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**WARM WEATHER MONTHS TEMPT CAR THIEVES,
H.E.A.T. RELEASES SAFETY TIPS**

LIVONIA, Mich. (July 11, 2007) - H.E.A.T. (Help Eliminate Auto Thefts) warns that warm weather in summer months can lead to carelessness among car owners, providing thieves with easy access to personal property and vehicles. July is National Vehicle Theft Prevention Month and the Auto Theft Prevention Authority reports that August is the highest month for auto theft in Michigan.

"While the summer months mean vacations and cook-outs with family and friends, they also bring car thieves looking to steal exposed property and vehicles," said Terri Miller, director of H.E.A.T. "It is important that people keep their guard high by rolling up their windows, locking their doors and putting car tops up, even when running a quick errand."

"Michigan typically experiences the most auto thefts in August, and nationally, the most auto thefts occur in July," stated Col. Peter C. Munoz, director of the Michigan State Police. "It is important to practice auto theft prevention throughout the summer, whether at home or on vacation."

Tips on keeping your car and belongings safe during warm weather:

- **Closed Not Cracked** - Close windows tightly, don't even leave them "cracked" and always lock your car when your vehicle is unattended.
- **Out of Sight** - Keep all personal belongings; including iPods, cell phones and other valuables out of sight.
- **Lock Your Top** - Close and lock convertible car tops.
- **Kill-Switch** - Protect your vehicle from being started by a thief by having a mechanic install a concealed kill-switch.
- **Double Duty** - Add a second layer of protection to your vehicle by using a steering wheel locking device, a steering column protector or an alarm with a visible flasher.
- **VIN** - Consider etching your VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) onto the glass surfaces of your vehicle. VIN etching makes vehicles less attractive to thieves because all windows must be replaced before the car is tagged with a fake VIN for resale.
- **1-800-242-H.E.A.T.** - If you know anything about auto theft, report it day or night to your local police department and H.E.A.T.'s 24/7 confidential tip-reward line, 1-800-242-HEAT or online at 1800242HEAT.com.

About H.E.A.T.

Since its inception in 1985, H.E.A.T. tips have led to the recovery of more than \$43 million in stolen property and the arrests of nearly 3,000 suspects involved in auto theft rings, chop shops, carjackings and fraudulent car thefts, among other auto-related crimes. H.E.A.T. has paid more than \$2.9 million in tipster rewards over the last 22 years.

Anyone with information on auto theft, carjacking, chop shops, auto theft-related identity theft and auto insurance fraud in Michigan is encouraged to call the H.E.A.T. 24/7 tip line and speak to a live operator at 1-800-242-HEAT, or log on to www.1800242HEAT.com to provide a confidential report. H.E.A.T. works with Michigan law enforcement agencies to follow up on tips. Tipsters are awarded up to \$1,000 if the tip leads to the arrest and prosecution of a suspected car thief or a person suspected of auto theft-related insurance fraud. Rewards of up to \$10,000 are issued if a tip results in the arrest and binding over for trial of a suspected theft ring or chop shop operators. H.E.A.T. rewards up to \$2,000 for information leading to the issuance of a warrant for a carjacking suspect. The H.E.A.T. tip line is monitored by the Michigan State Police and funded by Michigan's auto insurance companies.

Editor's Note: To schedule an interview with Terri Miller, contact Amanda Vasas at 517.316.0210.