



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WARM WEATHER TEMPTS CAR THIEVES; H.E.A.T. PROVIDES DRIVERS WITH SAFETY TIPS

LIVONIA, Mich. (July 6, 2009) – H.E.A.T. (Help Eliminate Auto Thefts) warns Michigan residents to stay alert this summer as warm weather months often lead to carelessness among car owners, giving thieves 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 warm weather brings fun outdoor activities with friends and family, it also brings out thieves looking to steal vehicles and exposed property while you are preoccupied,” said Terri Miller, director of H.E.A.T. “Don’t give a thief easy access to your property. Be sure to roll up your windows, keep belongings out of sight and never leave your keys in the car, even if you are running a quick errand.”

“Auto theft hits its peak during the summer months with August having the highest rate for auto theft in Michigan,” stated Detective Adam Henderson of the Michigan State Police. “It’s important to keep your guard up and practice auto theft prevention this summer whether at home or on vacation.”

H.E.A.T. is happy to provide drivers with the following tips for keeping cars and belongings safe during warm weather:

- **Lock and Load** – Always lock your car when your vehicle is unattended, and remember to set alarms or other anti-theft devices every time you get out. Close windows tightly, and don’t forget the sunroof.
- **Watch Those Wheels** – Thieves are targeting tires and rims. Invest in locking lug nuts and park in your garage whenever possible.
- **Out of Sight** – Keep all personal belongings, including a GPS, iPods, cell phones and other valuables, out of sight.
- **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 indicator.
- **Keep Watch And Report Crime**– Help your neighborhood by noting and reporting any suspicious activity and writing down descriptions, license plate numbers and other helpful information. If you know anything about auto theft, chop shops, carjacking or insurance fraud 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**.

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About H.E.A.T.

Since its inception in 1985, H.E.A.T. tips have led to the recovery of more than \$50 million in stolen property and the arrests of more than 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 \$3.2 million in tipster rewards over the last 24 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.

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Editor's Note: To schedule an interview with Terri Miller, H.E.A.T. director, contact Kim Tassie at 248.362.4200 ext. 243 or ktassie@baileypr.com