



TxDMV \* 4000 JACKSON AVENUE, AUSTIN, TEXAS 78731 | media@dmv.state.tx.us | www.TxDMV.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE June 13, 2011 Julia Bardnell (512) 374.5101 Julia.Bardnell@TxDMV.gov

## Texas Auto Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority Commemorates 20 Years of Auto Theft Prevention

Dallas, Texas – The Texas Auto Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority (ABTPA) celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The ABTPA—formerly the Texas Auto Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA)—was created in 1991 by the Texas Legislature to help combat the growing auto theft problem in the state. Since that time, the ABTPA and its grantees have reduced vehicle theft in Texas by 70 percent and recovered 1,640,605 vehicles, amounting to over \$11.6 billion in recovered value. The ABTPA is funded by a legislatively mandated annual assessment of \$1 for each vehicle per insurance policy. The fee is paid by individual policyholders and collected by the insurance companies. The reduction in auto theft rates that the ABTPA has achieved helps drive down automobile insurance rates for all Texas drivers.

The ABTPA has fostered a statewide cooperative network of law enforcement groups, prosecutors, insurance industry representatives, local tax-assessor collectors, and concerned citizens to combat vehicle theft and burglary through enforcement, prevention, public information, and education initiatives.

Despite its successes, automobile burglary and theft continues to be a huge issue in Texas:

- In Texas, a vehicle is stolen every 7 minutes.
- Every 2 ½ minutes in Texas, a vehicle is broken into and the contents stolen.
- In 2009, the Crime in Texas Uniform Crime Report reported 76,617 motor vehicle thefts, with a total dollar loss of \$738,487,759 with an average loss of \$9,980 per motor vehicle. These losses are incurred by every Texan through increased insurance rates.
- 30% of insurance fraud referrals to the Texas Department of Insurance are for motor vehicle fraud.

Some of the milestones reached in reducing auto theft in Texas over the last two decades include:

- **1991** The ATPA was created as a statewide effort for reducing auto theft, which had reached epidemic proportions in Texas with 163,837 thefts.
- **1993** Help End Auto Theft (H.E.A.T.) program began as a voluntary statewide vehicle registration program designed as a theft deterrent.
- **1994** The Border Auto Theft Information Center (B.A.T.I.C.), part of the Texas Department of Public Safety, was created exclusively to answer inquiries from Mexican and U.S. law enforcement.
- **2000** The Border Partners program was established to combat auto theft along the El Paso-Juarez border through the repatriation of stolen vehicles.
- 2001 Auto theft had decreased by 50% with 81,918 thefts recorded in the state.
- 2007 The "You Hold the Key" public awareness campaign was launched to increase understanding among vehicle owners that leaving doors unlocked and keys in the vehicles could make them unsuspecting accomplices in other serious crimes.
- **2007** The mission of the ATPA was expanded to include emphasis on vehicle burglary in addition to theft, resulting in the Authority's name change to the Texas Auto Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority (ABTPA).
- 2009 ABTPA, along with four TxDOT divisions, was transferred into the newly created Texas Department of Motor Vehicles.
- 2009 Auto theft had decreased by 70% since 1991. Law enforcement professionals throughout the state attribute these decreases to increased enforcement, enhanced investigative techniques and aggressive public awareness programs made available through ABTPA grants.

## **About Us**

The Texas Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority (ABTPA), supports a statewide network through grants, theft reduction initiatives, and public awareness/education. Since its inception in 1991, the ABTPA has funded and managed 570 grants, which have reduced motor vehicle theft by 70 percent. For more information on the ABTPA and prevention tips, go to <a href="https://www.txwatchyourcar.com">www.txwatchyourcar.com</a> or call (512) 374-5101. Like us on <a href="facebook">Facebook</a> or follow us on <a href="mailto:Twitter">Twitter</a>.

The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) is charged with overseeing the state's motor vehicle services that provide consumer protection, assist motor vehicle-related businesses, and raise revenue for the state. For every \$1 it spends, the TxDMV returns \$10 to build and maintain highways, roads and bridges and provide needed services to Texans. Each year the agency registers more than 21 million vehicles; regulates more than 23,000 vehicle dealers; credentials buses and large trucks for intrastate and interstate commerce; and awards grants to law enforcement agencies to reduce vehicle burglaries and thefts. Learn more at www.TxDMV.gov.

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**ATTN EDITORS:** Please update your newsroom stylebook to note the proper acronym for the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles is "TxDMV." Thank you.