



Automobile Theft Prevention Program

2015 Report to the State of Minnesota Governor and Legislature

Submitted by
Minnesota Department of Commerce
Fraud Bureau

Program Mission

To develop and sponsor the implementation of statewide plans, programs, and strategies to combat automobile theft, improve the administration of the automobile theft laws, and provide a forum for identification of critical problems for those persons dealing with automobile theft.

Program Background

The Automobile Theft Prevention Program was created by the Minnesota Legislature in 1996.

The program is funded by a surcharge collected from automobile insurance carriers that provide comprehensive insurance coverage issued in the State of Minnesota. The amount of the surcharge collected for the Auto Theft Prevention Program is \$.50 per vehicle for every six months of coverage.

The program utilizes this funding for a competitive grant process for activities that address automobile theft in the State of Minnesota.

In July 2004, the Automobile Theft Prevention Program was statutorily transferred to the Minnesota Department of Commerce. The Department's Fraud Bureau has managed the program since 2009.

Extent of Automobile Theft in Minnesota*

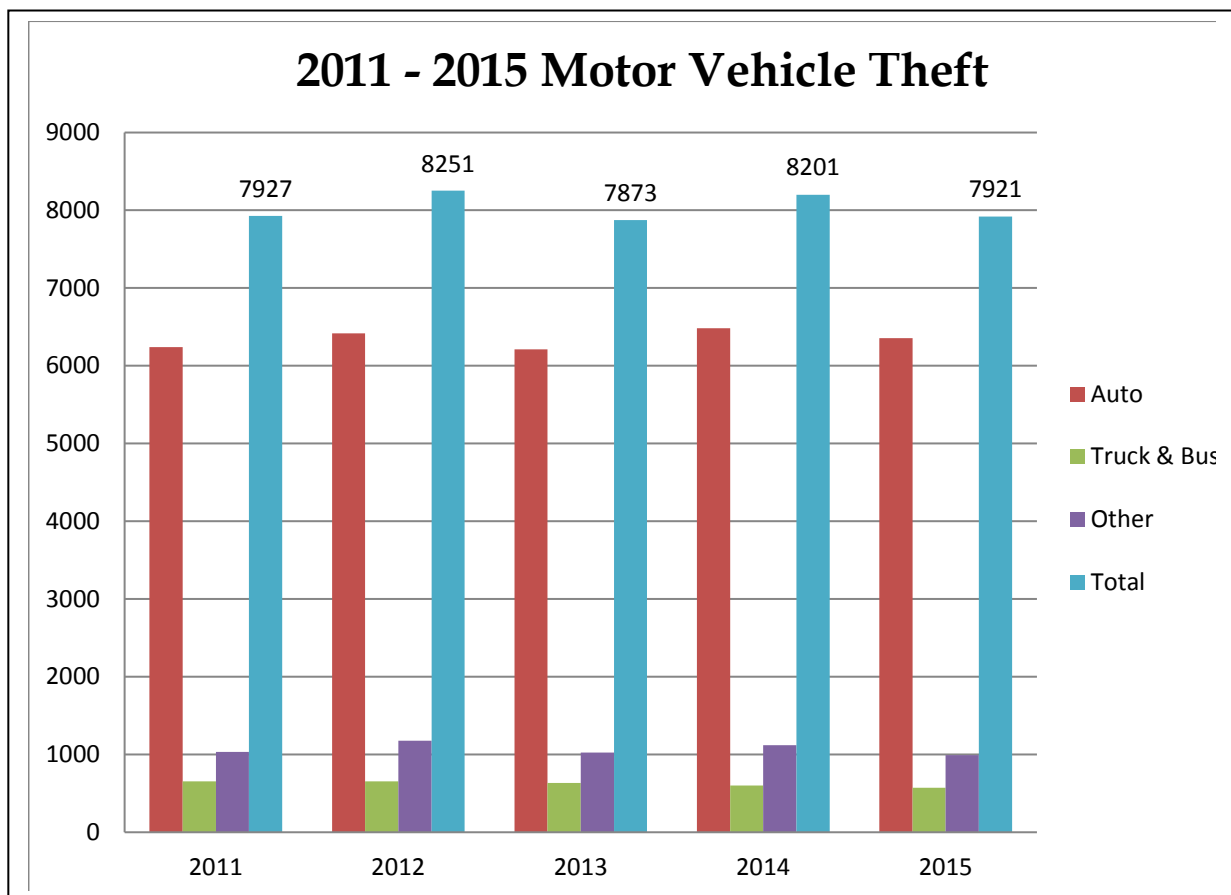
- In 2015, motor vehicle thefts represented 6.3% of the total property crimes reported in the state. On average 22 vehicles per day were stolen in Minnesota during the calendar year 2015.
- In 2015, 8,261 vehicles reported stolen in Minnesota, though 340 were later determined to be unfounded. The total confirmed number of stolen vehicles was 7,921.
 - 6,907 were stolen from metro counties, and 1,014 were stolen from non-metro counties.
- Of the total number of reported vehicle thefts, 1,614 were cleared, with 1,081 cleared with an arrest of a perpetrator. Of the total arrests, 232 involved the arrest of a juvenile.
- Of the 7,921 vehicles reported stolen in 2015, 6,354 were automobiles, 573 were trucks or buses, and 994 were other vehicles such as snowmobiles or motorcycles.

- Motor vehicle theft accounted for 6.5% of property crimes and 5.9% of all Part 1 offenses (serious crimes as defined by the FBI) in Minnesota for 2015.
- Motor vehicle theft was ranked the third costliest property crime in 2015 with a total of \$25,269,164 stolen (Larceny and Burglary led with \$54 and \$26 million, respectively)

*Information from 2015 Minnesota Uniform Crime Report (BCA)

Minnesota Vehicle Thefts 2011 - 2015

Based on the 2015 Uniform Crime Report published by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), reports of motor vehicle thefts showed a small decrease (3.4%) from 2014 to 2015. As shown in the graph below, reported vehicle thefts have fluctuated slightly from year to year, but have remained relatively unchanged between 2011 and 2015, with 2015 being the lowest in five years.



Auto Theft Prevention Program

The following types of projects are eligible to receive funding through the Auto Theft Prevention Program:

- Training (criminal justice, citizens, business, etc.)
- Public education (public meetings, literature, public service announcements, neighborhood and business watch promotions, etc.)
- Programs designed to improve or expand the resources of existing auto theft prevention, investigation, apprehension, or prosecution activities.
- Multi-Jurisdictional projects combining the resources of various agencies in the task force approach to combat auto theft.
- Long-term specialized training to further the expertise of auto theft investigators or prosecutors.
- Piloting new equipment and techniques proposed by grant recipients.

Auto Theft Prevention Initiatives Funded in 2014-2015

As part of the competitive grant process, the Auto Theft Prevention Program solicits applications from county attorney offices, law enforcement agencies, neighborhood and community organizations, and business organizations.

Priority in the competitive grant process is given to project proposals that included one or more of the following criteria:

- 1) established or enhanced a collaborative effort between two or more agencies;
- 2) included counties or regions with the greatest rates of automobile theft;
- 3) employed proven or promising strategies that reduced the incidence of automobile theft; and
- 4) addressed automobile theft that is perpetrated as part of a criminal enterprise.

During the state fiscal year 2014 (July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014), the Auto Theft Prevention Program provided grant funds totaling \$1,887,862 to 27 entities in Minnesota: 22 state or local law enforcement agencies; three county attorney offices; and 2 neighborhood, community, or business organizations.

During the state fiscal year 2015 (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015), the Auto Theft Prevention Program provided grant funds totaling \$1,784,000 to 25 entities in Minnesota: 20 state or

local law enforcement agencies; three county attorney offices; and two neighborhood, community, or business organizations.

Below are the agencies that received awards from the grant program in the fiscal biennium ending June 30, 2015.

Grant Recipient	FY2016
Anoka County Joint Law Enforcement Consortium	\$ 88,479.29
Anti-Vehicle Crime Association of Minnesota	\$ 24,550.00
Bemidji PD	\$ 81,376.73
Bloomington PD	\$ 71,698.00
Brooklyn Center PD	\$ 125,675.00
District 2 Community Council	\$ 27,845.00
Duluth PD	\$ 96,971.00
Golden Valley PD	\$ 23,185.00
Hennepin County Attorney	\$ 323,340.00
Hennepin County Sheriff	\$ 36,000.00
Lakeville PD	\$ 43,594.00
Mille Lacs Co Sheriff	\$ 133,862.20
Minneapolis PD	\$ 174,117.00
Minnesota State Patrol	\$ 90,000.00
Oakdale PD	\$ 17,055.00
Ramsey Co Sheriff	\$ 92,000.00
Ramsey County Attorney	\$ 307,959.00
Richfield PD	\$ 18,982.00
Rochester PD	\$ 40,890.00
Roseville PD	\$ 2,112.00
S. St. Paul/Inver Grove Heights/W. St. Paul PD	\$ 34,960.00
Saint Paul PD	\$ 282,316.30
Shakopee PD	\$ 24,725.00
Wash Co/Anoka Co Attorney	\$ 74,800.00

Auto Theft Prevention Program Impact

The automobile theft rates for the five-year period 2011 through 2015 (most current data available) continue to show that the incidents of auto theft have stayed relatively level. While the numbers have not declined drastically, they are much lower than those reported in the 1990s and early 2000s, when stolen vehicles were more than double today's numbers (17,983 in 1996) and arrest rates were far lower.

While the factors involved in the overall decline of auto thefts are numerous, the concerted efforts of the organizations receiving funding from the Automobile Theft Prevention Program are undoubtedly a contributing factor, as they continually address the issue through investigations, arrest, prosecution, public outreach, and identifying new trends in vehicle theft is perpetrated.

The financial support provided by this grant program continues to be critical in sustaining prevention and enforcement efforts for many city and county agencies in areas where the incidence of auto theft are the highest. It is unlikely that agencies would be able to sustain their auto theft initiatives without the support received from the Auto Theft Prevention Program.

Program Highlight – Pilot Programs for the South Metro

As part of an ongoing attempt to find new tools and techniques, a grant was awarded to West Saint Paul, South Saint Paul, and Inver Grove Heights who requested hand held infrared cameras and video cameras as part of their grant equipment request.

Since this is relatively new and somewhat unorthodox equipment for combating auto theft, the Department of Commerce is piloting these tools with these agencies who receive money under the same grant contract.

The agencies intend to deploy video cameras in areas where there is a high incidence or likelihood for auto theft. The infrared cameras would be distributed to patrol officers working the night shift and assigned to the same areas as the video cameras in the hope of seeing auto thieves through the dark and catching them in the act.

At the end of the grant period, data from these agencies related to the equipment will be evaluated to determine if other agencies would be awarded money for similar tools in the future.

The Department of Commerce is always looking for agencies that are willing to be creative and try new techniques and equipment in the fight against auto theft.



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