends, as well as police officer training offered by the ATPA. All police departments in the state were encouraged to utilize the free auto theft training taught by the ATPA's training instructor, Joseph Boyd, who is a retired PA State Police Lieutenant. Courses range from basic VIN identification and titling to motorcycle, ATVs, truck, tractor and semi-trailer identification.

Mark Your Calendars

August 14-19, 2011

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



October 18-19, 2011

ATPA Grantee Conference
Gettysburg, PA

October 18th

Advisory Group/Board Meeting 1:00-4:00;
Reception/Dinner 6:00-9:00

October 19th

Classroom Training—Gang Activity in PA 8:00-3:00

Philly man gets up to 26 years in student's death

A Philadelphia man has been sentenced to 13 to 26 years in prison for crashing a stolen vehicle into another car, killing a Villanova student last fall.

Donnie Sayers, 29, was awaiting jury selection when he pleaded guilty to charges of homicide by vehicle while driving under the influence, aggravated assault, theft, and related counts.

Police said Mr. Sayers was driving a stolen vehicle fleeing police in Delaware County in September when he hit a car carrying two Villanova students. Daniel Giletta, 21, of Wyckoff, NJ, died and the other student was hospitalized.

Mr. Sayers expressed remorse and said he confessed when he heard that another man had been arrested.

The Times Leader

NY man stole parts at auto auction—hit security officer with car in getaway

A NY man stole expensive parts off cars at the Manheim Auto Auction, then struck a security officer with his vehicle while trying to get away, police allege.

The 40-year-old male from Atlantic Beach, was charged with aggravated assault, simple assault, and two counts of recklessly endangering another person, according to Penn Township Police.

Auction security officers were watching the man from various locations throughout the auction, police said. They said he stole parts from at least 25 "high-end" cars that were going to be sold at the auction. Police declined to say which parts were stolen and their exact value, but that he stole "many thousands of dollars worth."

The security officer was taken to Lancaster General Hospital, treated for minor injuries and released, police said.

Police along the Pennsylvania Turnpike were notified of the incident. The man was stopped along the turnpike by state police in Chester County, taken into custody and returned to Penn Township Police.

The stolen car parts were recovered in his vehicle, police said.

He was also charged with theft by unlawful taking, theft from a motor vehicle and causing an accident involving death or personal injury, police said.

The man was arraigned and committed to Lancaster County Prison in lieu of \$100,000 bail, police said.

The man was an employee of a car dealer and had made legitimate purchases at the auto auction in the past, police said.

Intelligencer Journal

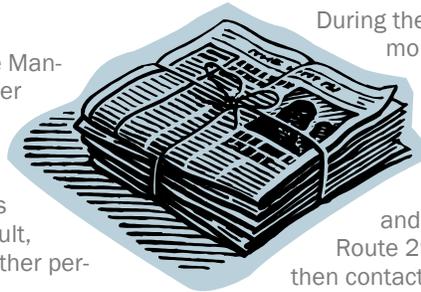
Towing site yields stolen cars

Hunlock Twp.—State police investigating a theft of 10 cars and trucks that were left on area roadways after they became disabled discovered several of the vehicles on the property of a local towing operating, according to a search warrant.

The search, conducted at Orval's Towing Service on Garden Drive, was part of an ongoing investigation into the theft of vehicles in various areas of Luzerne and Lackawanna counties over the past five months.

According to the search warrant affidavit, the search of Orval's was prompted after one of the auto theft victims visited the towing and salvage operator and found his vehicle there.

State police at the Wyoming and Dunmore barracks and the Hanover Township Police Department began investigating the thefts in January after the owner of a 1996 Lumina that became disabled along Interstate 81 near exit 170 reported returning to retrieve the vehicle, only to find it was missing.



During the next two months, police received reports of nine more disabled vehicles that were missing. In each case, the owners had contacted local police departments and learned the vehicles had not been removed under police authority.

One of the victims visited Orval's Towing Service and found his vehicle which was stolen from state Route 29 in Plymouth Township the day before. The owner then contacted state police, who arrived and discovered in plain view two other vehicles that had been reported stolen. Police then obtained a search warrant.

That vehicle and five other vehicles were seized from the business, according to the search warrant.

The Times Leader

Three teens charged with stealing, damaging vehicles

Three teenagers are accused of stealing four vehicles in Bradford County and then taking them to a rock quarry and damaging them, police said.

The vehicles were stolen from the owners' properties, state police said. All four vehicles were subsequently discovered the same day they were taken in a rock quarry along state Route 414 in Franklin Township, state police at Towanda said.

All of the vehicles sustained moderate to severe damage, state police at Towanda said. The teenagers were an 18-year-old male, a 17-year-old male, and a 16-year-old-male, police said.

The 18-year-old male was charged with theft by unlawful taking, receiving stolen property, and criminal mischief, police said. He was sent to Bradford County jail in lieu of \$85,000 bail, police said. Charges against the other two teenagers were filed before the Bradford County Probation Department, police said.

Daily Review