

STATE OF ARIZONA
ARIZONA AUTOMOBILE
THEFT AUTHORITY
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NEWS RELEASE
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AUTO THEFT DOWN IN PHOENIX, TUCSON & YUMA FOR 2010

PHOENIX – The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) reported today that 2010 continued the trend of declining national vehicle thefts for the seventh consecutive year. While the top five hot spots for 2010 showed an increase in thefts over the previous year, the other areas on the top 10 list actually had fewer thefts.

The FBI's preliminary 2010 crime statistics published last month indicate a 7.2 percent drop in vehicle thefts nationwide from 2009's number of 794,616. If that estimate holds when the final statistics are published in the fall, it would result in the lowest annual vehicle thefts since 1967.

The 2010 "Hot Spots" report, which tracks auto theft data throughout the nation, indicates that Arizona continues to show impressive reductions in auto theft last year. The Phoenix MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area), which had the dubious distinction of ranking the #1 "Hot Spot" just ten years ago, has continued to plunge down to 56th place. Tucson, which previously held the #2 spot fell to #22 during the same ten year period; Yuma dropped to #88.

For 2010, the Top 10 MSA's with the highest vehicle theft rates were:

2010 Ranking		2009 Ranking
1.	Fresno, Calif.	5
2.	Modesto, Calif.	2
3.	Bakersfield-Delano, Calif.	3
4.	Spokane, Wash.	18
5.	Vallejo-Fairfield, Calif.	16
6.	Sacramento/Arden-Arcade/Roseville, Calif.	11
7.	Stockton, Calif.	4
8.	Visalia-Porterville, Calif.	8
9.	San Francisco/Oakland/Fremont, Calif.	7
10.	Yakima, Wash.	6
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22.	Tucson, AZ	24
56.	Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale, AZ	40
88.	Yuma, AZ	62

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“Many factors go into this drastic reduction of auto theft in Arizona,” stated Brian R. Salata, Arizona Automobile Theft Authority Executive Director. “Our law enforcement partners have made incredible strides in the battle against auto theft. The AATA has partnered with local law enforcement in their efforts to isolate the problems that exist in their communities. We’ve seen outstanding efforts by several County Sheriffs to coordinate efforts with local, state, and federal agencies to take on this battle.

“A large part of the credit also goes to our multi-jurisdictional Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force. Our state Task Force, funded by the AATA, has been one, if not the most recognized law enforcement units in the United States in combating auto theft. The AATA also recognizes the efforts of our grant funded Deputy County Attorneys in Maricopa, Pinal, Pima, Santa Cruz and Cochise counties. These auto theft prosecutors work diligently with the Task Force and other law enforcement agencies to ensure that the guilty are brought to justice.” Director Salata further commented that, “Auto theft in our state remains tied to violent criminal activity that impacts the quality of life in Arizona. Our auto theft problem is directly connected to the smuggling and trafficking issues that have plagued our state. Many, if not most of the auto theft rings that operate in Arizona are simply the transportation component of these violent Mexican drug cartels. It would be naïve to think that auto theft is just a property crime.”

The Auto Theft Task Force is presently working with local, state and federal agencies to thwart smuggling activities by the cartels operating south of our border. Last year, the Task Force recovered nearly 2,100 vehicles worth over \$25 million; hundreds of suspects were arrested and dozens of chop shops shut down statewide.

The use of bait cars, technological automobile locating/identifying devices and owner-applied theft deterrence/recovery systems are also delivering outstanding results

“This is great news for the citizens of Arizona and our statewide law enforcement partners,” stated Mr. Salata. “The Arizona Legislature had the foresight to create an Auto Theft Authority to support and coordinate the statewide efforts of law enforcement, prosecution and prevention in the fight against auto theft. California, who does not have the benefit of a coordinated statewide effort that stems from an Auto Theft Authority, overwhelmingly dominates the list of “Hot Spots” again this year with 8 out of 10 cities on the list.”

The AATA recommends the following actions under its “layered approach” to protection plan:

Layer #1 -- Common Sense

- Always lock your car, close all windows and take the keys.
- Avoid vehicle burglaries - do not leave valuables in vehicle or make certain they’re not in plain view.
- Never leave your vehicle running unattended.

- Park in high foot traffic, well lighted areas or attended lots - car thieves do not like witnesses.
- Do not hide a spare set of keys in the car - the pros know where to look.
- If you have a garage, use it.
- Snap and save a pic of your license plate(s) with your cell/camera phone for faster reporting to law enforcement if your vehicle is stolen.

Layer #2 -- Visible & Audible Warning Devices

The second layer of protection is any device that can be SEEN or HEARD and alerts thieves that your vehicle is protected. Some popular examples include:

- Audible alarms, steering wheel locks, brake locks
- Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) etching on vehicle windows – visit the AATA’s website (www.azwatchyourcar.com – Events calendar) for a list of upcoming events or call to schedule an appointment – 602 364-2889.

Layer #3 – Immobilizers

The third layer of protection is immobilizer devices which prevent thieves from bypassing your ignition and hot-wiring the vehicle. Some popular devices include:

- Kill switches
- Starter, ignition and fuel disablers
- Smart keys
- High security locks & keys
- Fuse cut-offs

Layer #4 -- Tracking Devices

The final layer of protection is a tracking device which emits a signal to a police or monitoring station when the vehicle is reported stolen. Tracking devices are very effective in helping authorities recover stolen vehicles.

The full Hot Spots report is available at www.nicb.org. For additional information about the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority, visit www.azwatchyourcar.com.

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