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5 SENATE BILL 224 ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING  
6 MOTOR VEHICLE CRIME PREVENTION AUTHORITY  
7 TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES  
8

9 EMBASSY SUITES  
10 1001 E McCarty Lane  
11 SAN MARCOS, TEXAS 78666  
12

13 JANUARY 15, 2026

14 9:00 AM  
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## 1 APPEARANCES

## 2 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

3 Sharon Jones - Major - Chair

4 William Diggs - MVCPA Director

5 David Richards - General Counsel

6 Rick Porras - Lieutenant, El Paso Police Department,  
7 Auto Theft Task Force8 Robert Carson - Sargent, Houston Police Department,  
9 Texas Metals Program

10 Nathan Nguyen - Houston Auto Theft Division

11 Stewart Prentice - Partner, Techemet Recycling

12 Laird Doran - Vice President Gov't Relations & Senior  
13 Counsel, The Friedkin Group (Gulf States Toyota)

14 Jaime Rodriguez, Lieutenant, Laredo Police Department

15 Tchad Taormina - LKQ Auto Parts of Central Texas

16 Josh Martin - Compliance & Enforcement Specialist, Texas  
17 Department of Public Safety Regulatory Division, Compliance  
18 Enforcement19 F. Todd Foreman - Director of Law Enforcement Outreach,  
20 Institute of Scrap Metal Recycling Industries Inc.

## 21 APPEARANCES Cont.

22 Tolan Harding - Taskforce Commander

23 John Gonzalez - Taskforce Commander

24 Bryan Roden - Taskforce Commander

25 John Sanchez - Taskforce Commander

Howard Stinehour - Taskforce Commander

Janette Tobar - Taskforce Commander

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1 APPEARANCES Cont.  
2 Yessenia Benavides - Management Analyst  
3 Cassandra Flint - Executive Assistant  
4 Zach Warden - Board and Mobile Technician  
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CONT. OF INDEX TO CONVENTION

Certificate of Transcriptionist

1 (Proceeding begins, 9:00)

2  
3 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Good morning, everyone. My name  
4 is Sharon Jones, and I am pleased to open the first meeting of  
5 the Senate Bill 224 Advisory Committee, Board of the MVCPA. It  
6 is 9:00 a.m., and I am now calling the advisory committee  
7 meeting for January 15, 2026 to order. I want to note for the  
8 record that the public notice of this meeting containing all  
9 items on the agenda was filed with the Office of Secretary of  
10 State on December 29, 2025.

11 Before we begin today's meeting, please place  
12 all cell phones and other communication devices in a silent  
13 mode, and -- and please, as a courtesy to others, do not carry  
14 on side conversations or other activities in the meeting room.  
15 I want to welcome those who are with us for today's advisory  
16 committee meeting. To -- welcome everyone.

17 If you wish to address the committee or  
18 speak on an agenda item during today's meeting, please  
19 complete a speaker sheet at the registration table. Please  
20 identify the specific item you are interested in,  
21 commenting on your name and address, and whether you are  
22 representing anyone or representing yourself. If your  
23 comment does not pertain to a specific agenda item, we will  
24 take your comment during the general public comment period  
25 of the meeting.

1                   In accordance with the department's  
2 administrative rule, comments to the advisory committee  
3 will be limited to three minutes. To assist each speaker,  
4 a staff member will keep time. When addressing the  
5 advisory committee, please state your name and affiliation  
6 for the record.

7                   There are a few things that will assist you in  
8 making the meeting run smoother and assist the MVCPA in  
9 securing an accurate record. Please identify yourself before  
10 speaking. Speak clearly and slowly. Do not speak over others  
11 and please ask the chair for permission to speak and be sure to  
12 get recognized before speaking.

13                  Before we begin today, I'd like to remind all  
14 presenters and those in attendance of the rules and conduct of  
15 our advisory committee meeting. The advisory committee chair  
16 has the authority to supervise the conduct of meetings. This  
17 includes the authority to determine whether a speaker is being  
18 disruptive of the meeting or is otherwise violating the timing  
19 and presentation rules I just discussed.

20                  Members, I would now move on to agenda item  
21 number one. Which is roll call and establishment of  
22 quorum. Members, as I call your name please respond.  
23 Member Carson?

24                  MEMBER CARSON: Present.

25                  CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Member Doran?

1 MEMBER DURAN: Member Doran. Present.

2 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Member Foreman?

3 MEMBER FOREMAN: Present.

4 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Member Nguyen?

5 MEMBER NGUYEN: Present.

6 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Member Porras?

7 MEMBER PORRAS: Present.

8 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Member Prentice?

9 MEMBER PRENTICE: Present.

10 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Member Rodriguez?

11 MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Present.

12 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Member Martin?

13 MEMBER MARTIN: Present.

14 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Member Taormina?

15 MEMBER TAORMINA: Present.

16 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: And we are one member short. So  
17 I have to find a replacement. So, if you have any great  
18 suggestions for me, that pertains to our committee, I am all  
19 ears. And with great standing with the State of Texas, thank  
20 you for that. Let the record reflect that I, Sharon Jones, am  
21 present. We have a quorum.

22 Agenda item number two, is the Pledge Allegiance and  
23 to the State of Texas. " I Pledge allegiance to the flag of  
24 the United States of America, and to the republic for which it  
25 stands, one nation under God, indivisible with liberty and.



1 Justice for all." "Honor the Texas flag; I pledge allegiance  
2 to thee, Texas, one state under God, one and indivisible."

3 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Please be seated. We now move to  
4 agenda item number three, Comments and Announcements from the  
5 chair and MVCPA Director William Diggs. I am going to defer my  
6 comments a little later. We have a -- a fantastic lineup with  
7 the task forces today with their presentations -- and I got a  
8 lot of expectations yesterday, some of the committee members  
9 are very excited for today.

10 So, I am excited as well to see the -- the catalytic  
11 conversion and auto theft and our license plate reader  
12 technology -- how that plays into part, so, mister Diggs.

13 DIRECTOR DIGGS: Good morning, Madam Chair. William  
14 Diggs, Director, MVCPA, for the record. I did want to remind  
15 all of the members, whenever you get ready to speak or provide  
16 any information, if you would identify yourself so that we can  
17 get that on the transcript for the record. That goes as well  
18 for you guys that are here today that are going to be providing  
19 some of these updates on some of your law enforcement efforts.

20 I also, just as Major Jones said, I want to say thank  
21 you to all of you. You've worked very well with us over the  
22 last few weeks getting these PowerPoints' that you're going to  
23 be referring to today into my staff so that we can have those  
24 readily available today for the -- the members to be able to  
25 see what it is that you're doing. You guys are doing a  
phenomenal job. I'm excited about hearing some of these

1 updates, and I look forward to the advisory committee to hear  
2 some of these updates as well.

3 I also want to let law enforcement know that's  
4 here today, or if you're online observing as we're streaming  
5 live today, that our catalytic converter grant for FY27, will  
6 post on March the 16th, that's a Monday. For those  
7 opportunities for FY27 for grants that would be awarded by the  
8 MVCPA board in July of this year when we're in Fort Worth for  
9 our conference. And those grants obviously would go into play  
10 on September the 1st. I look for our funding level to be very  
11 similar to FY26. So, we look forward to seeing your  
12 applications and ensuring that we are using these funds as our  
13 state legislature intended for us to make Texas a safer place.  
14 And a -- to a obviously to reduce the number of catalytic  
15 converters that are stolen in the state.

16 So with that, Major Jones, I would yield back to  
17 you. Thank you.

18 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Can you mention the grant?

19 DIRECTOR DIGGS: Yeah. Thank you for that, Major  
20 Jones. We do have a workshop for our grant application  
21 process. It's going to be on April 8th, it'll be in San  
22 Antonio. We'll be putting more information on our website soon  
23 for law enforcement to -- be sure and attend that. We're  
24 asking that each agency sends somebody if you plan to apply for  
25 an FY27 grant.

1           Our applications will actually close on May the 8th.  
2   And so we do ask that any law enforcement agency that plans to  
3   apply for a grant in FY27, that you send someone from your  
4   agency to -- to get the training. It's going to be an all day  
5   event from eight to five, and it's going to help you navigate  
6   the application process. What happens after the award as it  
7   relates to progress reports, inventory issues, as well as being  
8   able to submit your request for reimbursement.

9           So, more to come on that. We are finalizing our  
10   contract with the event location there in San Antonio, and  
11   we'll have that posted on our website. And we're excited about  
12   providing this training to you. And this was a direction that  
13   the board provided -- gave to the MVCPA back in October. And  
14   so it's going to be a good time, and I hope it's going to be  
15   very educational and -- for everyone that's involved. We look  
16   to have probably well over 300 people in attendance.

17           CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Thank you, William Diggs. When  
18   he said, at least one person -- or one person for the  
19   commanders, you guys should be there -- you need to be there.  
20   But also the person who writes your grant, the person who does  
21   the financial, whoever it is that takes care of you and your  
22   grant and the Task Force. Those are the people who need to  
23   attend, because this workshop is going to be encompassing every  
24   single thing from A to Z: expectations, pitfalls, the contracts  
25   themselves between you guys and -- and other industry partners.

1 And stakeholders. We're covering everything -- this is going  
2 to be literally every single thing you need to know. Also, it  
3 is very beneficial to those partners of ours who just apply for  
4 the Senate Bill 224 funding. A lot of them are unaware --  
5 especially the -- the first time applicants, they're unaware of  
6 the procedures or the processes. And so to -- we need to  
7 assist them, and that's what that workshop is for.

8 And also, for those 224 only applicants, for them to  
9 also mingle with the actual commanders and know that there are  
10 task forces that are in existence, because some of them -- they  
11 apply for funding but had no clue that we have task forces. So  
12 it -- the -- the workshop serves literally as educational, but  
13 also to form and forge and maintain additional partnerships,  
14 especially when you have an agency and when they're presenting,  
15 and the chief tells you he's the chief, the assistant chief,  
16 the -- the deputy, and he takes calls. So those agencies  
17 need --definitely need our support as well.

18 So, with that in mind, we will move on to agenda item  
19 number four, and it's an introduction of the Senate Bill 224  
20 committee members. I would now like to take several minutes of  
21 your time for you to introduce yourself to the Advisory  
22 Committee attendees, and as I call your name, please call us  
23 your affiliation, your role with this -- the board. Don't be  
24 shy about it, because we do have some people that this is their  
25 first time here. So I am going to start with Member Carson.

1           MEMBER CARSON: Good morning. My name is Bob Carson.  
2 I'm a sergeant with the Houston Police Department, and I  
3 supervise the metal theft unit. Mainly, one of our primary  
4 goal -- goals and duties is to inspect scrap yards. Currently,  
5 there are about 86 scrap yards within the City of Houston. And  
6 I have detectives that do nothing but inspect them all day.  
7 They're looking in every nook and cranny for catalytic  
8 converters and how they entered that facility, and then we go  
9 from there, thank you.

10           CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Member Doran.

11           MEMBER DORAN: Good morning. It's an honor to be  
12 with you all this morning and an honor to serve on this  
13 committee. I am an attorney, and I've spent around the last 25  
14 years working with motor vehicle manufacturers, distributors,  
15 and dealers. And I'm -- I'm actually Senior Vice President of  
16 Public and Legal Affairs for the Friedkin Group, which is based  
17 in Houston, Texas. And I work extensively on behalf of our  
18 largest company, which is Gulf States Toyota, and they are the  
19 private distributor for Toyota here in Texas and four other  
20 states. And I've -- I had the honor of being extensively  
21 involved in the legislative process as it relates to the  
22 different catalytic converter bills that have made their way  
23 through the legislature the last couple years. And I'll just  
24 also add that I come from a law enforcement family and my  
25 brother is a police officer in Plano, Texas. So, thank you.

1 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: You're welcome, sir. I didn't  
2 know about your brother.

3 MEMBER CARSON: We're very proud of him.

4 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: We are too, he's one of us.  
5 Member. Foreman.

6 MEMBER FOREMAN: Morning, and thank you for allowing  
7 me to be here. I am Todd Foreman. I am the Senior Director of  
8 Law Enforcement Outreach and Community -- community relations  
9 with The Recycled Materials Association. I retired as the  
10 chief of police and, like Major Jones -- and ended up here at  
11 this committee because I work across the country between law  
12 enforcement and the recycle -- recycling industry, helping to  
13 build those relationships to stop the theft of catalytic  
14 converters and other metals.

15 I also worked with the IACP's Crime Prevention  
16 Committee, the International Association Chiefs, Police Crime  
17 Prevention Committee, and we work hard to prevent the crimes  
18 that are happening, such as these. So I work cross country,  
19 and RIMA has a chapter -- the Gulf Coast Chapter, which covers  
20 this region. So I'm part of -- work with that chapter also.  
21 So I cover this area, but I also cover our country with my  
22 work.

23 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: And you forgot to mention that  
24 you're my boss on the IACP committee.

25 MEMBER FOREMAN: Yes, I am the chair of the Crime  
management Prevention Committee.

1 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Member Nguyen.

2 MEMBER NGUYEN: Good morning, I'm Nathan Nguyen. I'm  
3 the captain with Houston Police Department. Currently, I'm  
4 assigned to Auto Theft Division. And prior to that, I was  
5 working with Bob in the Public Financial Crime, which also has  
6 a lot of task forces. So it was a very good transition to Auto  
7 Theft, and as soon as I got there, I was once told that I will  
8 be on this SB224. So, I'm very glad to work with that because  
9 is a -- I will talk to Stewart yesterday. The -- the price of  
10 rhodium will go up again. So, that's one -- the issue that we  
11 need to tackle very vigorously, and this opportunity gives us  
12 that, and I -- we appreciate that, thank you.

13 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: You're welcome, sir. Member  
14 Porras.

15 MEMBER PORRAS: d Hi, good morning, everyone. My  
16 name's Rick Porras. I'm the Auto Theft Task Force commander  
17 and program director for the El Paso Police Department auto  
18 theft Task Force. I'm currently -- I guess in charge of the  
19 Task Force Grant and SB224 Grant, and I've been a member of  
20 this committee since a -- it began so, thank you.

21 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Thank you, sir. Member Prentice,  
22 when you begin, can you also include the highlights of the --  
23 the precious metals and the increase and dhow it will affect  
24 Texas and beyond. What -- what we discussed last night?

25 MEMBER PRENTICE: Good morning. My name is Stewart.

1 Prentice. I'm a partner at Techemet in Pasadena, Texas.  
2 Techemet is one of the largest recyclers of platinum group  
3 metals in the world. We are on target to do over a million  
4 ounces this year of it and as such. We are probably the  
5 largest recycler(sic), of catalytic converters in the USA.

6 When it comes into our plant, we destroy the  
7 converter and extract the precious metals out. And deliver  
8 them back to automobile manufacturers, banks, investment  
9 houses, or whoever needs the platinum, palladium and rhodium.  
10 So it's an honor to serve in this committee -- it's important  
11 one for us. Is because we're in the front line of all the  
12 accusations and stuff that goes on and unfortunately, it is  
13 what it is. But because the -- the federal government has made  
14 these -- put these metals on the Critical Minerals List.

15 They're exempt from all import duties, they are seen  
16 as necessary for the -- not only the defense of the United  
17 States, but also for the well being of the environmental cycle  
18 that these metals need to go into. And we need to look at  
19 recycling catalytic converters as not an irritant but more a --  
20 a necessity. That being said, just a brief discussion on  
21 precious metals, and I think it'll go into, here we go again.

22 Platinum has more than doubled in value in the last  
23 seven to eight months, Palladium is done likewise, and Rhodium  
24 today hit nine thousand nine hundred dollars an ounce. It's --  
25 it's my opinion, and -- you know it's just an opinion, but I'm.



1 Either going to be lucky or wrong on this one but I think,  
2 Rhodium is going to go above ten thousand. The and -- and the  
3 other issue here is we -- we focus on Rhodium, but by value in  
4 a converter, Palladium contributes the most as far as money is  
5 concerned. And palladium has been shooting up -- and so today,  
6 the average value of a converter is probably sitting at \$180  
7 dollars.

8 And in our heyday of when automobile theft -- the  
9 converter theft was around, it was just over \$200 dollars. So  
10 we expect, unfortunately, in -- on our side of the fence, to  
11 see an increase in converter theft. Thank you.

12 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: You're welcome. Thank you, sir.  
13 Member Rodriguez.

14 MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: My name is Jaime Rodriguez. I'm a  
15 lieutenant with the Laredo Police Department. As a sergeant, I  
16 was assigned to our auto theft task force field operations, and  
17 then promoted out. Currently, I'm with the Tactical  
18 Investigations Operations Bureau. Good morning. Thank you.

19 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: You're welcome, sir. Member  
20 Martin?

21 MEMBER MARTIN: Good morning. Josh Martin. I'm a  
22 Compliance Enforcement Specialist with the Regulatory Services  
23 Division of DPS. I help manage the Texas Metals Program  
24 statewide. We have a group of investigators that are dedicated  
25 to regulating the metal recycling entities. So, I speak on.

1     Behalf of the Compliance Enforcement Service. We remain  
2     dedicated to the efforts of this committee, helping combat  
3     catalytic converter theft. Thank you. Back.

4             CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Thank you sir. Member Taormina.

5             MEMBER TAORMINA: Good morning. Thank you, Major.  
6     My name is Thad Taormina. I serve as the Legislative Director  
7     for the Texas Automotive Recyclers Association, I also work for  
8     the LKQ Corporation. In the past, we've had the tours at my  
9     facility, which is four miles down the road. But we're  
10    statewide agency dispelling end of life vehicles. We are on  
11    the front end recycling of the catalytic converters. A lot of  
12    good record keeping and security measures that a lot of you  
13    have seen. Techemet is our partner and very tight security  
14    when we recycle our catalytic converters, record keeping, and  
15    ultimately the processing to the MRE.

16            CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Thank you, sir. We will now move  
17    on to agenda item number five, which is to recap of our last  
18    committee meeting. Our last meeting we discussed and it's  
19    still very prevalent, it needs to continue to be discussed.  
20    But we have got to figure out a way to put catalytic converters  
21    with not necessarily the person itself, but be able to truly  
22    capture the numbers that are being recovered by law  
23    enforcement.

24            So, we've had those discussions. We still are  
25    planning with Member Doran's assistance and those who -- who.

1 Else that we're going to draft it. You -- you don't know it  
2 yet, but you will be recruited. But we're planning a meeting  
3 with the key stakeholders in the auto -- in the auto  
4 industry. Those who make decisions, not necessarily the -- the  
5 ones who are at the -- the dealerships, but those who  
6 literally are the true decision makers, to come up with some  
7 type of solution, because, as you know, we -- you can seize  
8 1,800, but when it's recorded -- it's recorded with one person.  
9 So it goes down, basically is one instead of 1,800. So we have  
10 no way of measuring or capturing what we're truly working and  
11 doing every day.

12 So, those are discussions that we will have and  
13 continue to have, and Member Doran has volunteered to help with  
14 getting those key stakeholders together so we can have a -- a  
15 much needed discussion and have a plan going forward. What  
16 does this look like in the future? So we're not just basically  
17 hitting our heads against walls.

18 And another part of my presentation for this  
19 committee and for those who did not attend our board meeting  
20 yesterday, I wanted to give you an update on the 1,183  
21 statewide LPR readers that are being installed. And, of the  
22 1,183, there are 269 that are pending approval by the Federal  
23 Highway Administration. That's -- that's not -- that's  
24 something we have to do. But those only account for interstate  
25 highways. So, if it's on I-35, Interstate 10, anything that's.

1 An interstate includes these 269.

2 Beyond that, we already have 432 that were installed  
3 and 440 that were approved for permit by the Texas Department  
4 of Transportation. So we are moving forward, and we are --  
5 we're receiving a tremendous amount of support for -- for this  
6 project. And once again, this project -- yes, it's under the  
7 Texas Department of Public Safety, but this was done for the  
8 locals. This was done for those agencies in the cities or in  
9 the counties who do not have the authority to install cameras  
10 on state highways, state roadways. So that's what that project  
11 is for. Any questions on -- regarding the install -- the  
12 installments, permitting? Okay. Perfect.

13 Hearing none, I will move on to agenda item number  
14 six, which is the plan of operation. And Major -- I keep  
15 calling him Major Diggs because he used to work for Texas DPS.  
16 Mr. Diggs will take home from here.

17 DIRECTOR DIGGS: Yeah. Thank you. Good morning,  
18 Madam Chair. So, William Diggs, Director, MVCPA, for the  
19 record; and I've been called worse than Major. So, anyway,  
20 with that being said, our partner agency coordination with  
21 TDLR, Texas DMV, Texas DPS, we continue to meet now quarterly  
22 with those stakeholders. We're still talking about best  
23 practices, any unmet needs, direction that those agencies are  
24 taking in support of the legislation. I think we heard some  
25 really good updates yesterday.

1           It's also exciting to hear about what we're doing as  
2 it goes to reporting in the regulatory world of -- of the  
3 catalytic converter issues. I believe we can put all of this  
4 information together. Like I said yesterday, some of you -- if  
5 you were present, you heard me talk about some crime analyst  
6 that we're looking at funding over at Texas DPS, and we're  
7 almost -- we're almost there.

8           We got an inter-agency contract. I think this is  
9 going to be something that those folks will be able to work on  
10 to help us put a lot of this information together, to share  
11 this with law enforcement. So that they'll be able to look  
12 around the state and see where some of these issues are  
13 occurring, and we can better focus our efforts when it comes to  
14 funding around Texas and into -- you heard Stewart just talk  
15 about the rise in the precious metals, and so we want to be in  
16 front of that and be ready to go as -- as those prices rise,  
17 and we assume that there could be additional theft as it  
18 relates to catalytic converters.

19           So, our partner agency coordination is going well.  
20 We -- we are Again, we're meeting quarterly now, and -- and  
21 we'll be flexible and agile where -- when it comes to that. If  
22 we need to meet more regularly, we can do that, but right now  
23 we're meeting quarterly. And so, with that Madam Chair, I'll  
24 close.

25           CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Your comments with the partner.

1 Agency coordination -- so they're not presenting today?

2 DIRECTOR DIGGS: So, they're actually -- they're not presenting  
3 today they presented their updates yesterday.

4 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Yesterday -- yes, sir.

5 DIRECTOR DIGGS: During the board meeting.

6 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Alright. Thank you.

7 We will now move on to agenda item number seven,  
8 which is what we're all excited to -- to hear and see -- is the  
9 law enforcement updates, Mr. Diggs.

10 DIRECTOR DIGGS: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the  
11 first agency I would like to call up is Houston Police  
12 Department and Tolan Harding has a presentation. He wants to  
13 come up and visit with us about some of their efforts. He did  
14 share with me last night that he needed half an hour. I -- I  
15 don't think he's going to quite take 30 minutes. Anyway,  
16 Tolan, the floor is yours, sir.

17 LIEUTENANT HARTING: Thank you, Director Diggs, Madam  
18 Chair Jones, and members of the board. My name is Tolan  
19 Harting, I'm a lieutenant with the Houston Police Department.  
20 I've been with the Houston Police Department approximately 29  
21 years. During that time, I served five years in the Auto Theft  
22 Division as a sergeant, promoted out of the Auto Theft Division  
23 to a lieutenant. I was lucky enough to get back to the Auto  
24 Theft Division about three years ago, and I've been serving as  
25 the task force commander for the Houston Auto Crimes Task.

1 Force. Since then.

2 I'd like to discuss with you all today a little  
3 bit about the task force's use and also HPD's use of  
4 license plate reading technology. There we go. Currently  
5 the Houston Police Department and the Auto Crimes Task  
6 Forces uses two different systems, and they provide  
7 different information. These systems basically can be  
8 described as either a fixed system or a mobile system.

9 Currently, the MVCPA funds 190 cameras for the  
10 a -- for the a Auto Crimes Task Force. And the Houston Police  
11 Department provides the -- us access to other systems as well.  
12 The main focus for the Auto Crimes Task Force is the areas of  
13 the City of Houston that are in the -- the Fort Bend,  
14 Montgomery, and Harris Counties, which covers about 6.2 million  
15 residents, about 5 million cars.

16 As my colleagues will probably share with you  
17 later on, Houston crooks don't respect jurisdictional  
18 boundaries. They go everywhere, and LPR lets us share data  
19 across the state with other task forces, and they can see some  
20 of these crooks come out of Houston.

21 Currently about half our department, about 2,800  
22 people, are LPR users. And that results in about 90,000  
23 inquiries on license plates per month. While that sounds like  
24 a lot of inquiries, when you do the math, one inquiry per user  
25 per day. I don't have the exact numbers, but I'm pretty sure.

1 Houston Police Department does more driver's license inquiries  
2 per day than one per person. While it seems like we do a lot  
3 of license plate inquiries, it's really a very reasonable  
4 number given the size of the Houston Police Department and the  
5 City of Houston.

6                   Why is LPR data and LPR as a tool so valuable?  
7 We, oh thank you -- thank you. Well, what percentage of cars  
8 are used in crimes? My guess is 90 to 95 percent. I -- I  
9 couldn't find an exact number or an exact study that could tell  
10 you that. But 90 to 95 percent of crimes involve some kind of  
11 a car. Cars are used to get to a crime, they're used to get  
12 away from the crime, they're used to transport contraband  
13 narcotics, they're used for human smuggling. They transport  
14 stolen goods. A vehicle can be used as a weapon. And most  
15 importantly to the MVCPA, the vehicle can be the target of the  
16 crime. Vehicles can be stolen outright, auto theft, they can  
17 be burglarized, or they can have parts stolen from them, such  
18 as their catalytic converters.

19                   Last year in the City of Houston, we had  
20 approximately 12,000 auto thefts, which indicates that 20 --  
21 approximately 24,000 catalytic converters attached to those  
22 vehicles were stolen. As we know, when vehicles are stripped,  
23 they don't leave any of the valuable parts behind. They don't  
24 leave the catalytic converters behind. Those are taken. What  
25 we end up with is basically scrap steel, it's all that's left.



1           Last year, we had approximately 20,000 vehicles  
2 broken into. And approximately 4,000 thefts of parts from  
3 vehicles. Fortunately, and I think it's in -- in part to the  
4 support of the MVCPA, all of these crimes from 2024 to 2025  
5 have decreased. LPR helps us address all of these crimes that  
6 involve motor vehicles.

7           What are some of the uses of LPR? And I'm sure some  
8 of the other task forces commanders will share other uses. But  
9 basically we use it to locate and identify. We locate vehicles  
10 and suspects and we identify vehicles and suspects. We also  
11 use it to confirm or refute leads. We use -- we use it to  
12 confirm someone's alibi or fact, or what we see on surveillance  
13 video, we use it to confirm that. LPR data and LPR technology  
14 is not the be all, end all solving crimes, but it's a valuable  
15 tool.

16           Now, what success has the Houston Auto Crimes  
17 Task Force and the Houston Police Department had with LPR?  
18 Here's one of the first ones, you wouldn't think LPR use would  
19 be significant in human trafficking. But our Vice Division  
20 head of human trafficking investigation where it was the sexual  
21 assault and the human trafficking of a 19 year old victim.  
22 They were able to get enough information to charge and issue a  
23 warrant for the suspect -- the pimp. They knew his last known  
24 address, of course he abandoned his last known address so we  
25 couldn't find him. We didn't know what car he was driving, so.

1 They used the LPR data, determined that he was frequently in  
2 the downtown area.

3 They saturated the area and were able to locate the  
4 vehicle and stopped it. Able to arrest the suspect. And in  
5 the vehicle, they found a second victim. The interview from  
6 her confirmed that she was being trafficked as well. From that  
7 interview, they were able to file additional charges against  
8 this pimp. Without LPR data, we could not have located that  
9 suspect as quickly. Second victim would have gone on to be  
10 victimized much, much longer.

11 One of my favorite fraud related motor vehicle  
12 crimes, local dealership sold a BMW for about \$55,000  
13 dollars. The suspect took delivery of the vehicle, then  
14 the dealership found out that everything on the application  
15 and the contract was fraudulent, so they reported the car  
16 stolen. Detectives were able to list the car stolen and  
17 LPR data showed that the car was frequently in a  
18 neighborhood in Fort Bend County. So we went to that area,  
19 we found the vehicle, saw the suspect get in it. We're  
20 able to stop the suspect, arrest him charge files -- and  
21 file charges. This was all done within two hours of  
22 listing the vehicle stolen. This is a great recovery.

23 Twenty -- on a personal note, in 2012, when I  
24 started at Auto Theft, I started working in the fraud squad and  
25 doing fraud related motor vehicle crimes. I worked a lot of.

1     These types of cases. There were often no leads because  
2     everything that the suspect gave you was fraudulent. And the  
3     addresses didn't matter -- didn't match, the names were  
4     fictitious, or they belonged to somebody else whose identity  
5     theft. The best we could do back then was list the car stolen  
6     and hope it would be recovered at some point in time. It might  
7     be two days, two weeks, two months, or literally two years  
8     later. Now with LPR data, you're able to find that vehicle in  
9     two hours. So I think that's a tremendous recovery. We  
10    wouldn't have been able to do this kind -- type of work without  
11    LPR, because again, like I previously mentioned, every lead is  
12    false, is fictitious.

13                 There's a success story of our Vehicle Crimes  
14    Division. Unfortunately, this is a fatal accident where the  
15    vic -- victim was crossing the street after getting off of a  
16    bus, he was struck by two vehicles. Witnesses could describe  
17    the vehicles in general terms, but no specific plate numbers.  
18    There are surveillance villein -- video from a nearby  
19    McDonald's which confirmed what the witnesses were saying of  
20    the two vehicles. The Vehicle Crimes investigators checked LPR  
21    cameras in the area and using the general description of the  
22    two vehicles, was able to identify both vehicles. Even one of  
23    the pictures on the LPR camera, she was able to see one of the  
24    vehicles being towed and that significant damage to it.  
25    Consistent with striking a pedestrian. From that information,

1 he was able to identify a suspect and file charges against him.  
2 He was also able to identify the second vehicle, which happened  
3 to be a commercial delivery vehicle. When it was examined, it  
4 was clear that it had not struck -- struck the victim even  
5 though it appeared to.

6           You know -- Detective had a -- the general  
7 description of the vehicle but, the LPR was able to identify  
8 the specific vehicles involved in this lead -- involved in this  
9 case. Without LPR, this case probably would have remained  
10 unsolved because they were just simply no workable leads.

11           This case is from our Major Offenders Division. It  
12 addresses a serial robber. This particular robber had an  
13 affinity for cell phone stores because they take a lot of cash.  
14 And he would rob cell phone stores. The only information that  
15 the detectives could get from the suspect was driving a gray  
16 Toyota Camry. There was no license plate information. Gray  
17 Toyota Camry, pretty common in Houston. Use -- again using LPR  
18 data and the description of the vehicle. The possible suspect  
19 vehicle was -- was identified. Again using LPR data, the  
20 current location of that vehicle is identified as well.  
21 Officers were again able to go to that area, saturate the area  
22 and locate the vehicle. Holding over on traffic, discovered it  
23 was the same suspect. They were able to tell it was the same  
24 suspect because he was wearing the same clothes from the prior  
25 robbery. He was also in possession of a firearm, and ended up.

1 Being charged in State as well as federally. This is a serial  
2 robber. He was not going to stop.

3 Again, LPR led to the fast identification and  
4 location of the suspect vehicle. It was so quick, the suspect  
5 didn't have time to change his clothes or commit another  
6 robbery. Though, that was pretty good. This is our guy. When  
7 they pulled him over, he was still wearing the clothes in the  
8 top picture, you clearly see the gun that he was using, so he  
9 knew what he was doing.

10 Now on to Narc -- successes from our Narcotics  
11 Division. Narcotics Divisions identified a trucking company  
12 that's transporting narcotics from McAllen on the border to  
13 Houston. They were using berries as the cover to hide the load  
14 -- hide the loads of Methamphetamine. That's a long way  
15 between the border and Houston. Using LPR data they were  
16 alerted that a truck they were interested in was headed towards  
17 Houston via US59. They could continue to see from the LPR  
18 alerts that the vehicle was getting closer and once it hit Fort  
19 Bend County, a traffic stop was initiated, and 210kg of  
20 methamphetamine were recovered. LPR gave us information on  
21 what vehicle to stop, what it's route was was and where -- what  
22 it's location was. Officers didn't have to sit on the side of  
23 the road doing random stops, hoping to interdict a narcotics  
24 load. They made their job much easier, much more efficient.

25 In tandem with the Narcotics Division on.

1 Something slightly different. Narcotics initiated a by bust  
2 investigation for 20 kilograms of cocaine. So the by bust was  
3 conducted and the suspect arrested. The investigators ran an  
4 LPR inquiry on the suspect's vehicle. And located a residence  
5 where that vehicle was frequently seen. When questioned --  
6 when the suspect was questioning about it, he admitted that's  
7 where he came from, and there were additional narcotics at the  
8 residence. That led to a consent to search; 437 additional  
9 kilograms of cocaine. Almost a thousand pounds of cocaine were  
10 located in that residence. Without LPR data, the residence,  
11 stash house would never have been located and an additional  
12 part -- allowed us to take additional narcotics off the  
13 streets.

14 This is a success from our Major Assaults  
15 Division, which handles crimes against persons. It's a  
16 whodunit type -- type of case. A juvenile was riding a  
17 scooter when he was approached and shot. Surveillance video  
18 from the area showed general -- showed -- showed the suspect  
19 vehicle, but you could only make a make and model out of it.  
20 Using LPR data, the Major Assaults investigator was able to  
21 identify the -- this specific vehicle and it led -- led to the  
22 identification of the suspects.

23 This is an assault case where the suspect used  
24 his vehicle as a weapon. The suspect and the complainant got  
25 into a disagreement in a parking lot, and suspect struck the

1 complainant with his vehicle. Surveillance video from the gas  
2 station parking lot caught the incident, didn't show a license  
3 plate. The only thing the surveillance video showed that was  
4 really significant was the suspect vehicle had a distinctive  
5 lawn mower in the back -- back of the truck. Again, this is  
6 another whodunit type of case. A white truck in Houston, is --  
7 there's thousands of them. It's not the most common -- it's  
8 one of the most common things you're going to see.

9 This was a random incident between the suspect and  
10 the complainant, they had no prior interaction, did not know  
11 each other. Using Flock images, the investigator canvassed the  
12 area around where the assault occurred. And found a white  
13 truck and could see that there was a lawn mower in the back of  
14 the truck. This confirmed what the surveillance video was  
15 showing and led to the identification of the suspect. Who  
16 is -- who was later charged.

17 Sorry for the delay, there we are. There's the  
18 white truck nothing distinct about it, very common in Houston.  
19 Unfortunately, you can see -- I believe that's going to be a  
20 John Deere riding lawn mower in the back.

21 Now moving on to property and financial crimes,  
22 a complainant's stolen credit cards(sic), was used at several  
23 locations. From the use of the credit cards, there was a  
24 general vehicle description and a general description of the  
25 suspect but no specific information. Detectives used LPR data.

1 To identify similar vehicles that were in the immediate area  
2 and -- immediate area and time of the various uses of the  
3 credit cards and the original theft. They were able to  
4 identify a vehicle from that.

5 In this crime the credit cards were used multiple  
6 times, and they're used at time -- multiple -- multiple  
7 locations. The suspect was very mobile and he was not going to  
8 stop until the credit cards didn't work. LPR data allowed us  
9 to identify the suspect from the vehicle registration, it was  
10 the son of the vehicle owner. They were able to charge --  
11 charge the suspect as well. Without LPR, there would have been  
12 no workable leads in this case.

13 Again with property and financial crimes.  
14 Something rather simple, the suspect stole four pairs of boots  
15 from a local Western ware store. Ran right out the front door  
16 to the getaway vehicle and fled. There were surveillance video  
17 of it. Nothing specific other than the general description of  
18 the car. Again using LPR data officers who are able to  
19 identify the specific vehicle. Find it in the area, which is  
20 confirmed by. The surveillance video. Other than that, there  
21 was no other evidence or leads. LPR again provided workable  
22 leads and of identifying the vehicle and the suspect and  
23 confirming that the vehicle and the suspect video were in the  
24 area, and the detective was able to file charges.

25 This is success story of LPR use from the.



1 Robbery Division. A Lyft driver was assaulted, kidnapped or  
2 robbed and his car was stolen. The was listed was listed as  
3 stolen and an LPR inquiry was done, and it indicated that the  
4 car was currently at the Galleria Mall in Houston. Officers  
5 went to the mall -- went to the mall, located the vehicle, and  
6 were able to locate the suspects committing another theft into  
7 the mall.

8 One suspect was arrested on the scene. The other  
9 suspect evaded. But investigators were able to identify the  
10 second suspect. Charges of aggravated robbery, aggravated  
11 kidnapping, and a federal case were open on both suspects. In  
12 this case suspects -- these suspects were committing multiple  
13 violent crimes with different victims in different locations.  
14 LPR data was able to allow us to quickly identify and locate  
15 the stolen vehicle and interrupt another crime. Without that  
16 data, the second crime probably would have -- would have been  
17 successfully completed.

18 And now, for what the board is more interested  
19 in. These are success stories from the Houston Auto Crimes  
20 Task Force. Very proud of my guys. This is a -- a rather  
21 funny one. The Houston Auto Crimes Task Force was conducting a  
22 covert operation in a local parking lot when they envied a  
23 vehicle being broken into. Due to the fact that we were  
24 conducting a different operation, we couldn't immediately  
25 respond or intervene in the burglary the motor vehicle.

1           Once our operation was over, we used LPR data to  
2 identify this vehicle. Because we knew it was a black Infiniti  
3 SUV, from that data, we were able to determine that the vehicle  
4 was then on the northeast side of Houston. We went to the  
5 northeast side of Houston, located that vehicle, stopped it.  
6 Found the suspect to be in possession of stolen property and  
7 we're able to charge him. Which was all done in the same day,  
8 and there's a picture of the -- two of the guns that were  
9 recovered. But, I apologize for the quality of the picture.  
10 My guys are really good at catching criminals, they're not  
11 always good at taking pictures for me. The LPR data let us go  
12 from one project or one -- one operation to another. If it  
13 wasn't for that, that suspect would have gotten away because he  
14 fled the scene so quickly that all we had was general  
15 description, and unfort(sic) -- unfortunately, we were working  
16 a different covert operation, and we couldn't immediately  
17 intervene.

18           Again with a Houston Auto Crimes Task Force, we  
19 received information about a stolen Lamborghini Urus worth  
20 about \$300,000 dollars. LPR data identified where the vehicle  
21 was commonly traveling. And it was near a luxury apartment  
22 complex. Officers went to the area, maintained surveillance  
23 until they saw the vehicle and solved suspect and get into it  
24 and drive off. Where again we convicted a traffic stop.  
25 Suspect was arrested and charged with felony physical firearm,

1 and a felony theft warrant. We discovered that the vehicle had  
2 an altered VIN and was stolen out of Miami. We also seized --  
3 seized about \$5,600 dollars in -- in cash, numerous credit  
4 cards belonging to different people, and were notified by the  
5 U.S. -- U.S. Postal Inspectors that the suspect we detained  
6 was involved in the theft of a three million dollar check.  
7 This was a high value vehicle. And the suspect was involved in  
8 multiple other high value financial crimes. LPR data led to us  
9 identifying this suspect locating -- excuse me, locating the  
10 vehicle and linking him to significant other crimes.

11 I don't know how many of us are in the neighborhood  
12 for \$300,000 cars, but I had to look up what a Lamborghini Urus  
13 was. Eh, not a bad looking car, not sure if I want to spend  
14 \$300,000 dollars on it though.

15 Again, this is from the Houston Auto Crimes Task  
16 Force. Officers were running on the freeway when they saw a  
17 GMC Sierra AT4 Black Widow Edition on the freeway and drew  
18 their attention. They knew it was a commonly stolen vehicle  
19 and a high value target. They ran a registration inquiry on  
20 the vehicle. Discovered it was a rebuilt salvage, which really  
21 piqued their interest. Unfortunately, they lost sight of the  
22 vehicle on the freeway, and had to come back to the office to  
23 continue their investigation. Back at the office they  
24 continued the registration inquiry and were able to see  
25 pictures of the vehicle when it was sold at auction, and had.

1 Significant front end damage most probably un -- uneconomical  
2 to repair. The next day, we used LPR data to determine where  
3 the vehicle was frequenting, went to that area and we were able  
4 to locate that truck. Officers confirmed that it was a VIN  
5 altered stolen vehicle and seized it.

6 Because auto theft -- Houston Task Force officers  
7 know that this particular make and model. Is a frequently  
8 stolen vehicle and a high value target to what drew their  
9 attention to it, again the LPR data let us -- let us locate the  
10 vehicle and recover it very quickly. Thieves have a very good  
11 taste in trucks, it was a very nice looking truck. That truck  
12 has since been awarded to the City of Houston.

13 It's a slightly different case, but a  
14 complainant in McKinney, Texas, received toll violations for  
15 traveling in the Houston area on his license plate. LPR data  
16 was able to show that his license plate had been cloned. From  
17 the LPR data, you could see the -- the same license plate was  
18 on two different vehicles in two different geographic areas at  
19 the same time. Again, using LPR data, we were able to locate  
20 the vehicle in Houston, examine it and discover that it was a  
21 VIN swap stolen. Passing around the actual fake license plate  
22 that was used on that vehicle. There's the vehicle in -- in  
23 Houston that turned out to be a stolen vehicle, and there's a  
24 close up of the license plate.

25 Most task force officers commonly use LPR to.

1 Help locate stolen vehicles. In -- in this case, officers ran  
2 the license plate of a recently stolen vehicle. And discovered  
3 that it was parked at a vacant lot behind a gate. The  
4 information we received here is -- was from a mobile LPR  
5 camera. We were able to go to the location, determine that the  
6 location was being rented by a mechanic. We went to the  
7 mechanic who stated that, he let another man store vehicles on  
8 the lot and gran -- granted us access to the lot where we found  
9 that it wasn't just one stolen vehicle but two. This shows  
10 where one LPR hit. Led to multiple recoveries of multiple  
11 stolen vehicles. And this one. Is a case where a mobile LPR  
12 camera provided the information.

13                   This is a case of where A fixed LPR camera  
14 provided information that helped us recover a vehicle. Again  
15 commonly, the task force officers run license plates of  
16 recently stolen vehicles through LPR data. In this case, they  
17 were able to see the -- the vehicle was last seen traveling  
18 in -- in Northeast Houston. The officers, knowing the area  
19 went to the northeast side of Houston, started checking  
20 multiple apartment complexes near where the -- the car was last  
21 seen or able to locate that truck in an apartment complex. We  
22 contacted the complainant who came out to the scene, and  
23 they -- we were able to recover their truck -- sorry, they were  
24 able to recover their truck.

25                   In this case, the crooks left that vehicle to cool.

1 Off at the apartment complex. One of the things we loved was  
2 they disconnected and removed the body control module, and this  
3 is to prevent another thief coming to the same apartment  
4 complex and stealing their stolen truck. But again, LPR data  
5 led to a quick recovery of this vehicle, and we returned it  
6 directly to the owner with minimal damage.

7 That brings us to the question of the day. Does  
8 LPR technology work? Is it a tool worth using? Is it  
9 worth the continued financial support of the MVCPA Board?  
10 That's the question of the day. I think the answer is yes.  
11 How do we know? How do we know it works and it's a  
12 valuable tool? Well, the projects success -- success  
13 stories show that LPR is a valuable tool for  
14 investigations. It's not the be all end all of solving  
15 crimes, but it is a very valuable tool.

16 How else do we know LPR works? It's because  
17 the crooks and thieves have adapted to it, and how they  
18 respond to it and how they -- how they avoid and try to  
19 and defeat LPR. One of the first things people have come  
20 up with is LPR counter surveillance. There's now a  
21 website, haveibeenflocked.com, where you can check your  
22 license plate to see if any -- if any law enforcement  
23 agency has inquired on your license plates. The -- crooks  
24 are concerned about it, and they want to know if they've  
25 been flocked.

1           Now, for LPR countermeasures, crooks are taking  
2 additional steps to defeat LPR. The top six are probably the  
3 most common ways that crooks defeat LPR. It's with license  
4 plate -- with some kind of license plate and whether it's  
5 stolen, fake, a plate flipper, just flat out removing the  
6 plates, using novelty plates to cover or just, hanging a rag  
7 over the back of the plate to hide it.

8           The bottom four concepts aren't as frequent, but  
9 there are -- are countermeasures for LPR. And then knowing  
10 from jail calls and interviews with suspects, they know what  
11 LPR does, what the technology provides, and where specific  
12 fixed cameras are located, and they will avoid those areas.

13           Fake plates, where did it start? Well, there's  
14 a good example of the paper temporary plate started it at all.  
15 It's probably the most common type of -- recently made fake  
16 plate, and it started to drive in the State of Texas to el --  
17 eliminate fake plates. They're not legal anymore, and that's  
18 good. But what are the crooks done since we eliminated paper  
19 plates? Well, they've adapted. It didn't take long before we  
20 had our first fake temporary plate. This is the new style  
21 metal plate, and it's already been faked.

22           Here are just some examples of the fake plates  
23 that we've encountered during our operations. They've been  
24 used in the commission of other crimes, they've been on getaway  
25 vehicles, they've been on stolen vehicles, they've been used by

1 Juggling suspects, they've been used by catalytic converter  
2 thief's. They're used anytime a crook wants to avoid a license  
3 plate being identified with his vehicle.

4 Now, Amber up -- posted the -- this license plate,  
5 the MVCPA website, and was giving guidance about not putting  
6 vanity or fake plates on your vehicle and that it was a crime.  
7 I saw it, I decided I wanted to take a look at this and just  
8 see where it was. This is a nationwide fake plate. Hoonigan  
9 is a popular automotive lifestyle brand from Hoonigan Racing  
10 Division, and it was founded by a rally driver named Ken Block.  
11 And he represents a culture of aggressive driving formerly  
12 called hooning, and where they drive aggressively or do  
13 spectacular stunts. Is a plate like this probably used to  
14 conceal crimes. Yes, it probably is.

15 Here's that same, plate on a Honda in Houston,  
16 here's that same plate on a Chevy truck in Houston. These  
17 makes and models or trucks are very commonly stolen in Houston.  
18 Is that plate being used to conceal a stolen truck? I don't  
19 know, it could be. This just your classic "resto-mod" Sunday  
20 driver type car, or is that plate hiding some other issues that  
21 prevent legitimate titling registration and license plates for  
22 that -- that vehicle? I don't know, but it's being used to  
23 conceal something.

24 On the right, you can see a license plate that  
25 says Quiet, that was a vanity plate from the Texas 2K event in.  
2023. If you don't know the Texas 2K event, is a legal meet up



1 of racing enthusiasts would often devolve into illegal street  
2 racing. And occurs in and around Houston each year. The left  
3 is a fake plate of an actually issued Texas vanity plate,  
4 quiet. That vanity plate hasn't been. Issued since February  
5 of 2020. But here's an image from January 4th of 2026. That  
6 plate being on a white BMW in the north Texas area. I research  
7 the Quiet Houston PD and discovered it had been on -- seen on a  
8 Tesla, and a motorcycle. Both of which -- both of those  
9 vehicles on different occasions evaded from police when police  
10 officers tried to stop the vehicle because, the license plate  
11 was expired and it's still being used.

12           And lastly, what is LPR data -- what does LPR  
13 cameras catch? You wouldn't expect it, that's a stolen car  
14 there in the background. And that's the driver of the stolen  
15 car being arrested during a felony traffic stop. He's been  
16 ordered out -- ordered out of the car, told to put his hands  
17 up, pulled his shirt up so that we can see he has no weapons --  
18 weapons in his waistband. So, it's amazing what LPR cameras  
19 catch. I couldn't make that up if I tried, but LPR camera  
20 caught it.

21           So in conclusion, LPR data is very valuable -  
22 valuable to all of law enforcement, not just motor vehicle  
23 crimes investigators. It's a valuable tool, we would like the  
24 MVCPA to continue its support and funding. Thank you.

25           CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Thank you, sir. Excellent

1 Presentation, great details. Any questions from committee  
2 members? Yes, sir.

3 MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Member Rodriguez for the record.  
4 Policy, does your department have policy on how it can be used?

5 LIEUTENANT HARTING: Yes, sir, it does. Very  
6 specific policy. It must be linked to a case, and you must --  
7 that must also note in your inquiry what type of case you --  
8 you're investigating and why -- and then the case number.

9 MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: And I'm going to ask that from  
10 everybody, so if y'all want to go ahead and touch on it before  
11 I ask, that'd be great. Appreciate it. Thank you.

12 MEMBER PORRAS: I have a question. Member Porras,  
13 you -- you mentioned you have 190 LPR cameras?

14 LIEUTENANT HARTING: Correct, the MVCPA funds 190  
15 specifically,

16 MEMBER PORRAS: Funds. Okay. And that was my  
17 question, if they were all funded by MVCPA.

18 (Simultaneously speaking)

19 LIEUTENANT HARTING: Yeah, no, there are several  
20 thousand across Houston. The City of Houston pays for other  
21 additional cameras, and then we have access to the other law  
22 enforcement agency cameras, business district cameras,  
23 homeowners association cameras.

24 MEMBER PORRAS: Nice. Okay. Thank you.

25 MEMBER NGUYEN: Yes. Madam Chair. Nathan Nguyen.

1 Just want to add about the policies. Anytime that new policy  
2 or the executive staff and the command staff we have input, and  
3 from there, the legal unit will draft the -- the final policy  
4 and then provide a chief. For instantly(sic), Jugging -- the  
5 new Jugging Law, which we fully embrace, which have very  
6 effective impact on the jugging. And we draft that, and it has  
7 been working very well. I know of the Houston Auto Task Force  
8 means using it exclusively, very -- very often on that law, and  
9 I would like to do this opportunity to commend our Task Force  
10 because Tolan, he's been a tireless worker in terms of  
11 embracing technology and embracing new law. With the new law  
12 excreting -- they use it to reduce the auto theft in Houston,  
13 so they truly embraced this. But behind the law and the  
14 technology, there's a human factor, and they always there. If  
15 I call Tolan in -- in middle of night, he will answer the call.  
16 Thank you.

17 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: You're welcome, sir. For those  
18 who are non-law enforcement, do you -- or Lieutenant, can you  
19 explain jugging, and then also, if you can, give an example,  
20 just one example, of jugging.

21 LIEUTENANT HARTING: Jugging simply is -- is a term  
22 for a predatory theft. Suspects will stake out a high-value  
23 target typically, it's a bank. Watching for people to come out  
24 of a bank where they can determine that they have cash. They  
25 will then follow the person until they stop somewhere, and then  
Either rob the person directly or, typically -- and what the

1 most of our Auto Theft Task Force focuses on is when they break  
2 into the vehicle, the money from the bank out of the vehicle.  
3 These juggers(sic) -- it's a theft basically.

4 Juggers will also follow people from high-end retail  
5 stores, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, the Apple store. They will also  
6 follow people from gun stores, gun ranges so, they're going to  
7 target the guns. Check cashing stores, anywhere that money or  
8 high-value items just are used. The suspects will set up,  
9 watch, and then prey on people who don't realize that they are  
10 being targeted to be a victim of crime.

11 Often these suspects will change license plates when  
12 they commit the crime because they know LPR data will -- like  
13 catch them. One of our techniques is to run an LPR check on  
14 the victim's vehicle and see what other vehicles were following  
15 it, that often helps us identify who the juggers are. We can  
16 then use LPR data to determine where that vehicle frequents,  
17 and then we can target that area, knowing that if they're on a  
18 certain side of town in a certain area, well -- there's banks  
19 in that area, so we'll go watch those banks. In summary, it's  
20 a predatory theft crime.

21 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Absolutely. And they also  
22 travel from state to state just -- they make a circuit. Thank  
23 you any? Yes, sir.

24 MEMBER DORAN: This is Member Doran. I really  
25 appreciate you bringing those plates in and giving us an

1 Opportunity to admire somebody's handiwork. But I -- I was  
2 curious, are you seeing legitimate plates, valid plates, being  
3 stolen off of other vehicles and then swapped onto vehicles  
4 that are being used by criminals? Or are you seeing plates  
5 that were once upon a time valid that are just at flea markets,  
6 or even out-of-state plates?

7 And with respect to those three categories of plates,  
8 how do the LPRs help with these, if at all?

9 LIEUTENANT HARTING: Yes, to -- to all three of  
10 those. We commonly see stolen license plates, the crooks will  
11 target a vehicle that's very similar to theirs, and they take  
12 the front license plate off. It may take weeks, months, or  
13 years before the person realizes that one of their two plates  
14 is missing. And they will use that, knowing that if an officer  
15 runs that license plate, it will come back to a very similar  
16 make and model. They'll probably get away with it. So that's  
17 stolen plates.

18 Yes, we also see plates that are expired,  
19 canceled, not used anymore, used as well, because those are  
20 easier to get. There's less of a chance of them being  
21 reported stolen, so we see those as well. Out-of-state  
22 plates? Yes. I just bring any out-of-state plates with  
23 me. They'll commonly use those as well. The LPR doesn't  
24 care what state your plate's from. It will capture the  
25 numbers. We can limit the search to, say, just Texas or

1 just California. But if I just put in ABC -- 123, it will  
2 inquiry, it will bring back any license plate from any  
3 state with ABC -- 123.

4 MEMBER DORAN: Member Doran. May I ask a follow-up  
5 question. Is it an offense to either maintain any  
6 possession a plate that has expired, not return it, or to  
7 be selling old plates, because -- I mean, we see this on  
8 Facebook, we see this at flea markets, etc.

9 LIEUTENANT HARTING: TxDOT does not require you to  
10 return a license plate. Once it's issued to you, it's yours.  
11 They don't ask for it back. As far as selling old license  
12 plates on -- on eBay or Facebook, I don't know. I don't  
13 believe that's a crime, because the license plate belongs to  
14 the person it was issued to. They can do with it what they  
15 want. It is a crime to knowingly have the wrong license plate  
16 or a fake license plate on your vehicle. So it is a crime to  
17 use it.

18 MEMBER DORAN: One last follow-up question. So, just  
19 from a policy standpoint, would it be beneficial to law  
20 enforcement if there was legislation, potentially, that imposed  
21 that obligation on Texans to surrender license plates that they  
22 had that were expired, no longer in use? I mean do -- do you  
23 see enough of this out there that -- that, would make a  
24 meaningful impact for -- for you and your efforts with your  
25 LPRs?

1           LIEUTENANT HARTING: I don't think it would. There's  
2 just too many.

3           MEMBER DORAN: Okay, thank you.

4           CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Did you answer? Okay, I didn't  
5 hear. I will say that the DMV will have some input on that  
6 because, coming from a regulatory agency, Texas DPS and  
7 driver's licenses, and when you had to surrender your license  
8 because of a DWI or other -- for other reasons, then what you  
9 do with those that have to be destroyed, and -- or are they  
10 kept for so long? Retention period? So, I -- I'm pretty  
11 confident that Texas DMV will have some -- some input. But I  
12 see a lot of nodding from the choir, they're all smiling,  
13 except for DMV. Okay. Any other questions for Lieutenant?  
14 Okay. Perfect. It is 10:10. Let's return back at 10:20.

15                   (Off the record, 10:10 a.m.)

16                   (Back on record, 10:32 a.m.)

17           CHAIR MAJOR JONES: It is 10:32, and we will now  
18 resume our committee meeting.

19           DIRECTOR DIGGS: Good morning, Madam Chair. William  
20 Diggs, Director, MVCPA. I would now like to continue with our  
21 law enforcement updates and ask that Task Force Commander John  
22 Gonzalez with the Harris County Sheriff's Office come present.

23           LIEUTENANT GONZALEZ: Good morning, Madam Chair,  
24 Director, and board members. For the record, my name is John  
25 Gonzalez. I'm employed by the Harris County Sheriff's Office

1 and hold the rank of lieutenant. I'm currently assigned to our  
2 Covert Investigations Division, where I oversee the operations  
3 for both our Auto Theft and Asset Forfeiture units. For those  
4 in the room that and those that are watching who are unfamiliar  
5 with Harris County, despite us and the City of Houston being  
6 mentioned in just about every intelligence meeting, here is the  
7 411. Harris County is located on the upper Gulf Coast in  
8 southeast Texas and is bounded by Waller County on the north  
9 and west, Montgomery County on the north, Liberty and Chambers  
10 counties on the east, and Galveston and Brazoria counties on  
11 the south and finally Fort Bend County on the west.

12           The county comprises 1,778 square miles and is the  
13 largest Texas county east of the Nueces River. Harris County  
14 had over five million residents as of mid 2025, with  
15 projections and estimates for 2026 placing it around 5.1 to  
16 5.12 million, solidifying its position as Texas's largest  
17 county and third most populous in the U.S., driven by  
18 significant growth. There are currently just over 850 fixed  
19 LPR cameras in Harris County, which are both law enforcement  
20 and privately owned or operated.

21           The Harris County Sheriff's Office, founded in 1837,  
22 is the largest sheriff's office in Texas, the third largest in  
23 the United States. The HCSO has nearly 4,600 employees and 200  
24 reservists dedicated to ensuring the safety of over 5.1 million  
25 residents who call Harris County home.



1 Harris County encompasses 41 incorporated municipalities with  
2 over 60 various law enforcement agencies.

3 Since 2016, the HCSO has been under the guidance and  
4 leadership of Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, no relation. Who is a  
5 lifelong Houstonian and is at the beginning of his third term  
6 as sheriff.

7 What is LPR technology? License plate recognition, or  
8 what is LPR technology? It's camera technology that uses  
9 specialized high-resolution cameras with artificial  
10 intelligence and infrared illumination to capture, read,  
11 and digitize license plates for moving vehicles in real  
12 time, even in tough conditions like darkness or glare.  
13 They capture plate numbers, vehicle details, make, model,  
14 color, time, and location, turning visual data into  
15 actionable digital information for automated tasks and  
16 investigations. They can be remotely mounted, affixed to a  
17 vehicle, or attached to a fixed structure. So basically,  
18 to summarize, it is a tool. As my colleague Tolan Harting  
19 said earlier, it's one of many tools that law enforcement  
20 uses within the scope of their work..

21 How does LPR technology help law enforcement? Please  
22 allow me to explain how. This first case is a kidnapping case  
23 in which LPR was used to locate the suspect's vehicle. In  
24 December of 2024, Harris County deputies were dispatched to a  
25 residence in east Harris County in reference to a runaway.

1 The computer-generated call slip's comments advised that a  
2 juvenile had left the residence without permission from their  
3 parents. Deputies learned that the juvenile's mother and  
4 stepfather had intercepted some flirtatious text messages  
5 between their 16-year-old daughter and a 38-year-old employee  
6 of the juvenile's stepfather.

7 A few days after the messages were discovered, the  
8 juvenile's stepfather confronted the employee about talking  
9 with his stepdaughter. The suspect in this case made comments  
10 that he does not care about going to jail because he knew he  
11 would eventually be released. A decision was made by both the  
12 mother, stepfather, and the juvenile's biological father to  
13 have her return to El Salvador to live with her father. The  
14 night before the juvenile was supposed to fly back, she left  
15 the residence through a back door and met with the suspect, who  
16 was waiting on her down the street, in his brother's vehicle.  
17 The suspect did not show up for work later that morning and was  
18 not heard from. The juvenile's stepfather informed deputies  
19 that this was not like his employee to not show up for work.

20 There is a small video here, this is just a clip  
21 of juveniles. You'll see her on the bottom right, she exits  
22 the house. This is around, I believe, almost two in the  
23 morning, you see her walking out, and she ducks off. And on  
24 the other side of that -- that looks like a -- a shop, there is  
25 another camera that captured -- it was a neighbor's camera --

1 captured the suspect vehicle waiting on the end of the street.  
2 I guess in this case, the suspect thought he was slick by using  
3 his brother's vehicle rather than his own.

4 The parents of the juvenile provided law enforcement  
5 with a suspect vehicle description along with a license plate  
6 number. Through the usage of LPR databases, law enforcement  
7 personnel were able to identify the suspect vehicle, which was  
8 observed heading west from Houston around 6:30 a.m. An Amber  
9 Alert was issued for the juvenile, as well as a live tracking  
10 request for the suspect vehicle, which was provided by the lien  
11 holder. The vehicle was tracked by both live GPS tracking  
12 along with LPR technology to an address in Austin, Texas.

13 HCSO detectives were able to collaborate with Austin  
14 law enforcement to successfully see the juvenile being safely  
15 returned home unharmed. Criminal charges were eventually filed  
16 for the suspect -- on the suspect for his involvement.

17 This is another abduction kidnapping case that  
18 occurred in our North District. LPR also played a  
19 significant role in helping patrol deputies locate the  
20 suspect vehicle and essentially rescue the victim. In  
21 August of 2025, HCSO patrol deputies were dispatched to a  
22 location in reference to an abduction kidnapping call for  
23 service. Upon arrival, deputies met with the reporting  
24 party, who worked at a car dealership just north of a small  
25 motel.

1 The reporting party stated to deputies that he heard a  
2 female yelling for help, saying, quote "He's kidnapping  
3 me". The reporting party was able to get a brief  
4 description of a male who was involved, as well as a  
5 vehicle description. In this case, it was a gray-colored  
6 SUV.

7 Within minutes, by using the LPR databases, deputies  
8 were able to locate a license plate for a vehicle matching  
9 that description that had been pinged in the area just  
10 earlier. Deputies were able to check the vehicle's license  
11 plate and learned that the registered owner did have a  
12 hotel room at that location -- near the location where the  
13 deputies were originally dispatched to.

14 A criminal history check was conducted and a  
15 photograph of the suspect was shown to the reporting party,  
16 who positively identified the suspect as the one he  
17 observed leaving the location in a gray-colored SUV.  
18 Approximately two hours later, deputies who were still  
19 monitoring LPR cameras in the area were able to locate and  
20 conduct a traffic stop on the suspect vehicle. After  
21 detaining the driver, deputies were able to make contact  
22 with the victim, who had visible injuries, in this case,  
23 broken ribs, and was in emotional distress. It was later  
24 discovered that the two were in a previous dating  
25 relationship and there was a protective order against the  
suspect.

1 Charges were accepted and filed against the suspect. And  
2 this -- this clip, it's just some body worn camera footage  
3 -- you know, just to show she's detaining the suspect and  
4 making contact with the victim. It's very brief. I'm not  
5 sure if there's audio. There should be audio, but she's  
6 basically telling the deputy.

7 (Video audio)

8 "My ribs are broken"

9 "Okay. What happened"?

10 "Can you get me some assistance please?"

11 "Yes."

12 "And my phone is in back parking lot at the hotel on  
13 the ground. Can you see if it's still there please?"

14 "I'm going to need EMS"

15 (End of video audio)

16 So that was good work by our deputies to locate it so  
17 quickly. This is an aggravated robbery case that occurred on  
18 our Northwest District in which LPR aided our patrol personnel  
19 in locating a stolen vehicle and eventually leading to the  
20 capture and prosecution of the robbery suspect. In September  
21 2025, HCSO patrol deputies were dispatched to an aggravated  
22 robbery call.

23 Upon arrival, deputies learned that the male victim  
24 had been robbed at gunpoint and his vehicle was taken. In this  
25 case, it was a white Honda Accord.

1 Deputies began to track the victim's vehicle due to his cell  
2 phone being left inside, but the tracking was not very  
3 accurate. By using LPR cameras in the area, in this case,  
4 stationary ones, deputies were able to pinpoint the vehicle to  
5 a certain radius. Canine and air support were requested, and  
6 the vehicle was located in an apartment complex. With the  
7 assistance of thermal imaging technology.

8           Not only was the LPR technology paramount in helping  
9 recover the victim's vehicle, but it also led detectives to an  
10 area with additional security cameras that provided evidentiary  
11 details to identify and capture and charge the suspect. Here  
12 are some footage from our air unit. You're going to see the  
13 air unit switches back and forth. He starts off in thermal.  
14 You'll see that the victim's vehicle in this case is parked in  
15 a corner. It is the only vehicle giving off a heat signature  
16 near the engine. He then switches to the day sun or -- excuse  
17 me, night sun and is able to confirm you can see the hood -- is  
18 -- he sees it's a white Honda parked in a corner. He switches  
19 back to thermal, and it's the only one getting off a heat  
20 signature. That was basically our units rolling up on it.

21           This case is -- which LPR cameras help the law  
22 enforcement personnel track down a stolen vehicle. In December  
23 of 2022, HCSO patrol deputies were alerted by both LoJack and  
24 LPR cameras that a stolen vehicle was currently in their area.  
25 Air support was requested, and deputies were able to locate the  
stolen vehicle.

1 Once patrol deputies were in a position, a traffic stop was  
2 conducted which resulted in a brief traffic pursuit. The  
3 stolen vehicle became disabled after striking another motorist  
4 and coming to rest on a median. The five occupants evaded  
5 deputies on foot. All five were captured and charged, and the  
6 vehicle was recovered and returned to its rightful owner.

7           Here's another video from our air unit. This is  
8 thermal, these guys are not covered in pink paint or Pepto-  
9 Bismol, that's just how they come out on the camera. You can  
10 see, their vehicles right there on the -- on the center median,  
11 it just crashed. You'll see, five subjects bail out. There  
12 they go. one, two, three, four, five, and you can see our  
13 deputies. The brakes are very hot on those cars. I'm glad  
14 that we had guys in shape because we caught all five of them.  
15 I believe the only person that was upset on that one was the  
16 canine guy because he -- he didn't get a chance to deploy his  
17 dog, so.

18           This last case is an example of how essential LPR  
19 technology is and how it helped our homicide detectives  
20 identify a murder suspect. In February of 2025, HCSO patrol  
21 deputies and homicide detectives were dispatched to a location  
22 in reference to an in progress life danger call for service.  
23 The call slips, comments advised, quote, "reportee (sic),  
24 advised her friend got shot in the yard. Suspect is gone on a  
25 -- suspect is GOA gone on arrival in a white small two door  
car."

1           Upon arrival, deputies observed an adult male laying  
2 on his back in the driveway of her residence, covered in blood  
3 and had sustained several gunshot wounds. After speaking with  
4 several witnesses on scene, it was discovered that the suspects  
5 fled the scene prior to police arrival in a white colored  
6 sedan. Unfortunately, the male victim was pronounced deceased  
7 by paramedics shortly after.

8           Homicide detectives were able to canvass the area for  
9 footage and were able to observe a vehicle matching the suspect  
10 vehicle description leaving the scene. Detectives noticed  
11 distinct damage and wheel combinations from a neighbor's  
12 security camera. You can see in that top one where they  
13 actually have the -- they see the paint damage and they see  
14 that the front tire is obviously missing a hubcap or is just  
15 riding on a spare.

16           By using LPR technology in this case, it was mobile.  
17 Detectives were able to locate a vehicle matching the physical  
18 description with similar body and paint damage, as well as the  
19 wheel combination on the vehicle. Upon checking the -- upon  
20 checking the matching vehicle's license plate. It was  
21 discovered that the registered owner was an ex boyfriend of the  
22 reporting party. It was later discovered that the reporting  
23 party and the suspect were previously in a dating relationship  
24 which -- which ended under bad terms.

25           The usage of LPR technology was vital.



1 In locating the suspect's vehicle as well as placing it within  
2 the vicinity during the time of the murder.

3 As my calling, lieutenant Tolan Harding mentioned  
4 enduring his presentation: Does LPR technology work? Ask  
5 yourself this: If LPR technology wasn't effective, would the  
6 criminals be going through such great links of deploying  
7 countermeasures in order to defeat it? In this case, license  
8 plate flippers, reflective spray..

9 I mentioned at the beginning of my presentation that  
10 LPR technology was one of many tools. That law enforcement  
11 uses in the scope of their duties. Throughout both my life and  
12 career, I have heard sayings that imply that all tools are  
13 weapons if placed in the wrong hands. This can range from your  
14 basic hammer, to firearms, vehicles, or, for the sake of  
15 today's discussion, license plate reader technology. But one  
16 thing I've also learned at -- is that it's not the tool, it's  
17 how we use it..

18 Now, I'm no master carpenter, but I have enough  
19 experience to know that in this photograph here, you can  
20 clearly see that this hammer is being used incorrectly. If  
21 tools such as a hammer are placed in the wrong hands or  
22 utilized incorrectly, you will most likely receive poor results  
23 like this. However, if you were to take that same hammer and  
24 give it to a master -- master of carpentry, you can expect to  
25 receive -- receive great results..

1           This concludes my presentation. I'd like to thank  
2   Madam Chair, MVCPA board members, as well as Director Diggs.  
3   For your time, as well as the privilege and opportunity to  
4   represent my agency and speak for you today. At this dtime,  
5   I'm willing to answer any questions that you all may have.

6           MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Member Rodriguez, for the record.  
7   Just touch a little bit on policy. And the reason I asked this  
8   is for the non-LEOs in the room so they understand how it -- it  
9   can -- there's measures so it won't be abused. So, if you  
10   could just touch on the policy a little bit.

11          LIEUTENANT GONZALEZ: Yeah, as -- thank you. As we  
12   all know, policies are in place for a reason. That's usually  
13   because of the result of something that we -- we learn from or  
14   a mistake.

15          Our policy currently falls underneath our  
16   investigations and evidence policy, and ours pretty much piggy  
17   -- mirrors the City of Houston's. Ours also goes into detail  
18   where, if you are going to inquire about any kind of license  
19   plate or vehicle, you enter a specific case number or call slip  
20   number. As well as the type of case that you're -- you're  
21   investigating, burglary, murder, jugging suspect, etcetera.

22          We also go into a little -- we elaborate a little  
23   more, as it needs to be under your user name. So when are --  
24   you sign into, let's just say, for example, Flock, you have  
25   your own user name that's vetted to the individual user.

1 There are often times where officers may say, hey, man, can you  
2 run a plate for me real quick? Or use somebody else's sign in,  
3 not with us. You have to have your own -- you have to use your  
4 own user info. Does it happen? I'm sure, because it's in  
5 policy. It's happened before, and when we were audited, that  
6 deputy had to explain. Does that necessarily mean that there  
7 was any mal intent? No, but it is just another checkpoint to  
8 assure that it's not abused.

9 MEMBER NGUYEN: Member Nathan Nguyen. Question  
10 regarding special prosecutor. For us, we have a special  
11 prosecutor that dedicated to auto theft. She has been very  
12 effective, matter of fact, she can by our office once a week.  
13 Do you all have similar arrangement like that?

14 LIEUTENANT GONZALEZ: Are -- excuse me, wow. Are you  
15 referring to a special prosecutor, Lindsey Tizzard?

16 MEMBER NGUYEN: Yes.

17 LIEUTENANT GONZALEZ: Yes, yes. We -- we've met  
18 with her before, we try to -- we check in with her about once a  
19 month as well. As far as I understand we've got a great  
20 working relationship. She's fairly new as well to the auto  
21 theft side, so she's learning a lot. But those are usually the  
22 pros -- type of prosecutors that we want because they're --  
23 they're, eager and they're willing to -- I don't want to say  
24 experiment, but they challenge themselves more but yes, sir.

25 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Is the prosecutor funded by ?

1           MEMBER NGUYEN: Yes, Madam Chair. Yes, she is funded  
2 through the grant being provide to us. So, it has worked out  
3 very well because, as you know -- auto theft is, a lot of kids  
4 are very complicated, and the auto theft law also evolved very  
5 -- very regularly. So, with her, has worked out very well.  
6 Thank you.

7           CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Excellent presentation. Thank  
8 you.

9           LIEUTENANT GONZALEZ: Thank you.

10          DIRECTOR DIGGS: Shall I continue?

11          CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Okay.

12          DIRECTOR DIGGS: So I would now like to call her  
13 Bryan Roden, the Task Force Commander for the Dallas Police  
14 Department.

15          CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Good morning.

16          SERGEANT RODEN: First want to say thank you for the  
17 MVCPA board, and the SB224 Committee for the opportunity to be  
18 able to be here today, and Director Diggs, you and your staff,  
19 and being able to put this together. And it's always been a  
20 privilege of mine to be able to come and talk about the things  
21 that we do. So, for the record, my name's Bryan Roden. I'm a  
22 sergeant with the Dallas Police Department. I've been with  
23 them a little over 22 years now, and I've been a part of the  
24 MVCPA grants now for the better part of 13 years. During that  
25 time, I've seen firsthand the positive impact these grants have  
Had on our department, not just our auto theft rate, but crime

1 in general.

2 Prior to SB224, our department operated about 100  
3 Flock cameras throughout the city. Even with that limited  
4 number, the cameras proved to be highly effective in supporting  
5 our investigative efforts. So when SB224 came around, I  
6 thought -- I saw it as an opportunity to be able to expand on  
7 that success. Not just for the unit I work for, but for every  
8 detective and officer across the city. I'm pleased to report  
9 that SB224 funding allowed us to acquire an additional 200  
10 Flock cameras, all of which are currently deployed up and  
11 operational.

12 So today's presentation just going to highlight four  
13 success stories, demonstrating how this technology selected  
14 suspect identification, investigative efforts. And they're  
15 just not just auto theft cases, just like some of the other  
16 stories have been presented. These are just some that have  
17 been able to find throughout the city.

18 Some quick facts before I get started. Flock cameras  
19 have revolutionized investigations in our city. In preparation  
20 for this presentation, every detective I spoke with emphasized  
21 one consistent point: Flock is essential to investigation. It  
22 provides powerful evidentiary value with near instant access.  
23 And you will see in the hands of the skilled detective or an  
24 officer can shift the course of investigation.

25 So for you people that don't know,

1 in 2023, City of Dallas had a huge spike in auto thefts. We  
2 were like, just shy of 19,000. This year, I'm down 3400  
3 offenses from last year, so that's about a little over 11,000 -  
4 - so 7,000 from '23, see -- and then also our stolen vehicles  
5 recovered has skyrocketed. In '23, our -- our clearance rate  
6 was about five and a half percent. Since all the installation  
7 of the Flock cameras, I'm up to about nine and a half percent.  
8 So it's been a real good tool for the city.

9 Our Flock cameras are also integrated into our Axon  
10 camera system. So when I got a chance to see this firsthand,  
11 I'm driving around a squad car, and it just starts pinging,  
12 going crazy, lights are flashing, and the detective that I work  
13 for in my office told me that Flock was trying to let me know  
14 that I passed a stolen vehicle. I just wouldn't click on the  
15 draw. So we went back, and there was another officer behind  
16 me -- he was a little bit more seasoned driving those squad  
17 cars than me, and he's recovering it already.

18 So one case that I'm going to talk about, all the  
19 pictures that you're going to see are basically ones that I've  
20 taken from the Flock camera system. So there's one that's kind  
21 of graphic, you'll be amazed at what these cameras can capture.  
22 So when it comes up, I'll give you some notice, and if any  
23 type -- of seeing something dramatic like that offend you or  
24 bothers you, Then we can proceed accordingly.

25 So our first case is basically a wanted fugitive.

1 Mr. Enrique Rivero. He was arrested originally by Dallas PD  
2 for the manufacturing delivery of cocaine. An unlawful  
3 carrying of a weapon. After his arrest, he identified as being  
4 associated with the Venezuelan gang Tren de agua. I know I'm  
5 pronouncing that wrong. But after his arrest, just like  
6 everybody else, he bonded it out and just went dark. And  
7 that's when they found out that he was associated with this  
8 gang.

9 So they sent this case to a special agent with the  
10 ATF, Dallas police officers that work with the federal agents,  
11 and the Department of Homeland Security. And they began their  
12 standard protocol, trying to find this individual cellular  
13 data, social media pings, things like that, and they really  
14 couldn't get anywhere.

15 During the investigation, they found, like -- they  
16 got Intel about the make and model of the vehicle he was  
17 driving. And just with that information on Flock, they were  
18 able to, what I like to call like a -- do a pattern of life  
19 assessment on him. He's going past the same Flock cameras kind  
20 know, pretty routinely. And so with that -- they were able to  
21 pull him over and arrest them.

22 Forgive me, my allergies are starting to act up on  
23 me.

24 This next case, is a cargo theft. My thought was  
25 interesting about this, was -- that the original offense

1 happened west of the Dallas Fort Worth metroplex, little town  
2 called Benbrook, I believe. And what's interesting about this  
3 is when the offense took place, the officer that was doing the  
4 original offense report, he put a BOLO in the Flock camera  
5 system has a basic being on the lookout for this vehicle -- it  
6 was taken in a cargo theft.

7           So a patrol officer who was just acting -- you know,  
8 in a covert capacity, had Flock up on his city cell phone. He  
9 gets an alert saying that a stolen trailer had just passed to  
10 this Flock camera system down the road. He goes over there, he  
11 finds the trailer backed up to a quick car repair shop off  
12 University Hills, and he calls for uniform support to go over  
13 there and help him out.

14           When he gets there, they notice that the trailer was  
15 backed up and they started unloading stolen property out of the  
16 trailer onto the -- onto this mechanic shop. So he cost a  
17 uniform support they get there, they detain some people. Our  
18 unit goes out there and we get a search warrant to be able to  
19 kind of properly inspect the property and search and be able to  
20 recover everything that we have.

21           So this little a -- a video that I'm about to play  
22 just kind of shows the -- the process that went through.

23           (Video audio)

24           "This morning, five people face felony charges after  
25 Dallas police say they busted a million dollar cargo theft ring  
And recovered a warehouse full of stolen tires. The



1 investigators tracked a stolen semi truck to a hair park repair  
2 shop only to find piles of stolen goods, hundreds of car tires,  
3 wheels, more than \$32,000 dollars. Police say the suspects  
4 pulled off at least 10 cargo thefts across North Texas over the  
5 past several years."

6           So, it took us three 18 wheelers -- trailers in a box  
7 truck to be able to get all this property off this location  
8 into a -- a secured facility where we kept it. Five, there's  
9 five people arrested. Several of those people, I think at  
10 least three were suspects in other cargo theft offenses around  
11 the metroplex. So when we get into something like that, we  
12 typically get the phones, do dumps on them and stuff like that.  
13 So we know that they were involved in several other cargo theft  
14 offenses across the Metroplex.

15           This is just kind of like a panoramic view that we  
16 had our drone unit take for us just because it was so -- so  
17 many a tires. It's like going up -- looking to the right,  
18 there's a grown man, he's about like 5' 11 or something. You  
19 can just see how massive -- how many tires of stolen property  
20 that was there that we recovered. And just keep on going the  
21 right and that's all the wheels. So it was well over a million  
22 dollars in property that we were able to recover. And really  
23 how we got to this was just a patrol officer who was able to  
24 use Flock, was paying attention to it and knew what was going  
25 on, and tracked it there.

1           So it just doesn't -- you know, this kind of  
2 showcases that it's just not investigators that really benefit  
3 from this but all the patrol too.

4           So this next one is the one that kind of has some  
5 graphic pictures that we I was able to find from Flock. So  
6 this one -- what happened was -- Dallas officer responded to a  
7 major accident at 1400 East Kiest earlier this year, a little  
8 after ten o'clock. The officer that showed up -- officer  
9 Garcia, she now -- where I now work for her, she's a detective  
10 in my office. And one of the reasons I really wanted her was  
11 just because how prolif(sic) --prolific she was with this Flock  
12 camera system. This is all to her credit and her hard work  
13 when she got to the scene.

14           So she pulls up and the -- the person who was struck  
15 was being loaded up, transferred to the hospital. A few other  
16 people stayed behind, and she began her investigation into this  
17 off -- offense. Started talking to people and things like  
18 that, she got a vague description about the vehicle that was  
19 used to -- in this accident. And this is the first picture she  
20 saw.

21           So this is just powerful evidence that --you know,  
22 you present this to a DA you give this to a jury, and there's  
23 really no kind of denying what's happened. I've always thought  
24 one of the hardest cases to investigate was accidents,  
25 especially hidden runs, and with this right here.

1 The next picture, you can see how close he is, and she was able  
2 to get the license plates off the vehicle. And she was able to  
3 go to that registered address that night. Find the vehicle  
4 before the -- the suspect had time to kind of -- you know,  
5 clean his tracks or get rid of it or do something with it, and  
6 was able to arrest the suspect in this offense that night.

7 So there's actually a lot more of these pictures. I  
8 just kind of wanted to spare everybody one of them. You could  
9 see the victim rolling with the car or the truck. So that's  
10 the next one right there, and you can see him -- he's laying up  
11 on the road over there. So with just that right there, she was  
12 able to arrest the suspect. Put the guy in jail and basically  
13 bow tie this case for the detective and the DA and normally --  
14 you know, it would be days, maybe weeks before something like  
15 this comes to a resolution.

16 So this is really good work on her part. Knowing  
17 where the Flock cameras were at so she could turn around and  
18 get -- you know, all this information pretty much at the time  
19 of the offense, and arrest the suspect.

20 So, this last case is one that detectives in my  
21 office have been working on for a little over a year now. And  
22 there's a lot to it -- but so, it really started out as just  
23 like any other offense where complainant goes outside and his  
24 car is missing, and patrol officer gets there. They do a  
25 report and they say, well, cars gone, but it's possible that a  
black Jeep -- that was used as a suspect vehicle. So detective

1 started analyzing and looking at a lot of reports, and the same  
2 black jeep had been using several of other offenses.

3           So with just the vehicle description they were --  
4 and -- and knowing where the offenses were, they were able to  
5 find this black Jeep. One of the things that the reason when  
6 they got to this point how they knew that was the Jeep was  
7 because all the wrong license plates they would put on the  
8 vehicle. So they would constantly change out license plates on  
9 this vehicle. So it's going past these flock cameras pretty  
10 routinely, but every day it's changing license plates. So they  
11 knew they had a good suspect.

12           So using flock, kind of getting a pattern of life  
13 they were able to -- to find where the Jeep was parking at  
14 night. We try to take some action on them that night, but they  
15 ended up getting away. But one thing we did recover that night  
16 was an Autel device that had 128 stolen VIN numbers on it. So  
17 we knew at that point that this group was responsible for a lot  
18 more than initially -- we started looking at them on. And so  
19 we got a hold of some partners around -- other agencies around  
20 our city, like Grand Prairie, Mesquite -- you know, other non  
21 grantees. And we use this program called Nighthawk, where we  
22 could build a shell and put all this data into it, and it kind  
23 of plots things out and analyzes all of our data.

24           So when we did that, we knew that they were not only  
25 using this vehicle, but they were also using this vehicle,

1 this BMW, and again, they were using different license plates  
2 on a daily. We started following them around. Once we located  
3 it and watching them and we actually saw them, they would just  
4 drive and get behind a business and change the license plate  
5 out. And it was just all tactics that they were using, trying  
6 to throw off -- like, any type of this detection from a Flock  
7 cameras.

8           And one thing that was really good about these flock  
9 cameras is the -- the picture on the left that's -- the black  
10 truck -- is the one that they just stole. So it took a picture  
11 of them, so it's really hard, good evidence that we could  
12 present to a DA to showing how this group is responsible for  
13 all these vehicles -- these thefts.

14           This is just something that we did with our Nighthawk  
15 program. And the reason I wanted to put it in there because it  
16 kind of gives us, like, a pattern of life for these suspects.  
17 Imagine this picture with the yellow dots -- and the red dots  
18 Flock cameras. So we take these pictures with the Flock  
19 cameras. Once we're able to identify the suspects, we get the  
20 picture of them going through the flock camera, we're able to  
21 ping their phone, use that phone data saying you were at the  
22 flock camera with a stolen vehicle is and where the other  
23 suspect vehicle is. And so, we put all this together with all  
24 those different vehicles that was taken from that Autel device,  
25 and it became a really good case for the DA.

1 And so we end up identifying five suspects, and -- and filed on  
2 them all for engaging an organized crime, which is a felony  
3 one.

4 This is another suspect vehicle that they use, and  
5 we're able to eventually recover. We got over seven million  
6 vehicles recovered from this one group, and we issued over 65  
7 warrants for different -- you know, phones and different --  
8 other digital media, and it really it began by using Flock.  
9 The last part of the beginning of the investigation was a flock  
10 camera. In the last part of the investigation was a flock  
11 camera. We was all able to put together with that night hop  
12 program showing patterns. And inconclusive or, you know,  
13 conclusive data showing that these guys responsible for all  
14 these number of vehicles stolen.

15 So, in conclusion, everybody I've spoken to about  
16 Flock and I mean -- they love it. If something happened  
17 tomorrow and we couldn't be able to use it, it would just  
18 really set the police department back 10 to 15 years. It's  
19 just been a powerful tool. Theres -- I -- I could go -- when I  
20 told everybody how to put this together, I said -- you know,  
21 give me some stories so I can put together. And the next day I  
22 came to work and I had a stack of reports this big. And I'm  
23 just shuffling through, trying to find ones that are easy to  
24 talk about, that, you know, show the value of this system, and  
25 so it's just an amazing tool.

1 And when detectives and officers were trained on it and know  
2 how to use it properly, You know, it becomes a real powerful  
3 tool.

4 And, yes, we do have policy specifically for  
5 Flock cameras, Flock Investigations, and there's overall policy  
6 about any program that the -- the officers of the city of  
7 Dallas have to abide by before they can use any type of program  
8 or feature that the city provides.

9 So I'm real thankful for this system, I'm thankful  
10 for the SB224. For the -- granting us this money for this, and  
11 with that, I'll answer any questions.

12 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Sir, can you go into detail  
13 regarding the integration of Flock and Axon?

14 SERGENT RODEN: Well, yes, I can but if you -- you  
15 know, you're looking at the technical -- how it integrates, I  
16 may not be -- you know, in -- in tune with that, but I do know.  
17 So it's basically like what the officer went through. So our  
18 camera systems in the squad cars, they -- you know, on the dash  
19 and there's the MDC in the car. So if you put a BOLO in Flock  
20 and Axon goes by it--let's say I'm looking for this license  
21 plate and Axon, the camera, picks it up--it will alert you that  
22 this vehicle has been tagged for whatever reason. And so it  
23 could be a detective looking to identify a suspect, it could be  
24 like -- it's stolen.

25 There could be a lot of different reasons that people  
put BOLOs onto the Flock system, but that's how the officer

1 with the cargo theft basically -- you know, got his alert, was  
2 through the Flock system. I -- I don't know the minute  
3 technical, how they do it -- but it --that's the gist of it.

4 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: That's what I was looking for.  
5 Thank you. Okay. Thank you, sir. I know some of you need to  
6 do a quick checkout, so just take care of your business and be  
7 back at 11:20. That should be sufficient, yeah? Thank you.

8 (Off the record 11:10 A.M.)

9 (Back on record, 11:25 A.M )

10 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: It's 11:25 and we will now resume  
11 our committee meeting.

12 DIRECTOR DIGGS: Madam Chair, the next up will be  
13 John Sanchez. He's our Task Force Commander from Montgomery  
14 County Sheriff's Office. John, thank you for being here today,  
15 sir.

16 LIEUTENANT SANCHEZ: Good morning. Thank you for  
17 having me here, Madam Chair, director Diggs. So I've been a --  
18 I've been a lieutenant with the Montgomery County Sheriff's  
19 Office for almost nine years -- be nine years next month. All  
20 of that time dedicated to the task force and task force  
21 commander. It was quite an eye opening to learn what the task  
22 force did. And I will tell you now that it will take many  
23 sticks of dynamite to try to get me out of this position. I  
24 absolutely love what they do, I love the work that we do I love  
25 the work that my guys do, I love this.



1           I think this is amazing, you don't really see a lot  
2 of this type of effort and support for law enforcement in other  
3 segments of our profession. I want to thank you all for -- for  
4 what you do to support us.

5           Go backwards other way. Got. So the first success  
6 I'd like to talk about came from our homicide unit. They had  
7 a -- Anthony Scott was there, deceased, and Scott was a robbery  
8 victim. And John Horace turned out to be their suspect.  
9 Anthony Scott and his mother, Anne Scott, were with their  
10 friend John Horace. I guess they called him a friend. They  
11 were at the Exxon station playing the ping --ping machines.  
12 After playing the machines, the, the three of them left in  
13 supposedly opposite directions. Anthony and Anne together were  
14 together. And they rode in with John in his own vehicle.  
15 Anthony and Anne drove to their home in Willis, Texas. They  
16 were later found -- Anthony was later found deceased and Anne  
17 had been assaulted and they had been robbed of the money that  
18 they'd won on the ping -- ping machine. They -- John was  
19 suspected to be the suspect. And he drove to their resident,  
20 arriving a few minutes before them, and they knew that because  
21 Flock, they were -- the investigators were able to go in a  
22 Flock with, with, John's -- I'm sorry. With John's license  
23 plate and the Flock cameras were able to show his direction of  
24 travel -- I'm sorry. I'm trying to get -- catch back up on  
25 this.

1 Flock showed that both vehicles were traveling towards the  
2 Scott residence separately. And the Flock allowed the  
3 investigators to confirm the direction of travel and the time  
4 frame of travel, putting John at the location at the time of  
5 the homicide, and he is currently awaiting trial on capital  
6 murder charges.

7           Juggers, on May 29, 2025, our Montgomery County Crime  
8 Reduction Unit was watching various banks in the Woodlands  
9 area, looking for potential jugging suspects. A suspected  
10 jugger (SIC), was identified and surveillance was initiated.  
11 Our real time crime center began intelligence workup of the  
12 suspect vehicle. Our real, real time crime center are very  
13 heavy users of the Flock system and all of our LPR systems in  
14 accounting all of our police efforts at the sheriff's office  
15 and a -- with the task force. The real time crime center  
16 analyst search Flock and discovered that the license plate on  
17 the vehicle had just hit a Flock camera in the city of Houston.  
18 And a minute later, hit a Flock camera in the Woodlands. So,  
19 our crime reduction unit were confirmed that this was, in fact,  
20 a fake license plate on this vehicle. The geographic location  
21 of the Flock hits made it impossible for the same vehicle to  
22 have passed both cameras within a minute's time frame. The  
23 crew unit began a jugging sting operation. The operation  
24 resulted in the arrest of one individual after a short pursuit.

25           Metal thefts, on December 11, 2024, around 11:00.

1 A.M., a theft of an air conditioning unit occurred in the  
2 Cleveland area of Montgomery County. The victim had  
3 surveillance video of the theft. Still photographs from the  
4 video were provided to the real time crime center. Real time  
5 crime center analyst performance search of Flock cameras in the  
6 area and were able to match the suspect vehicle and obtain the  
7 license plate. This led to the identification of the  
8 suspect -- and go back. I apologize, I should have put a  
9 photograph in here. The suspect vehicle was covered in mud,  
10 and they were able to see that in the sur --surveillance video,  
11 in the Flock photographs that they got -- they were able to  
12 match the mud pattern on the truck, and that's how they knew  
13 that this was the suspect vehicle.

14 BMVs, Montgomery County Auto Theft Task Force  
15 received several BMV reports where tools were the only items  
16 taken, this is what linked the BMVs together. Investigators  
17 began a Flock search in the area and were able to identify a  
18 suspect vehicle. The suspect vehicle was also seen on other  
19 Flock cameras in Harris county near similar BMVs.  
20 Investigators were able to use Flock hits to identify the  
21 suspect. The suspect was arrested and charged with 15 counts  
22 of BMV. Thousands of dollars of tools were also recovered.

23 The a -- we put a bolo out on Flock and it hit, and  
24 that drove our parole deputies into the area. That's how we  
25 were able to capture the suspect and make the traffic stop.

1 The a -- Found out later that the a -- the tools -- this BMV  
2 suspect was only taking tools -- was taking them down into  
3 Houston to the flea market on Airline, and selling them there.  
4 So we weren't really able to recover anything from there other  
5 than the -- the traffic stop we made. He had just committed a  
6 couple of BMVs and we had the tools there. We were able to  
7 return those to the victims.

8 Several similar events where Flock located stolen  
9 vehicle and patrol was able to respond and recover vehicles. A  
10 trailer was stolen Montgomery County the trailer was seen by  
11 several Flock cameras and allowed investigators to identify the  
12 vehicle pulling the trailer. Flock allowed investigators to  
13 track the trailer to the Dallas area where it was recovered.

14 We also have a policy that is similar to Harris  
15 county and HPD's policy. Everyone that works in Flock or makes  
16 an inquiry and Flock has to use their own -- their own  
17 dedicated account name and they have to put in the case number  
18 or the call slip number and also what type of investigation  
19 that they're working on. There are any questions?

20 MEMBER CARSON: Member Carson, and I meant to ask  
21 this of Lieutenant Harting and Lieutenant Gonzalez, also, of  
22 all the technology tools available to law enforcement, where  
23 would you rank this LPR and Flock? At the top or?

24 LIEUTENANT SANCHEZ: I would probably rank it right  
25 beneath DNA.

1 MEMBER CARSON: Okay.

2 LIEUTENANT SANCHEZ: It is -- it is an amazing  
3 technology. We are on our next grant request we're going to  
4 add -- ask for some money to get the -- the a I forget what  
5 Flock calls it exactly, but it's the ability to see the convoy  
6 package that they have. Which I've seen other agencies use,  
7 and it's an amazing tool. And we plan on adding that to our  
8 Flock package. But Flock and all the LPRs are -- are really an  
9 amazing tool. We've just moved to -- the department's just  
10 moved to Axon, and having the LPRs in every single patrol  
11 vehicle now has really upped the game for locating things  
12 and -- and being able to identify suspects..

13 MEMBER CARSON: In terms of, force multiplier, how  
14 many man hours do you save? How do you correlate that? I  
15 mean -- would you think it's a great man hour saver? Or force  
16 multiplier adds? I -- I don't think we're stressing that  
17 aspect of it enough. How much this technology really assists  
18 us and -- and reduces man hours on cases? Lieutenant Gonzalez  
19 is talking about cases that were solved in two hours. Without  
20 this technology, how long would it have taken -- I guess, is  
21 trying to, what I'm determine -- trying to determine here.

22 LIEUTENANT GONZALEZ: Well, the -- the technology  
23 gives us eyes and locations that we would normally have eyes.  
24 There are a lot of individual private surveillance cameras out  
25 there, but they're not always all dedicated in the direction,

1 that we need them to be. This really gives us the ability to  
2 look in different places. Along -- also with the fact that,  
3 like the one I talked about, where the, the trailer was tracked  
4 to Dallas, it allows an agency to look outside of its  
5 jurisdiction, outside of its boundaries, to see if the vehicle  
6 suspects they're looking for have traveled into other  
7 geographic areas.

8 Without this, we would have to just pound the  
9 pavement and try to talk to people and try to, drag  
10 surveillance video wherever we could. This is absolutely,  
11 saves a ton of man hours and allows us to expand our  
12 investigative area well beyond our geographic boundaries and  
13 well beyond areas that we wouldn't traditionally have gone to.  
14 We're not going to send somebody up to North Dakota to -- to go  
15 follow up a lead. But Flock can tell us, hey, somebody was  
16 there, this is where they were. We can contact those agencies  
17 and have them do it for us so it saves, a -- a ton of man  
18 hours, expedites a lot of investigations and broadens the --  
19 the areas in which we can work.

20 MEMBER CARSON: Yeah, I -- I wasn't trying to put you  
21 on the spot. I was just, I think that part needed to be  
22 introduced into the conversation and really stressed. It  
23 hadn't been talked about all -- too much as far as how much  
24 time it saves us as investigators,

25 LIEUTENANT GONZALEZ: Yes, sir.

1           MEMBER CARSON: How quickly we can get people's  
2 property returned to them, or how quickly we can get a human  
3 trafficking victim back so, thank you.

4           LIEUTENANT SANCHEZ: Well, and also, I think you just  
5 mentioned something, is that Flock is not just for auto theft  
6 or BMVs. It has an appeal across the board for everything that  
7 we do, everything that we investigate. It has a way to help  
8 those investigators and accelerate those investigations.

9           MEMBER NGUYEN: Yeah, Member Nguyen. I just want to  
10 add that Flock not only had the impact on investigation, but  
11 also on the inter-agency cooperation. Right after 9/11, one of  
12 the mandate is that we need to work better together because we  
13 have eighteen thousand different agencies with Flock. We have  
14 case from Tennessee and we got to hit in Houston and they  
15 called us right away, hey we got a hit can you help us? So  
16 it's -- it's instantaneous and cooperation incredible. Thank  
17 you.

18           CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Thank you, sir.

19           LIEUTENANT SANCHEZ: Thank you, ma'am.

20           DIRECTOR DIGGS: Madam Chair, I would now like to  
21 call up Howard Stinehour. He's a Task Force Commander for the  
22 Burnet County Sheriff's Office to talk about some of the things  
23 that the Heart of Texas Task Force has been doing with the --  
24 the SB224 funding.

25           COMMANDER STINEHOUR: Thank you for having me.  
Howard Stinehour.

1 Heart of Texas Auto Theft Task Force, Burnet County, we're  
2 multi-jurisdictional Task Force. I used to just tell everybody  
3 we're everything south of Dallas, north of Austin, east and  
4 west pretty far. So we cover a pretty big geographical area.

5 I want to thank everybody for allowing us to present  
6 this, some, it's really good information. It's revolutionized  
7 investigations, and I've been doing this since 1989. And let  
8 me tell you, it's just amazing, I'm learning how to use a  
9 computer.

10 So anyway, I wanted to start out with, the -- the  
11 gist of this was the Flock cameras. We also use the Motorola,  
12 the Vigilant with the grant money also that helped us out the  
13 same ways. We have policies in place for logging onto this.  
14 The good thing is, providers require you to put in a case  
15 number, they require you to put the reason, so that keeps  
16 everybody in check. So the policies are all written with what  
17 the provider gives us also, so it keeps everybody honest.

18 As you can see here, we invested in some trailers  
19 because we were putting out the -- the slower-speed pole  
20 cameras in some of our rural areas, and we were having some  
21 issues. So the crime moves around, so we try to move those  
22 quicker if some thing's going on. One quick example is with  
23 the recycling centers or we have these overnight vehicle thefts  
24 moving around, and they're doing these catalytic converters.  
25 And to try to build the case and see that they're actually,



1 Doing what they're being reported to us, it's hard for us to do  
2 surveillance on, so we put these cameras. The general public  
3 thinks it's a speed camera, just tells you what your speed is  
4 going down the road. The camera is actually on the backside of  
5 it, so as they pass, they're not even seeing the camera, which  
6 helps us out. So we build up our cases using that information.  
7 Of course, we all know cameras, pictures are good for a jury,  
8 good for a judge, attorneys, everybody likes to see pictures,  
9 so that helps us out a lot.

10 So let's go. I'll start out with this case. It's  
11 one of our biggest cases, it's still active. We had a -- a  
12 pretty big case where this vehicle was being used by a wanted  
13 person out of Tacoma, Washington. He befriended this guy who's  
14 on parole, had parole warrants and used his vehicle to steal  
15 trailers, travel trailers, RVs, equipment, skid steers from  
16 anywhere from south of Dallas, Freestone, Limestone County, all  
17 the way down to Georgetown, Williamson County, back across  
18 through Burnet, Marble Falls, Blanco, Kyle, Buda, all that down  
19 in there these people were using Chase cashier's checks with a  
20 printing machine. Going online, buying the -- you know,  
21 getting the price, creating the check, going to the  
22 establishments, these dealerships, buying the property.

23 This particular picture is a trailer sales in Marble  
24 Falls, Texas. The victim said, hey, I've got a video of the  
25 truck hauling the thing out of there, but we can't see the  
license plate.

1 So what we did was, using Flock, she said, hey, there's, I see  
2 some damage on the right side. So we just started going  
3 through all the pictures. We have the trailer that we have set  
4 up in the Kingsland Llano County area. We've seen that truck  
5 go through and said, there's the damage and we can see the  
6 orange stuff.

7 So that identified the truck, which was perfect. That  
8 set off the investigation, leading to identifying multiple  
9 wanted people doing this thing, that they would buy this  
10 equipment for the business -- ran the check in. Of course,  
11 they find out later, after they're gone with the items,  
12 that they're coming back as a forged check. So it led to  
13 identity theft, the fraudulent transfer of these vehicles,  
14 they were se -- selling the vehicles, the trailers. It was  
15 just a big operation that went all the way up to Idaho,  
16 Iowa and Washington. We've got the FBI involved in the  
17 wire fraud with these people, and we've got several of them  
18 in jail already now, so waiting to go further with this  
19 case.

20 This one here just occurred in December. We were  
21 notified by Hamilton County Sheriff's Office and the Texas  
22 Rangers. They were investigating a murder where a body was  
23 dumped and they had someone occupying a vehicle that the  
24 registered owner did not have. So they were saying, can you  
25 see where this vehicle's been? And can you find it?  
So, we basically put the plate into Flock and the

1 suspect, we actually have the suspect driving that vehicle that  
2 did not belong to him. He was a suspect who murdered the  
3 person and dumped him on the side of the road. So we found  
4 him, got cinched the case for the District Attorney's Office,  
5 and they were grateful that this really kind of put the case  
6 together for them. So they were, well, thankful for using --  
7 we used Flock, it was in our coverage area. We helped this  
8 case out, so it's really good plus.

9           This case is very large and thanks to Dallasâ€"Fort  
10 Worth area auto theft units. We had a large case involved a  
11 group in the Central Texas Waco area that were stealing  
12 vehicles from the Dallasâ€"Fort Worth area, bringing them down,  
13 VIN-swapping them. We got a tip of a chop shop in Waco --  
14 downtown Waco area. Started doing surveillance on it, started  
15 catching vehicles coming out of there.

16           We made contact with one suspect, which he was able  
17 to get a message out. It broad casted all across the Dallasâ€"  
18 Fort Worth area. Our suspect from Waco in the green Ram pickup  
19 with the personalized plates took off to Dallas that night. We  
20 got them on camera going north into Dallas. He reported the  
21 truck stolen to Dallas PD, took the vehicle, got the wrap off  
22 of it. So we started doing all the history on that stolen  
23 truck, that license plate prior to him reporting it stolen.  
24 And then we have it after the date of still the report is  
25 stolen, where he pulled the wrap off and the way we were able,

1 To do it, not just the license plate, because they change those  
2 plates up, but on the far top left, above that back window. We  
3 were thinking, did he put those plates on another vehicle? But  
4 we could see the green wrap still on the top. They were such a  
5 hurry to get it off, they left some of that green wrap up  
6 there, which was perfect for the prosecutors that were like,  
7 okay, so we still have the same vehicle. We're just -- they  
8 keep this guy changing their identity. That led to over 12  
9 vehicles, still more after that, 12 arrests. That's still an  
10 active phase two.

11 We found some vehicles in a backyard or stolen and  
12 stolen again -- after stolen, they put trackers in them, and  
13 they would steal them after they put the tracker in them. One  
14 of them actually had a steering wheel lock on it. And the  
15 Hyundai handouts. The lady had gotten it from the handouts,  
16 and she said, I put it on my vehicle because my husband got me  
17 this vehicle, and I don't want it to get stolen. I said But  
18 it's a stolen car.

19 So she -- she couldn't believe that it was that she  
20 was making the effort to secure her vehicle to keep from  
21 getting stolen, which was a stolen vehicle, kind of funny deal,  
22 but.

23 Another one, a pretty big theft case where they were  
24 stealing vehicles in the Austin area, bringing them out into  
25 the Hill Country area,

1 using them burglaries, residential communities. We made -- we  
2 identified several vehicles, one being abandoned in a store  
3 parking lot -- Lake LBJ area. Went and got the video from that  
4 store, which led us to this vehicle was parked next to the  
5 stolen vehicle, which was abandoned. We pulled the video, got  
6 the license plate, put that plate in Flock, started, put a  
7 watch on a BOLD on it. And saw the vehicle coming through on  
8 one Flock camera in Marble Falls, and then we looked again.

9           So we started looking for just the same vehicle, same  
10 time. That same vehicle came back out off of dead end road.  
11 It had a different plate on the front, so they were trying to  
12 disguise it, change the plates out. But we were able to make  
13 it the moment we were notified by our analyst, hey, the vehicle  
14 was just spotted. We were in the area, made right to the  
15 house. There was still somebody getting out of the vehicle, so  
16 it helped cinch that case for us. That was a win, win for us  
17 with Flock.

18           I can go into -- we've already -- someone beat me to  
19 the punch, but I was excited to bring some license plates.  
20 When we do these vehicle verifications. 100% now of these GMC  
21 trucks, these Chevy trucks that are coming in here, the  
22 Camaros, the Stellantis vehicles are all showing up for vehicle  
23 verifications from Facebook Marketplace.

24           So they'll bring them in, they'll roll up and we see  
25 it. As soon as they roll up, they're in line.

1 You guys can see these after the deal if you want to pass them  
2 around. But there --there's kind of comical the way they did  
3 some of them. They actually put the wraps on them. The person  
4 that's buying the vehicle has no idea. When they roll up of  
5 course, they're innocent buyers. So we keep that in mind, but  
6 we immediately get them out, get statements from them, what's  
7 going on.

8 We take the plates off and we fingerprint the  
9 plates, because that plate was put on there by the suspect. So  
10 we put in Flock and Vigilant. We do research on the plate  
11 that's stolen that's being displayed because we can see where  
12 it came from. So they say, hey, we bought it in Katy, Texas,  
13 at the Lowe's parking lot at this day in this time. So we just  
14 do Flock. We can backtrack this -- this plate was displayed  
15 when we take it off. The stolen plate, was just put the wrap  
16 on it and put the cover to the stolen one. So, we started  
17 researching both of them. And we had a trail where the  
18 suspects were coming from. So with the help of Houston, we  
19 were able to fix that one up. But there's just an array of  
20 these things. These plates are on vehicles.

21 We had highway patrol in Lampasas County stop a  
22 vehicle who had catalytic converters in his trunk called and  
23 said, hey, can -- can you do some research on this car? So we  
24 did some research on it, found it. We could track it to a  
25 recycling center in Marble Falls, so -- which,

1 It goes to show the length that these suspects are going  
2 through just to disguise, they know if they're going to  
3 somewhere, they're -- you know, we're going to catch them. So,  
4 they're -- they're going through these means. It's just to  
5 change up and find themselves, they're all aware.

6           You know, we push the to the public a lot about  
7 it's not Big Brother watching you. It's us trying to help  
8 you as a victim or people missing -- people we find. When  
9 we have this information, this technology. We don't know  
10 who that car is, those thousands of reads. We have no idea  
11 who that car belongs to. We're not tracking you, we're not  
12 looking for you. All we know is there's this car, this  
13 description, involved in a crime. And we're going to help  
14 find it. We're going to help resolve the case. So we try  
15 to push that because when we first put our cameras out, we  
16 would get a few people calling in the county commissioners  
17 and stuff saying, hey, why are we watching this particular  
18 road? Was there something going on? No, we're just trying  
19 to help keep you safe because we have a lot of burglaries  
20 in this area. So just communicating with the public,  
21 keeping them aware of why we're doing it and what we're  
22 offering for them. So it's -- it's a -- it's a win, win  
23 all the way around. And I think it's a -- it's a plus, so  
24 I appreciate it. That's all I got, if you have any  
25 questions.

1           DIRECTOR DIGGS: Thank you for being here today,  
2 Howard. I thank you guys in the Burnet County Sheriff's Office  
3 and your other partners -- law enforcement partners up there  
4 doing a phenomenal job to keep that part of Texas safe, so  
5 thank you.

6           COMMANDER STINEHOUR: Thank you.

7           CHAIR MAJOR JONES: I was going to mention that. But  
8 also, echo something that you say and you always say, everyone  
9 comes to you and they don't want to stand in line elsewhere.  
10 Everyone knows the little secret is to head to you. So great -  
11 - now -- job taking care of those within your community and  
12 then those who extend beyond your community.

13           COMMANDER STINEHOUR: Yeah, the 99 percent of these  
14 come from, of course, the bigger cities, Dallas--Fort Worth,  
15 Houston area.

16           CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Houston right?

17           COMMANDER STINEHOUR: And we do this, what they call  
18 the 68A process. It's a title verification -- vehicle  
19 verification for the Department of Motor Vehicles to help get  
20 these vehicles titled. And that's where the stolons come in.  
21 So these innocent buyers will bring them to us, and we just  
22 help do it. It doesn't matter where you are in the state. We  
23 know the process needs to be done, so we just -- we offer that  
24 for.

25           CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Can you explain the process of  
Facebook Market.



1 I go out there, I purchase a car that is technically probably  
2 about -- maybe worth 70,000. I purchase it for cash, 5,000,  
3 and then I go to get it inspected. And you take my plate  
4 because technically, it's not my car. So can you explain the -  
5 - the, the process of season and then ultimately, what happens  
6 to me, my 5,000 in the vehicle and where it is the vehicle end  
7 up?

8 COMMANDER STINEHOUR: Sure, and thank you.

9 So basically, people are buying vehicles on social  
10 media because they don't have the -- the credit or they use  
11 cash only. So these suspects, they prey on these folks that  
12 don't have bank accounts or can't afford these high end  
13 vehicles. And they'll sell it on Facebook Marketplace,  
14 for 20, - \$30,000 less than the value. They go -- they always  
15 meet in a business parking lot. Which is good for us because  
16 we get the surveillance video and we get photos. They give  
17 them the truck with this on there, they give them fake Texas  
18 titles, which they wash instantly, they go to the TAG office,  
19 they go to register, they put it in. It doesn't match any of  
20 the documentation that they have supporting it, so they send  
21 them to these task forces around the state to get the vehicle  
22 verified. Which is called again that 68A form, the VTR form.

23 We look at the vehicle, we break it down -- we do --  
24 the hidden VIN numbers, we run those through Carfax and VITAS  
25 ResNet, we use is OTCIC NCIC, of course.

1 And then if we need to dig deeper, if we get any red flags,  
2 that's when we. Kind of move the vehicle out of view and start  
3 looking at hidden identifiers just to try to positively  
4 identify, because they do switch out everything from the  
5 mylars, the tire pressure labels, the VIN tags on the dash,  
6 they change all this out and it looks authentic. It looks real  
7 to me, to even the street officers.

8           You have to really look close to see the fonts and  
9 things, and just over time, you learn them. But the street  
10 officer don't know that when they're making a traffic stuff --  
11 so it puts them their safety at risk because they don't even  
12 know what they're dealing with or who they're dealing with.

13           So and so -- once we get this ident(sic) -- removed -  
14 - identify the true vehicle. We take a statement from the  
15 person, we get any video, pictures, the Facebook account that  
16 they got it from or wherever -- whatever media site they went  
17 to. We have them report the theft of the -- the money because  
18 they were deprived of the value of that vehicle, wherever that  
19 purchase occurred at. So we recommend that they contact the  
20 agency where they bought the vehicle --in a random parking lot.  
21 If they have pictures of the person, sometimes they do, but  
22 majority of time they don't provide that picture.

23           We take that picture, put it in facial recognition  
24 software. If they have it, which helps identify some folks,  
25 but the most of them.

1 We don't get any returns on it, but we -- we try anyway,  
2 and then we reach out to the insurance companies. Because  
3 that's the owner of the vehicle at that point. Sometimes these  
4 are stolen within days and brought in for 68A. So it's not  
5 even the -- the owner of the vehicle hasn't even been paid out  
6 by insurance. So, it goes back to the owner who he has to re  
7 identify the vehicle back to where it was, but the -- the, the  
8 others are the insurance companies get notified.

9 Hey, we have your vehicle. It needs to be re-  
10 identified basically and starts that process. Which of course,  
11 it cost our insurance, because this -- this is a on --  
12 vicious cycle.

13 One of my goals really is I -- we mentioned it a  
14 couple years ago. We were trying to get Meta Facebook. To  
15 change the way they put these vehicles, allow the public to put  
16 these vehicles for sale on Facebook or Marketplace. We --  
17 we've sent letters, we've asked attorneys to -- is there any  
18 way -- and I tell them straight up, we do not have this problem  
19 on eBay.

20 EBay we have -- I have not one stolen vehicle in all  
21 the years I've been doing this through eBay, because those  
22 people are vetted, they have accounts, they have -- but  
23 Facebook, Meta doesn't want to do that because it's taking away  
24 from the -- their social deal that they got going.

25 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: After the awarding of the,

1 Stolen vehicle to the true owner, what happens to me, my \$5,000  
2 dollars? Am I leaving with the car? Do I get my money back?  
3 I -- I start walking, right?

4           COMMANDER STINEHOUR: We -- we try to do it  
5 quarterly, but yes, we do ask them to see if they can  
6 phone a ride. Because the owner says, I want my car back,  
7 it's been stolen. So what we do is, a lot of these cases,  
8 we'll hold what is called a Chapter 47 hearing with the  
9 judge.

10 Which both parties, the person who actually owned it,  
11 or the insurance company, or the person who bought it with  
12 good intention can speak their case in front of a judge.  
13 And then the judge usually awards to the insurance company  
14 because they see it -- that the \$40,000 dollar cash, that  
15 their life investment is gone. We've had some instances,  
16 Progressive Insurance is probably one of them, that pay  
17 these people out. If they report their car -- they got  
18 insurance on it the day they got it, so they send that to  
19 their insurance company. It's on their phone, I've got  
20 insurance on this truck -- it's my truck. So the insurance  
21 company will actually pay that victim for theft -- us  
22 taking their vehicle because it was a stolen vehicle and  
23 they didn't know it was stolen.

24           So if -- if they have proof that they got a title,  
25 they went to the tax office, did the right thing,

1 sometimes they'll pay out. Which, of course, it --it hurts  
2 because you've got two people getting paid out for the same  
3 actual piece of equipment there.

4 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Absolutely. Thank you for the  
5 details.

6 COMMANDER STINEHOUR: Okay.

7 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Any questions? Thank you, sir.

8 DIRECTOR DIGGS: Now I like to call up Janette Tobar,  
9 the Task Force Commander for Laredo Police Department.

10 LIEUTENANT TOBAR: Good morning, everyone. Madam  
11 Chair, Director Diggs, SB224 committee members, thank you for  
12 allowing me to present today. So, I will be presenting on our  
13 Flock safety success stories. Before I go into that, for those  
14 of you that are not familiar with Laredo, we are located in  
15 South Texas. We are a border town, and we sit just at that  
16 tail end of IH-35. We do have over 261,000 community members,  
17 and we currently have four ports of entry. We are the number  
18 one port in the nation, and up here, I've also added our  
19 numbers regarding our Laredo International Bridge crossings,  
20 and this is for FY25. And so you can see here the influx of  
21 commercial motor vehicles, non-commercial motor vehicles,  
22 pedestrian crossings that we see not only on a daily basis, but  
23 in this case, on a yearly basis.

24 Moving over to our Laredo Flock coverage. So this is  
25 a map of our city, and you can see how we have that coverage,

1 Pretty much spread out throughout our city. Of course, we did  
2 concentrate on a lot --in a lot of our hot-spot and problem  
3 areas. I wanted to ensure we had plenty of coverage and Flock  
4 hardware in those particular areas.

5 So moving over to our Flock success outcomes. So, we  
6 started with the -- I'm so sorry -- I apologize. So, I forgot  
7 to introduce myself. Mr. Diggs asked for that. So, I am  
8 Lieutenant Jeanette Tobar. I am assigned to the Laredo Auto  
9 Theft Task Force, I am the commander for the record, I  
10 apologize for that mishap.

11 Anyway, so going back to our Flock success outcomes.  
12 So, I initiated -- or we initiated, the Flock installation back  
13 in October of 2024, and so this data reflects October 2024  
14 through December 2025. And so, this data is heavily reliant on  
15 our personnel, making sure that they add each success story in  
16 the system -- in the software. They need to physically add  
17 each case. If it was a Flock outcome success story, they need  
18 to make sure to add it on there. And so for anyone that has  
19 worked with the Flock installation, you know that you -- we did  
20 have a lot of permitting issues, a lot of delays in  
21 installation. You know -- I had even delays with the  
22 electrical connectivity in some of our corridors. And so,  
23 nevertheless -- so that -- you know, the -- the installation  
24 roll out -- you know, was slowly -- said -- it just -- it just  
25 took a while. But anyway, we were finally able to have that

1 complete installation.

2           So as of October 2024, we have had a total of 172 of  
3 our cases that were cleared by -- through arrest with this  
4 software. And this includes our Patrol Division and our CID.  
5 And so, we were also able to record 28 stolen vehicles  
6 recovered through our Flock -- software. Also need to make  
7 sure to get -- okay. We continue with -- so we continue with  
8 the arrests by Patrol as a result of our Flock Falcons LPR.

9           So this again is a map of our city, and you can see  
10 where we have that high conse -- concentration on hot-spot  
11 areas. So, the -- our Flock hardware actually consists of 113  
12 condor surveillance cameras. We do have 79 Falcons which  
13 are -- are LPRs. We have 40 community cameras which were  
14 pretty much set up at a lot of our businesses where we have a  
15 lot of our hot-spot activity. And we also have seven total  
16 Raven locations, and these are our shot spotters. These are  
17 covering seven of our high schools, some of our middle schools,  
18 and elementary schools. And lastly, we were able to obtain six  
19 solar video trailers and these are our mobile trailers that we  
20 utilize to capture everything we need, for example IH-35 where  
21 we have an influx of stolen vehicles coming into town. And  
22 then we have a lot of our stolens(sic), leaving northbound --  
23 you know with -- with smuggling cases and the like. So just a  
24 little bit of -- of what we actually have installed.

25           So our Flock -- first Flock success story is this  
particular suspect vehicle.

1     This was a Ford F-150 that was involved in a stolen trailer  
2     case. And so, of course, our detectives were immediately able  
3     to start working this particular case. In this incident, we  
4     actually were able to utilize the Flock Freeform software, and  
5     so this software gives us a more in depth -- in depth search.  
6     And so we are able to search for any unique characteristics or  
7     features that a particular vehicle may have. And so in this  
8     case, it was a spare tire and some gold trim over the tire  
9     well. And so once we enter those features into the Freeform  
10    software search, we are able to get a suspect vehicle and zone  
11    in on a suspect vehicle, and we're able to have that refined  
12    search. So we were able to successfully locate the suspect  
13    vehicle and a suspect, and we were able to make that arrest on  
14    that theft stage of felony, and we were able to recover the  
15    trailer in this case.

16           Moving over to our Flock success story number two.  
17    So this incident actually happened last year in April, and as I  
18    mentioned before, we did have a little bit of a delay with our  
19    roll out -- roll out on our installation. And, this was  
20    actually a Flock Community Partnership camera of success story.  
21    So as I mentioned before, these cameras were installed in a lot  
22    of our hot-spot areas regarding our businesses. And so this  
23    particular business did not have any exterior cameras. And so  
24    this, camera our -- our Flock community camera, was actually  
25    installed just two weeks prior to this incident taking place.



1           And so in this case, we received a report of an  
2 aggravated robbery at one of our convenience stores. And, of  
3 course, the incident was captured by our community partnership  
4 camera. So, two suspects arrive and demand our victim's  
5 vehicle at gunpoint. Of course, our victim relinquishes the  
6 vehicle, gives them the keys, and the suspects are able to take  
7 off in our victims vehicle and this other suspect vehicle that  
8 was described as a Dodge Dart. And so of course, our -- our  
9 patrol officers and investigators that are being dispatched to  
10 the scene, they right away input the suspects vehicle and the  
11 victim's vehicle into our Flock search. And within a couple of  
12 hours, we are able -- our patrol officers are able to locate  
13 the suspect vehicle. So they can they conduct -- conduct a  
14 felony stop. They're able to stop the vehicle and they're able  
15 to detain these three suspects you see here on the -- on the  
16 images. And they are detained, they are later charged with  
17 that aggravated robbery, amongst other charges.

18           So this other female you see here on the top left  
19 or -- on the mid left. She was actually identified as a  
20 suspect in one of our auto theft rings, and so again, just --  
21 you know, the brazen acts of -- of these suspects and the  
22 violence that they're inflicting on our community -- you know,  
23 it's just very brazen.

24           Moving over to Flock success story number three. So  
25 this one just happened last month where we received a Flock,

1 alert on one of our LPRs notifying us of a stolen 2021 Chevy  
2 Equinox that was reported out of San Antonio. So, this was  
3 captured by our Falcon camera, located in our downtown area,  
4 and so our RTCC analysts immediately began monitoring our  
5 cameras for activity.

6 And so our suspect -- let me see if it starts there -  
7 - I don't know if the vehicle -- video was playing. So our  
8 suspect, ends up parking that stolen vehicle near one of our  
9 solar mobile trailers. And again, so our analysts are able to  
10 observe. Our suspect walking away from that stolen vehicle.  
11 And he exits and he starts walking away, and so by this time,  
12 they're able to relay that information to our responding patrol  
13 officers. So our officers arrive on scene -- you know, based  
14 on that direction of travel, he's able to zone in right away on  
15 that suspect. And so he calls them over, they're conversing  
16 for a little bit before he's detained.

17 And so this suspect is later identified as Juan Axcel  
18 Ramirez. And so our auto theft division is immediately  
19 contacted and we start heading over, to go ahead and  
20 conduct an interview with Ramirez. So again, this was a  
21 LPR success story.

22 So two weeks prior to Axcel Ramirez's detention are  
23 auto theft investigators had been investigating several stolen  
24 vehicle crossings. And had compiled a set of images for a male  
25 sus -- suspect pictured below, along with these stolen  
vehicles.

1     However, our detectives were not familiar with the suspect.  
2     And they were talking among themselves, you know, sharing  
3     notes, comparing notes. And they end up cementing that maybe  
4     this suspect is from out of town.

5             And so once our detectives arrive with Ramirez, he  
6     ends up actually confessing to crossing several of these stolen  
7     vehicles. So it was these three vehicles pictured, plus two  
8     additional Chevy pickup trucks. And these pictures that you  
9     see here, that would include a 2020 Cadillac XTX, a 2020 Kia  
10    Sportage, and a 2021 Chevy Silverado. So Ramirez is charged  
11    with theft of motor vehicle, unauthorized use of motor vehicle,  
12    tampering with evidence. His cell phone was seized by our task  
13    force, and he is later served with two additional warrants, and  
14    he is currently pending a third.

15    And our -- on that case, I just wanted. How do I go back?  
16    Sorry. No. Sorry about that. So.

17             ZACH WARDEN: I got you, I'll go back.

18             LIEUTENANT TOBAR: So, with -- with Axel Ramirez, I  
19    just wanted to showcase again this was a simple LPR. What  
20    we -- you know, think is a simple LPR alert, which led to us  
21    being able to solve several -- several auto thefts cases.

22             So moving over to Flock, success story number four.  
23    So this is actually our Flock Raven success story. So this  
24    actually just occurred last week where our Flock Raven  
25    alerted -- alerted us to shots fired at 1:18 in the morning.

1 Again, this was automatic, and the alerts were recorded by over  
2 20 of our gunshot detection devices, which are located in South  
3 Laredo. So, right after our LPD dispatch receives a call of  
4 shots fired. So, the way the Raven works is that it'll alert  
5 you, and the coordinates will give you that alert within 90 ft  
6 of where the alert occurred.

7 And so, based off of that information, that is  
8 related to our patrol officers -- our patrol officers were able  
9 to arrive fairly quickly. And to the actual location, and they  
10 were able to locate two male suspects running from the scene.  
11 They located several spent shell casings and a 9 mm handgun  
12 with an extended magazine, which you see pictured here on the  
13 images. So, two adult suspects are arrested and detained, one  
14 was identified as a Noel Raya, and the other one was Julian  
15 Guzman. And so they're each charged with a bevy of -- of  
16 criminal charges. Guzman is actually charged with that  
17 discharging of a firearm and unlawful carrying. And so, I've  
18 also added an audio of the actual alerts that I've recorded  
19 from this particular case, so you can just take a listen.

20 ZACH WARDEN: I'll go ahead and do it.

21 LIEUTENANT TOBAR: So, just depending on where that  
22 audio came from, you will have -- you know, the difference  
23 of -- of what it sounds like, just depending on how far, far,  
24 or how close it is, the day, the time of day.

25 That also has a lot to do with the clarity of the  
audio itself.

1 So, moving over to Flock success story number five. So in this  
2 particular instance, this suspect, Rafael Cortez, actually  
3 became known to our auto theft he -- he came onto our radar  
4 sometime last year, early last year, when he was involved in a  
5 stolen vehicle case. He actually ended up crossing a stolen  
6 vehicle at that time, our auto theft was not familiar with him.  
7 We just had some images, and we were currently working on  
8 identifying this particular suspect. With some legwork, we  
9 are -- we were able to identify him, and we ended up arresting  
10 him for that -- for crossing that stolen vehicle.

11 Cortez is then linked to another one of our auto  
12 theft cases, with this stolen Camaro on the left. He ends up  
13 stealing this Camaro from one of our shopping centers, and by  
14 this time, he's already familiar to our task force. And so,  
15 again, we're able to then secure an arrest warrant, and we're  
16 able to arrest him for that theft of that motor vehicle.

17 So, and then this particular case, Cortez is now  
18 involved in an aggravated robbery at one of our motels, and so,  
19 luckily, the victim in this case, is -- he was friends with  
20 Cortez, when Cortez ends up pulling out a handgun, striking him  
21 over the head, causing a deep laceration, and Cortez ends up  
22 stealing all of his property. And so the victim is able to  
23 call, you know, LPD dispatch, and we're able to respond to the  
24 scene quickly. Since he was familiar with

25 Cortez, he was able to give us a description,

1 a full name, and he actually had the license plates of the  
2 suspect's vehicle, which is this black Dodge Ram. And so, of  
3 course, we place out a BOLO, we input the information into  
4 Flock, and within two hours, we are able to locate that suspect  
5 vehicle. And so, our patrol officers respond and our TAG  
6 investigators were able to quickly locate that suspect vehicle,  
7 and they engage in a vehicle pursuit with Cortez. Cortez is  
8 later detained and he is charged with that aggravated robbery  
9 and tampering with evidence, among the slew of other charges.

10 And so the reason I wanted to highlight Cortez was  
11 that he was just recently arrested on yet another case. And  
12 this one's involving an aggravated kidnapping, which is still  
13 under investigation, but it's now turned into a murder case.  
14 And so I just wanted to highlight -- you know -- just the level  
15 of violence again that these certain suspects are involved with  
16 and that, you know, they inflict upon our community.

17 So this is my last success story, I'm sorry. I don't  
18 want to -- I try not to keep you so long. So this one just  
19 occurred this past year. So our CBP officers detained a newer  
20 -- this is our Customs and Border Protection officers at Bridge  
21 Two. They detained a newer model, red in color, Chevy pickup  
22 truck, which was actually referred over to secondary  
23 inspection. With this truck, there was a second suspicious  
24 vehicle that was described as a white GMC Sierra pickup truck.  
25 And so, the driver of the red truck was detained and --

1 and stopped for CBP officers. However, that GMC pickup truck  
2 rammed into another vehicle to get past the toll booths as it  
3 fled into Mexico.

4           So, as I mentioned, the driver of the red truck was  
5 detained. He was identified as one Christian Cardenas out of  
6 Houston, Texas. So our auto theft was notified, we immediately  
7 responded to the scene. And during the course of the  
8 investigation, it was determined that another vehicle, a gold  
9 Buick Enclave, was the scout vehicle for these two stolen  
10 vehicles. And two additional males in that Enclave were also  
11 detained. A third vehicle, which was described as a gray Chevy  
12 Traverse, also crossed into Mexico. And then we later learned  
13 that it actually ended up crossing right behind that GMC  
14 Sierra.

15           And so again, this was one -- this was a success  
16 story from our Falcons and our Condor mobile traders. So while  
17 we're searching the Flock LPR database, we later learned that  
18 all four aforementioned vehicles were actually driving in  
19 tandem, which was also confirmed by our Flock solar trailer  
20 located near Bridge Two.

21           So our CBP officers are able to relate to our auto  
22 theft that the driver of the stolen red Chevy truck, which was  
23 Cardenas, actually had evidence on his phone of all of these  
24 stolen vehicles. And so CBP was able to seize his cell  
25 phone -- the cell phone of the arrestee,

1 and those two other suspects that were in the Enclave, who were  
2 all identified to reside out of Houston, Texas. The three  
3 vehicles that were reported stolen out of, reported stolen out  
4 of San Antonio and out of Fort Bend County.

5 And so, based on all of this information, our intel  
6 analyst was able to compile an intelligence report which was  
7 shared with San Antonio, Houston, Cibolo PD and Harris County  
8 PD.

9 So this concludes the success stories. I did want to  
10 mention, I'm sorry I failed to mention earlier, we also have  
11 policy in place when we started with the Flock roll out. We  
12 actually wanted to ensure that we had these policies in play to  
13 make sure that we included now, our Flock software. And so,  
14 again, this was just going to help us avoid for any of our  
15 personnel that has access to Flock to avoid misusing the  
16 database. And of course, just like the other agencies, we do  
17 also require for our personnel to add a case number and a  
18 search reason before they are able to utilize that search --  
19 that search database.

20 So, I just wanted to share really quick video with  
21 you all regarding our year in review for last year. And again,  
22 every time we make it out to any of these events, you know,  
23 we're able to share, you know, those education efforts with the  
24 public -- you know, ensuring that if they have any questions,  
25 they, they can approach us at these events,



1 and we are glad to ensure and -- you know, help them with  
2 anything they may need.

3 (Video audio)

4 "And With that, the 2025 season comes to an end.  
5 Good night thank you."

6 And again, that concludes my presentation. If  
7 anybody has any questions, please feel free. Our information  
8 is listed up here for myself and two of my sergeants. If y'all  
9 ever have any questions, you need any assistance, please don't  
10 hesitate to reach out.

11 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Thank you, Lieutenant.

12 LIEUTENANT TOBAR: Thank you.

13 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Any questions for Lieutenant?  
14 Perfect. This is all the -- the last presentation, correct?  
15 You all did an amazing job. Great presentation, and I look  
16 forward to seeing what 2026 brings.

17 LIEUTENANT TOBAR: Absolutely.

18 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Thank you, ma'am.

19 LIEUTENANT TOBAR: Thank you.

20 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: We will now move on to a briefing  
21 by Josh Martin from Texas -- Texas DPS Regulatory Service  
22 Division.

23 MEMBER MARTIN: Good morning. Josh Martin,  
24 Compliance Enforcement Specialist, Regulatory Services  
25 Division, DPS for the record.

.

1 So as far as the Compliance and Enforcement Service goes, the  
2 regulation of catalytic converter purchases by metal recycling  
3 entities continues to stay on the forefront for our field  
4 personnel. Our team's actions continue to include educating  
5 the businesses on the rules and laws, ensuring they're  
6 operating in compliance, and taking the appropriate enforcement  
7 actions when they are not. So our division has been busy with  
8 a focus on updating resources to assist MREs in identifying  
9 stolen metal and providing guidance reiterating the rules and  
10 laws.

11 So new for 2026, the department's quick reference  
12 guide for metal recycling entities it has been updated and the  
13 new version has been published and is live on our website. So,  
14 in relation to Senate Bill 224 and catalytic converters, we've  
15 added information regarding the catalytic converter declaration  
16 requirement, which is informing the MREs they must declare with  
17 the department if their business activity involves catalytic  
18 converters removed from motor vehicles and to what extent.

19 Also, we've added details from the Occupations Code  
20 1956.0321, providing clear guidance on the required steps prior  
21 to purchasing a catalytic converter from an individual seller.  
22 This information includes obtaining the year, make, model and  
23 VIN for the vehicle from which the catalytic converter was  
24 removed. Obtaining a copy of the title or other ownership  
25 documentation for that vehicle.

1           Determining if the catalytic converter is consistent  
2 with the manufacturer's specifications of that vehicle, marking  
3 each catalytic converter purchased with a unique number that  
4 identifies the entity, the date and the individual transaction,  
5 and then keeping this information as part of the required  
6 record.

7           We've also added to the reference guide details from  
8 the Occupations Code 1956.123, which provides clear guidance  
9 when purchasing catalytic converters from other business  
10 entities. This information includes maintaining an accurate  
11 record for each of these catalytic converter transactions. The  
12 record must contain a description of the volume of catalytic  
13 converters purchased, the business name from whom the catalytic  
14 converters were purchased from, and the date of the  
15 transaction.

16           Lastly, we've added some reference images of  
17 catalytic converters removed from vehicles, and we list the  
18 corresponding violations when an MRE is found not in compliance  
19 with a rule or law. The updated Quick Reference Guide for  
20 Metal Recycling Entities is available to the public and can be  
21 found at [dps.texas.gov](http://dps.texas.gov) under the Texas Metals Program Laws and  
22 Regulations page.

23           So also, with education and training in mind, we're  
24 currently updating the online training required for metal  
25 recycling entities. These updates add deeper training,

1           on catalytic converter record requirements and add  
2 additional quiz questions on the subject matter.  
3 Implementation for this is scheduled for the end of the month.  
4 And as you may know, we have 16 personnel filling the grant  
5 funded positions dedicated to the Texas Metals Program. There  
6 are 14 program investigators and two case support specialists  
7 stationed throughout the state. These personnel completed an  
8 average of two routine inspections at each metal recycling  
9 entity for the last calendar year. The number of licensed MREs  
10 in the state has remained consistent.

11           There are around 625 active metal recycling entities  
12 currently licensed. DPS is responsible for the eligibility and  
13 the issuance of these licenses, and all MREs are required to be  
14 registered with the state. So we continue to investigate all  
15 complaints, tips from the public and leads generated from data  
16 which involve potential stolen metal purchased by metal  
17 recycling entities. Our investigators work closely with our  
18 troopers and our agents, providing them necessary assistance  
19 and information when targeting different operations.

20           On the commission side of things, to provide some  
21 background, in 2023, there were no arrests or investigations by  
22 RSD involving metals that were done that year. This was due to  
23 a high focus on vehicle inspection that year, as well as a lack  
24 of personnel. Then moving forward into 2024, there were three  
25 undercover operations that led to one arrest in San Antonio.

1 Then in 2025, we obtained some assistance from the Highway  
2 Patrol to loan our division some officers. With those  
3 officers, there were operations at nine metal recycling  
4 entities that led to three arrests. The individual in this  
5 slide photo unlawfully purchased six catalytic converters  
6 without requiring any paperwork or identification at the time  
7 of purchase.

8 Also in June of last year, RSD conducted an  
9 undercover operation to sell catalytic converters. This  
10 operation was planned due to information provided by one of our  
11 own program investigators. The investigator indicated this  
12 location was buying catalytic converters from the public  
13 without being a licensed MRE. The investigator obtained this  
14 information by simply asking a local licensed MRE if they had  
15 any information about people in the area who might be  
16 conducting illegal business. Our trooper was able to sell the  
17 owner four catalytic converters. The owner told him they  
18 couldn't pay him as much since he didn't have the appropriate  
19 paper work. An arrest warrant was obtained and the owner was  
20 arrested. So, this is an example of good investigative work  
21 done by an employee who's salary is funded by the SB224 grant.

22 And currently in 2026, we already have information on  
23 no less than eight metal recycling entities who we have  
24 received complaints that they may be engaged in illegal  
25 activity.

1           So, our increase in personnel has increased their  
2       presence which has increased our enforcement. Ideas on how to  
3       coordinate with the Texas Metals Program, information sharing  
4       and collaborations opportunities are always welcome, and can be  
5       directed to dpsmetals@dpstexas.gov. And that concludes the DPS  
6       Regulatory Services update, and I am happy to answer any  
7       questions.

8           CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Any questions? Thank you sir.

9           MEMBER MARTIN: Thank you.

10          CHAIR MAJOR JONES: We will now move on to agenda  
11       item number nine. And that pertains to the next 224 meeting  
12       that, meeting will take place July 24th which is a Friday.  
13       Friday morning at the end of annual conference, which is in  
14       Fort Worth again, it starts on the 19th. So July 24th,  
15       especially for you Todd, cause I know you have to come in from  
16       out of state, the 24th the morning of the 24th. And for those  
17       who will be attending the annual banquet is the Thursday prior  
18       to that so plan accordingly, thank you. We will not address  
19       agenda item 10 or 11 because, we do not have closed session.  
20       Cassandra, any public comment for -- for number 12?

21          CASSANDRA FLINT: Madam Chair, there are no questions  
22       or comments, thank you.

23          CHAIR MAJOR JONES: We do not have any public  
24       comments so would move to agenda number 13 which is  
25       adjournment. Do I have a motion to adjourn the meeting?

1 MEMBER PORRAS: Member Porras for the record. I make  
2 a motion to adjourn.

3 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: And a second?

4 MEMBER FOREMAN: Member Todd Foreman. I'll second  
5 that motion.

6 CHAIR MAJOR JONES: Meeting is adjourned at 12:30  
7 P.M.

8 (Off the record, 12:30P.M.)  
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## 1 CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIPTIONIST

2  
3 I, Mariana Novoa, legal transcriptionist, do  
4 hereby certify:

5 That the foregoing is a complete and accurate  
6 transcript of the original digital audio recording of the  
7 testimony and proceedings captured in the above entitled  
8 matter. As the transcriptionist, I have reviewed and  
9 transcribed the entirety of the proceeding to ensure a  
10 verbatim record to the best of my ability.

11 I further certify that I am not neither attorney, for  
12 nor a relative or employee of any of the parties to the  
13 action; further, that I am not a relative or employee of  
14 any attorney employed by the parties hereto, nor financially  
15 or otherwise interested in the outcome of this matter.

16  
17  
18 In witness thereof, I have hereunto set my hand  
19 this 17th of July 2025.  
20

21  
22  
23 \_\_\_\_\_  
24 Mariana Novoa  
25 Legal Transcriber



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