



Texas Department *of* Motor Vehicles

Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention  
Authority  
Report of Activities for Fiscal Year 2014

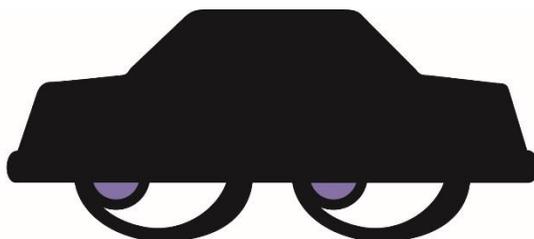
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Prepared for:

**The Honorable Dan Patrick  
Lieutenant Governor of Texas  
and  
The Honorable Joe Straus  
Speaker of the House**

**April 1, 2015**

Presented By:  
**Board of Directors  
Texas Auto Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority**



**Watch Your Car**  
TEXAS AUTO BURGLARY & THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY



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## **Statutory Report**

Article 4413 (37), §6(d), Texas Revised Civil Statutes requires the Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority (ABTPA) to report on its activities to the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by April 1st of each year. This report covers the period from September 1, 2013 to August 31, 2014.

## **Statutory Mission**

The mission of ABTPA is to:

- Provide financial support to law enforcement agencies for economic automobile theft and burglary enforcement teams;
- Provide financial support to law enforcement agencies; local prosecutors; judicial agencies; and neighborhood, community, business, and non-profit organizations for programs designed to reduce the incidence of economic automobile theft and burglary;
- Conduct educational programs designed to inform automobile owners of methods of preventing vehicle burglary and theft;
- Provide equipment, for experimental purposes, to assist vehicle owners in preventing automobile burglary or theft;
- Fund a statewide vehicle theft recovery registration program; and
- Establish a uniform program to prevent stolen automobiles from entering Mexico.



## **Executive Summary**

### **Improving Collaborative Networks**

This year ABTPA has focused on improving law enforcement collaborative networks. Collaboration is what makes ABTPA grantees more than local initiatives limited by defined law enforcement jurisdictions. The ABTPA awarded \$13.8 million to 29 grantees in FY14 and spent \$571,000 on statewide public awareness efforts.

Our collaborative system requires grantees to communicate and work together to apprehend highly mobile and organized suspects, share information on technology, and prepare law enforcement agents to understand the ever changing, fast paced criminal environment.

ABTPA serves as the hub of a statewide network focused on reducing automobile related crimes. These joint efforts also allow grantees to work beyond their jurisdictions and boundaries with Texas Department of Motor Vehicles, National Insurance Crime Bureau, Texas Department of Public Safety, and local and federal prosecutors.

### **Funding**

State law requires a \$2 auto theft prevention fee be assessed on every automobile insurance policy written in Texas. ABTPA receives less than 70 cents (70¢) of the amount collected each year. The fee is paid by all insurance companies to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts General Revenue fund and classified under revenue object code 3206.

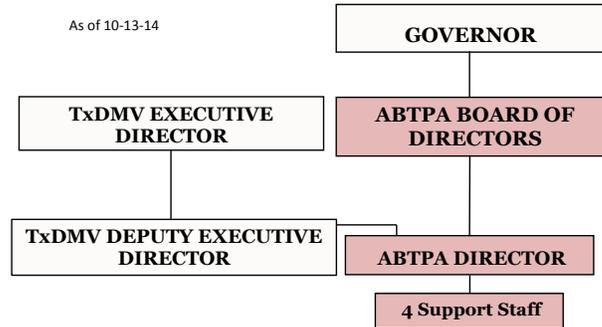
### **Operations**

The mission of the Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority (ABTPA) is to foster a statewide collaborative network to combat motor vehicle theft and burglary and to fund public awareness campaigns. ABTPA has a board consisting of six members appointed by the governor and the Executive Director of the Texas Department of Public Safety or their designee. The appointed members consist of two law enforcement representatives, two insurance representatives, and two consumer representatives. The staff of ABTPA is organized as a division of the Texas Motor Vehicles (TxDMV).

We submit this report as required by statute as the summary of activity for the Fiscal Year 2014.

**Chief Carlos Garcia**  
**Board Chair**  
**Automobile Burglary & Theft Prevention Authority**

# Texas Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority



ABTPA uses appropriated funds in three ways: 1) pay for ABTPA operations; 2) provide grants to local and state organizations to reduce automobile theft and burglary; and 3) purchase advertising to inform the public how to reduce their likelihood of being a victim of automobile burglary and theft.

First, ABTPA funds (\$461,939 or 3.1%) were used to support the five-member staff headquartered in Austin and to administer its operations. This included salaries and benefits, training and travel, office supplies, workshops for grantees, and case management services.

Second, \$13.7 million (more than 93%) is used to support governmental agencies in providing law enforcement personnel and resources to combat the automobile burglary and theft problem in Texas. Details on these programs will follow this section.

Finally, the ABTPA has contracted with a third party provider to purchase media and other public awareness materials (\$571,749.47 or 3.9%) through various outlets. These activities promote the various licensed messages such as “Watch Your Car,” “Protect It. It’s Yours,” and “Think Like a Thief” intended to reduce the incidence of automobile burglary and theft that results from things like unlocked doors and keys left in vehicles.

The ABTPA has a cap on administrative expenses, including the public awareness campaigns, of 8%. The total administrative cost percent for FY14 was 6.997%. The ABTPA board and TxDMV worked to keep the administrative costs low while meeting its statutory obligations.

## Grant Funded Law Enforcement Activities

In FY14 the ABTPA issued \$13.8 million in awards to 29 different grantees in three categories:

Grant Category	Grants	Amount Disbursed
Law Enforcement, Detection & Apprehension	26	\$11.8 mil
Reduction Of Sales Of Stolen Vehicles Or Parts	2	\$1.7 mil
Public Awareness & Crime Prevention	1	\$0.2 mil
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>\$13.7 mil</b>

These grantees had a fund utilization rate of more than 99% of the amount that they were awarded.

## Enforcement, Detection & Apprehension

Most of these grantees create Task Forces. The Task Forces coordinate local and regional efforts to prevent automobile burglary and theft and apprehend the offenders who commit these crimes. Most burglaries and thefts are multijurisdictional, and therefore require regional coordination and efforts. The Task Forces in the border communities must also coordinate some of their efforts on the bridges entering Mexico.

As a result of their investigations in FY14, the Task Forces reported making almost 7,000 arrests for theft of an automobile and almost 20,000 arrests for burglary from an automobile. These agencies coordinated their efforts with each other and other local law enforcement agencies on more than 22,000 different occasions. The automobile burglary and theft investigations revealed more serious crimes in about 650 cases.

A major facet of these investigations is dealing with the various types of motor vehicles associated with these crimes and the underlying technologies. While most of the vehicles stolen or burglarized are cars and pick-up trucks, many large trucks, motorcycles and trailers are included in ABTPA Task Forces cases. The Task Forces led to location or recovery of 3,600 vehicles representing about \$115 million in stolen automobiles and parts. Task Forces performed almost 35,000 VIN inspections to identify possible stolen vehicles and to help Texans clear their vehicles for title and registration.

Border area Task Forces conducted investigations and worked to become experts in the more complicated environment around the international bridges. These investigations and interdictions come with greater complexity due to the presence of the various federal and state agencies with their respective unique objectives. Currently only eight of the twenty border counties are covered by an ABTPA funded Task Force. These Task Forces completed more than 300 bridge inspections and intercepted more than 100 vehicles entering Mexico.

Three of ABTPA's grants support highly specialized programs. Fuginet (operated by TDCJ) is located in the prison and parole system. The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) operates the state training program for automobile and burglary detection, and a binational stolen vehicle location service, the Border Auto Theft Information Center (BATIC) with Mexico.

## Reduction in Sales of Stolen Vehicles and Parts

All Task Forces may conduct salvage operations. The grantees conduct salvage yard, repair shop, and scrap metal inspections for stolen vehicles and/ or parts to help licensed salvage businesses avoid supporting criminal networks and to disrupt and dismantle automobile theft rings. The Task Forces also educate the public on how VIN etching may reduce auto burglary and theft and make vehicles identifiable if stolen.

FY 2014 Grantee Salvage Inspections	
Salvage Inspections Conducted	919
Vehicles Inspected During Salvage Inspections	14,820
Other Salvage Inspections (Dealer, parts, etc.)	10,394
Total Inspections	26,133

Additionally, grantees filed 20 salvage charges, wrote 67 citations and recovered 576 vehicles during salvage operations.

## Public Awareness and Crime Prevention

Educating the public and law enforcement about the benefits of practicing proactive automobile crime prevention measures is vital to the ABTPA mission and success. ABTPA awarded one grant, The Reduce Auto Theft in Texas (RATT) program, to administer a statewide public awareness and education initiative. RATT coordinates public awareness activities across Texas and provides assistance to other ABTPA grantees and law enforcement in promoting prevention by providing materials and assistance. The RATT program conducted three training classes and coordinated events in four communities not covered by other ABTPA grantees.

FY 2014 RATT Program		
Activity	Measure	Audience
Presentations, Exhibits and Training	117	595,071
Mass Emails/Mail Sent	17	2,011
Law Enforcement & Training Classes Conducted	3	
Distributed literature and promotional items statewide	160,916	
1-800-CAR-WATCH calls received	979	

Typically, automobile burglary and theft rates rise during the holidays and during the peak of summer. A significant number of automobile thefts are resultant from keys left in the ignition or other places in the car. Many automobile burglaries are quickly committed when valuables are seen inside of an unlocked car.

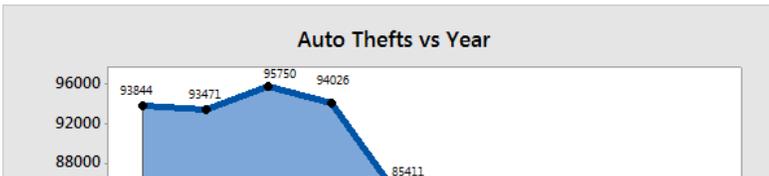
ABTPA used a contract vendor to perform two statewide media events in FY14. Most media is purchased where the ABTPA funded Task Forces are located. The first was a holiday media event using the “**Think Like a Thief**” campaign materials. The event was staged from November 29, 2013 through January 1, 2014. The commercials ran in movie theaters. ABTPA purchased a set number of views and received additional public service showings. The media company reported that based on industry measurement standards the ABTPA received 8,769,304 impressions for this event.

The second event was during July 2014 for “**Watch Your Car Month**” and used the “**It’s Not Rocket Science**” media campaign. The contractor reported 21,019,730 impressions in gas station monitor plays, on-line viewing, and movie theatre views. The contractor also purchased 1900 broadcast and cable television commercials.

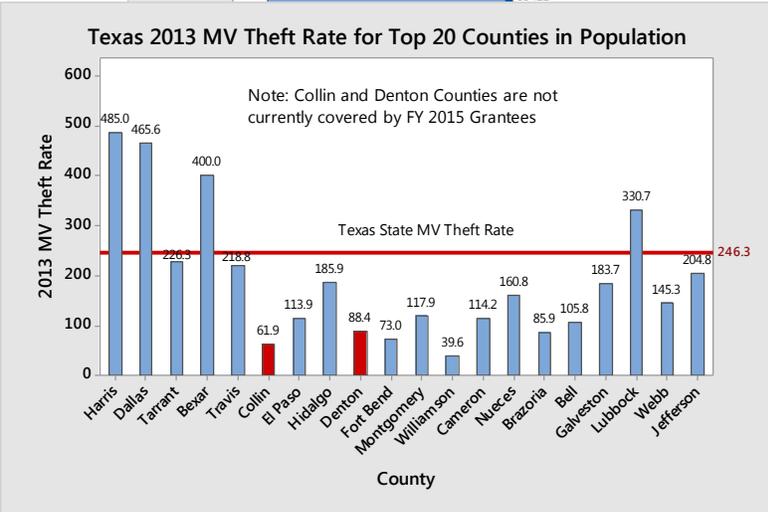
## Current Status of Automobile Thefts and Burglary

In recent years automobile thefts have increased (up 2.5% in 2012 and 1.1% in 2013) according to the DPS's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) system. These are the first increases in automobile thefts Texas has experienced for many years.

FY13 Motor Vehicle Theft	
Category	Number of Thefts
Police Reported	53,975
County Sheriff Reported	11,696
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>65,671</b>

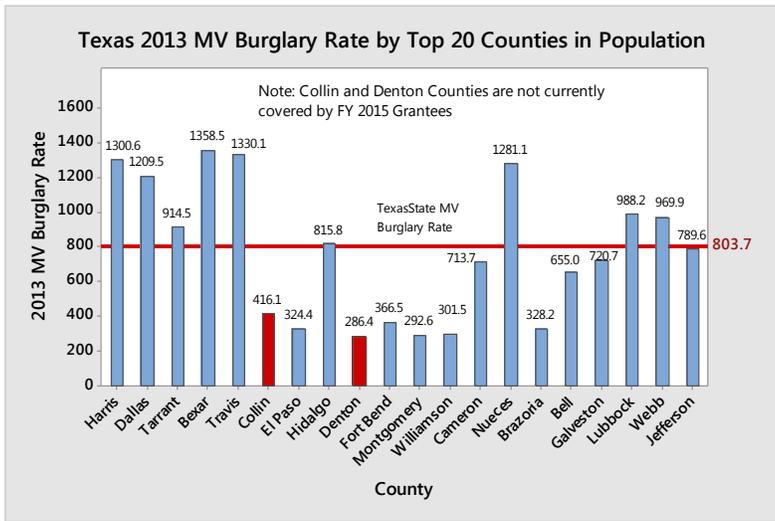


2013 Big Six Motor Vehicle Thefts	
County	MV Thefts
Harris	20944
Dallas	11373
Tarrant	4298
Bexar	7261
Travis	2396
El Paso	961
<b>Totals 2013</b>	<b>47,233</b>
<b>State Total 2013</b>	<b>65,671</b>
<b>% of State 2013</b>	<b>71.9</b>



## 2013 Automobile Burglary

2013 Border Counties Motor Vehicle Thefts	
Counties	MV Thefts
Brewster	3
Brooks	0
Cameron	492
Culberson	1
Dimmit	21
El Paso	961
Hidalgo	1562
Hudspeth	0
Jeff Davis	1
Jim Hogg	1
Kinney	1
Maverick	22
Presidio	1
Starr	107
Terrell	0
Val Verde	18
Webb	391
Willacy	19
Zapata	33
Zavala	13
<b>Totals 2013</b>	<b>3,644</b>
<b>State Total 2013</b>	<b>65,671</b>
<b>% of State 2013</b>	<b>5.5</b>



County	MV Larceny (Burglary)	Rank
Harris County	54605	1
Dallas County	30904	2
Bexar County	27063	3
Tarrant County	16910	4
Travis County	15346	5
Hidalgo County	6625	6
Collin County	4384	7
Nueces County	3856	8
Lubbock County	3630	9
Cameron County	3466	10
El Paso County	3029	11
Denton County	2518	12
Webb County	2501	13
Fort Bend County	2314	14
Bell County	2244	15
Potter County	2218	16
McLennan County	2079	17
Galveston County	1935	18
Jefferson County	1871	19
Montgomery County	1768	20

## Challenges

ABTPA faces three main challenges in improving its performance and meeting its mission over the next year: increasing funding, increasing collaboration against sophisticated criminal networks and improving outcome measurement systems.

First, funding has remained stagnant despite significant increases in population and registered vehicles in the state. Stagnant funding may have contributed to the marginal increase in automobile thefts during the last two years. Stagnant funding also reduces, over time, the ability to recruit and retain quality investigators and the ability to maintain equipment and materials required to reduce automobile theft.

Second, as automobile technology advances, so does the sophistication of criminal organizations and activities. This puts pressure on ABTPA Task Forces to fully utilize and upgrade their resources to keep up with changes in technology and to stay ahead of criminal enterprises.

Finally, the ABTPA and its Task Forces will work to better measure the performance associated with the grant funded activities. Some of these challenges lie in the current UCR system and how it classifies data by jurisdiction and crime type. Resources and researchers may be needed to improve the measurements. The ABTPA recently reevaluated its metrics to make them more uniform.