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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 15,640 vehicles reported stolen in the state during 2010.

"Though the number of auto thefts was down from 2009, the crime of auto theft still 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. "Although there were a few less auto thefts in these two jurisdictions than in 2010, collectively almost 50% of all vehicles stolen statewide were from these municipalities."

"Estimating the value of stolen vehicles at a national average of \$6,505 per loss, auto theft cost Missouri almost \$102 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 2010**

Passenger Cars

1. Ford Taurus
2. Dodge Intrepid
3. Pontiac Grand Prix
4. Chevrolet Impala
5. Dodge Stratus
6. Oldsmobile Cutlass
7. Pontiac Grand Am
8. Chevrolet Monte Carlo
9. Honda Accord
10. Chevrolet Malibu

Source: Missouri State Highway Patrol