

## *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: THE YEAR IN REVIEW*

**The early days of auto theft prevention.** Auto theft prevention authorities (ATPAs) first began appearing in the late 1980s. They were the result of cooperative efforts among legislators, the auto insurance industry, police, prosecutors, courts and businesses affected by vehicular crimes, such as car rental companies. Since the first ATPA was established in Michigan, 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.

**The Authority in Pennsylvania: six-year record of reducing auto theft.**

The Authority, created under Act 171 of 1994, has supplied 15 law enforcement/investigative units with grant funding since 1996. This funding comes from annual assessments of auto insurance companies in Pennsylvania. No taxpayer dollars have ever been used. To date, these agencies have been awarded more than \$35.8 million to help local auto theft units investigate and prosecute auto theft through additional personnel, modernized equipment, automobiles, special training seminars and public outreach measures.

The Uniform Crime Report (UCR), compiled each year by the Pennsylvania State Police, is the most complete and reliable indicator of criminal activity available. The 2002 UCR data shows that motor vehicle theft declined in 2002 for the sixth straight year, roughly the same period the Authority has been in existence.

For the first time since its inception, the Authority dedicated this year to reaching the 18- to 25-year-old audience. Research commissioned by the Authority indicated that members of this target group are nonchalant with regard to protecting their cars from being stolen. Through a new brochure developed in 2002 to be distributed on college campuses and venues frequented by this age group—and by new radio advertising to debut in 2003—the Authority is taking proactive steps to reach this vulnerable population.

In 2002, law enforcement officials recovered stolen vehicles worth \$22.4 million and parts estimated at \$1.5 million. The total value recovered since 1996 in Pennsylvania is \$156.6 million in stolen vehicles and \$10.7 million in parts. Clearly, the grantees are having an impact on auto theft and vehicle recovery in Pennsylvania.

