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A public information organization of insurance companies

# **\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\***

**FOR RELEASE: AT WILL**

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## **AUTO THEFT STILL A CONCERN IN MISSOURI**

"Auto theft continues to be a major problem for law enforcement, insurance companies and especially Missouri motorists," an insurance industry spokesman said today.

According to statistics released by the Missouri Highway Patrol, there were 25,706 vehicles reported stolen in the state during 2006, representing a slight decrease from last year.

"The crime of auto theft continues to be a big business and Missouri motorists are paying for it," according to Brent Butler, government affairs director of the Missouri Insurance Information Service.

"Reports from Kansas City and St. Louis reveal that these two cities remain primary targets for Missouri's auto theft problem," he explained. "St. Louis City Police Department reported 8,645 auto thefts, while the Kansas City Police Department reported 5,510, collectively accounting for over 55 % of all vehicles stolen statewide."

"Estimating the value of stolen vehicles at a national average of \$6,173 per loss, auto theft cost Missouri more than \$158 million last year," Butler said.

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The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) is operating a toll-free hot line to handle reports of auto theft and fraud. Rewards of up to \$1,000 are offered for tips leading to convictions. The hot line number is 800-TEL-NICB, or 800-835-6422.

In addition, Butler suggested some safety tips provided by the insurance industry to help reduce the chance of your car being stolen:

- ❖ Lock your car, close all windows and pocket the key.
- ❖ Park with front wheels turned sharply to the right or left, making it difficult for the professional thief to tow your car away.
- ❖ When parking a front wheel drive model, pull on the emergency brake and place the vehicle in "park". If you have a stick shift, pull on the emergency brake and shift into forward or reverse gear. All four wheels will be locked making it difficult for a thief to tow your car.
- ❖ Put packages or valuables out of sight.
- ❖ Activate any theft deterrent device you may have.
- ❖ Park in a well-lighted area.
- ❖ If you park in a commercial lot or garage, leave only the ignition key with the attendant. Retain all others.
- ❖ If you have a garage, use it. Lock both the vehicle and the garage.

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**MISSOURI AUTO THEFT STATISTICS  
MOST STOLEN IN 2006**

Passenger Cars

1. Ford Taurus
2. Oldsmobile Cutlass
3. Chevrolet Cavalier
4. Pontiac Grand Am
5. Ford Escort
6. Pontiac Grand Prix
7. Chevrolet Lumina
8. Dodge Intrepid
9. Chevrolet Caprice
10. Cadillac DeVille

Source: Missouri State Highway Patrol