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WARM WEATHER MONTHS TEMPT CAR THIEVES, H.E.A.T. RELEASES SAFETY TIPS

LIVONIA, Mich. (June 26, 2006) – H.E.A.T. (Help Eliminate Auto Thefts) warns that warm weather in summer months can lead to carelessness among car owners, providing thieves with easy access to personal property and vehicles. According to the 2006 FBI Uniform Crime Report, motor vehicle theft is consistently highest in July and August.

“As warm weather sets in, people tend to relax their guard by leaving car tops and windows down when they leave their vehicles,” said Terri Miller, director of H.E.A.T. “This makes it easy for thieves to steal exposed property like purses, laptops and cell phones – not to mention the vehicle itself.”

“Always keep a watchful eye on your property, especially in the summer,” said Lt. John Michalke of the Macomb Auto Theft Squad. “Just as you lock your front door before leaving your house, be sure to secure all car doors before stepping away from your vehicle, even when running a quick errand.”

Tips on keeping your car and belongings safe during warm weather:

- **Closed Not Cracked** – Close windows tightly, don’t even leave them “cracked” and always lock your car when your vehicle is unattended.
- **Out of Sight** – Keep all personal belongings; including iPods, cell phones and other valuables out of sight.
- **Lock Your Top** – Close and lock convertible car tops.
- **Kill-Switch** – Protect your vehicle from being started by a thief by having a mechanic install a concealed kill-switch.
- **Double Duty** – Add a second layer of protection to your vehicle by using a steering wheel locking device, a steering column protector or an alarm with a visible flasher.
- **VIN** – Consider etching your VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) onto the glass surfaces of your vehicle. VIN etching makes vehicles less attractive to thieves because all windows must be replaced before the car is tagged with a fake VIN for resale.
- **1-800-242-H.E.A.T.** – If you know anything about auto theft, report it to your local police department and H.E.A.T.’s confidential tip-reward line, 1-800-242-H.E.A.T.

About H.E.A.T.

Since its inception in 1985, H.E.A.T. tips have led to the recovery of over \$42 million in stolen property and the arrests of nearly 3,000 suspects involved in auto theft rings, chop shops, carjackings, fraudulent car thefts, among other crimes. Also, H.E.A.T. has paid over \$2.9 million in tipster rewards over the last 20 years.

Anyone with information on auto theft, carjacking, chop shops, auto theft-related identity theft and auto insurance fraud in Michigan is encouraged to call the H.E.A.T. tip line, 1-800-242-H.E.A.T., to provide a confidential report. H.E.A.T. works with Michigan law enforcement agencies to follow up on tips. Tipsters are awarded up to \$1,000 if the tip leads to the arrest and prosecution of a suspected car thief or a person suspected of auto theft-related insurance fraud. Rewards of up to \$10,000 are issued if a tip results in the arrest and binding over for trial of a suspected theft ring or chop shop operators. H.E.A.T. rewards up to \$2,000 for information leading to the issuance of a warrant for a carjacking suspect. The H.E.A.T. tip line is monitored by the Michigan State Police and funded by Michigan's auto insurance companies.

Information and upcoming dates of free vehicle identification number (VIN) etching events throughout the State of Michigan is available on the H.E.A.T. Web site at www.miheat.org.

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Editor's Note: To schedule an interview with Terri Miller, contact Amanda Bechtel at 248.362.4200 ext. 227.