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**ATPA and HEAT® REPORT DETROIT AUTO THEFT DROPPED 5% IN LAST YEAR; 27% SINCE 1997
DETROIT, WARREN, DEARBORN AND HIGHLAND PARK RANK AS TOP CITIES FOR AUTO THEFT**
Michigan Continues to Buck National Trend with 27% Decrease in Auto Theft since 1986

Lansing, MI (5 February 2003) – The Auto Theft Prevention Authority of Michigan (ATPA) and Help Eliminate Auto Thefts (HEAT®) announced results of the 2002 ATPA Annual Report today; Detroit had a 5 percent drop in auto theft in the past year with 24,537 auto theft crimes committed in 2001. Although still the number one city for auto theft in Michigan, the city has experienced an impressive 27 percent drop since 1997. Detroit is followed by Flint, Dearborn, Warren and Highland Park as the top five cities for vehicle theft in the state.

While national theft rates continue to climb, Michigan saw a drop in auto theft statewide in 2001 – topping off a 27 percent decrease since 1986. In spite of this drop, Michigan moved from sixth to fourth in the country for total motor vehicle thefts. Wayne County, although the top county in the state, saw a 4 percent drop in auto theft from 2000-2001. Oakland County ranked second in Michigan, with 3,683 auto theft related crimes in 2001, a 9 percent decrease over the last year. Macomb County ranked fourth with 3,038 thefts last year, a 14 percent increase from 2000.

Along with the top cities and counties for auto theft, the report also lists thieves' preferences of color, make, model and month, as well as ranking Michigan's top ten vehicles stolen in the state. Michigan's top ten includes: 2000 Jeep Cherokee; 2000 Dodge Intrepid; 2002 Dodge Stratus; 2002 Chrysler Sebring; 1999 Dodge Intrepid; 2002 Pontiac Grand Am; 2001 Dodge Neon; 1994 Plymouth Voyager; 2001 Dodge Stratus; 1989 Chevrolet Caprice.

The most popular car color for thieves in Michigan is white, with October being the favorite month to steal a car. Monday is the most likely day to have your car stolen, with Thursday and Sunday ranking as thieves' least favorite days to steal.

"Since the inception of the ATPA and HEAT®, Michigan has made great strides in reducing auto theft," said ATPA Executive Director Val Vitols. "And the fact that Detroit has experienced such a dramatic decline in auto theft since 1997 illustrates that over the long-term, we're making an impact on this crime that touches everyone."

Terri Miller, executive director of HEAT®, is also encouraged by the overall progress metro Detroit has made curbing auto theft related crimes. "People can protect themselves and their neighborhoods by calling 1-800-242-HEAT and reporting any auto theft related information. By working together, and knowing the facts about when, where and how auto thieves are most likely to strike, we can keep auto theft rates declining in our communities."

The Michigan Automobile Theft Prevention Authority is funded by a statutory assessment on auto insurance policies. It seeks to improve and support vehicle theft law enforcement, prosecution, prevention and education programs by establishing statewide planning capabilities and coordination of dedicated funding sources.

HEAT® operates a toll free confidential tip line, 1-800-242-HEAT, for citizens to report auto theft related information. Since its inception in 1985, HEAT® has awarded more than \$2.4 million to tip callers. During that period, the HEAT® tip line has received 5,916 tip calls leading to the arrest of 2,578 suspects and has recovered 3,161 vehicles valued at more than \$36 million.

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