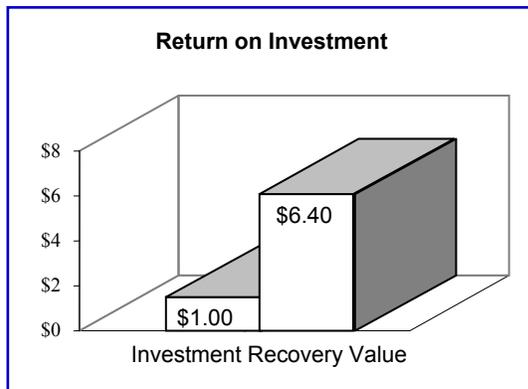


# TASK FORCE HIGHLIGHTS

## Return on Investment

During 2012, ATPA grantees achieved the following: 4,196 recovery incidents; 2,701 arrests; and 1,346 vehicles etched. The law enforcement grantees recovered \$6.40 for every \$1 the ATPA invested.



### ◆ **Auto Parts Store Actually a Chop Shop!**

The Detroit Police Department, Preventing Auto Theft Team, busted one of the largest chop shops in memorable history. Out of 120 cars in the yard, only 15-20 were not found to be stolen. They had a little of everything, from an Intrepid to a Jaguar. The owner of the business would purchase vehicles between \$300 and \$500 each. He would then sell parts from the cars online, including interior seats, catalytic converters, lights and stereos, and scrap the rest of the vehicle. A chop shop that does not keep its inventory discrete is considered an "anomaly." Most chop shops conduct business in abandoned garages, are used to chop two to five cars at a time, and then they move on. This one was using a regular business as a front.

### ◆ **Detailed Work Involved in Stealing Cars Today!**

MSP, Washtenaw Area Auto Theft Team, was asked to handle a stolen vehicle report from a local car dealership. It was quickly determined that this stolen vehicle involved some type of identity theft. The suspect created a company under his ownership, and wanted to lease a new vehicle in the name of the bogus company. The dealership requested financial records from the bogus company so they could determine if they would be able to finance the automobile. Financial records provided by the bogus company indicated the company had

earnings of \$9 million, which allowed the finance company to complete the deal on the \$60,000 Acura lease. Further investigation revealed that the company existed in name only, as a limited liability company. State treasury officials advised that the company had never paid taxes. The bogus company did hire a legitimate employee, and gave him the title of President of Security. This employee then accompanied the suspect to the dealership to handle the delivery of the vehicle. All of the paperwork was signed by the President of Security. The scam was working well until the dealership asked for a \$1,500 deposit. The scam started falling apart at this point and subsequently the suspect was charged and the vehicle was recovered.

◆ **Don't Make Too Many New Keys!** The Macomb Auto Theft Team was alerted by a new car dealership of frequent illegal new car key cuts being made at their dealership. After a brief interview, the suspect was identified as a well-known person in the auto theft community. The dealership was told to contact the auto theft team when the suspect showed up again requesting keys. A short time later a call came in that the suspect just obtained a key for an auto located in their jurisdiction. Police contacted the vehicle owner and insurance company and made arrangements to conduct surveillance of the vehicle. In an attempt to arrest the perpetrators, the owner allowed for the vehicle to be stolen. Within three days of the theft, the vehicle was listed on Craigslist for sale. A few days later the car was moved and sold to an unsuspecting purchaser. Officers intervened and captured the suspect and his associates. This case led to several additional arrests, and identified the location of numerous stolen vehicles in Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne Counties.

### ◆ **A Reason for the Creation of Vehicle History Reports.**

A Kalamazoo salesman is facing charges for selling "junk" cars to unsuspecting customers as "used cars". These cars were found to be significantly damaged. The salesman would fix up the "junk" cars and resell them. This is illegal in Michigan, and considered dangerous if the vehicle has serious safety problems. Always check your vehicle history report before purchasing a used vehicle.

# TASK FORCE HIGHLIGHTS, CONTINUED

◆ **Interesting Name!** A 2010 Audi Q-7, valued at \$55,000, was impounded by the Southfield Police Department, Auto Theft Team. The day after the vehicle was impounded, a subject with a fraudulent driver's license tried to claim the car, and ultimately confessed that he had been paid to pick up the vehicle. An investigation showed the car registered to a Ms. Harding, and was a fraud purchase in Ohio. A short time later, a suspect named Mr. Goodpaster showed up to claim the vehicle. Mr. Goodpaster stated that he owned a vehicle storage facility and that Ms. Harding had stored the vehicle with him, and then failed to pay the storage fees. Mr. Goodpaster said he then applied for title to the vehicle using a VDBR-140 form from the Michigan Secretary of State, which allowed him to own the vehicle for non-payment of rent. He stated the owner and lien holder had been served, but was unable to come up with the paperwork. At this point, during questioning, Mr. Goodpaster became obviously nervous. After being confronted that the story was not true, he admitted wrong-doing. He actually closed the storage facility in 2011, and was using left over VDBR-140 forms to register cars in his name. After a Law Enforcement Information Network check and title search, it was determined that Mr. Goodpaster had 12 cars registered in his name, and further revealed the names of several other subjects that Mr. Goodpaster had washed titles for. Mr. Goodpaster is now facing numerous felony charges.

◆ **State Salvage Vehicle Inspector Violates Law!** A gentleman from Wisconsin purchased a 2006 Toyota Tundra over the internet from a dealership in Kalamazoo, Michigan. After taking possession of the vehicle, he attempted to title the vehicle in Wisconsin. He was told by the agency that they were unable to title the auto because the vehicle was already titled as scrap in Wisconsin a year earlier. The owner subsequently demanded his money back from the dealer, and when he was refused, the police were notified. During an interview with the dealership's owner about the scrap/junk title, the dealer stated that the damage was minor and that the vehicle was miss-titled by the state of Wisconsin. The state of Michigan had changed

the title to a clean green title. Further investigation uncovered that a Licensed Salvage Vehicle Inspector in Michigan documented on an inspection form that the vehicle was not considered scrap/junk, and should be given a clean title. At this time, the inspection forms and title applications were taken to the Secretary of State. They were found to be mistakenly cleaned by the Michigan Secretary of State. After an interview and search warrants being issued, it was determined that no criminal intent had occurred by any of the employees at the Secretary of State offices. Charges are being filed against the dealership owner and the Salvage Vehicle Inspector for cleaning over 20 titles and selling the vehicles to unsuspecting citizens. The Salvage Vehicle Inspector was charged with embezzlement, and for not reporting nearly \$70,000 in income.

◆ **Putting the Pieces Together!** Oakland County Auto Theft Task Force put together a long trail of evidence that eventually led to the capture of a couple of thieves involved in everything from fraud to carjacking. The first victim was airing up his tires on his Ford Explorer at a gas station, when suddenly the suspect jumped into the victim's vehicle and drove off. A second suspect jumped into the moving vehicle as it was exiting the gas station. After obtaining a video from the gas station that was also aired on the local news, it was discovered that the same two suspects had matched a fraud complaint from a local Wal-Mart involving stolen lap-tops. Shortly after the videos were released to the media, police started receiving tips on the identity of the two suspects whose photos appeared to match recent booking photos. The original victim's Ford Explorer was subsequently recovered in Detroit. A phone number written on a piece of paper that was left in the stolen vehicle led investigators to another witness. This individual led authorities to a pawn shop where a stolen laptop from Wal-Mart was recovered. The pawn shop owner was able to assist the investigation by identifying two of the suspects. A positive identification of the suspect by the original victim eventually led to both suspects' incarceration.

# TASK FORCE HIGHLIGHTS, CONTINUED

◆ **It Doesn't Matter Who You Are!** Famous gospel singer Pastor Marvin Winans was carjacked while pumping gas in downtown Detroit.\* One suspect walked up to the Pastor and started a conversation about the music playing in his 2012 Infinity QX56 SUV, when he told the Pastor his gas was overflowing from his vehicle's gas tank. When Pastor Winans looked down he was struck in the face with a closed fist, causing him to fall to the ground, where he was continually kicked and beaten. The suspect and two other accomplices drove off in the SUV, valued at over \$58,000. The suspects also confiscated the Pastor's wallet, and an unknown amount of cash. Also stolen were a watch, an iPhone, and a metallic briefcase. The suspects were subsequently recognized by a witness and police were informed that the same individuals were given a citation earlier that day by Detroit police. This information led to a photo lineup that allowed the Pastor to positively identify his assailants. The suspects have been arrested and charged with car-jacking and robbery.

\*[Laitner, B. (2012, May 16). Marvin Winans recalls gas station attack: It started with music talk. *The Detroit Free Press*. Retrieved from <http://www.freep.com>]



## Historical Performance of the ATPA

The following table displays the historical performance of ATPA law enforcement auto theft consortiums.

YEAR	ARRESTS	\$ VALUE RECOVERED
1989-2003	36,842	374,946,375
2004	2,719	33,819,435
2005	2,778	37,420,835
2006	2,957	49,220,230
2007	3,073	50,391,560
2008	2,256	39,541,465
2009	2,583	39,316,557
2010	2,311	28,370,280
2011	2,281	27,508,471
2012	2,701	34,246,620
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>60,501</b>	<b>\$714,781,828</b>

## Vehicle Theft Rates

From 1986 to 2011, despite growth in both population and number of registered vehicles, Michigan's theft rate per 100,000 population, and per 100,000 registered vehicles, has fallen dramatically.

THEFT RATE	1986	2011	% CHANGE
Population	787.5	253.6	-67.8
Vehicles	999.5	255.0	-74.5

