

LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR

To the Honorable Governor Edward G. Rendell and Members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly:

Once again, it is my pleasure to share with you the continued success of the Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority. Since the organization's inception in 1995, auto theft rates have decreased by more than 60%. We are honored to be part of such a reduction in crime which impacts everyone in the Commonwealth.

In 2009, we celebrated another year of declining auto theft rates. There were 17,656 vehicles stolen in Pennsylvania in 2009.* The Authority's law enforcement partners made and assisted in the arrests of 1,653 individuals leading to 446 convictions. Their efforts also led to the recovery of \$28.3 million worth of stolen vehicles and parts.

Our grantees share the responsibility of fighting auto theft in Pennsylvania, and they have more than stepped up to the challenge. A cooperative approach to solving cases has been the focus as our grantees work together to investigate and stop auto theft. Auto theft cases cross jurisdictional borders as auto thieves know no boundaries. Car thieves are becoming more organized, which means the organized efforts between the funded grantee units will be the key to addressing an increase in organized auto theft activity.

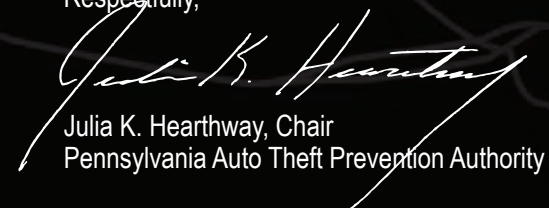
With the far-reaching nature of auto theft today, having our network of trained auto theft investigators is crucial in addressing this evolution in the crime of auto theft itself. A vehicle stolen in Pennsylvania can be quickly sold in another state or even another country, oftentimes with its identity changed or altered. Another version of the crime is when a vehicle is stolen in another state and brought to the Commonwealth where its identity is changed and sold to an unsuspecting consumer. In either scenario, the crime is complicated and requires dedicated resources to address it.

We have recognized that auto thieves may learn to out-smart new anti-theft technologies just as quickly as they are invented. To keep auto theft investigators up-to-date and experts in their field, the Authority provides and supports training throughout the year. We also offer comprehensive auto theft training to all law enforcement agencies in the state, with courses ranging from basic vehicle identification to specialized instruction on tractor-trailer, motorcycle and heavy equipment theft.

Investigating the crime of auto theft is only one side of the solution to fighting auto theft. Taking steps to prevent the crime before it happens is just as important. Even with the increase in anti-theft technology, systems are rendered useless in protecting the vehicle if the key is left in the ignition. Law enforcement can only do so much ... the driving public needs to do their part as well to continue impacting auto theft rates in PA. That is why the Authority continues to educate and remind drivers about protecting themselves from becoming a victim through public awareness messaging throughout the year.

Fighting auto theft continues to be a challenge; but, with our coordinated efforts with law enforcement and public awareness, we are keeping thieves at bay. As each year passes, we continue our mission to efficiently and effectively reduce and prevent auto theft in the Commonwealth.

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 finalized for publication on 03/08/10. UCR numbers are subject to continual edit and not complete until the UCR Annual Report is compiled. The 2009 UCR Annual Report is expected October 2010.

YOUR KEY TO **AUTO THEFT** PREVENTION

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