



# STRENGTHENING TIES

Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority  
2007 Annual Report

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## TIGHTENING THE BONDS

To the Honorable Governor Edward G. Rendell and Members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly: Each year I proudly report the continued success of the Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority. After all, cutting auto theft by nearly 50 percent in the Commonwealth since our inception is something to be proud of!

This year, I would like to share with you some new partnerships that have been woven into the fabric of our organization as we focused on making new connections and strengthening current ties.

Thanks to our long-term partners—our grantees—we are able to celebrate another year of declining auto theft rates. In 2007, 26,048 vehicles were stolen\*; the Authority's law enforcement partners made or assisted in the arrests of 1,351 individuals and had 606 convictions. Their investigative efforts led to the recovery of \$43.5 million worth of stolen vehicles and parts. Now, more than ever, auto theft cases cross county borders with casework intertwined. Thankfully, our network of grantees can

more easily work together and share the responsibility of fighting auto theft in Pennsylvania with the Authority's support. Creating and expanding this spirit of cooperation has been our focus as we lay the groundwork for new ways for grantees to communicate, investigate and stop auto theft.

We have recognized that auto thieves may learn to outsmart new anti-theft technologies almost as quickly as they are invented. To keep our officers up to date as experts in their field, the Authority this year—for the first time—held a two-day training conference, bringing insurance industry special investigative units and law enforcement together to share knowledge and renew their commitment to partnership.

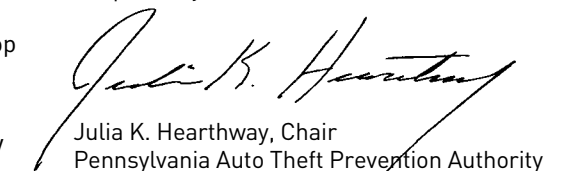
To help our network of law enforcement officers that continues to combat auto theft across the entire Commonwealth, the Authority introduced a new public awareness

campaign in the southeast region of Pennsylvania where more than 40% of the auto thefts occur. The Authority partnered with the Philadelphia Eagles to launch "75 Tips for the Tailgater," introducing a new take on traditional auto theft prevention tips. Together, the Authority and the Eagles reached millions of Commonwealth residents and showed them that protecting your ride can be as rewarding as rooting for your favorite team.

Fighting auto theft continues to be a challenge, but with our coordinated efforts statewide, we are keeping thieves at bay. As each year passes, we will continue to strengthen the organization and establish new partnerships and technologies, as well as encourage drivers of all ages to guard themselves against auto theft through effective outreach efforts.

Together, we will continue to protect the citizens of Pennsylvania from auto theft, making it a safer place to drive.

Respectfully,

  
Julia K. Hearthway, Chair  
Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority

\* Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Definition: Motor vehicle theft is the illegal taking of a motor vehicle, or driving the vehicle without the owner's consent. Attempted motor vehicle thefts are included. Includes theft of motor-driven vehicles, such as autos, trucks, buses, motorcycles, motor scooters and snowmobiles. Data accurate as of 2/25/08. UCR numbers are subject to continual edit and not complete until the UCR Annual Report is compiled. The 2007 UCR Annual Report is expected October 2008.

*Our grantees made 1,351 arrests, and there were 606 convictions.*

## LINING UP AN INSPIRED EFFORT

Auto theft is a serious and occasionally violent crime. It is invasive and shocking and leaves victims with a heart-in-their-throat feeling of helplessness. But thieves don't care.

*23% of the 1,351 individuals arrested were juvenile perpetrators.*

They steal cars for transportation, to sell or exchange for drugs, to strip and sell in-demand parts and to commit other serious and violent crimes. For 12 years, we have tried to stop them by staying one step ahead and by working with law enforcement as well as the driving community to get the word out about new trends in auto theft and how NOT to become a statistic.

As thieves become smarter, more organized and more aggressive, we believe we need to build our strength in numbers. In 2007, we examined each of our law enforcement and community partners and searched for ways to strengthen the framework of our existing network. We also identified and cultivated relationships with new partners, adding to our committed group working to reduce auto theft. Our organization and our partners know that when cars are stolen, insurance rates go up, and we all pay the price. The Auto Theft Prevention Authority is funded through an assessment of nearly 400 insurance companies doing business in Pennsylvania and uses no tax dollars.

The Authority, created under Act 171 of 1994, has supplied law enforcement/investigative units with grant funding since 1996. To date, these agencies have been awarded more than \$60.7 million to help local and state 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 2007 UCR data shows that motor vehicle theft declined again in 2007, and since the ATPA's inception in 1995, annual auto-theft rates have declined by nearly 50 percent.

In 2007, law enforcement officials recovered stolen vehicles worth \$42.2 million and parts estimated at \$1.3 million. For every dollar spent on grants in fiscal year '06-'07, the insurance industry realizes a return on investment of \$8.21 in vehicles and parts recovered. Since its inception (1995), the ATPA has recovered stolen vehicles and parts worth \$341 million. Clearly, the grantees are having an impact on auto theft and vehicle recovery in Pennsylvania.



## CONNECTING ACROSS BORDERS

The Authority funds law enforcement/investigative units, including the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), which distributes its grant funds to three regional task forces. Authority funds support investigative activities by the grantees, as well as public outreach activities by two additional organizations.

In 2007, four of our grantee partners hosted free public VINgraving events while we began offering the do-it-yourself VINgraving kits free of charge to Pennsylvania drivers at our website, [watchyourcar.org](http://watchyourcar.org).

**Allegheny County District Attorney's Office**

The Allegheny County District Attorney's Office joined the Authority in September 1998. The unit, which consists of an assistant district attorney and two paralegals, is operating under a one-year grant renewal totaling more than \$178,370 through June 2008.

**Delaware County District Attorney's Office**

The Delaware County District Attorney's Office received its first grant to establish an auto theft unit in 1996. The unit is operating under a two-year grant renewal totaling more than \$504,438 through June 2009. An assistant district attorney, a detective and an analyst support the unit. Grant funds help pay overtime expenses for four police officers from local departments. The funds also cover equipment and coordination with local law enforcement units.

**City of Erie Bureau of Police**

The City of Erie Bureau of Police was initially funded in 1997 and is operating with a two-year grant extension through June 2009 totaling \$186,484. The Erie Auto Theft Unit has one officer working closely with the Pennsylvania State Police to investigate and arrest auto thieves.

**Harrisburg Bureau of Police**

The Harrisburg Bureau of Police has had an active auto theft unit since it received its first grant in 1997. The unit is operating with a two-year grant of \$356,583 through June 2008. Two investigators coordinate anti-theft measures in Harrisburg, where there has been a major problem with drug-related auto thefts.

**Lancaster City Police**

The Lancaster City Police joined the list of grantee organizations in July 2002. The unit, which consists of two investigators and a part-time assistant district attorney, received a two-year grant extension totaling \$571,080 through June 2008.

**Lehigh County District Attorney's Office**

The Lehigh County District Attorney's Office received an initial grant in 1996. Currently, it is operating its auto theft task force under a two-year grant renewal totaling more than \$915,752 through June 2008. The unit, which also has investigative powers in neighboring Northampton County, has a prosecutor, secretary and four full-time investigators from local police departments.

**Northeastern PA Task Force**

The Northeastern PA Task Force is a unique, multi-jurisdictional program administered by the Lackawanna County District Attorney's Office. First funded in 1996, the unit is operating on a two-year grant of \$544,880 through June 2008. Supported by an assistant district attorney, an administrator, two full-time and four part-time detectives and a secretary, this far-reaching investigative unit coordinates efforts in 11 counties, including Lackawanna, Luzerne, Pike, Susquehanna, Bradford, Monroe, Wayne, Wyoming, Sullivan, Columbia and Carbon.

**Pennsylvania State Police Eastern, Central and Western Regional Task Forces**

The Pennsylvania State Police Eastern, Central and Western Regional Task Forces

oversee statewide auto-theft efforts. Initially granted funds in 1996, the units received a two-year extension totaling over \$3.8 million through June 2009. The regional task forces concentrate on high-theft areas around Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and central and northeastern Pennsylvania. The grant funds cover salaries of 12 county detectives, as well as overtime costs for four state police supervisors and 17 troopers. The funds also cover part-time clerical support in district attorneys' offices, equipment, maintenance, vehicles and other expenses.

**Philadelphia District Attorney's Office**

The Philadelphia District Attorney's Office received funding for their juvenile initiative in 2003. The unit is operating on a one-year extension totaling \$341,926 through mid-2008. The funds support one detective, one prosecutor, two trial assistants and two law clerks. The funds are used to continue their juvenile auto theft diversion program in Philadelphia.

**Philadelphia Police Department**

The Philadelphia Police Department was initially funded in 1996 and operates its Major Crimes Auto Theft Unit with a two-year grant extension totaling more than \$2.9 million through mid-2008. One arm of the unit concentrates on chop shop and salvage yard investigations, while another investigates all other auto-theft cases. Funding from the Authority added eight police officers and four detectives, doubling the resources available prior to the Authority's grant funding.

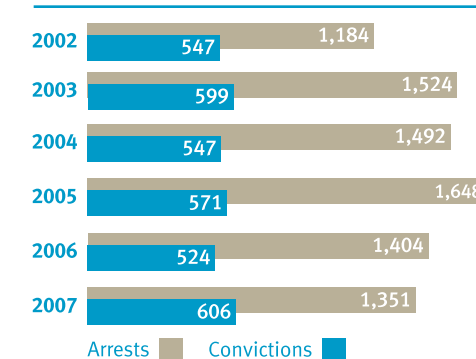
**Pittsburgh City Police Department**

The Pittsburgh City Police Department received its first grant in 1996. Currently, it is using a \$491,748 grant extension through mid-2008. The funding increased its auto-theft squad by three detectives (for a total of six detectives), modernized equipment and paid for office space and automobiles.

**York County District Attorney's Office**

The York County District Attorney's Office first received funding in 1996 and was approved for more than \$112,036 to extend its operation through mid-2008. Supported by a detective, the unit developed auto theft reporting, investigation and prosecution protocol for countywide use.

**Individuals Arrested and Convicted**



There are also two public outreach programs funded by the Authority:

**Good Shepherd Mediation Program**

The Good Shepherd Mediation Program received its first grant in 2004. Currently,

it is funded through June 2008 with a grant of \$100,000. After solidifying a partnership with the Philadelphia District Attorney's Juvenile Court Division, they have successfully developed and implemented a diversion program for first-time juvenile offenders involved in vehicle theft. Good Shepherd also facilitates an in-school theft

prevention seminar targeted toward at-risk youth in Philadelphia.

**Pennsylvania Anti-Car-Theft Committee**

The Pennsylvania Anti-Car Theft Committee (PACT) received its first one-year grant in 1997 and is currently working under a two-year grant totaling \$93,500 through mid-2008. PACT operates a speakers bureau.

**Impact of Grantees' Combined Efforts**

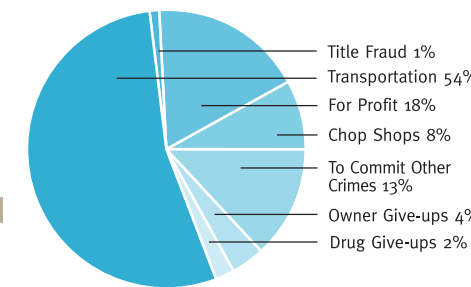
Grants Awarded vs. Estimated Value of Recovered Vehicles, Parts and Restitution. Total grants from 2002-2007: \$34M

Value of Recovered	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total
Vehicles	\$24.9M	\$26.1M	\$26.5M	\$32.2M	\$37.8M	\$42.2M	\$189.7M
Parts	\$1.5M	\$1.8M	\$1.0M	\$1.4M	\$1.3M	\$1.3M	\$8.3M
Total value of recovered vehicles/parts 2002-2007							\$198M

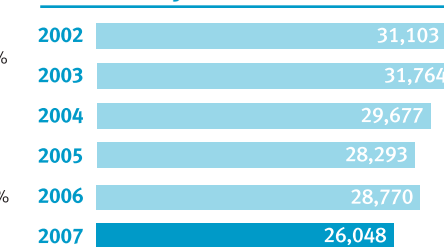
  

Sentences	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total
Restitution	\$1,034,113	\$2,388,217	\$1,184,291	\$1,351,885	\$1,435,779	\$950,573	\$8,344,858

**Types of Arrests 2007**



**Motor Vehicle Thefts in Pennsylvania\***



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## CLOSING THE LOOP

It's no secret that one of the most important tools in reducing vehicle theft is training—for law enforcement and vehicle owners alike. In 2007, the Authority educated 887 Pennsylvania law enforcement officers through its auto theft identification and investigation courses.

The Authority's curriculum includes a series of six training courses, which are offered free to Pennsylvania law enforcement agencies. Each program lasts two to four hours and is targeted to the professional police officer. The instructor, Joseph Datesman, is a retired Pennsylvania State Police lieutenant who spent 33 years of his career investigating and training other investigators on vehicle theft and related subjects.

### Auto Theft 100-Level Courses

Auto Theft 101 is designed to teach patrol officers what to look for during traffic stops and update them on laws concerning auto-theft-related crime. The course also includes information about VIN numbers, titles and license plates, as well as methods of theft.

Auto Theft 102 was developed for officers who will be participating in stolen vehicle investigations. The course

### Heavy Equipment Theft Training

In response to an increase in heavy equipment theft, the ATPA hosted heavy equipment theft training with the Cranberry Township Police Department in December. The two-day hands-on training was presented by an expert in the field of heavy equipment theft, George Kleinsteinber, and involved more than 100 police officers from local and state departments. The training was very well received and future classes are planned statewide.

*This year, the Authority's training conference was open to law enforcement grantees and their insurance industry special investigator counterparts.*

addresses vehicle identification and methods used to alter VINs.

Auto Theft 103 focuses on identifying all-terrain vehicles.

Auto Theft 104 addresses motorcycle identification.

Auto Theft 105 discusses heavy equipment identification.

Auto Theft 106 teaches officers how to identify trucks, tractors and semi-trailers.

### Annual Training Conference

The Authority also hosts an annual training conference. In the past, the conference was open to all grantees and featured special guests who provided law enforcement training sessions beyond what is offered through the Authority's standard curriculum.

This year, the Authority's training conference was open to law enforcement grantees and their insurance industry special investigator counterparts. In the spirit of partnership, conference attendees met in Hershey for two days to learn about auto theft investigative techniques. In the evening, both groups had the opportunity to network and discuss auto theft trends from their respective corners of the state.

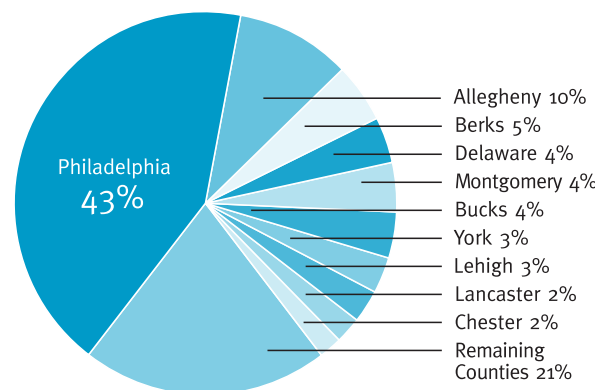
The training sessions were presented by Mike Bender of Bender Enterprises, who specializes in emerging technologies and innovative investigative techniques. Bob Jagoe and Chris McDonald from the Baltimore Regional Auto Theft Team (RATT) assisted in the presentations and helped facilitate the hands-on portion of the conference.

Conference attendees took part in training sessions that ranged from keyless entry, smart keys, transponder and immobilizer overviews to global trends that affect auto theft in the United States.

## CREATING AN INFLUENTIAL LINK

Each year the Authority searches for new and innovative ways to educate the public about reducing the risk of becoming a victim of auto theft. This year, we focused our efforts in the Southeast region of Pennsylvania because 43 percent of the state's auto thefts occur in and around Philadelphia.

### Thefts by County



The Philadelphia region is the most densely populated and most expensive media market in Pennsylvania. Our challenge was to develop a message that broke through the resulting advertising clutter, could be produced in a cost-effective manner and was presented in a way that made a lasting impression with the region's drivers. As a result, the ATPA looked to establish a strategic partnership with the Philadelphia Eagles, an organization with a well-established voice in the area.

Continuing his reputation as a community activist, linebacker Takeo Spikes helped drive home the message that when it comes to auto theft, Common Sense Is Your Best Defense!



As the Philadelphia Eagles began their 75th season, the ATPA launched a statewide print, radio and online public relations effort announcing the online and in-stadium campaign that included the Stars and Cars Sweepstakes and 75 Tips for the Tailgater, an interactive presentation of auto theft prevention tips. The contest and tips were hosted at the ATPA's website, [watchyourcar.org](http://watchyourcar.org).

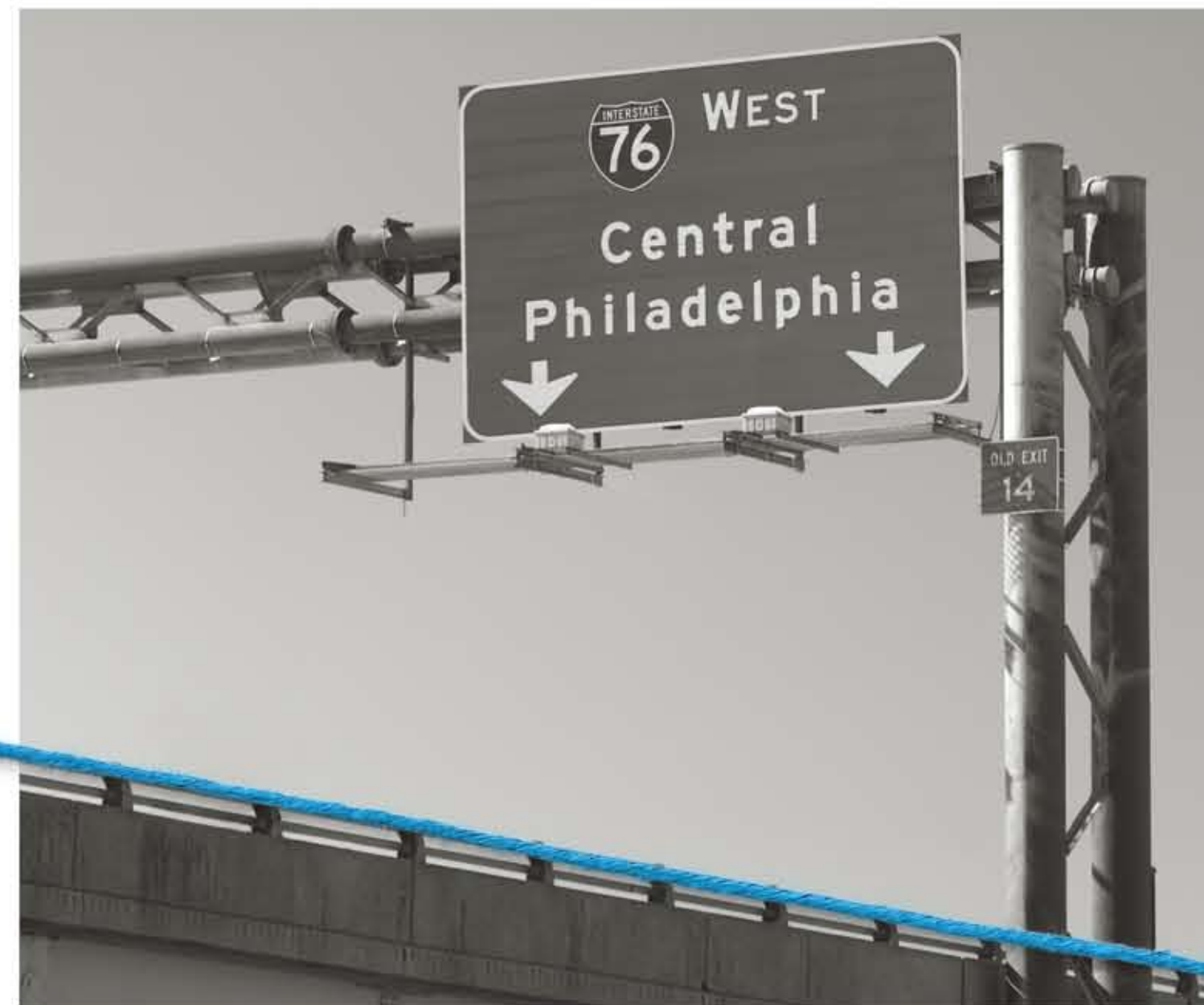
The focal point of the campaign was a fully interactive Internet microsite that urged contest entrants to explore auto theft prevention tips, such as "hot wing sauce on your door handle is not an approved anti-theft device" and "veteran tailgaters know that hiding keys in the car is a ticket to finding an empty spot after the game!" The site was promoted with campaign elements that included advertising on the Eagles' website ([philadelphiaeagles.com](http://philadelphiaeagles.com)) and various in-stadium elements.

The Eagles helped coordinate a partnership with Jeep, who donated a 2007 Jeep Patriot that was wrapped with campaign messaging.

After entering the contest and checking out auto theft prevention tips, entrants received an email from linebacker Takeo Spikes thanking them for entering and wishing them luck. The personalized email urged them to check out theft statistics for the county they live in. Also included was a link to [watchyourcar.org](http://watchyourcar.org) where entrants could request a free VINgraving kit.

For the ATPA, partnering with the Eagles to educate the residents of the southeast region of Pennsylvania was a tremendous opportunity. We succeeded in presenting an auto theft prevention message in a new and exciting way. As the southeast region continues to be the worst area when it comes to auto theft, we will continue to look for ways to educate the public with trusted partners such as the Philadelphia Eagles.

*"hot wing sauce on your door handle is not an approved anti-theft device"*



## STRETCHING THE DOLLARS

Since its inception (1995), the ATPA's funded units have recovered stolen vehicles and parts worth \$341 million. That translates to an impressive return on investment for the insurance industry. In fiscal year '06-'07 alone, \$8.21 in vehicles and parts recovered was returned for every dollar spent on grants.

### Fiscal Year 2006/2007

#### Financial Accounts:

Assessments	\$6,260,949.00
Miscellaneous Income	\$14,707.00
Interest Earned	\$481,368.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$6,757,024.00</b>
Balance Carried Over from Previous Year	\$2,832,209.00
<b>Total Funds Available:</b>	<b>\$9,589,233.00</b>

#### Program Expenses:

Grants Paid	\$5,259,934.00
Public Awareness/Relations	\$301,553.00
Training	\$79,375.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$5,640,862.00</b>

#### Operating Expenses:

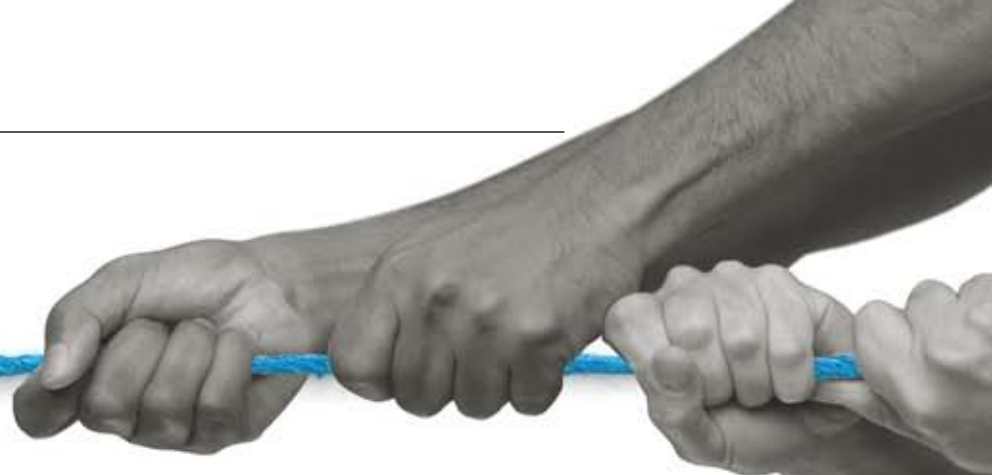
Personnel Expenses	\$141,942.00
Operating Expenses	\$224,035.00
Capital Asset Expenses	\$62,135.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$428,112.00</b>

#### Year-End Balance:

**\$3,520,259.00**

(to be applied to future grants and operational expenditures)

The ATPA operated at 7% of the total assessments collected (\$428,112.00)



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