

PUBLIC AWARENESS/ PREVENTION

PUBLIC AWARENESS INITIATIVE

Each year, the Authority encourages Pennsylvania drivers to protect their vehicles from theft. Our public awareness and educational programs are designed to empower vehicle owners to reduce their risk of becoming a victim, take steps to secure their vehicle and learn that auto theft prevention begins with common sense. One of the most important messages we can provide to Pennsylvania drivers is to always "Lock your car and take your keys."

In 2009, the Authority created and delivered prevention messaging through localized public awareness campaigns at key times throughout the year. The campaigns were designed to remind drivers to lock their vehicles, take the keys, never leave vehicles running/unattended, and to never leave valuables in plain view (like packages, cell phones, GPS units, etc.).

Messaging was targeted at drivers in high-theft areas around the state when their vehicles are top-of-mind – while drivers are actually in their vehicles. Radio commercials, traffic spots, and interviews with radio personalities were delivered during peak drive-times to remind drivers of the campaign's intended message.

In 2009, there were two public awareness/prevention campaigns – the summer-time and the winter/holiday season. These timeframes were selected as drivers tend to exhibit certain behaviors that put them more at risk for becoming a victim of auto theft. During these seasons of the year, we see an increase in drivers leaving their vehicles running, unattended to keep the inside of their vehicles comfortable. The holiday season is also prime time for thieves to do a little shopping of their own. They look for vehicles with packages and personal items in plain view and use the frenzy of holiday activity to their advantage – scanning for frazzled shoppers who leave their vehicles unlocked. During the holiday season, we added a few additional elements with the radio stations to reach holiday shoppers.

YOUNG DRIVER EDUCATION PROGRAM

To further our vehicle theft prevention goal, the Authority developed a training program for teen drivers to teach auto theft prevention techniques. The concept behind developing something for the young driver is that when they learn good habits at a young age, they will most likely carry those habits through to adulthood.

The DVD and lesson plan for young drivers was delivered, free-of-charge, to driver education programs in all of the schools across the state. To increase the flexibility of the program and to make sure more students receive the message, the program was converted in 2009 to a web-based lesson plan to allow driver education teachers the flexibility of assigning the lesson plan as homework for students. The program was designed with input from driver education teachers and students to ensure the program was received well and that it would be used by its intended audience. A formal launch of the program, in cooperation with the Department of Education, will occur in 2010.

VINGRAVING PROGRAM

The Authority sponsored and participated in several VINgraving events across the Commonwealth in 2009. The concept behind VINgraving is simple - the Vehicle Identification Number or VIN number of a vehicle is chemically-etched onto all windows of a vehicle as a means of theft prevention. If a thief intends to steal a vehicle to dismantle it for parts, he or she would have to replace all windows of the vehicle because the VIN would be etched into all windows of a VINgraved vehicle. Replacing the glass on a vehicle can be very expensive and time-consuming, so a thief would most likely pass on a VINgraved vehicle. The Authority also offers free do-it-yourself VINgraving kits on their website (www.watchyourcar.org).

PUBLIC OUTREACH/ PREVENTION GRANTS

The Authority funds two public outreach grantees that are integrated in the community and work to prevent thefts on a grassroots level.

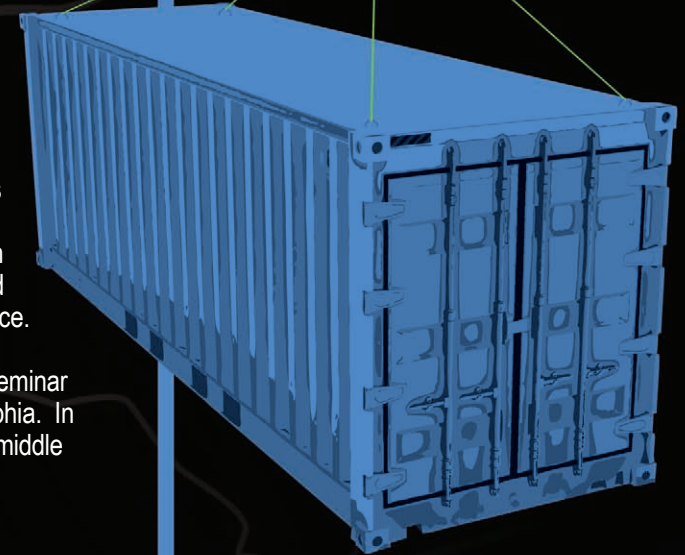
GOOD SHEPHERD MEDIATION PROGRAM

The Good Shepherd Mediation Program received its first grant in 2004. Currently, it is funded through June 2010 with a grant of \$96,928. After solidifying a partnership with the Philadelphia District Attorney's Juvenile Court Division, the program has successfully developed and implemented a diversion program for first-time juvenile offenders involved in vehicle theft. In 2009, it worked intensively with 42 first-time juvenile offenders in order to reduce the likelihood that they would commit future delinquent acts. Of the juvenile offenders who completed the program in 2009, 88% have not been re-arrested. Through the program, Good Shepherd has issued more than 305 hours of community service. Additionally, the organization continually facilitates an in-school theft prevention seminar targeted toward at-risk youth in Philadelphia. In 2009, Good Shepherd worked with 184 middle school youths in an effort to reduce the chances of vehicle theft behavior among young people in Philadelphia.

PENNSYLVANIA ANTI-CAR THEFT COMMITTEE

The Pennsylvania Anti-Car Theft Committee (PACT) received its first one-year grant in 1997 and worked under a two-year grant totaling \$93,500 through June 2009. PACT operated a speakers bureau designed to educate civic organizations and community groups.

New Jersey
SHIPPING OUT



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