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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 16,282 vehicles reported stolen in the state during 2012.

"The number of auto thefts slightly increased from 2011, showing that this crime 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. The St. Louis City Police Department reported 3,489 auto thefts, resulting in a slight increase of around 3.5% over last year, while the Kansas City Police Department also reported a 3.5% increase in thefts with 3,574 vehicles stolen in the city."

"Estimating the value of stolen vehicles at a national average of \$6,152 per loss, auto theft cost in Missouri were over \$100 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 2012**

Passenger Cars

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

Source: Missouri State Highway Patrol