

# **Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority**

## **2008 Annual Report**



Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs





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### *Mission Statement*

*The mission of the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority is to prevent and reduce motor vehicle thefts and other associated crime in the State of Washington.*

### *Values*

- *A mission driven organization*
- *Honesty and integrity*
- *Commitment*
- *Public trust*
- *Collaboration*
- *Diversity*
- *Accountability and responsibility*
- *Quality services*
- *Competent, professional staff*
- *Progressive innovation*
- *Outcome driven initiatives/programs/projects*
- *Data driven outcomes*
- *A philosophy of individual motor vehicle owner/operator responsibility*



# WASHINGTON AUTO THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY

WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SHERIFFS AND POLICE CHIEFS

3060 Willamette Drive NE, Suite 101 ~ Lacey, WA 98516 ~ Phone: (360) 292-7900 ~ Fax: (360) 292-7269 ~ Website: <http://watpa.waspc.org>  
"preventing and reducing motor vehicle thefts and other associated crime in the State of Washington"



December 15, 2008

The Honorable Christine Gregoire  
Governor of Washington  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire:

It is with great pleasure that we present the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority's (WATPA) annual report for the calendar year ending December 31, 2008.

The WATPA is pleased to report a significant reduction in motor vehicle thefts in Washington for the past few years. In 2005, Washington experienced an all-time high of nearly 50,000 stolen vehicles. Since that time there has been a statewide reduction each year. In 2008, it is projected that Washington will have less than 28,000 motor vehicles stolen. However, Washington is still one of the top states in the nation for both the number of vehicles stolen and its theft rate. In 2007, Washington was 7<sup>th</sup> nationwide in number of vehicles stolen and 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation for vehicles stolen per 100,000 state residents. We recognize that there is still a great deal of work to be done to prevent Washington citizens from suffering the negative affects of a stolen vehicle and the other crimes associated with vehicle theft.

The WATPA has completed its first year of operation. Financial assistance in excess of \$5.435 million will have been awarded to public agencies by March of 2009. We expect that with continued funding of the WATPA which allows us to provide financial assistance to the public agencies of our criminal justice system that Washington will continue to see a reduction in the number of motor vehicle thefts.

The WATPA is committed to reducing the incidence of vehicle theft and associated crime in Washington. With the support of your office, the Legislature, the criminal justice community, as well as other public and private organizations we look forward to continued service to the citizens of the State of Washington.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald G. Pierce".

Donald G. Pierce  
Authority Chair

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*Washington Auto Theft  
Prevention Authority*

**JOHN BATISTE**  
*Chief - WA State Patrol*

**EMIL DAMMEL**  
*Insurance Industry*

**HARVEY GJESDAL**  
*Sheriff - Douglas County*

**KEN HOHENBERG**  
*Chief - Kennewick*

**JOHN LOVICK**  
*Sheriff - Snohomish County*

**MERLE PFIEFER**  
*General Public*

**DON PIERCE**  
*Executive Director - WASPC*

**DAN SATTERBERG**  
*Prosecuting Attorney - King  
County*

**STEVE STRACHAN**  
*Chief - Kent*

**MICHAEL WEST**  
*Automobile Industry*

**JIM LAMUNYON**  
*Executive Director - WATPA*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Washington State experienced several years of increased motor vehicle thefts, peaking in 2005 at nearly 50,000 stolen vehicles a year with an economic loss of nearly \$325 million. Since that time, there has been a marked decrease in the number of stolen vehicles. The projection for 2008 is less than 28,000 stolen vehicles.

In 2007, in response to the trend of increasing stolen vehicles, the Legislature enacted the Elizabeth Nowak – Washington Auto Theft Prevention Act (E3rdSHB1001). It included changes to sentencing laws, changes to the laws regarding theft of motor vehicles, possession of stolen motor vehicles, possession of auto theft tools, and creation of the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority (WATPA).

The primary task assigned to the WATPA is the provision of financial assistance to public agencies to address the motor vehicle theft problem in Washington. This is done through funding initiatives involving investigation, arrest and prosecution of vehicle thieves as well as funding equipment and technologies that assist law enforcement. Funding is also provided for public awareness and education, and confinement.

The WATPA provided \$4.435 million through 24 grant awards effective July 15, 2008. These funds went to task forces, multi-agency initiatives that did not constitute a task force, and other grants for equipment, technology and public awareness. Several of the task forces are still in the formative stages and have little or no theft reduction activity to report. This will change in the coming months as they move from planning and organizational activities to operational activities. Another \$1 million in equipment and technology grants will be awarded in early 2009.

In addition, WATPA initiated several public awareness activities including a website, speaking engagements, brochures and posters, and media contacts. Plans are in place for public service announcements, video or filmed awareness announcements, and assisting local agencies with public safety events where the “prevention of auto theft” message is pertinent. WATPA has adopted “You Hold the Key” as its primary prevention theme.

Future activities are contingent upon legislative appropriations from the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority Account in the State Treasury. Much of the first year, both for the WATPA and the funded agencies, has been spent with startup processes. Policies, procedures, operational and financial plans have been completed. Priorities for financial assistance and grant processes have been established and the first grant awards have been approved.

The coming year will see the increased implementation of operational activities. This should lead to further reductions in vehicle thefts in the coming years. WATPA is in a position to provide a valuable service to the public agencies and the citizens of Washington. It is expected, through WATPA activities, that Washington citizens will, due to the continued downward trend in thefts, experience less emotional trauma, lower economic loss, and improved public safety.

## **AUTHORITY MEMBERS**

### **Don Pierce, Executive Director, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, WATPA Chair**



Don Pierce of Lacey has been appointed to a term effective November 19, 2007, ending November 18, 2009. Pierce is the executive director of Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC). He served as the Chief of Police for Boise, Idaho; Bellingham and Tukwila; and was the director of public safety for the City of Normandy Park. Pierce was the Chief Executive Officer of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Idaho prior to joining WASPC.

### **Dan Satterberg, King County Prosecuting Attorney, WATPA Vice-Chair**



Dan Satterberg of Seattle has been appointed to a term effective November 19, 2007, ending November 18, 2011. Satterberg is the newly elected King County Prosecuting Attorney. He served as Chief of Staff for the Prosecutor's office for 17 years and was appointed Interim Prosecutor in May 2007. Satterberg worked to create King County's Drug Diversion Court and has worked on the reformation of state sentencing laws.

### **Sheriff John Lovick, Snohomish County Sheriff's Office**



John Lovick of Everett has been appointed to a term effective November 19, 2007, ending November 18, 2011. Lovick is a past State Representative and was recently elected Sheriff of Snohomish County. He was a state trooper with the Washington State Patrol and has received the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Lifesavers award, a certificate of commendation from the National Commission Against Drunk Driving, the Washington Traffic Safety Commission Special Director's award and the Washington Association of County Officials' 2005 Legislator of the Year award.

### **Sheriff Harvey Gjesdal, Douglas County Sheriff's Office**



Harvey Gjesdal of East Wenatchee has been appointed to a term effective November 19, 2007, ending November 18, 2009. Gjesdal is the Sheriff of Douglas County and has served as a law enforcement officer for 22 years, with experience as a traffic officer, detective, firearms instructor, SWAT team member, patrol sergeant and Sheriff. He is in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserves and is a veteran of Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom.

### **Mr. Merle Pfeifer, Sparks Car Care, General Public**



Merle F. Pfeifer of Kent has been appointed to a term effective November 26, 2007, ending November 18, 2009. Pfeifer is the chief executive officer of Sparks Car Care. He is the president of the Federal Way Public Schools Technical Advisory Council, the president-elect and government affairs committee chairperson for the Automotive Service Association and the chairperson of the NAPA Western Region Auto Care Council.

**Mr. Mike West, Southtowne Auto Rebuild**



Michael West of Tukwila has been appointed to a term effective November 19, 2007, ending November 18, 2011. West is the owner of Southtowne Auto Rebuild. He is the education chairperson for the Southwest King County Chamber of Commerce and a Valley View Sewer District Commissioner. He has served on the Governor and Attorney General's antifraud task forces, the Seattle Community College advisory committee, the Renton Technical College advisory committee, the Highway 99 action committee and the City of Tukwila's planning commission.

**Chief Steve Strachan, Kent Police Department**



Steve Strachan of Kent has been appointed to a term effective November 19, 2007, ending November 18, 2009. Strachan is the Chief of Police for the City of Kent. Previously, he served as the Chief of Police in Lakeville, Minnesota. He graduated from the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Seminar and is a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the King County Chiefs of Police Association and the Kent Rotary Club.

**Chief Ken Hohenberg, Kennewick Police Department**



Ken Hohenberg of Kennewick has been appointed to a term effective November 19, 2007, ending November 18, 2011. Hohenberg is the Chief of Police for the City of Kennewick and has served with the Kennewick Police Department since 1978. He is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and completed Boston University's Senior Management Institute for Police and the FBI's Law Enforcement Executive Development Seminar. He is a member of the Columbia Center Rotary Club, the Benton County Law and Justice Council, Benton-Franklin Legal Aid and the Benton-Franklin drug courts Community Action and International Law Enforcement Exchange Foundation.

**Chief John Batiste, Washington State Patrol**



John Batiste of Olympia has been appointed to a term effective November 19, 2007, ending at the Governor's pleasure. Batiste is the Chief of the Washington State Patrol and an executive board member of WASPC and the Western States Information Network. Batiste is a Washington Criminal Justice Training Commissioner, a Washington Traffic Safety Commissioner and the chairperson of the Governor's Methamphetamine Coordinating Council. He is a member of International Association of Chiefs of Police and is on the board of Northwest University. He has worked with the Kenya National Police Force to create a National Police Chaplin Program and with the South African National Police Force on ethical policing.

**Mr. Emil Dammel, PEMCO Insurance Co.**



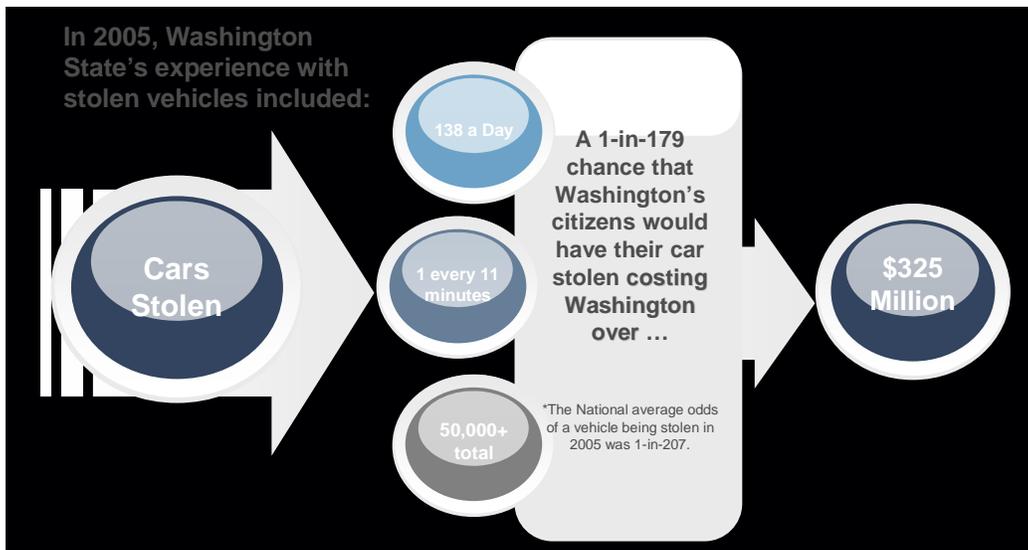
Emil Dammel of Seattle has been appointed to a term effective November 19, 2007 ending November 18, 2011. Dammel is the claims quality assurance manager for PEMCO and has been a legal examiner, claim analyst and casualty adjuster for PEMCO. He is a Washington Business Week company advisor and a speaker at seminars held by the Washington State Trial Lawyers Association.

## BACKGROUND

In 2005, after years of increasing motor vehicle thefts, Washington State had nearly 50,000 vehicles stolen and was ranked in the top five nationally. Since 1994, auto theft in Washington had increased 55 percent. Seattle and Yakima ranked in the top 10 metropolitan areas for stolen vehicles nationally with Spokane in the top twenty.

It is well known that the theft of a motor vehicle causes significant inconvenience and loss to people, imposes financial hardship, and negatively impacts their work, school and personal activities. The annual cost to Washington's citizens topped \$325 million in lost vehicles and higher insurance rates. Motor vehicle theft had become a major economic and social problem. See Diagram 1.

**Diagram 1**



Motor vehicle theft is linked to offenders engaged in other crimes. Stolen vehicles are frequently used by criminals for transportation while engaged in other criminal activity or enterprise. Stolen vehicles are used in robberies and burglaries. Many people stopped in stolen vehicles possess personal identification of others as well as drugs including methamphetamine, precursors to methamphetamine, or equipment used in the manufacture of methamphetamine.

Often thought of as a non-violent crime, motor vehicle theft was often a lower priority within the criminal justice system. Juveniles and adults alike had to have numerous convictions before they were sentenced to any serious jail or prison time. There was little deterrent effect and law enforcement was frustrated as there were few, if any, significant consequences to being apprehended for vehicle theft.

There have been several instances in Washington State and across the country where motor vehicle theft has turned deadly. An off duty police officer on her way to work was

struck by a stolen vehicle and killed. A 90-year old man sitting in his vehicle at an intersection waiting for the light to change was struck broadside and killed by an out of control stolen vehicle. A Washington State Trooper stopped a stolen vehicle and was confronted by the driver who was wielding a shotgun. A State Trooper in Texas was shot and killed by the driver of a stolen vehicle. These examples all point to the fact that auto theft is not just a property crime, but a public safety issue as well.

As a result of the Washington Legislature's desire to change these trends, Engrossed 3rd Substitute House Bill 1001 (the Elizabeth Nowak<sup>1</sup>-Washington Auto Theft Prevention Act) was enacted during the 2007 Regular Legislative Session. It was signed into law by Governor Gregoire and became effective July 1, 2007.

The Act included amendments to existing laws and enactment of new laws so that motor vehicle theft and possession of a stolen motor vehicle are now separate crimes from other property theft. A new law was also enacted to deal with motor vehicle theft tools.

Changes to sentencing laws now make it possible to obtain longer sentences for convicted motor vehicle thieves with fewer past convictions. The same is now true with juveniles as there are mandatory minimum sentences designated within the Act.

In addition to other changes dealing with motor vehicle theft, the Act created the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority (WATPA) in the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC). The Authority consists of 10 Governor appointees serving staggered terms. Representatives of law enforcement, prosecution, the auto industry, the insurance industry, the general public, as well as the Executive Director of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs and the Chief of the Washington State Patrol are included as members of the Authority. The Authority staff includes an executive director, a public awareness coordinator, and an administrative assistant.

The Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority account was created in the Washington State Treasury and is subject to appropriation. The account is funded through a \$10.00 surcharge on traffic infractions. Expenditures from the account are to be used only for activities related to motor vehicle theft. These include:

- ◆ Education
- ◆ Prevention
- ◆ Law Enforcement
- ◆ Investigation
- ◆ Prosecution
- ◆ Confinement

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Nowak was an off-duty Seattle police officer who was struck and killed by a stolen vehicle while she was driving to work.

The WATPA provides financial assistance through the use of grants to prosecutors and law enforcement agencies for activities that help address the motor vehicle theft problem.

The sections of Engrossed 3<sup>rd</sup> Substitute House Bill 1001 that address the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority have since been codified in RCW 36.28A.130 and Chapter 46.66 RCW. The WATPA began administrative operations effective October 15, 2007 and held its first meeting of the members on January 9, 2008.

## STATUS

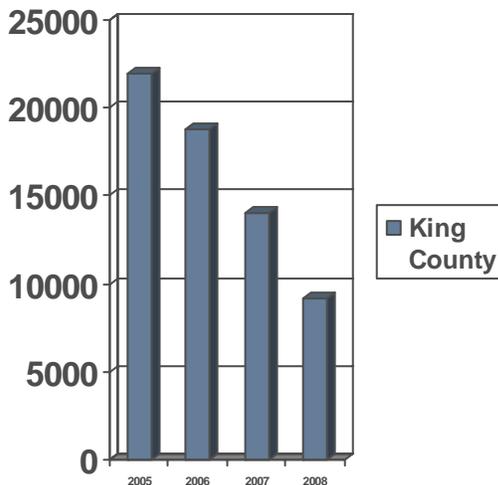
Washington State as a whole has experienced positive change over the past few years in regards to the number of motor vehicles stolen. The Seattle metropolitan statistical area (MSA) has fallen to 16<sup>th</sup> in the nation. Spokane has fallen out of the top twenty. However; Yakima continues to be (per capita) ranked 9<sup>th</sup> nationally.

The Uniform Crime Report (UCR) is a system operated by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs. The statistics are published annually in *Crime in Washington*. UCR statistics are reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation which reports the national rollup annually in its *Crime in the United States* publication.

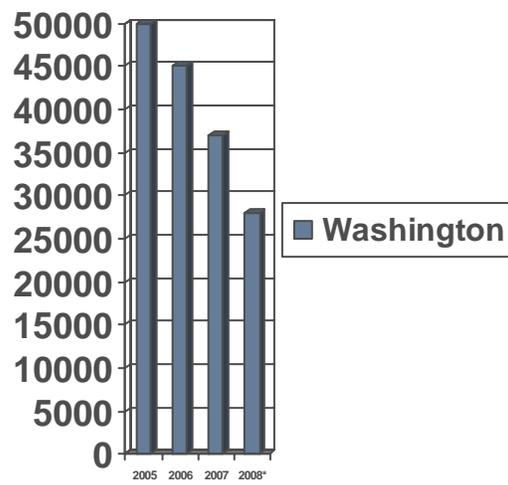
Washington State shows a significant decline in motor vehicle thefts over the past three years. UCR statistics show a drop from 49,151 stolen motor vehicle thefts in 2005 to 36,932 in 2007. The total number of stolen vehicles in 2008 is projected to be less than 28,000. This is approximately a 49-percent reduction over the past three years. As a result of this dramatic reduction there are thousands of Washington citizens that have been spared the negative effects of having their vehicle stolen.

With a projection of less than 10,000 stolen vehicles in 2008, King County has experienced a 62-percent reduction in motor vehicle thefts over the past three years (nearly half the reduction for the entire state). See Chart 1 and 2.

**Chart 1**



**Chart 2**



There is good reason for this high percentage reduction. The King County Prosecutor's Office has created the Car Theft Initiative (CTI) that includes prosecutors dedicated solely to motor vehicle theft. They have become experts at prosecuting auto theft cases and are adept at bringing in charges from multiple jurisdictions throughout the County. When a suspect is charged they will seek out other agencies that might be working cases on the individual and consolidate the cases. The prosecutors have been highly successful at either obtaining good plea bargains or sentences that put motor vehicle thieves in prison for several years. Some vehicle thieves in King County have been sentenced to as much as 84 months in prison.

Another important component to King County's motor vehicle theft initiatives is Redmond Police Department's Auto Theft Tactical Analysis Center of King County (ATTACK). This is a motor vehicle analysis center that gathers information about vehicle thefts and the top thieves and distributes it to hundreds of police officers throughout the Central Puget Sound area. They identify the most prolific thieves enabling officers and detectives to focus on those people.

Some auto thieves have admitted to stealing as many as five vehicles per day. Through identification of these individuals, focusing investigative resources on them, and arresting and filing charges in such a manner that upon conviction they are removed from the community for long periods of time, the theft rates go down. See Diagram 2.

**Diagram 2**

*(Approved for Public Release)*

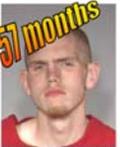
Auto Theft Tactical Analysis Center of King County  
**ATTACK**

**November 24, 2008** **Bulletin 08-011 PR**

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**King County's Top Auto Thief Sentences**

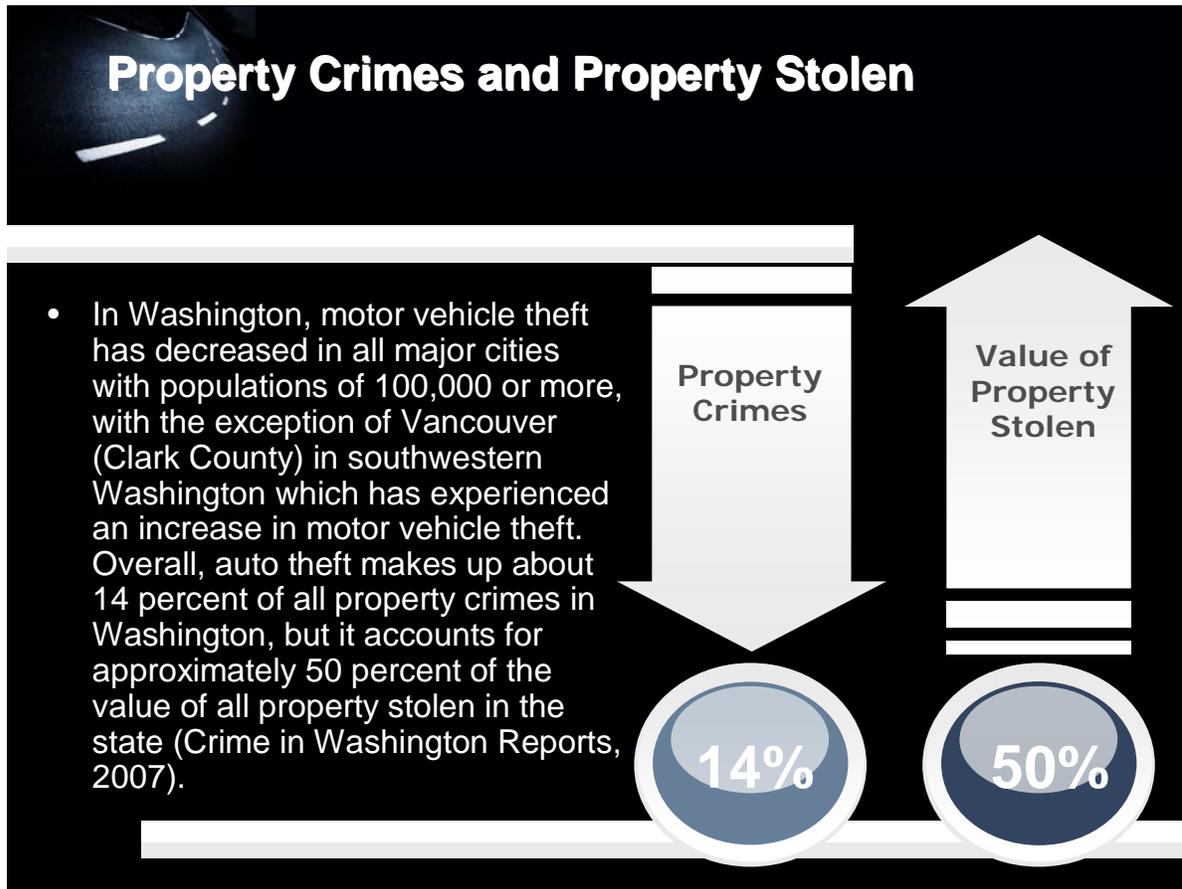
These auto thieves were apprehended by law enforcement agencies and, through a coordinated effort, have been successfully prosecuted by the King County Prosecutor's Car Theft Initiative (CTI) program.

 Skyler KAIZUKA	 Daniel MILLER	 Anthony PHELPS	 Christopher GREGORY
 Craig BIGLER	 Ryan COX	 Brian DENNIS	 Angel LOHR
 John SONNEVIL	 Corey HARRUFF	 Jeffrey TITUS	 Jessee TINDALL

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However, even with the declining theft rates there is still significant economic loss due to stolen vehicles. In fact, stolen vehicles only constitute 14 percent of all property crimes committed yet account for over 50 percent of the economic loss due to property crimes. See Diagram 3.

**Diagram 3**



The Authority has emphasized King County’s initiatives as a “best practice” and model for other areas of the state where motor vehicle theft is a significant problem and financial assistance is being provided for task forces. The WATPA believes that this type of effort can be replicated in other parts of the state with the probability of similar results.

### **Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority – First Year**

The Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority has just completed its first year of operation. Much of the year was used developing operations plans, financial plans, policies and procedures for the Authority and policies and procedures for grants. An executive director was appointed. A chair and vice-chair were selected and five meetings

were conducted. A public awareness coordinator and an administrative assistant were also employed by the Authority.

The primary focus for the first year was getting the Authority organized and moving forward in a strategic manner. Although the Legislature appropriated \$5.4 million for FY 07-08 and \$6.922 million for FY 08-09 the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority account started with a zero balance.

The Authority took a conservative approach to providing financial assistance to public agencies and did not open a grant process for funding in FY 07-08. This allowed the WATPA account to receive sufficient revenue to cover the cash flow needs that would be represented by reimbursement grants for FY 08-09. When grants were awarded in June 2007 for FY 08-09, the Authority was again conservative in the amounts awarded in order to gain another year's experience with the revenue that the WATPA account is receiving. There was a desire to have sufficient history with the revenue stream to know that future cash flow needs would be met.

During its first award process, the Authority received in excess of \$14 million in grant requests and authorized grant awards in the amount of \$4.435 million. Awards became effective July 15, 2008. Grants were awarded to individual agencies or multiple agencies as follows:

### **Multi-Jurisdiction Awards**

*Each agency shown in parentheses is the administrative/fiscal agent for the award.*

- ◆ **South King County** (Auburn Police Department) – PATROL Task Force - \$1,030,000 (this task force includes agencies from South King County and Northeast Pierce County)
- ◆ **Snohomish County** (Snohomish County Sheriff's Office) – Snohomish County Auto Theft Task Force - \$830,000
- ◆ **Pierce County** (Lakewood Police Department) – Pierce County ATTACK Unit - \$530,000
- ◆ **Yakima County** (Yakima County Sheriff's Office, Yakima Police Department, Sunnyside Police Department, Toppenish Police Department) – Auto Theft Prevention Program - \$440,000
- ◆ **Clark County** (Vancouver Police Department) – Southwest Washington Auto Theft Taskforce - \$330,000
- ◆ **Spokane County** (Spokane Police Department) – Auto Theft Prevention Task Force - \$330,000
- ◆ **East King County** (Redmond Police Department) – East King County Cooperative Auto Theft Initiative - \$230,000
- ◆ **Chelan and Douglas Counties** (Douglas County Sheriff's Office) - Chelan/Douglas Metro Auto Theft Reduction - \$60,000
- ◆ **Lewis County** (Chehalis Police Department) - Tri-Agency Stolen Vehicle Recovery Enforcement - \$30,000

- ◆ **Thurston County** (Prosecutor's Office) – Thurston County Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Program - \$30,000

### **Other Awards**

- ◆ Washington State Patrol Regional Auto Theft Units - \$160,000
- ◆ Seattle Police Department - \$100,000
- ◆ Washington State Patrol Aviation Section – \$100,000
- ◆ Bremerton Police Department – \$30,000
- ◆ Everett Police Department – \$30,000
- ◆ Kennewick Police Department – \$30,000
- ◆ Kitsap County Sheriff's Office – \$30,000
- ◆ Longview Police Department – \$30,000
- ◆ Lynnwood Police Department – \$30,000
- ◆ Walla Walla County Sheriff's Office - \$30,000
- ◆ Central Washington University Police Department - \$18,500
- ◆ Castle Rock Police Department - \$7,000

Most of the multi-jurisdiction task forces are still in the formative stages and are working through policies, procedures, logistics, etc. However, the Snohomish County Auto Taskforce, SNOCAT, is partially operational. They are two detectives short of being fully operational; yet, they are still working cases and have had success during their short tenure.

In October 2008, SNOCAT investigated a possible motorcycle chop shop. They recovered one stolen motorcycle and uncovered a drug house. SNOCAT worked with the Regional Drug Taskforce and as a result the following were seized or recovered:

- Over \$32,000
- 7 firearms (4 of them stolen), including 2 assault rifles
- Over 3 lbs of Marijuana
- Over 1,200 Oxycontin pills
- 109 grams of base cocaine
- 2 Ballistic Vests
- 1 Kevlar Helmet
- Police Scanner

At the end of October, SNOCAT recovered two stolen snowmobiles and a trailer. The suspect, a felon in possession of a firearm, has agreed to a plea agreement and will receive a sentence of 53 months in prison. Other activity has included the recovery of over 25 stolen vehicles, service of multiple search warrants, and the arrests and charging of over 15 suspects.

The Yakima County Sheriff's Office has implemented several grant funded activities as well. They have increased the number of bait vehicle deployments, public awareness contacts and enforcement activities. They have recovered 102 stolen vehicles valued at

\$340,000, initiated 23 investigations and completed 19, arrested 8 suspects for motor vehicle theft and 4 others for possession of stolen vehicles and disrupted one chop shop. Arrests for associated crime included three for drugs, one for firearms, one for car prowling, and one for identity theft. Sentencing for convictions ranged from 10-57 months. They have also purchased technology that will assist their deputies assigned to vehicle theft duties.

WATPA provided funding for the purchase of 24 automated license plate readers (ALPR). These devices can be mounted on patrol vehicles and dependent upon the number of cameras used can read license plates 360 degrees around the patrol vehicle either approaching or going away. There has been a great deal of success in detecting stolen vehicles with this equipment. Kent Police Department put an ALPR into service at their expense and within the first couple of months of operation had recovered 50 stolen vehicles.

At the request of the WATPA, the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) drafted a model policy regarding the use of ALPR and its data storage. The policy provides, among other things, guidelines on deployment of the equipment (when, where and how to use ALPR), data retention, use, and access, and a legal review and analysis. The policy was approved by the general membership of WASPC at their fall conference in November. A copy of the model policy has been provided to all of the agencies that received WATPA funding for ALPR purchases. It is expected that these agencies will implement an ALPR use policy, likely to be based on the WASPC model policy, prior to putting ALPR into service.

The funded agencies had been waiting for the model policy prior to purchase of the equipment. Now that the policy has been approved and distributed the agencies have begun their procurement processes and should be deploying ALPR's within the next few months.

The WATPA is developing a public awareness coordination program to work with local agencies. A website was initiated early in the first year; however, it needs improvement. We expect the website to be more interactive, user friendly and include more dynamic content. The public awareness coordinator is working on the website changes.

WATPA is working with media in communities throughout the state to localize the information regarding motor vehicle theft. The public awareness coordinator will forward local statistics and other information on a regular basis to local papers and media outlets. This will allow them the opportunity to publish or broadcast vehicle theft information that is pertinent to their particular service area.

WATPA is also planning public service announcements or other types of public awareness advertising. There are tentative plans to enlist the help of professional sports teams or venues to help sell the prevention message. Both Arizona and Pennsylvania have been able to work with professional baseball and football teams in their public awareness efforts. The Authority is also in the process of reviewing several education

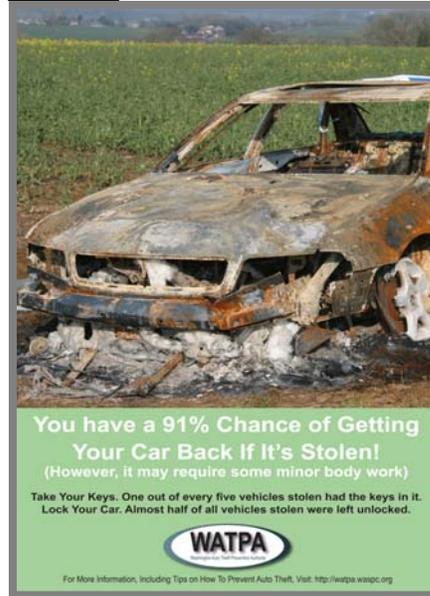
programs currently used in other states to see if they are viable and cost effective in Washington.

Brochures addressing how motorists can help prevent vehicle theft have been created for distribution to the public through a variety of outlets. Posters have been developed and printed with a variety of messages regarding motor vehicle theft and prevention. They are designed for display in businesses, law enforcement agencies and other establishments where they will have good visibility to the public. See Poster 1, 2, 3 and 4.

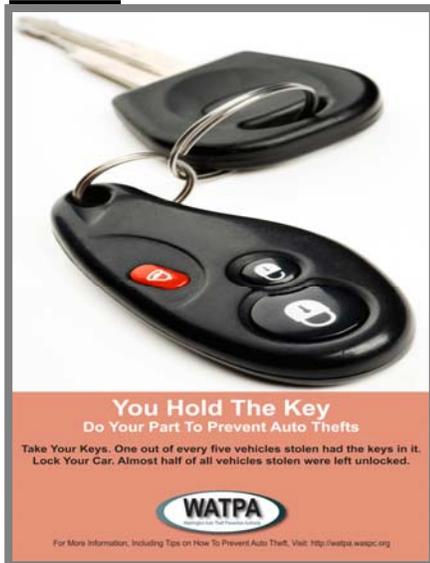
**Poster 1**



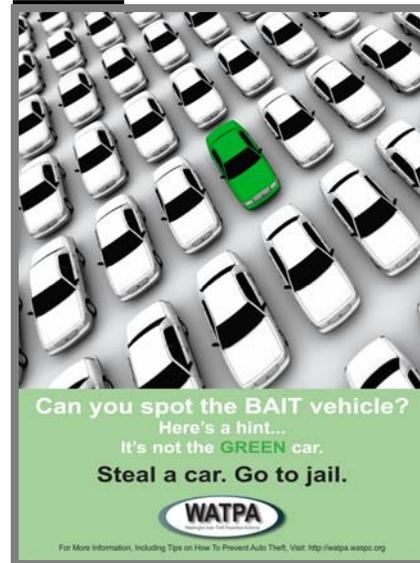
**Poster 2**



**Poster 3**



**Poster 4**



WATPA staff members have been actively pursuing opportunities to speak to civic and trade organizations across the state. Presentations have been given to Kiwanis clubs, Automotive Service Association groups, the Autobody Craftsman Association, the

Washington State Crime Prevention Association and other groups. There have also been press release and media contacts regarding motor vehicle theft and the WATPA.

The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) has arranged for the donation of an SUV that will be wrapped with several messages regarding motor vehicle theft and the WATPA theme of "You Hold the Key." The wrap will include the WATPA logo and the vehicle will be used at public events throughout the state such as safety fairs, auto shows, mall displays, civic events, etc. It will be equipped with theft prevention equipment and tracking devices to demonstrate what is available to the public.

WATPA is also working with NICB regarding equipment for bait vehicles. A recent bait vehicle deployment in the Yakima area resulted in the arrest of four auto theft suspects by the Yakima County Sheriff's Office. In another case, a bait vehicle deployed in the Sunnyside area resulted in the arrest of an auto theft suspect within 45 minutes of deployment. Although bait vehicle deployment has had mixed results, it is still a viable tool in many jurisdictions. It is not the only answer to auto theft but it does provide another method of identifying and arresting vehicle thieves.

VIN etching is the marking of vehicle windows with a vehicle's identification number. It is costly and difficult for vehicle thieves to replace all of a vehicle's windows if they are etched. Several agencies participate in this type of effort in different parts of the state. WATPA plans on working with local agencies to expand the etching effort.

The Authority plans on awarding another million dollars in early 2009 for one time equipment and technology purchases. These purchases will be completed prior to the end of the current fiscal year, June 30, 2009. The award period for the next biennium (09-11) will be announced in February with awards being made as soon as the appropriation for the next biennium is known.

The appropriation for the next biennium is critical to continuing the activities initiated by the WATPA during the past year. With a solid balance in the account, the Authority believes it can build on what has been started by providing increased financial assistance to the task forces. This will allow them to enhance and improve what they have initiated and better implement the best practices that are proven to reduce vehicle thefts. It also will allow WATPA to continue with and expand the public awareness activities.

The Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority has laid the foundation for continued success in preventing and reducing motor vehicle theft in Washington. During the next year those agencies that received financial assistance will move beyond the initial planning and organizing stages to full implementation of their proposed activities. With the added investigators, crime analysts, prosecutors, crime scene responders/processors and added equipment and technology, Washington should see additional reductions in vehicle thefts. This in turn will save many more Washington citizens from being victimized by the theft of a vehicle or other associated crime. It will also cut down on the tremendous economic loss experienced by the state and its citizens that is caused by motor vehicle thefts.

## Finances

The Legislature created the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority account in the State Treasury. The funds in the account are subject to Legislative appropriation. The WATPA is authorized to solicit gifts, grants, and other bequests. These receipts and other funds from public and private sources intended to support the activities of the Authority must be deposited into the WATPA Account.

Expenditures from the account are to be used only for activities related to motor vehicle theft including education, prevention, law enforcement, investigation, prosecution, and confinement. The WATPA is to use no more than 10 percent of the moneys in the account for administration. The primary funding source for WATPA is a \$10 assessment on all traffic infractions.

During the 07-09 biennium, the Legislature appropriated \$5.4 million in the first fiscal year and \$6.922 million in the second fiscal year for WATPA activities. The WATPA Account, initiated in July 2007, started with a zero balance. It has taken over a year for the account to build a sufficient balance that it could cover grant awards and operational costs of the WATPA. In addition, the monthly revenue, which started slowly, has never reached the projected levels. Revenue in the first six months of FY 08-09 has been close to or slightly over \$600,000 per month. This has allowed the account to build an adequate reserve to cover the cash flow needs of the WATPA as it reimburses public agencies for their expenses associated with the grant awards.

The WATPA Account also provides funding to the Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA). For the current biennium, DOC received an appropriation from the account of \$1,506,523. Their projected appropriation for the 09-11 biennium is \$2,293,295. JRA was appropriated \$171,000 for the current biennium.

As of December 1, 2008, the WATPA Account had a balance of \$5,773,923. WATPA currently has \$4,435,000 in grant awards encumbered and will be awarding another \$1,000,000 in early 2009. As of December 1, 2008, disbursements to WATPA from the account have totaled \$413,127. This will increase dramatically as the grant recipients move from planning to operational activities over the remainder of the fiscal year.

The first fiscal year (07-08) the WATPA administrative budget was \$268,440. It was under spent by \$21,568. The administrative budget for the second fiscal year is \$388,559. These expenses, as they are incurred, will also be disbursed to WATPA during the remainder of the fiscal year.

WATPA also had \$30,000 budgeted in FY 07-08 for direct service programs such as public awareness activities. These funds pay for the brochures, posters, website improvements and operation, public service recordings, video recordings, and other related activities. Total direct service expenses for the first fiscal year were \$15,987 with

a balance of \$14,013 carried forward to the second fiscal year. The second fiscal year has a budget of \$160,000 to cover the expanded public awareness activities.

## **Acknowledgements**

WATPA wishes to thank the Washington Legislature and Governor Gregoire for having the foresight to create the Authority. The Authority and its ability to distribute financial assistance to the agencies that are working on the motor vehicle theft issues in Washington has been very well received.

We also wish to acknowledge the assistance during this first year of operation of the leaders of various auto theft authorities in other states. Specifically, Ms. Michelle Staton, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority and Mr. Enrique Cantu, Executive Director of the Arizona Auto Theft Authority. Their assistance has been instrumental in establishing the WATPA.

There are many people who have had a hand in the creation and startup of the WATPA. Former State Representative, now Snohomish County Sheriff John Lovick and King County Prosecutor Dan Satterberg were key players in seeing that the legislation creating the WATPA made its way through the legislative process. As members of the Authority, they continue to have a significant influence on the auto theft problems faced by this state.

The assistance of the National Insurance Crime Bureau with vehicle theft analysis, studies, statistics and providing local agencies with bait vehicles is very much appreciated. WATPA wants to express a personal thank you to Dana MacDonald and Scott Wagner for arranging the loan of a vehicle from MetLife Insurance Co. for WATPA use in its public awareness programs.

In support of the WATPA legislative reporting requirements, the Division of Governmental Studies and Services (DGSS) at Washington State University conducted a study and prepared a report entitled **REPORT TO THE WASHINGTON AUTO THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY (WATPA), Report in Support of Recommendations to the Washington State Legislature Regarding the Operations and Work of WATPA: Results of Background Research.**

Under the leadership of Nicholas P. Lovrich, Ph.D., Director of DGSS, the following researchers were instrumental in providing a product that met the needs of the WATPA: Michael J. Gaffney, Associate Director, DGSS; Christina Sanders, Research Coordinator and Westside Liaison, DGSS; Season Hoard, Doctoral Candidate in Political Science; and Yu-Sheng (Linus) Lin, Doctoral Candidate in Criminal Justice. Our thanks and appreciation go to the researchers, Dr. Lovrich and the DGSS support staff for their hard work, their attention to detail and their diligence in seeing this project through to completion.

Most important, we would like to acknowledge the hard work of those in the criminal justice system who strive every day to reduce the number of citizens negatively affected by motor vehicle thefts. We appreciate the interest and dedication they have displayed in addressing the vehicle theft problem in Washington. WATPA looks forward to providing additional financial assistance to them so they can continue what they have started.

# NOTES



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