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AUTO THEFT PREVENTION PROGRAM

Minnesota Statutes 2001, Section 299A.75 JAN 24 2003

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How the Program Works

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In 1996, the Minnesota Legislature created the Auto Theft Prevention Program. This program is funded from a surcharge that is collected from automobile insurance carriers that provide comprehensive insurance coverage issued in the State of Minnesota. The amount of the surcharge is 50 cents per vehicle for every six months of coverage. Utilizing this funding, the program makes money available through a competitive grant process for activities to address the problem of auto theft in the State of Minnesota.

Minnesota Statutes 2001, Section 299A.75, Subdivision 4 created the seven-member Automobile Theft Prevention Advisory Board to advise the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety on the distribution of grant funding for the program. This Board met in November 2001 to advise the Commissioner on allowable expenditures for the program and grant award amounts for 2002.

Mission

To reduce motor vehicle theft and its consequences in the State of Minnesota by funding programs which aid in the:

- Identification of Critical Issues
- Education and Awareness
- Investigation and Prosecution

Extent of Auto Theft in Minnesota

In 2001, there were 14,838 motor vehicles stolen in Minnesota with a value of \$62,874,122. Of the vehicles reported stolen, 11,680 were automobiles. The theft rate represents a 9.7% increase over the 2000 rate. Statewide, eighteen percent of the thefts were cleared by an arrest. Eighty-seven percent of thefts occurred in urban areas.

The top ten most stolen automobiles in Minnesota in 2001 were:

1. 1989 Toyota Camry
2. 1993 Honda Civic DX
3. 2001 Honda Civic SI
4. 1991 Chevrolet Caprice
5. 1987 Chevrolet Caprice
6. 1990 Toyota Camry
7. 1991 Chevrolet T10 4x4
8. 1991 Toyota Camry
9. 1994 Acura Integra GS-R
10. 1995 Chevrolet Caprice Classic

2000 Minn. Laws Chap. 488
Art. 6 Sec. 7

Minn. Stat. 299A.75 Subd. 2

How the Money is Utilized

Every two years, the Department of Public Safety solicits auto theft grant applications from county attorney's offices, law enforcement agencies, and neighborhood, community, and business organizations. A seven-member Automobile Theft Prevention Advisory Board advises the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety on the distribution of grant funding for the program. Applications may be submitted for the following types of projects:

1. Training (criminal justice, citizen and business, etc.)
2. Public Education (public meetings, literature, public service announcements, neighborhood and business watch promotions, etc.)
3. Programs designed to improve or expand the resources of existing auto theft prevention, investigation, apprehension, or prosecution activities.
4. Multi-jurisdictional projects combining the resources of different agencies in the task force approach to combat auto theft.
5. Long term specialized training to further the expertise of auto theft investigators or prosecutors.

In 2002, twenty-four grantees are operating twenty-seven auto theft prevention programs in cities and counties throughout Minnesota. They are:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1. Anoka County | 13. City of Fairbault |
| 2. Beltrami County | 14. City of Hutchinson |
| 3. Dakota County | 15. City of Inver Grove Heights |
| 4. Hennepin County (2) | 16. City of Maplewood |
| 5. Mahnomon County | 17. City of Minneapolis |
| 6. Ramsey County | 18. City of Oakdale |
| 7. City of Bloomington | 19. City of Owatonna |
| 8. City of Burnsville | 20. City of Plymouth |
| 9. City of Cass Lake | 21. City of Rochester |
| 10. City of Duluth | 22. City of St. Paul (2) |
| 11. City of Eagan | 23. City of South St. Paul |
| 12. City of Eden Prairie | 24. Anti-Vehicle Crime Assoc. of MN (2) |

Project Monitoring

During the summer of 2002, all grantee organizations participated in a thorough site review conducted by the Office of Drug Policy and Violence Prevention. Most of the sites had an on-site review, but several of the grantees with smaller grant amounts received a telephone review. A standardized review format was utilized and addressed both administrative and fiscal compliance with the conditions of the grant and grant project operations and outcomes. The results of the reviews were documented and summarized and a report was presented to the Auto Theft Prevention Advisory Board in November 2002. The information will be used by the Board to share successful strategies with current grantees and inform the decision-making in the awarding of future grants.

AUTO THEFT PREVENTION GRANT PROGRAM
PROJECT SUMMARIES: January 1, 2002 – December 31, 2002

Anoka County Sheriff's Office \$149,091

Supported activities of the Anoka County Auto Theft Task Force by:

- Continuing inspections of used car dealerships and swap meets, attention to repeat offenders, and release of statistics to local media to raise awareness of auto theft.
- Training investigators and peace officers in auto theft related investigations and expanding the amount of training available by providing for tuition and registration costs.
- Continuing salvage yard inspections (four per year), in-depth investigations, undercover operations, intelligence gathering, use of informants, and bait vehicle operations in the highest offense areas.
- Increasing data feedback to patrol divisions of the eleven cooperating agencies. Data will include theft and recovery information produced through the use of the pin-mapping software.

Anti-Vehicle Crime Association of Minnesota (AVCAM – media) \$375,000

Created and implemented a media/education campaign to:

- Increase public understanding of preventing automobile theft by producing radio and television announcements, billboards, and newspaper ads in both metro and out-state markets targeting the areas of highest auto theft rates.
- Increase public recognition of the social and economic costs of motor vehicle theft.
- Work with law enforcement officials and other subject matter experts to design and produce auto theft prevention training videos for law enforcement agencies.
- Work with local law enforcement to determine high-risk locations for targeted media campaign.
- Incorporate the Minnesota Help Eliminate Auto Theft (H.E.A.T.) reward line in appropriate media campaign to encourage the public to report information about auto theft.

Anti-Vehicle Crime Association of Minnesota (AVCAM-training) \$19,382

AVCAM utilized grant funding to:

- Hold two vehicle theft investigation seminars (May 2002 and September 2002) to train law enforcement officers with vehicle theft techniques, Vehicle Identification Numbers (VIN) training, investigative resources, and training in the laws and statutes pertaining to vehicle theft.
- Provide training through two AVCAM training seminars (Spring and Fall 2002) offered to law enforcement officers, insurance company claims personnel, and other actively involved in combating vehicle theft.
- Produce and distribute a vehicle theft investigation manual to assist investigators in conducting vehicle investigations.

Beltrami County Sheriff's Office \$95,343

Continued the efforts of the on-going auto theft program by:

- Providing additional training for the full-time auto theft investigator.
- Working closely with township boards, community crime watch groups, the Bemidji Police Department, the Blackduck Police Department, the Leech Lake Indian Reservation Security, and the Red Lake Indian Reservation Police Department.
- Educating the public about the theft of cars, trucks, ATVs, and snowmobiles through informative speeches and presentations.
- Monitoring and building relationships with area salvage yards and used dealers to aid in the detection of disguised stolen vehicles.
- Continuing to cultivate and utilize informants and to distribute information on stolen vehicles ("hot list") to officers and deputies working on the street.
- Ongoing efforts to aggressively investigate vehicle theft, process vehicles for evidence and prepare cases for prosecution.

Bloomington Police Department \$118,227

Furthered the efforts of the continuing auto theft prevention program by:

- Working with the Minneapolis Police Department for increased activity at a joint undercover storefront location.
- Leasing, maintaining, and insuring two bait vehicles.
- Training and equipping several officers to more adequately process every recovered stolen vehicle.
- Purchasing auto theft mapping software and providing for undercover investigation expenses.
- Allowing two officers to attend the Annual International Association of Auto Theft Investigators (IAATI) Conference.

Burnsville Police Department \$70,008

Continued the efforts of the on-going auto theft prevention program by:

- Continuing the partnership with the Savage Police Department to achieve the auto theft prevention grant goals.
- Hardening of potential crime targets through public education.
- Allowing officers to attend the IAATI Conference.
- Providing educational materials to police officers on stolen auto recovery and processing. This should result in the processing of more vehicles, leading to more prosecutable cases.
- Continuing to lease and maintain a bait vehicle and deploy it according to crime analysis techniques.
- Conducting follow-up investigations and developing informants with using grant funded overtime pay.

Cass Lake Police Department \$30,000

Furthered the efforts of the continuing auto theft prevention program by:

- Forging a new partnership with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (LLBODPS) Department of Public Safety.
- Sending the LLBODPS chief to the IAATI Conference.

- Holding public awareness meetings, mailing surveys and brochures, and conducting a public service campaign using radio media.
- Providing overtime hours to officers to continue surveillance, follow-up investigations and the identification high risk areas and suspects.

Dakota County Attorney's Office \$150,586

Continued the efforts of the on-going auto theft prevention program by:

- Aggressively prosecuting auto theft cases.
- Partnering with two other counties in the multijurisdictional South Metro County Attorney's Auto Theft Task Force and funding one full-time prosecutor and one full-time legal secretary for work on auto theft cases.
- Tracking cases to ensure that standards on timeliness of charging cases are met and that all cases that meet legal sufficiency requirements are charged.
- Developing methods of increasing public awareness and promoting education on preventing auto theft.
- Advocating for guideline sentencing on all cases.
- Developing and presenting training for police officers and insurance industry personnel.
- Holding first-time offenders accountable by charging with felony offense and seeking a combination of local incarceration and sentencing alternatives.

Duluth Police Department \$150,050

Strengthened the Department's auto theft prevention program by:

- Participating in interagency investigations, particularly for those auto theft cases that are associated with other criminal behavior. Joint operations with the Proctor Police Department and Minnesota State Patrol.
- Continuing surveillance of habitual offenders and areas with a high incidence of vehicle theft.
- Continuing the Harley-Davidson inspections program to assist DVS in identifying stolen parts and fraudulent VIN numbers.
- Gathering detailed information related to crime data, suspects, and auto body and scrap dealers and maintaining a distribution network for information.
- Conducting public education events and attending community group and block watch meetings to increase awareness of how to prevent auto thefts; enlisting community support for the apprehension of auto thieves.
- Providing training for local neighboring police departments and community colleges.
- Utilizing a "hot sheet" approach with lists of recently stolen vehicles and containing evidence collection tips.
- Developing specific expertise by having the designated investigator attending the International Outlaw Motorcycle Gang Investigators Conference.

Eagan Police Department \$53,570

Continued the efforts of the on-going auto theft prevention program by:

- Working with the county attorney's office to prosecute auto theft suspects.
- Utilizing a leased motor vehicle equipped with audio, video, and tracking capabilities as a bait vehicle in high theft areas to apprehend thieves.

- Working with businesses, communities and apartment complexes to reduce auto theft in their areas.
- Funding overtime activities and training for police officers to prevent motor vehicle theft and recover stolen motor vehicles and process them for evidence.
- Collecting data on auto thefts, auto recoveries, suspect arrests, and convictions in an effort to target grant objectives.

Eden Prairie Police Department \$25,000

Furthered the efforts of the continuing auto theft prevention program by:

- Paying overtime for proactive enforcement efforts via patrol activities at already identified high-risk areas.
- Collecting and analyzing data to re-evaluate risk areas.
- Educating the public in the prevention of auto thefts by distributing informational material and conducting presentations to community groups.
- Allowing an officer to attend the IAATI training seminar.

Fairbault Police Department \$10,630

A new grant to address auto theft by employing strategies such as:

- Paying overtime for surveillance in already identified high-risk areas.
- Monitoring and building relationships with area auto dealerships to address their risk of theft.
- Educating the public in the prevention of auto thefts by: distributing informational material, implementing a media campaign and conducting presentations to community groups.
- Training officers to process stolen vehicles for evidence and identify suspects through investigation.

Hennepin County Attorney \$449,529

Continued the efforts of the specialized auto theft prosecution unit by:

- Renewing the employment of two grant-funded attorneys and one and three-quarter paralegals to review all adult and juvenile motor vehicle theft referrals.
- Aggressively and consistently charging adults and juveniles in motor vehicle theft cases using a vertical prosecution model.
- Requesting increased and more consistent sanctions for offenders.
- Decreasing case-processing time for auto theft cases.
- Increasing collaboration with Hennepin County law enforcement by being available for consultation with investigators, participating in meeting with the Minneapolis Police Department, and attending law enforcement seminars.
- Collaborating with other stakeholders including judges and probation representatives to improve case handling, disposition options, and case-related communication.

Hennepin County Sheriff's Office \$112,863

Strengthened the current auto theft prevention program by:

- Continuing the Harley-Davidson inspections program to assist DVS in identifying stolen parts and fraudulent VIN numbers.

- Allowing three officers in the auto theft program to attend the 2002 Outlaw Motorcycle Gang conference.
- Providing for overtime time for five officers to allow them to continue their motorcycle and auto theft prevention activities.

Hutchinson Police Department \$10,000

A new grant to address auto theft by employing strategies such as:

- Collaborating with law enforcement agencies in McLeod County to investigate auto theft.
- Implementing proactive preventive patrols in areas subject to vehicle theft.
- Utilizing a community policing approach to work with residents to identify and address local conditions that could give rise to auto theft.
- Training for officers and investigators to increase knowledge and skills related to auto theft issues.

Inver Grove Heights Police Department \$36,504

Supported the efforts of the Motor Vehicle Theft Task Force by:

- Continuing the task force surveillance operation with officers working once a week during the prime midnight to 6 am hours.
- Meeting with neighborhood groups, businesses (including car dealerships), and apartment complexes to discuss strategies to reduce the number of automobile thefts and related crimes.
- Sharing information with other neighboring communities for a more collaborative and proactive approach to auto theft prevention.
- Reviewing automobile theft reports to analyze and determine patterns of current thefts including trends, methods, times of day, and locations.

Mahnomen County Sheriff's Department \$10,000

Continued the efforts of the on-going auto theft prevention program by:

- Using patrol officers to target the area surrounding the Shooting Star Casino, an area with a high number of auto thefts in the county, for quick response to thefts and recovery of stolen vehicles.
- Conducting a public service campaign using the local media.
- Distributing anti-theft handouts to the public at community gatherings, neighborhood watch groups, and the county fair.
- Partnering with the County Attorney to more successfully prosecute auto theft cases.
- Training for officers related to detection and identification methods.
- Utilizing a bait vehicle equipped for videotape surveillance.

Maplewood Police Department \$25,000

A new grant to address auto theft by employing strategies such as:

- Conducting surveillance of known criminals and/or high crime rate areas.
- Investigating auto theft cases including interviewing witnesses and suspects, and vehicle identification.
- Initiating a bait vehicle program.

- Providing training for officers and investigators through national and local conferences and training opportunities.

Minneapolis Police Department \$370,436

Continued the efforts of the city-wide Task Force by:

- Utilizing bait vehicles with GPS systems in high-risk theft areas throughout the city to apprehend auto thieves. Grant pays to equip and operate bait vehicles and for a full-time officer to coordinate the program.
- Assisting jurisdictions statewide in the development, implementation and operation of bait vehicle programs
- Continuing proactive motor vehicle theft approaches such as targeting well-known auto thieves, working on legislation for changes to salvage yard law, and undercover activities.
- Working collaboratively with the Hennepin County Auto Theft Prosecution Program to insure that auto theft cases are successfully prosecuted.
- Compiling data for on-going crime analysis of auto theft reports and historical profiles of suspected chop shops and organized auto theft rings throughout the City of Minneapolis.
- Utilizing billboards, newspaper ads, and shelter signs at Metro Transit Council bus stations to advertise the Bait Vehicle Program for the deterrence of auto theft.
- Continuing other public awareness programs via the City of Minneapolis WEB site.

Oakdale Police Department \$17,500

A new grant to address auto theft by employing strategies such as:

- Funding overtime for officers involved in investigation and surveillance activities.
- Initiating a bait vehicle program.
- Conducting a crime analysis of vehicle thefts.

Owatonna Police Department \$20,535

Supported the efforts of the continuing auto theft prevention program by:

- Collaborating with Steele County to implement a bait vehicle program.
- Working with local cable and radio stations to create public service announcements.
- Funding overtime for officers involved in surveillance activities.
- Hosting informational forums and school presentations to teach the public how to prevent auto theft and how to report these crimes to the police should they occur.
- Training officers to better prevent auto thefts and to recover stolen vehicles.

Plymouth Police Department \$5,000

Continued the efforts of the Plymouth Auto Theft Prevention Program by:

- Educating the public about auto theft prevention techniques through local newspapers, community television, flyers, Crime Watch captains, and the multi-housing officer.
- Leasing and maintaining one bait vehicle for use in high-risk areas.
- Funding the overtime wages of officers participating in grant operations (8 hours per week)
- Increasing the number of Watch Your Car registrants

Ramsey County Attorney \$273,561

Supported the efforts of the Ramsey County Attorney's Office Automobile Theft Program by:

- Communicating with other law enforcement agencies (including the St. Paul Police Department and suburban Ramsey County police agencies) and prosecutors in other counties (including the Hennepin County Attorney's Office and the Southeast Metropolitan program) to enhance decision-making and increase collaborative activities.
- Renewing funding for two prosecuting attorneys and a half-time legal secretary. One attorney would be primarily responsible for adult prosecution while the other would focus on juvenile prosecution.
- Continuing to evaluate the effectiveness of the program by gathering and analyzing data about the disposition of cases.
- Enhancing the training of prosecuting attorneys by attending educational seminars and by participating with the Minnesota State Patrol and the St. Paul Police Department in the field examining methods of concealing vehicle identity.
- Researching the criminal history of all offenders to enable the courts to impose the correct sanction.
- Providing training for law enforcement personnel on investigating and preparing cases for prosecution and for the public on auto theft prevention.
- Ensuring the best possible prosecution of both juvenile and adult auto theft cases by allowing the same prosecutor to handle the case from charging to sentencing and by establishing tough prosecution policies.

Rochester Police Department \$39,500

A new grant to address auto theft by employing strategies such as:

- Initiating a bait vehicle program.
- Publicizing the bait vehicle program as a deterrent to thefts.
- Funding overtime for officers working on investigations.
- Training of officers on stolen vehicle identification methods.
- Partnering with the New Car Dealers Association to decrease theft from the dealerships.

St. Paul Police Department \$92,450

Strengthened the efforts of Auto Theft Unit program by:

- Funding overtime for officers working on short term and long term investigations and "cold cases".
- Utilizing bait vehicles in areas cars are most likely to be stolen by auto theft rings.
- Training current and new St. Paul officers on techniques of auto theft detection and pro-active methods they can use when working on cases involving career auto thieves and chop shop operators.
- Coordinating with the Special Investigations Unit and the Juvenile Unit to ensure that investigation data is available, shared, and useful to all three groups working on auto and motorcycle theft in St. Paul.
- Educating the public and car dealerships on methods to safeguard vehicles and prevent auto thefts.

- Collaborating with West St. Paul, Mendota Heights, South St. Paul and Inver Grove Heights department to share intelligence.
- Utilizing a "hot sheet" approach with lists of recently stolen vehicles.

St. Paul Police Department (juvenile) \$42,000

Furthered the efforts of the on-going St. Paul Police Department Juvenile Unit auto theft prevention program by:

- Using updated statistics to analyze locations and suspects and coordinate with the Auto Theft and Special Investigations Units to identify trends in auto theft. Proactively patrol sites at risk for auto theft by juveniles.
- Utilizing grant money for direct proactive auto theft investigation and surveillance techniques to target juvenile offenders using both Sergeants and street officers with juvenile experience.
- Using the TRACC Program with Ramsey County Enhanced Probation to do checks on juveniles convicted of auto theft.
- Utilizing bait vehicles to enhance efforts.

South St. Paul Police Department \$12,235

Strengthened the efforts of the current auto theft prevention program by:

- Placing squads, motorcycle and bicycle patrol in selected areas for auto theft prevention.
- Utilizing a computer system to analyze and determine patterns of automobile thefts and related crimes (location, time of day, method, and vehicle type).
- Collaborating with West St. Paul, Mendota Heights, South St. Paul and Inver Grove Heights department to share intelligence.
- Participating in local training opportunities to enhance skills in auto theft investigation.