

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ann Armstrong, Public Information Officer
Arizona Automobile Theft Authority
Phone: 602 364-2892
E-mail: ann.armstrong@aata.state.az.us

**ARIZONA AUTOMOBILE THEFT AUTHORITY AND NATIONAL
INSURANCE CRIME BUREAU (NICB) ANNOUNCE 100th BAIT CAR ARREST**

PHOENIX (April 11, 2005) The Arizona Automobile Theft Authority (AATA), National Insurance Crime Bureau and statewide law enforcement officials are pleased to announce the 100th bait car arrest in Arizona. The 100th arrest occurred this month in Scottsdale when an auto thief was apprehended operating one of that city's fleet of bait cars. This important milestone demonstrates the success of the state's Bait Vehicle Program, which launched in January 2003.

Bait cars are equipped with technology using computers, satellites and tracking devices, which notify police when the vehicle has been entered. These vehicles, which are donated by insurance companies, are then deployed in high auto theft areas then police wait for a signal to be transmitted notifying them the vehicle has been entered into or moved so they can catch thieves in the act. Prosecution of these cases has been extremely successful as well. The Maricopa County Attorney's Office prosecutes the cases that occur in Maricopa County, which to date have accounted for a majority of the arrests. "My job is to make sure auto thieves are behind bars, not behind the wheel," said Maricopa County Attorney, Andrew Thomas.

"Bait cars are an enticing weapon in combating one of Arizona's most common and costly crimes. Last year, auto theft cost our state nearly \$368 million dollars," reported Mikel Longman, AATA Executive Director. "One message we want to be heard loud and clear is that bait cars are everywhere, steal one and you will go to jail."

Robert M. Bryant, President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Insurance Crime Bureau said, "There are three essential elements to an effective insurance fraud and auto theft prevention program: comprehensive legislation, aggressive enforcement, and vigorous prosecution. These results clearly demonstrate that this formula is recognized and practiced through the collective efforts of the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority, Arizona law enforcement agencies, the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, and NICB special agents."

###