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Auto thefts decline in Michigan in 2005

H.E.A.T. (Help Eliminate Auto Thefts) has an answer to 2005 statistics released by the Auto Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA) which show a 16th year of reduction in auto theft in an 18-year period in metro Detroit and across the state.

"After another decrease in 2004, Michigan residents became aware of the value in assisting local law enforcement in cracking down on auto crime in their neighborhoods," said Terri Miller, director of H.E.A.T. "Resources like the H.E.A.T. tip line offer a safe, anonymous way to empower residents to report criminal activity and help recover stolen property -- chipping away at auto theft and adding to residents' quality of life."

H.E.A.T. is a partnership of Michigan's auto insurance companies, law enforcement, community groups and residents. The H.E.A.T. program encourages citizen action through its toll-free tip line -- 800-242-H.E.A.T. -- that gives financial rewards to people who provide information leading to the arrest and prosecution of individuals for auto theft, auto-related identity theft, carjacking and chop shops.

Auto thefts in Michigan declined 3.8 percent from 2004 to 2005, according to the ATPA. That compares with a nationwide decrease of only 2 percent. In 2005, 48,064 vehicles were reported stolen in Michigan, compared with 49,982 in 2004. Data for the 2006 calendar year will not be available until February 2008.

From 1986 to 2005, Michigan auto thefts declined 33.3 percent and national thefts increased by 0.9 percent.

Michigan comprised 3.9 percent of United States auto theft activity in 2005, dropping the state to sixth in the nation for total motor vehicle thefts, from fifth place in 2004.

The City of Detroit saw auto thefts decrease by 12.8 percent, from 24,573 in 2004 to 21,439 in 2005.

Among Michigan's larger cities, declines in auto theft were seen in:

Detroit -- from 24,573 in 2004 to 21,439 in 2005, a decline of 12.8 percent.

Grand Rapids -- from 739 in 2004 to 678 in 2005, a decline of 8.3 percent.

Lansing -- from 471 in 2004 to 412 in 2005, a decline of 12.5 percent.

Muskegon Heights -- from 196 in 2004 to 121 in 2005, a decline of 38.2 percent.

Inkster -- from 340 in 2004 to 266 in 2005, a decline of 21.8 percent.

Romulus -- from 253 in 2004 to 167 in 2005, a decline of 34 percent.

Ypsilanti -- from 187 in 2004 to 155 in 2005, a decline of 17.1 percent.

Among Michigan's cities, increases in auto theft occurred in:

Ann Arbor -- from 182 in 2004 to 238 in 2005, an increase of 30.8 percent.

Flint Township -- from 221 in 2004 to 287 in 2005, an increase of 29.9 percent.

Royal Oak -- from 136 in 2004 to 189 in 2005, an increase of 39 percent.

St. Clair Shores -- from 156 in 2004 to 247 in 2005, an increase of 58.3 percent.

Warren -- from 1,402 in 2004 to 1,633 in 2005, an increase of 16.5 percent.

In 2005, the Dodge Ram pickup truck was deemed Michigan's most stolen vehicle. Thieves' top three favorite color choices for vehicles stolen in 2005 were black, gray and white.

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 crimes.

H.E.A.T. has paid more than \$2.9 million in tipster rewards over the last 21 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. tip line, (800) 242-H.E.A.T., or log on to <http://www.miheat.org/> 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.
