

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ARIZONA AUTOMOBILE THEFT AUTHORITY ANNOUNCES REDUCTION
IN AUTO THEFTS FOR 2003**

PHOENIX (August 9, 2004) The Arizona Automobile Theft Authority (AATA) is pleased to announce a 1.1% reduction in Arizona's total vehicle thefts in 2003 according to recent statistics released from the Department of Public Safety *2003 Crime in Arizona Report*.

For the first time in five years, Arizona has experienced a reduction in vehicle thefts. For 2003, Arizona had 56,222 stolen vehicles compared to 56,876 in 2002. "The AATA is encouraged by the reduction but knows there is still a great amount of work to be done to continue to reduce Arizona's vehicle theft rate", stated Mikel Longman, AATA Executive Director.

The AATA credits the reduction to several programs and initiatives coordinated by the Agency in recent years as well as statewide law enforcement agencies and the public taking steps to prevent vehicle theft.

The Agency encourages the public to continue its diligence in protecting their vehicles from being stolen. A "layered approach" to protection is recommended, which involves using several theft deterrent devices, along with common sense practices, to make vehicles tough to steal. Additional tips include:

- Lock it or lose it - Always lock your vehicles and take the keys with you.
- Never leave your vehicle running and unattended.
- Enrollment in the free Watch Your Car Program.
- Use visual theft deterrent devices such as steering wheel locks, brake locks, ignition column devices, vehicle identification number (VIN) etching on windows, tracking systems, and for greater protection, consider an immobilizer.

These devices will discourage thieves and/or increase their chances of being caught.

For additional information about the Watch Your Car Program or protecting yourself from vehicle theft, contact the AATA at 1-888-668-4433 or visit our web site at www.azwatchyourcar.com

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