

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ARIZONA AUTOMOBILE THEFT AUTHORITY ANNOUNCES 2004/2005
GRANT AWARD RECIPIENTS**

PHOENIX (May 18, 2004) The Arizona Automobile Theft Authority (AATA) is pleased to announce nearly \$1,032,000 will be issued in grant funding to thirty-five (35) criminal justice agencies throughout Arizona for fiscal year 2004/2005.

The AATA finalized its 2004/2005 Law Enforcement, Professional Training, Public Awareness, and Vertical Prosecution grant programs with funding going out to statewide criminal justice agencies. The AATA's Law Enforcement grant awards are intended to promote efficient and effective law enforcement within jurisdictions for vehicle theft deterrence, enforcement and investigation. The Public Awareness grants are intended to educate the community on ways to protect their vehicles from being stolen, while also promoting a "layered approach" to protection and the Authority's free, "Watch Your Car" program.

The agencies receiving funding this year include Apache Junction Police Department, Arizona Department of Public Safety, Buckeye Police Department, Casa Grande Police Department, Chandler Police Department, Cochise County Attorney's Office, Cochise County Sheriff's Office, Coolidge Police Department, Cottonwood Police Department, Flagstaff Police Department, Florence Police Department, Gilbert Police Department, Glendale Police Department, Maricopa County Attorney's Office, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, Mesa Police Department, Mohave County Attorney's Office, Mohave County Sheriff's Office, Payson Police Department, Peoria Police Department, Phoenix Police Department, Pima County Attorney's Office, Pima County Sheriff's Office, Pinal County Attorney's Office, Pinal County Sheriff's Office, Prescott Valley/Prescott Police Departments, Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, Scottsdale Police Department, Surprise Police Department, Tempe Police Department, Tucson Police Department, Yavapai County Sheriff's Office, Yuma County Sheriff's Office, Yuma Police Department, and the Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force.

Several of this years grant agencies include rural communities in Arizona that the AATA has not issued prior funding to. AATA Executive Director, Mr. Mikel Longman states, "The AATA is excited about the opportunity to provide additional funding to its statewide community partners to further their enforcement, investigation and public awareness and community education efforts."

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The AATA Vertical Prosecution grants are issued to county attorney offices throughout Arizona to fund dedicated, specially trained deputy county attorneys to address all phases of the criminal justice process regarding vehicle theft, and associated crimes. The counties currently receiving funding include Cochise, Maricopa, Mohave, Pima, Pinal, and Santa Cruz.

The 2004/2005 Law Enforcement grant agencies will be receiving funding for officer overtime, investigative support, equipment/tools, communications and technology to purchase tracking systems for police “bait” vehicles.

The 2004/2005 Public Awareness grant agencies will be receiving funding for officer overtime, Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) etching equipment and supplies, and promotional/advertising items. The participating agencies will be conducting events within their communities, featuring free VIN etching and educating the public on methods of vehicle theft prevention which include the following:

- Lock it or lose it - Always lock your vehicles and take the keys with you.
- Never leave your vehicle running and unattended.
- 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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