



AZ. Auto Theft Authority News & Updates

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AUTO THEFT DOWN IN PHOENIX AND TUCSON FOR 2009

PHOENIX - The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) reports that 2009 marked the nation's sixth consecutive year of declining vehicle thefts in the United States.

The 2009 "Hot Spots" report shows the Phoenix and Tucson MSA's (metropolitan statistical areas) made an impressive leap down the list in 2009; Phoenix dropped to 40th place, Tucson to 24th. This marks a significant improvement for both cities, particularly Phoenix, once labeled the car theft capital of the U.S. In 2001, Phoenix and Tucson both held the #1 and #2 spots on the list and remained on the top ten list until 2008.

"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."

The Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force 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 prosecutors who have worked with law enforcement to ensure that the guilty are brought to justice.” Director Salata went on to say that “we can’t lose sight of the fact that our auto theft problem in Arizona is directly tied to the smuggling and trafficking issues that have plagued our state. Auto theft is a crime that significantly facilitates the flow of narcotics and illegal aliens throughout Arizona and we can’t let up efforts despite these encouraging numbers.”

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 3,100 vehicles worth over \$43 million; hundreds of suspects were arrested and dozens of chop shops shut down.

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. 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 overwhelmingly dominates the list of “Hot Spots, they would do well to follow Arizona’s lead.” stated Director Salata.

For 2009, the 10 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) with the highest vehicle theft rates are:

2009 Ranking		2008 Ranking
1.	Laredo, TX	2
2.	Modesto, CA	1
3.	Bakersfield, CA	5
4.	Stockton, CA	6
5.	Fresno, CA	10
6.	Yakima, WA	3
7.	San Francisco/Oakland/Fremont, CA	9
8.	Visalia/Porterville, CA	11
9.	Las Vegas/Paradise, NV	7
10.	Albuquerque, NM	8
24.	Tucson, AZ	13
40.	Phoenix, AZ	19
62.	Yuma, AZ	26

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.

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.

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.

For additional information about the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority, visit www.azwatchyourcar.com. For complete information on the 2009 Hot Spots Report, visit www.nicb.org.



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