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South Philadelphia VINgraving a Success

On Saturday, June 13, 2009, the ATPA, together with the Philadelphia Police Major Crimes Auto Squad, First Police District and AAA Mid-Atlantic, hosted a successful VINgraving event.

Nearly 300 vehicles were VINgraved and received other free services from AAA at the event located in South Philadelphia. Drivers were notified of the event with the help of Don Tollefson of ESPN Radio 950 and by promotion on Twitter and the AAA blog. The AAA blog featured an interview with ATPA Executive Director, Michelle Staton.

Lt. Haag and Sgt. Buckley of the Philadelphia Police Major Crimes Auto Squad, an ATPA grantee, were instrumental in coordinating the event and encouraging the residents of Philadelphia to come out and receive the free service. The Auto Squad volunteers worked like a well-oiled machine, etching up to 15 vehicles at one time! The success of the event was



VINgraving event volunteers pose for a group picture in front of the AAA event RV. Photo courtesy of AAA Mid-Atlantic.

in large part due to their team work and camaraderie. Ron Kosh, ATPA Board Member and Vice President of Public and Government Affairs at AAA Mid-Atlantic Insurance Group was instrumental in bringing

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Message from the Executive Director

Click to
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Michelle's
Bio



With this issue, we begin exclusive electronic distribution of our newsletter. We have made some minor changes, but all of the features you have come to expect are untouched. Locate the hand icon and click for links to special features and information sources. Do you know someone who would like to receive our newsletter? Tell them to sign up at www.watchyourcar.org.

In this issue, we share with you the success of our recent South Philadelphia VINgraving event, where we etched nearly 300 vehicles. Thank you to the Philadelphia Police Department and AAA Mid-Atlantic for coordinating and hosting such a wonderful event.

Also in this issue, we keep you up-to-date with auto theft-related events, review the elements of NICB & LoJack's Auto Theft Protection Month educational initiative, celebrate two of our award-winning grantees and highlight some notable auto theft-related news items.

If you are hitting the road this summer for a family vacation, keep auto theft prevention tips in mind. When making a pit stop for snacks, fuel or to use an ATM, hide valuables, roll up windows, lock the doors and take your keys. Leaving windows cracked or luggage and GPS units in plain view attract thieves. These types of thefts are preventable – so please take these steps to protect your vehicle.

Have a safe and happy summer.

Sincerely,

Michelle L. Staton
Executive Director, Auto Theft Prevention Authority



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Grantees

Allegheny County District
Attorney's Office

Delaware County District
Attorney's Office

Good Shepherd Mediation
Program

Harrisburg Bureau of Police

Lancaster City Police

Lehigh County District
Attorney's Office

Northeast Regional Task Force

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





Mark Your Calendars

July 18, 2009

Free VINgraving Event

Gateway Park | Coatesville, PA
10:00AM - 2:00PM | No Rain Date

Event sponsored by the Coatesville Police Department, Pennsylvania State Police Eastern Auto Theft Task Force, Chester County District Attorney's Office and AAA Mid-Atlantic.

For more information, visit www.watchyourcar.org

August 10 - 14, 2009

IAATI International Conference

The Westin Westminster | 10600 Westminster Blvd. | Westminster, Colorado

For more information, visit www.iaati.org or contact Det. Jim Kautz at 303.658.4229.

September 23, 2009

Free VINgraving Event

AAA Chambersburg Office | 1666 Lincoln Way East Shopping Center | Chambersburg, PA
9:00AM - 3:30PM | Rain Date: 9/25/09

For more information, call AAA Chambersburg Member Services at 800.222.1469

October 7, 2009

Free VINgraving Event

AAA State College Office | 200 Shiloh Road | State College, PA
9:00AM - 3:30PM | Rain Date: 10/9/09

For more information, call AAA State College Member Services at 800.222.1469

South Philly VINgraving Success, Continued From Page 1

the ATPA and AAA together. Ron was also on-hand at the event to pitch in.

Besides free VINgraving, AAA provided free vehicle battery and engine checks, along with free windshield ding repair. AAA also provided drivers with car care literature.



For a listing of all upcoming VINgraving events, visit www.watchyourcar.org. Motorists who are not able to attend a free event may request a do-it-yourself kit from the ATPA, on their website.

Click to Order a Free Do-It-Yourself VINgraving Kit



Volunteers etch VIN numbers on windows. The group etched nearly 300 vehicles.



A volunteer applies the etching solution to the VIN stencil. Photo courtesy of AAA Mid-Atlantic.



NICB/LoJack: July is Auto Theft Protection Month

**Awareness and Education:
the Focus of Efforts as LoJack
Expands Coverage in PA**

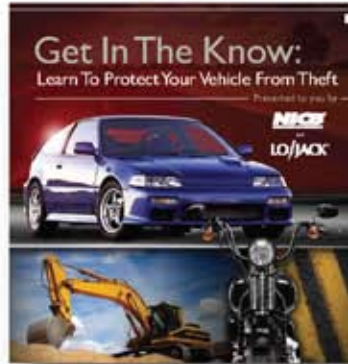


Headquartered in Des Plaines, Ill., the NICB is the nation's leading not-for-profit organization exclusively dedicated to preventing, detecting and defeating insurance fraud and vehicle theft through information analysis, investigations, training, legislative advocacy and public awareness. The NICB is supported by more than 1,000 property and casualty insurance companies and self-insured organizations. NICB member companies wrote nearly \$343 billion in insurance premiums in 2008, or more than 82 percent of the nation's property/casualty insurance. To learn more visit, www.nicb.org.*



LoJack Corporation, the company that invented the stolen vehicle recovery market more than two decades ago, is the global leader in finding and recovering a wide range of mobile assets including cars, construction equipment and motorcycles—having recovered more than \$5 billion USD in stolen assets worldwide. In today's rapidly changing world, LoJack's core competencies are more valuable and more relevant than ever as they are now being applied into new areas, such as the prevention, detection and recovery of stolen cargo and finding and rescuing people with cognitive disorders such as Alzheimer's and autism. LoJack has the proven processes, ultimate technology for recovery—Radio Frequency—and unique integration with law enforcement agencies. LoJack's Stolen Vehicle Recovery System operates in 27 states and the District of Columbia, and in more than 30 countries throughout North America, South America, Europe, Africa and Asia. For more information, visit www.lojack.com.*

*Source: NICB/LoJack press release for Auto Theft Protection Month



**Click to Download
NICB/LoJack's
"Get in the Know"
Brochure**

On June 22, 2009, LoJack and the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) launched their third annual vehicle protection month program and educational initiative.

In a press release issued by the groups, it is mentioned that "In today's tough economy, owners of cars, trucks, motorcycles and heavy equipment need to do everything possible to protect their vehicles from today's clever, professional thieves — particularly during the summer months when vehicle theft rates are at their highest and when many families are on the road enjoying summer vacations."

LoJack and NICB are distributing educational information via podcasts, tweets on their twitter page (twitter.com/TheftProtection), and via a downloadable brochure.

The ATPA encourages drivers to learn how to keep their vehicles safe. The theft protection initiative provides four helpful steps towards vehicle safety:

Step One: Use Common Sense Measures. Don't leave vehicles running unattended.

Step Two: Use Theft Prevention Products. Visible and audible

warning devices keep thieves away.

Step Three: Use Immobilization Devices. Things like smart keys, kill switches and fuel cut-off devices make stealing a vehicle much more difficult.

Step Four: Use a Tracking and Recovery System. Stolen vehicle recovery systems help police track down your vehicle if it is stolen.

In its third year, the protection initiative is providing drivers with useful information during the time of year when driver behavior often puts vehicles at risk for theft. More information can be found at the links below.

Stay informed by following along with Auto Theft Prevention Month



twitter.com/TheftProtection



<http://tinyurl.com/nlsna5>



<http://tinyurl.com/nf29dg>



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

ATPA HOSTS ADVISORY GROUP MEETING WITH GRANTEES & BOARD

On April 22, 2009, the ATPA hosted an advisory group meeting in Harrisburg. The meeting was attended by ATPA grantee supervisors and the ATPA Board of Directors. Grantees reported on regional statistics, current issues and trends.

As each grantee described the types of thefts, investigations and challenges in their respective areas, it became clear that ATPA grantees are working corroboratively to combat auto theft in Pennsylvania. The advisory group meeting is one way the ATPA ensures that the fight against auto theft in Pennsylvania is carried out in a coordinated, efficient way.

PA AUTO THEFT RATES DROP MORE THAN NATIONAL AVERAGE

Earlier this summer, many national news agencies reported preliminary FBI statistics on crime in the United States. National violent crime trends fell 2.5% last year as a result of fewer reported murders, rapes and other violent crimes.

Auto theft is considered a property crime. Nationally, property crimes fell by 1.6%, but increased in the Northeast region, where they rose by 1.3%. Auto theft, specifically, fell by 13.1% nationally. In the Northeast region, auto thefts fell by 11.9%.

In Pennsylvania, auto thefts fell by nearly 15% from 2007 to 2008. Since the inception of the ATPA in 1994, auto thefts have fallen by nearly 60%.

LOJACK INTENDS TO EXPAND COVERAGE TO BERKS, LEHIGH & NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES

LoJack, the stolen vehicle recovery system technology featured in the A&E series "Jacked," will soon be available in Berks, Lehigh and Northampton counties. "Jacked" follows an auto theft task force in Northern New Jersey as they recover stolen vehicles. The technology has already been available in the Philadelphia region for some time. Even though these tracking and recovery systems don't prevent theft, they do make it easier for police to find stolen vehicles.



About the Auto Theft Prevention Authority

theAuthority eNewsletter is published by the Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority. The ATPA 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:

Phone: 717.591.7097 | Media Inquiries: 717.443.1025 | Toll Free: 888.777.ATPA | www.watchyourcar.org

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In the News

As debt grows, desperate car owners turn to fraud

Driven to desperation, a growing number of financially strapped car owners are torching, sinking or ditching their vehicles and then reporting them stolen to cash in on the insurance.

Known as owner give-ups, the scams have increased even as auto thefts dropped nationally — a sign that the deepening recession is pushing the trend.

Such cases can result in felony charges of insurance fraud, making false statements to police and insurance providers, and arson, if the car is burned.

Along with serving prison time, defendants can also be ordered to pay restitution.

The Associated Press

5 with gang ties charged in crime spree in rural Berks, tell police victims are easy pickings, authorities say

Three adults and two teenagers with ties to the Bloods street gang were charged in a series of car thefts, burglaries and armed robberies in northern Berks County, state police said. Members of the ring told troopers they targeted residents in rural areas because they were easy victims.

Ring members stole several vehicles during burglaries at houses in northern Berks. They drove around the rural area until they saw a house that looked empty or a car that was unlocked with the keys inside.

City police from the vice and narcotics section, the gang unit and members of the auto theft unit assisted Tpr. James McCoy and the state police auto theft task force.

Reading Eagle

Police sting shuts down Queens car theft ring

The Queens, NY District Attorney said that police broke up a major auto theft ring allegedly responsible for more than \$400,000 in luxury car thefts from car dealerships.

Eight people were charged in two separate indictments for stealing the cars from the lots and taking them to a holding facility in Brooklyn, replacing the VINs and selling the vehicles.

Astoria Times

Got a Honda Civic, Accord or Acura? Protect it

If you have a Honda Civic or Accord or an Acura - and especially if it was made in the mid-1990s - listen up: Your car is at great risk of being stolen or stripped.

That's the message that came from the Lehigh County District Attorney's Auto Theft and Insurance Fraud Task Force, which reported that in April alone, 37 of the makes were stolen in the Bethlehem and Allentown area. Most of the vehicles are older.

Detective Salvatore Aprile warned motorists to take removable stereo faces out of vehicles, activate alarms, use steering wheel or ignition-locking systems and park in well-lit areas.

The Morning Call

Former Steelers running back Davenport's car stolen, totaled

Former Pittsburgh Steelers running back Najeh Davenport chased a suspected car thief who, police said, drove off in his 1970 Chevrolet Impala when he left it running outside his Carrick home.

The man sped off and struck four parked cars, police said, then got out of the totaled Impala and ran to the parking lot of a grocery store.

The suspect was taken to South Side Hospital before being lodged in the Allegheny County Jail.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Truck/trailer thefts may be related

Police were investigating the theft of an Urban Outfitters trailer filled with as much as \$500,000 worth of merchandise.

Investigators said thieves brought a truck tractor to an Urban Outfitters warehouse near Gap and used it to haul away a trailer loaded with clothing and household items.

In another incident that could be related, a black Freightliner truck tractor was stolen about a mile away from the Urban Outfitters warehouse and distribution center. The value of the trailer was \$25,000.

Lancaster New Era



Two ATPA Grantees Win NE-IAATI Anthony Kane Awards



From L to R: DJ Thompson - President, NE-IAATI, Det. Heather Halstead & Det. Steve Owens - Lancaster City Police Auto Theft Unit. Photo courtesy of Edward Cox.



From L to R: DJ Thompson - President, NE-IAATI, Det. Sgt. Sal Aprile, Det. Eric Brenner, Det. Jeff Bruchak, Det. Sgt. Steve Marshall - Lehigh County Auto Theft Task Force. Photo courtesy of Edward Cox.

ATPA grantees, Lancaster City Police Auto Theft Unit and Lehigh County Auto Theft Task Force, received the Anthony M. Kane Achievement Award from the Northeast Chapter of the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators (NE-IAATI).

The Anthony M. Kane Achievement Award is awarded for exceptional contributions to the field of vehicle theft and fraud investigation. Nominees for the award must be members of the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators.

Det. Heather Halstead and Det. Steve Owens of the Lancaster City Auto Theft Unit worked with a confidential informant to investigate an insurance fraud scheme that reached from New York to Miami. The informant, a tow truck operator, was asked by suspects to dispose of multiple vehicles that were falsely reported stolen. The successful investigation led to multiple arrests and convictions, as well as \$40,000 in restitution ordered.

Det. Sgt. Sal Aprile, Det. Eric Brenner, Det. Jeff Bruchak and Det. Sgt. Steve Marshall of the Lehigh County Auto Theft Task Force investigated the burglaries of several auto dealerships and residences in the Lehigh Valley. The perpetrators would burglarize the properties and steal vehicles, vehicle titles, inspection stickers, weapons and keys to vehicles (which they used to steal vehicles at a later time). In total, there were 25 vehicles stolen worth \$185,000, as well as thousands of dollars worth of other property.

In both cases, effective police work led to the arrest of several perpetrators. Without great police work, these criminals would likely still be in business. Both groups justly received the award for their aggressiveness towards fighting auto theft.

Click for more info about IAATI



Order Free Training Videos

The ATPA offers two training videos relating to owner give-ups. "The Give Up" is tailored for law enforcement professionals, while "The Give Up: Special Victims Unit" is for insurance claims/SIU professionals. Both videos come with related reference material.

Both videos and additional copies of the reference materials are available free-of-charge by calling the ATPA at: 888-777-ATPA.



"The Give Up"

A training video designed for law enforcement professionals, "The Give Up," reviews the basics for spotting and investigating owner give-ups.

"The Give Up: Special Victims Unit"

A training video designed for insurance claims personnel and special investigative units, "The Give Up: Special Victims Unit" reviews the basics for spotting and investigating owner give-ups from the insurance company's point of view.

