

AUTO THEFT PREVENTION PROGRAM

Minnesota Statutes 2003, Section 299A.75

January 1, 2004

How the Program Works

In 1996 the Minnesota Legislature created the Auto Theft Prevention Program. This program is funded from a surcharge that is collected from automobile insurance carriers that provide comprehensive insurance coverage issued in the State of Minnesota. The amount of the surcharge is 50 cents per vehicle for every six months of coverage. Utilizing this funding, the program makes money available through a competitive grant process for activities to address the problem of auto theft in the State of Minnesota.

Mission

To reduce motor vehicle theft and its consequences in the State of Minnesota by funding programs which aid in the:

- Identification of Critical Issues
- Education and Awareness
- Investigation and Prosecution

Auto Thefts in Major Cities and Counties in Minnesota, 1997 and 2002

	1997	2002	%Change 1997-2002
Hennepin County	8,036	5,049	-37.2%
Minneapolis	5,036	3,433	-31.8%
Bloomington	399	242	-39.3%
Brooklyn Park	254	280	10.2%
Anoka County	856	756	-11.7%
Fridley	166	109	-34.3%
Coon Rapids	134	139	3.7%
St. Louis County	481	509	5.8%
Duluth	291	306	5.2%
Rochester	143	180	25.9%
Ramsey County	3,362	2,772	-17.5%
St. Paul	2,628	2,171	-17.4%
Maplewood	183	155	-15.3%
Roseville	140	121	-13.6%
Dakota County	886	591	-33.3%
Burnsville	250	130	-48.0%
W. St. Paul	139	63	-54.7%
Washington County	297	379	27.6%
Wash. Co. Sheriff's Office	80	64	-20.0%
St Cloud	205	171	-16.6%

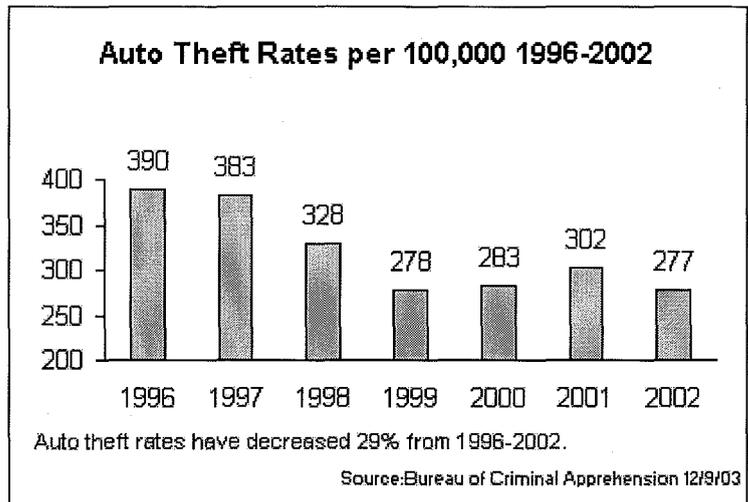
Source: Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, 12/9/03

Extent of Auto Theft in Minnesota

In 2002, there were 13,771 motor vehicles stolen in Minnesota with a value of \$58,552,459. This figure represents eight percent of property crimes in Minnesota and indicates a theft rate of 276 per 100,000 residents.

The top ten stolen automobiles in Minnesota are:

1. Honda Civic
2. Honda Accord
3. Toyota Camry
4. Oldsmobile Cutlass/Supreme/Ciera
5. Chevrolet Compact SUV (Blazer)
6. Buick LeSabre
7. Ford Taurus
8. Oldsmobile Delta 88/Royale
9. Chevrolet Full Size C/K Pick-up
10. Jeep Cherokee/Grand Cherokee

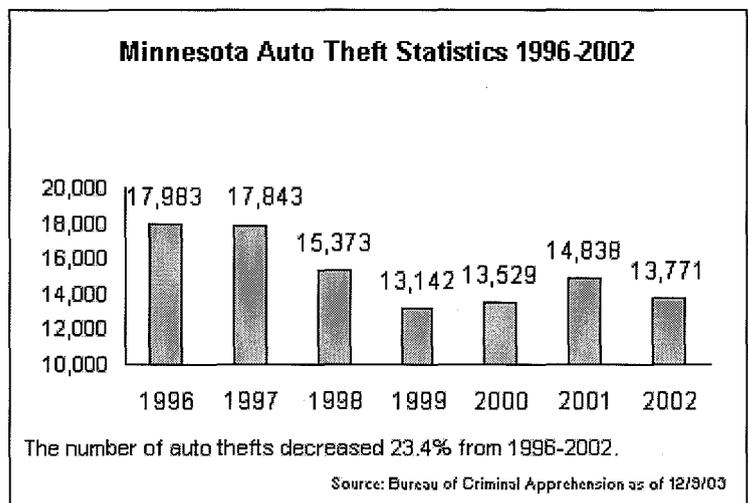


How the Money is Utilized

Every two years, the Department of Public Safety solicits auto theft grant applications from county attorney's offices, law enforcement agencies, and neighborhood, community and business organizations.

Applications may be submitted for the following types of projects:

1. Training (criminal justice, citizen and business, etc.)
2. Public Education (public meetings, literature, public service announcements, neighborhood and business watch promotions, etc.)
3. Programs designed to improve or expand the resources of existing auto theft prevention, investigation, apprehension, or prosecution activities.
4. Multi-Jurisdictional projects combining the resources of different agencies in the task force approach to combat auto theft.
5. Long-term specialized training to further the expertise of auto theft investigators or prosecutors.



In 2002 - 2003, twenty-six grantees were operating auto theft prevention programming in cities and counties throughout Minnesota.

2002 - 2003 Auto Theft Prevention Grantees

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Anoka County Sheriff's Office | 13. Hennepin County Sheriff's Office |
| 2. Anti Vehicle Crime Association (2) | 14. Hutchinson Police Department |
| 3. Beltrami County Sheriff's Office | 15. Inver Grove heights Police Department |
| 4. Bloomington Police Department | 16. Mahnomen County Sheriff's Department |
| 5. Burnsville/Savage Police Departments | 17. Maplewood Police Department |
| 6. Cass Lake Police Department | 18. Minneapolis Police Department |
| 7. Dakota County Attorney's Office | 19. Owatonna Police Department |
| 8. Duluth Police Department | 20. Plymouth Police Department |
| 9. Eagan Police Department | 21. Ramsey County Attorney's Office |
| 10. Eden Prairie Police Department | 22. Rochester Police Department |
| 11. Faribault Police Department | 23. St. Paul Police Department (2) |
| 12. Hennepin County Attorney's Office | |

Eighteen agencies were selected to operate auto theft prevention programs for the period January 2004 through December 2005. Program descriptions for the new funding period are as follows:

Anoka & Washington County Attorneys Auto Theft Prevention Project - \$171,700

The Anoka County Attorney and Washington County Attorney have formed a multi-jurisdictional task force to prosecute auto theft offenders. The primary goal of this project is to place additional prosecution and police emphasis on auto theft cases so that repeat offenders will be sent to prison and first-time offenders will realize that there are significant consequences for those caught stealing cars. Under this grant, one-full time experienced prosecutor and one full-time legal assistant will be assigned to work with the County Attorneys and investigators in the two counties.

Anti Vehicle Crime Association of Minnesota (AVCAM - media) – \$157,000

Continued funding to:

- Increase public awareness concerning individual responsibility in preventing auto theft, and the social and economic costs of motor vehicle theft, through television and radio public service announcements, billboards and printed media throughout the state, and bus sides in Minneapolis.
- Educate law enforcement, prosecutors and dedicated insurance company personnel about auto-theft through a newsletter that is distributed to all police departments, prosecutors and AVCAM members, and includes news articles on auto theft, training material, and upcoming training events.
- Provide law enforcement agencies throughout the state with brochures, posters and videos to use in their own public awareness campaigns

- Encourage the public to report information about auto theft to law enforcement or other government agencies through the Minnesota Help Eliminate Auto Theft (H.E.A.T.) reward tip line, the number is available on all media.

Anti Vehicle Crime Association of Minnesota (AVCAM - training) - \$25,000

Continued funding to:

- Host two law enforcement training seminars in the spring of 2004 and spring of 2005.
- Host AVCAM seminar in the fall of 2004, for law enforcement officers, insurance claims personnel, and others involved in combating theft.

Topics presented at these seminars help educate attendees in: new techniques used in auto theft; disposing of stolen vehicle parts, the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), secondary Vehicle Identification Numbers, laws, statutes, and case law pertaining to auto theft., preparing a case for the filing of criminal charges, investigation of Chop Shops, identification of altered documents, vehicle insurance fraud.

City of Bemidji and Beltrami County Auto Theft Prevention Program - \$217,000

Support activities to:

- Reduce The Number Of Auto Thefts By 20%. They will reinstate the bait car program with adequate tracking; increased enforcement with the appointment of a second investigator; a networked computer record keeping system; training of personnel; informant fund.
- Increase The Conviction Rate Of Auto Theft Crimes By 20%. They will provide for increased workload; increase availability for testimony; increase access from the County Attorney's office to the Law Enforcement agencies; more attention to processing of evidence.

Bloomington Police Department - \$56,038

Continued funding to:

- Reduce auto thefts and recoveries at the Mall of America and Airport South.
- Clear more cases by use of forensic and latent evidence.
- Reduce auto thefts 20% at major apartment complexes (Hampshire Hills, Tarnhill, Village Park, Park Shore, Southgate).
- Conduct undercover long-term auto theft investigations.

Brooklyn Center Police Department – \$126,320

Support for the Catch Auto Theft Crime Happening (CATCH) program. The approach is three-fold:

- *A proactive Auto Theft Team* consisting of three Patrol Officers to target repeat offenders, juvenile offenders, and “hot spots” for auto thefts; an Administrative Technician to provide crime analysis and grant administration; a Detective; and a School Liaison Officer.

- *Training for all sworn personnel* in all aspects related to auto thefts. The Administrative Technician will train officers on use of the Crime Mapping system for use at their disposal. The three officers, Detective and School Liaison Officer will conduct periodic in-service training on intelligence trends. The Brooklyn Center Police Department is also training sworn personnel on gang identity and shared intelligence.
- *A public education campaign.* Neighborhood Liaison Officers (NLO) will have Neighborhood Watch Group Captains distribute flyers in their respective areas with tips to prevent autos from being stolen, as well as giving presentations at community meetings in each of the City's sectors.

Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) - \$233,500

The BCA Forensic Science Laboratory will support motor vehicle theft investigation and prosecutions through a two-tier approach:

Tier 1: Hire an experienced latent print examiner. This position would be dedicated to prioritizing auto theft cases submitted to the latent print laboratories. In addition, this position will train law enforcement officers in the proper identification and collection of latent prints from stolen motor vehicles.

Tier 2: Hire and train a forensic technical specialist for automobile theft. This position will be multi-faceted in providing support and training for the Tier 1 position, as well as developing a resource center for serial number and VIN investigations. This position will provide technical support in all areas of the laboratory relating to auto theft investigations.

Burnsville and Savage Police Departments - \$55,000

With continued funding the Burnsville/Savage Auto Theft Prevention project will:

- Increase auto theft recoveries by 10-15% using Computer Aided Dispatch to run vehicles for stolen status; establishing proactive patrol patterns at high crime areas; the reporting of suspicious vehicles by citizens.
- Train Officers and community in the problem of auto theft, how to prevent it, discover it and investigate the calls.
- Increase the level of auto theft investigation skills.

Dakota County Attorneys Office - \$206,416

The south metro County Attorneys in Dakota, Carver, and Scott Counties through their multi-jurisdictional approach continue their on-going efforts by:

- Aggressively prosecuting auto theft cases and developing ways to adopt current prevention programs.
- Devoting a full-time prosecutor to handle all auto theft cases in these south metro counties.

- Advocating for sentencing on all cases; making it a priority to send repeat offenders to prison, requiring accountability for first time offenders by charging them with a felony offense seeking a combination of local incarceration and sentencing alternatives.
- Providing training based on need/requests for information on such topics as: search and seizure, crime scene investigation and arson investigation.
- Education & Public Awareness by distributing auto theft prevention brochures and other support materials to all police agencies in the three counties, to license bureaus, automobile dealerships and local businesses. Developing an educational venue for automobile dealerships to participate and train employees on prevention of identity theft, insurance fraud and vehicle theft. Continuing to publish a newsletter to all tri-county law enforcement agencies, insurance investigators and other interested parties.

District 2 Community Council - \$20,925

The Stop Auto Theft Project is designed to both educate the general population of the District 2 service area to the most effective ways to prevent auto theft, and to create an intensive auto theft reduction program in the apartment complexes within the District 2 service area. They will:

- Conduct auto theft prevention seminars with apartment residents, block club residents in high incident grids, also seminars in Hmong.
- Publish “Auto Theft Prevention Tips,” “Auto Theft Alerts,” Auto Theft Prevention Seminar schedule in the District 2 News.
- Place warning notices (in English and Hmong) on vehicles that are unlocked in targeted apartment complexes.

Duluth Police Department - \$150,000

Operation Secure Ride has two primary initiatives: intelligence operations and proactive enforcement.

- Intelligence strategies and activities are to collect, analyze or record, and disseminate information gathered from various sources. Part of this involves identifying new sources of information, such as scrap yards, auto body shops, swap meets and new informants and then integrating this information into existing networks. It is also out of the intelligence operations that the list of “habitual offenders” is created. This is a list of people that the auto theft investigator actively targets for cases.
- Proactive strategies are developed from information gleaned from intelligence operations. These may include, but are not limited to, stakeout, decoy operations and technical surveillance, and targeting habitual offenders. Another activity which falls into the proactive area is the motorcycle inspections done with the Department of Motor Vehicles, this includes helping to train and equip the inspectors so that they can help identify fraudulent parts and paperwork for these vehicles.

Hennepin County Attorney’s Office - \$432,873

Continue the prosecution and collaboration strategies of the specialized auto theft prosecution unit by:

- Dedicating two experienced attorneys to conduct the prosecutorial activities of the Project with the assistance of two paralegals.
- One attorney and one paralegal will handle adult cases, and one attorney and one paralegal will handle juvenile cases.
- Prosecuting auto theft cases using the vertical prosecution model in which auto theft attorneys handle each case assigned to them from charging through disposition. Paralegals assist the attorneys in preparing complaints, tracking cases, preparation work for plea negotiations and trial, and assisting victims with completing restitution claims.

Hennepin County Sheriff's Office - \$40,000

To continue proactive investigations by the Special Operations Detail (SOD):

- Targeting known automobile thieves, and their criminal organizations; those individuals are usually racers and are always looking for replacement engines and transmissions.
- Conducting surveillance utilizing video cameras on various platforms, pen registers and GPS tracking systems.
- Providing training for deputies and local police officers to Identify Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) switched vehicles.
- Recovering stolen vehicles, and major components (motors and transmissions).

Minneapolis Police Department - \$300,000

Support the efforts to:

- Conduct "Chop Shop" investigations to reduce sales of auto parts taken from stolen autos.
- Conduct investigations of Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) switches.
- Work with precinct Crime Prevention personnel to alert community in areas of increased auto theft through crime alert bulletins, crime prevention literature. Placement of bus shelter advertising, public service announcements/press releases.

Minnesota Gang Strike Force - \$181,291

Support efforts to:

- Target gang members who steal motor vehicles for resale in whole or in parts.
- Conduct undercover operations.
- Conduct surveillance, interview informants, automate all information collected, analyze collected information, write and distribute summary reports to interested law enforcement agencies.
- Increase public awareness on the nature and prevalence of auto theft.

Northfield Police Department - \$25,000

Support efforts to:

- Canvas communities checking for unlocked vehicles and hang information tags in the vehicles. Document and track data.
- Provide crime prevention classes to neighborhood watch groups, community service groups, apartment complexes, car dealers.
- Media campaign for public awareness of the problem of vehicle theft.
- Develop a standard processing procedure to improve the collection of forensic evidence from recovered vehicles.
- Develop a method of operation data base for investigators.
- Develop a county wide fingerprint data base.

Pillsbury United Communities - \$111,569

Support the Central Weed & Seed Project to:

- Work with the Minneapolis Police Department to reduce auto thefts in the Central neighborhood, and increase the number of arrests of auto theft perpetrators; train 3rd Precinct officers on taking timely and accurate reports, provide for overtime investigations to solve more cases, train residents to assist police in arrests.
- Increase recoveries of stolen vehicles; publicize stolen vehicles in newsletters and block leader handouts, train residents on auto theft intervention methods such as reporting suspicious activity immediately, what a theft in process looks like, collecting information for reporting, identifying a chop shop, etc..

St. Paul Police Department - \$70,130

Continued support to the Auto Theft Prevention Program to:

- Reduce the number of overall auto thefts in the City of St. Paul.
- Reduce the number of Hondas and Toyota Camrys being stolen in the City of St. Paul.
- Increase the number of recovered stolen vehicles.
- Increase the number of auto theft cases investigated.
- Increase the number of auto theft cases presented to the County Attorney's Office for prosecution.
- Increase the number of auto theft case closures.
- Increase public awareness of auto theft related issues
- Training of police personnel into auto theft issues.
- Conduct auto theft prevention seminars to the Citizens.

St. Paul Police Department - \$44,100

Support for the Gang Related Vehicle Theft/Recovery Project to:

- Reduce the number of gang related motorcycle thefts, particularly Harley Davidsons.
- Reduce the rapid increase of automobile thefts primarily Hondas.
- Increase the prosecution rate for gang related automobile thefts.

- Increase follow-up on gang members associated with automobile theft.