

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.