

STATE SENATOR • MARTHA G. SCOTT • 2ND DISTRICT

Scott Press Release

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AUTO THEFTS DOWN 16.5 PERCENT IN MICHIGAN

LANSING, Michigan - Auto thefts in Michigan went down by 16.5 percent last year, the Michigan Automobile Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA) determined in its 2008 Annual Report. Since the creation of the ATPA in 1986, auto thefts have fallen by 42.4 percent.

“The Automobile Theft Prevention Authority has proven itself to be extremely successful in bringing together local, county and state agencies to prevent and combat auto theft,” said State Senator Martha G. Scott (D-Highland Park). “I am grateful for its continued outstanding work, which saves citizens and the government money.”

The report shows that Michigan motorists are saving \$50 per insured vehicle as a result of lower thefts. The insurance industry has saved about \$50 million in fraudulent theft claims since 1996.

In 2008, ATPA units were involved in the recovery of 4,917 stolen vehicles or parts with an estimated worth of \$39.4 million. The return on investment of ATPA funds was \$6.39 for every \$1 spent in 2008.

Several ATPA success stories from the 2nd Senate District are highlighted in the ATPA 2008 Annual Report.

- “Half a Sandwich?” Hamtramck officers investigated the B&E of a vehicle (three laptop computers were taken) where Joe had almost been run over by fleeing suspects. Joe was able to get the plate number from the vehicle, so officers put the owner’s Secretary of State picture in a photo line-up. Joe immediately picked out the suspect as the person who tried to run him over. Officers obtained a search warrant for the suspect’s house and located three stolen guns, two pounds of marijuana, and \$5,000 cash, but only one of the laptop computers.
- “Newbie Project” Grosse Pointe Park officers reported a very successful first year of operation. They made 104 arrests and 430 recoveries with an estimated value of \$2.4 million. Forty percent of those recoveries were achieved within 72 hours of the theft, and the vehicles were still in good condition. Auto thefts have been reduced by 22 to 30 percent in participating jurisdictions (the five Grosse Pointes and Harper Woods). The unit won a HEAT award for an undercover operation at the Chrysler Corporation which

resulted in the arrest of four individuals who were creating a serious theft problem for Chrysler.

- “No Bull Zone” Detroit Auto Theft units obtained information that Bull Auto Parts was buying stolen vehicles, stripping them, and selling the parts from the store or via its website. Detroit officers obtained a search warrant for the business and requested all the ATPA-funded auto theft units in Wayne County to assist them. Bull Auto Parts has two large buildings, and it took about 35 officers two full days to review the store’s records and check the parts inventory. Their search revealed the owner was running a chop shop, retagging vehicles, and fixing vehicles with stolen parts or just selling them. Officers also found four guns. This cooperation between multi-jurisdictional auto theft units resulted in solving one of the largest chop shop cases in the history of the Detroit Police Department.
- “Financial Advice?” Detroit Auto Theft investigators worked with Troy PD to arrest Steven on identity fraud. Steven ran an investment business and after meeting with a client, he went to a Troy dealership using his client’s Social Security number on the credit application. On his way out of the dealership, Steven (caught on video) stole the keys to a 2008 Cadillac and drove off with it. Detroit officers staked out his business and arrested Steven as he got into the stolen vehicle. He had multiple identification credit cards in his possession. Shortly after Steven confessed, an FBI agent showed up to indicate they were investigating him for more than a million dollars in fraud on many victims.

Statewide, auto thefts went from 49,709 in 2006 to 41,510 in 2007. In Detroit, auto thefts went from 22,918 in 2006 to 19,655 in 2007.

The complete report is available online at www.michigan.gov/atpa.

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Senator Scott represents the 2nd Senate District, which includes areas of Detroit and the cities of Hamtramck, Harper Woods, Highland Park and all of the Grosse Pointes. She serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee.