

The Authority continued to reach out to new groups and organizations as partners in motor vehicle theft prevention. The Department of Education, PENNDOT and the AAA Mid-Atlantic Insurance Group joined forces with the Authority on separate initiatives to help educate about and prevent auto theft.

Police and the Northeast Regional Task Force to hold mock auto thefts at convenience stores in Erie and Scranton in the late summer and fall.

Both Erie and Scranton law enforcement officials had noticed an increase in car thefts from convenience store

PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRESSIVE METHODS HELP PREVENT AUTO THEFT.

Officials from the Department of Education met with the Authority in the summer to discuss ways to reach teenage drivers. Subsequently, the Department of Education sent letters to various driver training schools and instructor training programs encouraging these groups to incorporate auto theft prevention messages into their lesson plans. The Authority will continue to communicate ideas and strategies to the Department of Education.

PENNDOT and the AAA Mid-Atlantic Insurance Group partnered with the Authority in 2002 to offer VIN etching to their customers and members. Both organizations have expressed their willingness and desire to continue investing in vehicle protection initiatives in 2003. In addition, the AAA Central Penn Auto Club will offer VIN etching programs to all of its offices in nine counties including Dauphin, Cumberland, Perry, Adams, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon and Mifflin.

The Authority turned to drama and live action in 2002 as a way to illustrate how easy it is to steal a car not secured by its owner. The Authority partnered with the Erie Bureau of

parking lots. To help combat this growing problem, the Authority created the “Lock it or Lose it” convenience store initiative. Neiman Group designed a bold black and yellow sticker for convenience store windows that states, “Lock it or Lose it. Take your Keys. Lock your Car.”

The Erie and Scranton grantees then worked with local convenience stores to coordinate mock auto thefts in which plain-clothes police officers would play victim and thief in a car theft scenario. The purpose was to show the public—through extensive media coverage—how quickly a car can be stolen if left running. All three network affiliates plus the *Erie Times-News* covered the event in Erie; in Scranton, the mock auto theft received coverage by two of the three network affiliates plus the *Scranton Times*.

The successful media coverage and resulting cooperation with additional convenience store chains in Scranton and Erie has led other grantees to want to coordinate “Lock it or Lose it” programs in their areas, too. We look forward to more successful partnerships in 2003.