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CONTACT: Kim Tassie  
248-362-4200 x243  
[ktassie@baileypr.com](mailto:ktassie@baileypr.com)

## Statewide auto theft continues to decline, but H.E.A.T. warns against growing shift in other auto theft-related crimes

**Livonia, Mich.** (Feb. 17, 2010) – H.E.A.T. (Help Eliminate Auto Thefts) responded today to 2008 statistics released by the Automobile Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA) in its annual report, which indicated a continued decrease in the number of traditional vehicle thefts in Michigan.

“We expected and are pleased to see the continued decline in the number of vehicle thefts across the state,” said Terri Miller, director of H.E.A.T. “However, the battle against auto theft-related crime continues, as we see activity shifting from traditional vehicle theft to more insurance fraud and component theft.”

Miller continued, “As vehicles become better-equipped with anti-theft technologies, thieves are finding new ways to cheat the system, and it impacts all of us who pay Michigan auto insurance premiums. Through the H.E.A.T. program, Michigan residents are empowered to assist law enforcement in their steadfast efforts to put an end to auto theft-related crime in our communities.”

### **2009 ATPA Annual Report Highlights:**

*(Note: This data, which is the most recent available, is from 2008. Data for the 2009 calendar year will be available from the ATPA in February 2011).*

- Auto thefts in Michigan in 2008 declined by 14.6 percent from 2007. In 2008, 35,467 vehicles were reported stolen in Michigan, compared to 41,510 in 2007.
- From 1986 (the year of ATPA’s inception) to 2008, Michigan auto thefts dropped by approximately 51 percent, compared to a decrease in auto thefts nationally of only 22 percent. In 2008, Michigan maintained its ranking as the state with the sixth highest total motor vehicle thefts in the nation.
- In 2008, Wayne County topped the list of Michigan counties with the highest reported motor vehicle thefts at 59 percent (20,950 thefts). Macomb and Oakland Counties accounted for 8.84 percent (3,134 thefts) and 8.31 percent (2,949 thefts) of Michigan’s motor vehicle thefts, respectively.

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- The 2000 Dodge Caravan topped Michigan's list of most stolen vehicles in 2008. Thieves' top color preferences for vehicles to steal were once again black, followed by white and blue.
- The months with the highest auto theft figures in 2008 were July, August and June.
- Though the city of Detroit once again saw an overall decrease in vehicle thefts, from 19,655 in 2007 to 16,117 in 2008 (-18%), it is still the highest ranking city in Michigan for auto thefts.
- Among some of Michigan's other large cities, **decreases** in auto theft were seen in:
  - Grand Rapids – From 589 in 2007 to 453 in 2008, a decrease of 23 percent.
  - Flint – From 1,034 in 2007 to 904 in 2008, a decrease of 12.6 percent.
  - Southfield – 631 in 2007 to 540 in 2008, a decrease of 14.4 percent.
  - Lansing – From 357 in 2007 to 333 in 2008, a decrease of 6.7 percent.
- Some Michigan cities that saw **increases** in auto theft in 2008 include:
  - Westland – From 332 in 2007 to 423 in 2008, an increase of 27.4 percent.
  - Hazel Park – From 170 in 2007 to 205 in 2008, an increase of 20.6 percent.
  - Warren – From 1,163 in 2007 to 1,274, an increase of 9.5 percent.
  - Dearborn – From 801 in 2007 to 835 in 2008, an increase of 4.2 percent.

“The decline in Michigan's vehicle theft is certainly a trend we hope to continue year after year,” said Miller. “H.E.A.T. encourages citizens to help make that goal a reality by utilizing its 24/7 toll-free tip line (1.800.242.HEAT) and Web site ([www.1800242HEAT.com](http://www.1800242HEAT.com)) to anonymously report auto theft-related crime. Tipsters may be rewarded up to \$10,000 for their tip.”

**About H.E.A.T.**

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 Kim Tassie at 248.362.4200 x243 or [ktassie@baileypr.com](mailto:ktassie@baileypr.com).*