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## ATPA Welcomes Charles H. Ramsey

The ATPA would like to welcome their newest board member, Charles H. Ramsey, newly appointed Commissioner of the Philadelphia Police Department and former Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia. The ATPA will surely benefit from Ramsey's experience during his distinguished career as a law enforcement professional and policy maker.

Nearly 40% of Pennsylvania's auto thefts occur each year in Philadelphia and, as a result, the city carries the Commonwealth in terms of auto theft. In a recent discussion with the ATPA, Ramsey acknowledged that, "If the auto theft rate in Philadelphia increases, then the state follows suit. Fortunately, the decreases in auto theft in the city have been significant. YTD 2008, there has been a 20% reduction in auto theft as compared to the same period last year." Stopping auto theft in Philadelphia is a combined effort of effective law enforcement and prevention programs—and it has to be.



*Charles H. Ramsey, Commissioner,  
Philadelphia Police Department*

**Ramsey, continued on Pg. 3**

## Message from the Executive Director



The arrival of spring has ushered in warmer temperatures in Pennsylvania. That means it is time to put away the winter jackets and sweaters; begin spring cleaning; and tune up the lawn mower. As you accomplish these customary chores, take time to think about the simple and effective things you can do to protect your vehicle from being stolen.

In this issue of our newsletter, we happily welcome our newest board member, Charles H. Ramsey, Commissioner of the Philadelphia Police Department. His distinguished career as a law enforcement professional and policy maker will surely be an asset to the ATPA.

Just as the end of winter ushered in warmer spring temperatures, the end of the calendar year closed one chapter in Pennsylvania auto theft history and marked the beginning of a new one. Preparing the recently published 2007 ATPA annual report, titled "Strengthening Ties," gave us the opportunity to reflect on our past achievements and look to the future of our mission. We share many of the key headlines and statistics in this newsletter, but a full electronic copy of the report can be viewed at [www.watchyourcar.org](http://www.watchyourcar.org).

Our grantees and partners have continued their work fighting auto theft on the local and regional level. Their hard work and dedication are paying off! 2007 marked the highest one-year reduction in auto theft in state history, as well as reaching the 50% reduction in auto theft rates in the Commonwealth since our inception in 1995.

Spring is a season of renewal. Leaves turn green, flowers bloom and wildlife reemerges from hibernation. For the ATPA, spring is also a time of renewal as we plan for our future partnerships, public awareness activity and constantly strive to reinvent how we combat and prevent auto theft in Pennsylvania.

Our work is cut out for us, but it is also time for Pennsylvania motorists to step up to the plate. This spring, do your part by encouraging drivers to lock their cars and take their keys; tell them to invest in an after market alarm; and remind your neighbors that if they have a garage, use it—even if it means making room for the car and the lawnmower!

Sincerely,



Michelle L. Staton  
Executive Director, Auto Theft Prevention Authority

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May 31, 2008

August 3 - 7, 2008



Fall, 2008

## Mark Your Calendars

### FREE VINgraving Community Event — York, PA

The York County District Attorney's Office is sponsoring a free VINgraving event at the York Galleria Mall from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. For more information, visit [www.watchyourcar.org](http://www.watchyourcar.org).

### International Association of Auto Theft Investigators Annual Conference

The 2008 IAATI annual conference will be held in Sydney, Australia. The conference is expected to attract over 350 delegates from all parts of the world to discuss current vehicle theft issues and trends, prevention initiatives, the latest technological and policy solutions, and practical training in vehicle theft detection and investigation.

For more information or to register, visit [www.iaatius.org](http://www.iaatius.org).

### FREE VINgraving Community Event — Bensalem, PA

The Pennsylvania State Police Eastern Task Force will be sponsoring a free VINgraving event at the Philadelphia Park race-track. Date and time is to be determined.

For more information and the full VINgraving schedule, visit [www.watchyourcar.org](http://www.watchyourcar.org).

## Ramsey, continued from front page

The "citizens in Philadelphia are aware of the risk of falling victim to auto theft...but complacency comes with time," said Ramsey. "The Major Crimes Auto Squad, [a grantee of the ATPA,] has addressed this exact issue repeatedly via community meetings, educational programs, training seminars and the media. The Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority has been instrumental in helping us spread that message."

Auto theft is a serious crime. In Philadelphia, Ramsey believes that auto theft is connected to other crimes and that "stolen vehicles are used to facilitate the drug trade...as transportation during other crimes (e.g., murder, rape, assault, burglary... [and have been] used as getaway vehicles)." To combat auto theft, "the Major Crimes Unit Auto Squad is part of a regional joint task force with other local, state and federal agencies that investigates multiple auto theft rings responsible for exporting stolen vehicles out of the country." The ATPA promotes partnership within the law enforcement community and applauds the efforts of the Philadelphia Police Department.

While serving as the Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia, Ramsey dealt significantly with juvenile auto theft offenders. To combat the problem, Ramsey's administration "formed a partnership with Juvenile Court and Juvenile Probation and created a program called Operation Prevent Auto Theft (OPAT)." Currently, the ATPA funds aspects of a similar cooperative program in Philadelphia, coordinating a relationship between the Philadelphia Police Department, the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office and the Good Shepherd Mediation Program.

Commissioner Ramsey joins Col. Jeffery B. Miller, Commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police, as a representative of Pennsylvania law enforcement on the ATPA Board of Directors. The Board is chaired by Julia K. Hearthway, Esq., Chief Deputy Attorney General—Office of the Attorney General; Alan P. Demers, Vice President, Claims—Nationwide Insurance Company; Ronald L. Price, Claims Manager—State Farm Insurance Company; Judith G. Hopson, Safety and Security Manager—Avis Rent-A-Car and Ronald W. Kosh, Vice President, Public and Government Affairs—AAA Mid Atlantic Insurance Group.

# ATPA Publishes 2007 Annual Report

**ATPA Celebrates Milestones:  
Thefts Down 10% in 2007,  
50% Since Inception of  
Organization**



PA Auto Theft Prevention Authority's 2007 annual report, chairperson's letter to Governor Edward G. Rendell.



Individuals arrested and convicted.



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

In March 2008, the ATPA published their 2007 annual report. The report, designed to highlight a year filled with successes and partnerships, was entitled, "Strengthening Ties." Each year, the ATPA uses the annual report as their official communication to the Pennsylvania law makers who enacted the legislation that created their organization.

2007 marks two milestones for the ATPA. They have seen the highest one-year reduction in thefts, a 10% decrease from 2006. In addition, the ATPA has reached a 50% reduction in thefts since the inception of their organization in 1995!

This outstanding achievement is the result of ongoing coordinated law enforcement/investigative efforts. Since 1996, the ATPA has awarded state and local law enforcement agencies with \$60.7 million in grants to help investigate and prosecute auto

theft. Grant money has provided additional personnel, modernized equipment, automobiles, special training seminars and public outreach measures.

The report contains vital statistics that illuminate the issue of auto theft in Pennsylvania. For example, the ATPA tracks the number of individuals arrested and convicted, the value of recovered vehicles and parts and the value of restitution paid by convicted perpetrators. Of equal importance, and the name sake of this year's report, are the partnerships that the ATPA has developed over their successful history. The tone of the report also hints at new partnerships that are continually being cultivated.

**Report, continued on Pg. 7**



**The ATPA continually strives to find new ways to combat and prevent auto theft in Pennsylvania. Here are a few note-worthy highlights.**

## **ATPA Highlights**

### **Reducing Auto Theft is a Return on Investment**

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.

### **"Stars and Cars" Winners Announced**

The 2007 ATPA/Philadelphia Eagles partnership was a huge success. Fans learned about auto theft and registered for a chance to win Eagles prizes and received personalized auto theft prevention messages. Congratulations to the following winners:

<b>Grand Prize:</b>	<b>Mike Wilson</b>	<b>Media, PA</b>
<b>Runners Up:</b>	Dan Palaferro	Denver, PA
	Andrew Spano	Folcroft, PA
	Matthew Roberts	Reading, PA
	Robert Yarnall	East Stroudsburg, PA
	Denise Stricker	Philadelphia, PA
	Leah Gluchoff	Downingtown, PA
	Bill Messik	Glen Mills, PA
	Holly Harman	Morrisville, PA
	Denis Bartley	King of Prussia, PA
	Robert Garrett	Levittown, PA

### **ATPA Revisits "STOPS" and Surveys Drivers Ed**

In 2006, the ATPA commissioned an auto theft prevention educational video called "STOPS." The video, a parody of Comedy Central's "Reno 911," was distributed with an accompanying lesson plan to all driver education programs in Pennsylvania. The ATPA has conducted a survey of driver education programs and will begin developing new materials to complement "STOPS" and create new methods to teach young drivers to prevent auto theft.

### **ATPA Operates With No Assessment Increase For Two Years Straight**

Each year, the ATPA is authorized by legislation to increase their annual assessment in line with the consumer price index. In 2007, and again in 2008, the ATPA is able to operate efficiently and effectively with no increase in their assessment to the insurance industry.

### **Thank You Fellow NE IAATI Conference Sponsors**

Thank you to the following sponsors who, along with the ATPA, made the 2008 NE IAATI conference a huge success:

LoJack, Manheim, Erie Insurance, The Hartford Insurance Group, National Vehicle Service, ELSAG North America, NY Anti Car Theft and Fraud Association, State Farm Insurance, Donegal Insurance, Magloden, National Insurance Crime Bureau, Finest Golf Society, Winner International, Lackawanna County District Attorney & County Commissioners, AvisBudgetGroup, Used Car Dealers Association of Ontario and Atlantic Autobody and Associates

## NICB Targets Heavy Equipment Theft

In a press release, the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) and Insurance Services Office (ISO) announced their partnership with the National Equipment Register (NER) to share heavy equipment ownership and identification information with law enforcement.

The alliance will make it easier for law enforcement who are involved in heavy equipment theft investigations by utilizing an already fantastic informational resource—local NICB agents—to obtain identification information. Most law enforcement units involved in stolen vehicle investigations work closely

with their NICB agents for identification assistance. “Expanding that relationship to include heavy equipment theft identification assistance is a big step forward and it will streamline efforts for the ATPA-funded units who are involved in heavy equipment theft investigations,” said Michelle Staton, Executive Director of the ATPA.

For more information regarding this partnership, visit [www.nicb.org](http://www.nicb.org).



## In the News

### “Chop shop” suspect faces charges of threatening trooper

A Cook Township man in Westmoreland County faced charges of running a chop shop, threatening to shoot a state trooper and illegally owning a firearm. The suspect was held in connection with a months-long investigation by the State Police Western Regional Auto Theft Task Force and troopers at the Greensburg barracks.

The suspect was charged with operating a chop shop, alteration of vehicle identification numbers, illegally possessing a firearm while a convicted felon, theft, receiving stolen property, harassment and making terroristic threats.

Police allege that the suspect, while repairing a truck in 2006, made a duplicate key and later used the key to steal the car in 2007. The police also allege that the suspect helped a friend with an insurance fraud committed earlier in the year.

*Tribune Review / Pennsylvania State Police, Western Regional Auto Theft Task Force*

### FBI investigates possible ID theft of man accused of car theft

Police know that this incident was not their suspect’s first brush with the law. In fact, he has served time for a series of Main Line ATM robberies and was accused of stealing a car from a Plymouth Township auto dealer.

The suspect was believed to have worked at the Plymouth Township car dealer for a few short weeks and was fired after Philadelphia police arrested the 27-year-old for driving the stolen car. The suspect was also under investigation by the Secret Service for swiping identities to make fake car purchases while he worked at the now defunct Drexel Hill Nissan dealer.

The suspect was held at a county jail on a parole violation and car theft charges.

*NBC10.com Video Report*



### Consumer groups sue justice department over auto database

Congress required the federal government to set up a comprehensive national database covering the title-, theft-, and damage-history of used cars, based on data from insurance companies, junk and salvage yards, and all 50 states. A consumer buying a used car would be able

to instantly check the validity of the car’s title and odometer reading and learn whether it had been stolen or severely damaged in the past. That kind of information would dramatically reduce the amount of auto fraud and save consumers from economic loss. Fifteen years later, the program still hasn’t been implemented.

Public Citizen, a consumer advocacy group, filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Justice, asking the federal district court in San Francisco to force the government to do what Congress required it to do. They were joined in the suit by two other national consumer groups—Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety (CARS) and Consumer Action.

*Public Citizen*

### A thieves’ paradise

Where can you find a place where people leave their wallets, purses, cell phones, navigation systems, or cars unattended and ripe for theft? The answer won’t surprise you; it happens every time they pull off the road to get gas or grab their favorite drink from a convenience store and leave their keys in the ignition or their doors unlocked.

More and more over the last year, gas station safety has moved to the forefront of crime prevention. When customers leave their doors unlocked, it enables a thief to drive up next to the victim’s car, open an unlocked door, and grab any valuables within reach.

*Prevention Works, a Blog by the National Crime Prevention Council*

## Lancaster City Enforces “Keys & Locks”



*Sgt. Michael Branner, spokesperson for the Lancaster City Police, discusses the “Keys & Locks” program with WGAL reporter Carrie Fairchild.*

In Lancaster, PA, during the month of December, there were eight vehicles stolen with the keys left in the vehicle. As a result, officers and detectives from the Lancaster Bureau of Police began enforcement of the “Keys & Locks” city ordinance in early January.

During their first detail, police cited 44 individuals who left their vehicles unlocked and running or unlocked with the keys in the vehicle. One individual was cited for leaving her two children (ages 6 and 9) in the running vehicle unattended.

Their effort to crack down on vulnerable vehicles was highlighted in numerous

news print articles and was the subject of a feature story with WGAL TV reporter Carrie Fairchild. The story illustrated how quickly a thief can steal an unlocked and running vehicle. Fairchild also encouraged viewers to take easy steps to protect their vehicle.

The Lancaster Bureau of Police's Auto Squad is a grantee of the ATPA. Michelle Staton, Executive Director of the ATPA, said that, “While enforcing the ‘Keys & Locks,’ the Lancaster City Police cited over 100 individuals. It is crucial that Pennsylvania motorists lock their cars and take their keys.”

## Report, continued from Pg. 4

Partnerships highlighted in the report include the organization's continued work with their grantees, community VINgraving events, a public awareness partnership with the Philadelphia Eagles and the community based Good Shepherd Mediation Program.

Also of note, the ATPA provides a top-ten list of Pennsylvania counties ranked by the highest percentage of the state's auto theft cases. This year, Philadelphia tops the list

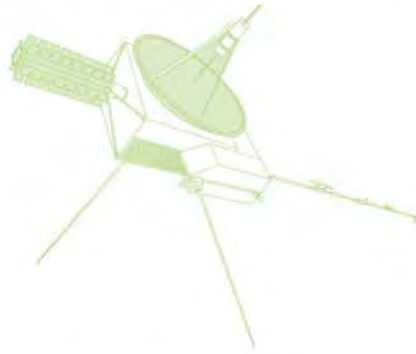
with 43% of the state's thefts. They are followed by Allegheny, Berks, Delaware, Montgomery, Bucks, York, Lehigh, Lancaster and Chester counties.

To order free a copy of “Strengthening Ties,” the ATPA's 2007 annual report, please email your request to [mkandrysawtz@watchyourcar.org](mailto:mkandrysawtz@watchyourcar.org) or view it online at [www.watchyourcar.org](http://www.watchyourcar.org).

## THE AUTHORITY'S GRANTEES

Allegheny County District Attorney's Office  
Delaware County District Attorney's Office  
Erie Bureau of Police  
Good Shepherd Mediation Program  
Harrisburg Bureau of Police  
Lancaster City Police  
Lehigh County District Attorney's Office  
Northeast Regional Task Force of Pennsylvania  
Pennsylvania Anti-Car Theft Committee (PACT)  
Pennsylvania State Police Auto Theft Unit (Central Region)  
Pennsylvania State Police Auto Theft Unit (Eastern Region)  
Pennsylvania State Police Auto Theft Unit (Western Region)  
Philadelphia District Attorney's Office  
Philadelphia Police Department  
Pittsburgh Police Department Auto Squad  
York County District Attorney's Office

## We've gone electronic.



The ATPA has begun electronic distribution of this newsletter with this issue.\*

E-mail us at

[newsletter@watchyourcar.org](mailto:newsletter@watchyourcar.org)  
to receive your electronic copy.

\*The ATPA will continue print distribution of this newsletter.

## THE AUTHORITY

is published by the Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority. The Authority and its grantees receive operational funding from nearly 400 insurance companies operating in Pennsylvania. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact us at:

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