



# Arizona Automobile Theft Authority

www.azwatchyourcar.com

## International Association of Auto Theft Investigators (IAATI) Conference

The 50<sup>th</sup> Annual IAATI Conference was held August 4-9, 2002 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This Annual Conference involves auto theft investigators and law enforcement personnel from all over the United States and the world and includes comprehensive training in international auto theft trends.

The AATA provided funding for this valuable training opportunity to sixteen (16) officers from various Arizona law enforcement agencies from the 2002/2003 Professional Training Grant Program as well as several officers from the Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force.



Arizona delegation at IAATI Annual Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, August 2002

Jane Dee Hull  
Governor

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### AATA Staff

Mikel Longman  
Executive Director

Paul Boelhauf  
Administrative Services Officer

Ann Armstrong  
Public Information Officer

Arthur Myer  
Fiscal Services Specialist

Elisa Laurita  
Administrative Assistant

Arizona Automobile Theft Authority  
3737 North 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Ste. 150  
Phoenix, Arizona 85014-5079

TEL (602) 604-9034  
FAX (602) 255-4802  
1-888-668-4433



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# ARIZONA AUTOMOBILE THEFT AUTHORITY

October 2002 Newsletter

## The Arizona Auto Theft Authority Proudly Nominates Tempe Police Department to receive Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) 2002 Innovation Award

In April, the AATA nominated the Tempe Police Department's, Crime Free Multi-Housing Program for the ACJC Community Program Award.

As one of the AATA's Public Awareness Grant agencies, the Tempe Police Department has been actively partnering with the AATA since 1999 to educate Tempe residents on vehicle theft prevention and the Watch Your Car program. The Tempe Police Department's Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Coordinator, Ms. Kathy Groenewold, in conjunction with the City of Tempe Crime Free Multi-Housing Apartment Communities has demonstrated unique



AATA Executive Director, Mr. Mikel Longman and Tempe Police Chief, Ralph Tranter (center) receive ACJC 2002 Innovation Award. Also pictured, Commissioners Rick Romley (far left) and Mayor Jim Boles of Winslow (far right).

and innovative efforts in combating vehicle theft, particularly in the Tempe area.

The award ceremony took place on July 18, 2002 at the Third Annual Criminal Justice Innovation Awards event as part of the Annual Law Enforcement POW WOW in Flagstaff, Arizona. AATA Executive Director, Mikel Longman was present along with Tempe Police Chief, Ralph Tranter to receive the awards.

Congratulations to the Tempe Police Department! The AATA values our partnership and considers it an effective example of agencies collaborating to combat vehicle theft in Arizona.

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## AATA Expands Vertical Prosecution Grant Program

The AATA Board of Directors recently approved expansion of the Vertical Prosecution Program into three (3) additional counties in Arizona. As of August 2002, Cochise, Mohave, and Santa Cruz counties have now joined Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal counties in conducting vertical prosecution of auto theft cases within their offices.

Vertical Prosecution refers to the concept of a single prosecutor handling a case from submission, (often during the

investigation phase) through trial. Although this is not a unique concept, it was rarely employed in vehicle theft cases in Arizona. The expansion of this program means there are currently six (6) county attorney offices in Arizona participating in the AATA's Vertical Prosecution Grant Program.

The efforts of the county attorney offices involved with the AATA's Vertical Prosecution Grant Program continue to demonstrate impressive results.

**1-888-NO-THIEF**

Arizona Automobile Theft Authority



## Meet the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority Board of Directors

The Honorable William J. Ekstrom, Mohave County Attorney



The Honorable William J. Ekstrom  
Mohave County Attorney

Mr. William Ekstrom has been a member of the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority Board of Directors since 1997 and occupies one of two county attorney positions on the AATA Board.

Mr. Ekstrom has held the position of Mohave County Attorney since 1979. A third generation Arizonan, Mr. Ekstrom received his bachelor's degree from Northern Arizona University and his juris doctor degree from Arizona State University in 1973.

Mr. Ekstrom has served as president of the Arizona County Attorneys and Sheriff's Association, and was chosen by his peers as County Attorney of the Year in 1984. Other professional associations include the National District Attorneys Association, National Association of College and University

Attorneys, Vice-Chairman of the Arizona Prosecuting Advisory Council, Compliance Committee Chairman, Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Advisory Council, Public Lawyer Section with the Arizona State Bar, ASU Law Society, and President of the Mohave County Bar Association from 1983-1990. In 1996, Mr. Ekstrom was recognized by the State Bar of Arizona by receiving the Distinguished Public Lawyer Award.

Mr. Ekstrom and his wife, Dianne have two children (Hillary and Haydon) and enjoy hiking, golf, skiing, photography and travel.

Thank you, Mr. Ekstrom for your continued support and dedication to the AATA as we work together to combat vehicle theft in Arizona.

## October is National Crime Prevention Month - Help the AATA Lock Out Auto Theft

The Arizona Automobile Theft Authority in partnership with the Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force will be participating in several crime prevention events and safety fairs throughout our community during the month of October (and November). Some of the scheduled crime prevention events include:

**Saturday, October 5, 2002** – “Shopping for Crime and Fire Prevention” at the Arizona Mills Mall at I-10 and Baseline Road.  
9:00 am– 12:00 pm – Parking lot area for free VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) etching.  
11:00 am – 4:00 pm – Inside food court area for prevention display materials.

**Saturday, October 12, 2002** – 10:00 am – 2:00 pm - Phoenix Spectrum Mall (formerly Chris Town Mall) Community Health and Safety Fair.

**Saturday, October 19, 2002** - Public Safety Day at the Arizona State Fair from 10 am – 10 pm.

**Sunday, October 20, 2002** – Public Safety Day at the Arizona State Fair from 10 am – 6 pm

**Saturday, November 16, 2002** – 10:00 am – 2:00 pm – AATA, Phoenix Police Department, and Allstate Insurance Safety Fair at Metrocenter Mall. Auto theft prevention information and free VIN etching.

Please visit the AATA's web site at [www.azwatchyourcar.com](http://www.azwatchyourcar.com) for a complete listing of events in October and throughout the year.

**1-888-668-4433**

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## AATA Takes Theft Prevention Message On The Road



The AATA recently purchased a “Watch Your Car” Van (see photo, left) through a grant received from the United States Department of Justice – Bureau of Justice Assistance. The van is complete with exterior advertising graphics and theft prevention messages to be used to promote vehicle theft prevention and the AATA's free Watch Your Car program. The van is equipped with several theft deterrent devices, and will be displayed at community events, safety fairs and other promotional opportunities throughout Arizona.

The “Watch Your Car” Van will also be available for Arizona criminal justice agencies to borrow for community events planned in their areas. To reserve the van or check on its availability, contact Ann Armstrong, AATA Public Information Officer at 602 604-9034.

## Arizona Law Enforcement Agencies Receive Boost from AATA



The Arizona Automobile Theft Authority (AATA) recently awarded 48 grants totaling more than \$425,000 to law enforcement agencies throughout Arizona. The funding was issued as part of the AATA's 2002/2003 Law Enforcement, Professional Training and Public Awareness Grant Programs.

AATA grant awards are intended to assist law enforcement agencies with additional funding for law enforcement and investigative assistance needs, training funds for its officers assigned to auto theft units, and to educate the community on ways to

protect their vehicles from being stolen, while also promoting the AATA's free, “Watch Your Car” program.

Several of this year's grant agencies include rural communities in Arizona that the AATA has not issued prior funding to. 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 vehicle theft investigation, training, and community education and prevention efforts.”

## BATIC (Border Auto Theft Information Center) and License Plate Reader (LPR) Development in Progress

The AATA has been analyzing the problem of un-recovered stolen vehicles in Arizona and has determined there is a significant problem with regard to stolen vehicles crossing the Arizona/Mexico border.

To address this issue, the Authority has formed partnerships with the U.S. Customs Service, the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) and the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) to utilize data from an automated License Plate Reader (LPR) that is being installed at all

border crossing points along the southwest border. These systems have already been installed at most of the inbound lanes at the Ports of Entry (POE) in Arizona, with installation currently underway in the outbound lanes.

In addition, the AATA in cooperation with the Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force, continues its development of a Border Auto Theft Information Center (BATIC) to facilitate communications between Arizona and Mexican law enforcement authorities. The BATIC will serve as a central resource

for Mexican law enforcement authorities to contact to determine if a U.S. plated vehicle is stolen. In turn, BATIC will also serve as a central resource for Arizona law enforcement authorities to contact to determine if a Mexican plated vehicle is stolen.

With these two initiatives in place, the AATA expects significant progress in decreasing the theft and exportation of vehicles.