



## **AZ. Auto Theft Authority News & Updates October 2009**

### **AATA Welcomes New Executive Director**

Brian R. Salata joined the AATA Team on September 1<sup>st</sup>. Salata comes to the AATA with a wealth of knowledge about the agency after having served as the Interim Director for a short time in 2005. He established the first Auto Theft Prosecution Unit in Arizona with the Pinal County Attorney's Office where he prosecuted countless felony auto theft cases. Salata has been serving as the Legal Advisor to the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators (IAATI) since 2003 and remains committed to national and international auto theft issues. Please join us in welcoming Brian Salata to the AATA.

### **ARIZONA PUTS THE BRAKES ON AUTO THEFTS FOR 6th STRAIGHT YEAR - Down 25% for 2008.**

According to statistics released from the FBI's 2008 Uniform Crime Report, Arizona realized its largest double digit decrease in nearly a decade. The FBI's Report also shows vehicle thefts across the United States down by 12.7% from 2007; the 5th consecutive year of declining vehicle thefts nationwide. Moreover, the total thefts for 2008 are below 1 million vehicles - the lowest annual total in over 20 years.

This is great news for vehicle owners, law enforcement and the insurance industry," said Brian R. Salata, AATA Executive Director. "It takes years of sustained effort to deliver the kind of reductions that we are enjoying today." The AATA exists to establish, coordinate and fund activities to prevent, combat and reduce vehicle theft in Arizona. By focusing resources in enforcement & investigative units, prosecution efforts, and aggressive public education programs, the AATA, in partnership with statewide law enforcement agencies, has largely been the driving force behind decreasing auto theft in Arizona.

Although this downward trend is encouraging, Arizona still had more than 37,000 vehicles stolen last year and the problem remains a costly drain on our economy (over \$282 million in 2008) and a tremendous burden for victims.

The AATA encourages all Arizona residents to take extra precautions to secure

their vehicles through a “layered approach” to protection. The more layers on your vehicle, the tougher it is to steal. Visit [www.azwatchyourcar.com](http://www.azwatchyourcar.com) for more tips.

### **AATA Budget Cuts Impact Auto Theft Reduction Programs**

The AATA, in its present form, was created in 1997 by the Arizona Legislature, with funding received from insurance companies issuing vehicle insurance policies in Arizona. Currently, over 425 insurance companies provide a semi-annual assessment (50¢ twice a year) to the Auto Theft Authority fund, designated for statewide auto theft reduction programs. In FY's 2009 & 2010, budget reductions have already reduced ATA auto theft programs by nearly \$1 million; with additional proposed cuts possible before the end of the year. These dedicated funds have been instrumental in reducing auto thefts in Arizona since 2003 by over 38% and are used to support auto theft programs listed below:

- The State's Auto Theft Task Force;
- Police Bait Car Programs & Several Other Proactive Auto Theft Crime Fighting Efforts;
- Auto Theft (Vertical) Prosecution Programs;
- Auto Theft Prevention Programs like the Watch Your Car Decal Program & Free Window (VIN #) Etching Events, Youth and Senior Theft Prevention Outreach Programs;
- Partnerships and Resource Support to statewide law enforcement agencies, crime prevention organizations, Blockwatch & community groups.

Although recent declines in Arizona's auto theft rate are encouraging, authorities remain concerned about the raiding of agency funds and that a reduction in funding and a coordinated, statewide strategy may result in an increase in auto thefts. The AATA will continue to identify and analyze best practices for combating Arizona's auto theft problem and attempt to focus resources where greatest impact will be made.

### **Az. Auto Theft Authority Announces Partnership with Valley Metro and local Police Departments for Park-N-Ride Auto Burglary & Theft Prevention Campaign**

This month, the AATA, in partnership with Valley Metro, Phoenix, Mesa and Tempe Police Departments, and the National Insurance Crime Bureau, will launch a new auto theft & burglary prevention campaign at Light Rail and Commuter Bus Park-N-Ride lots across the Valley. The program will provide auto burglary & theft prevention tips and reminders to Metro transit riders during peak travel times at targeted lot locations. The AATA is pleased to partner with Valley Metro and the surrounding cities as a proactive approach to deterring vehicle thefts and/or break in's.

**The AATA is now on Facebook  - Join our Fan Page - Arizona Auto Theft Authority. Check in for weekly auto burglary and theft prevention tips, news & upcoming events.**