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**H.E.A.T. REPORTS INCREASED AUTO THEFT ACTIVITY
IN METRO-DETROIT AND MICHIGAN**
Long-term Numbers Still Show Progress

Livonia, Mich. (Feb. 4, 2008) – H.E.A.T. (Help Eliminate Auto Thefts) responded today to 2006 statistics released by the Auto Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA) that indicate a slight increase in the number of vehicles stolen in Michigan.

“Auto theft statistics are often related to economic conditions,” said Terri Miller, director of H.E.A.T. “As the economy worsens, actual thefts increase, as well as insurance frauds disguised as theft as a way to dispose of vehicles that people can no longer afford. However, looking at the long term view, we deem the ATPA’s 20-year statistics as a solid benchmark that proves our H.E.A.T. program is working. The data from 2006 does show higher incidences of theft in Detroit and in several other communities across the state, so H.E.A.T.’s job is far from over. We will continue encouraging community members to utilize our 24/7 toll-free tip line as a safe, anonymous way to report criminal activity, recover stolen property and help keep insurance rates down.”

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 24/7 toll-free tip line (1-800-242-H.E.A.T.) and Web site 1800242HEAT.com, which provide financial rewards to people who give confidential information leading to the arrest and prosecution of individuals for auto theft, auto-related identity theft, carjacking and chop shops.

In 2006, the Dodge Ram pickup truck was again deemed Michigan’s most stolen vehicle. Thieves’ top three favorite color choices for vehicles stolen in 2006 were black, white and blue.

The Good News: 2006 Numbers Reveal 20-Year Decrease in Auto Theft

- From 1986 to 2006, Michigan auto thefts declined 31 percent, compared to a decrease in auto thefts nationally of only 2.6 percent.
- In 2006, auto thefts in Michigan were up slightly from 2005, 3.4 percent, according to the ATPA. In 2006, 49,709 vehicles were reported stolen in Michigan, compared with 48,064 in 2005. Data for the 2007 calendar year is not available until February 2009.

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- The City of Detroit saw auto thefts increase by 6.9 percent, from 21,439 in 2005 to 22,918 in 2006. This compares favorably to 1986, when over 72,000 vehicles were stolen in the city.

- Among Michigan's larger cities, **declines** in auto theft were seen in:
 - Dearborn – from 1,082 in 2005 to 1,035 in 2006, a decrease of 4.3 percent.
 - Southfield – 850 in 2005 to 707 in 2006, a decline of 16.8 percent.
 - Flint – from 1,583 in 2005 to 1,521 in 2006, a decline of 3.9 percent.
 - Jackson – 153 in 2005 to 118 in 2006, a decline of 22.9 percent.
 - Muskegon – from 238 in 2005 to 170 in 2006, a decline of 28.6 percent.

- Among Michigan's cities, **increases** in auto theft occurred in:
 - Detroit – from 21,439 in 2005 to 22,918 in 2006, an increase of 6.9 percent.
 - Warren – from 1,633 in 2005 to 1,805 in 2006, an increase of 10.5 percent.
 - Pontiac – from 488 in 2005 to 565 in 2006, an increase of 15.8 percent.
 - Lansing – from 412 in 2005 to 472 in 2006, an increase of 14.6 percent.
 - Battle Creek – from 187 in 2005 to 218 in 2006, an increase of 16.6 percent

About H.E.A.T.

Since its inception in 1985, H.E.A.T. tips have led to the recovery of over \$47 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 23 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, contact
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