

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.

