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Las Vegas Drops to 7th place in Auto Thefts

Significant reduction in theft rate attributed to VIPER program

Las Vegas –From 2006 to 2008, Las Vegas dropped from first to second to seventh in auto theft rates among U.S. cities. The new rankings were released today by the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB).

Data released today by the NICB shows that 22,415 thefts were reported in 2006 and 13,662 in 2008, a drop of 8,753 vehicles. On a *per capita* basis, Las Vegas fell from 1,265 thefts per 100,000 residents in 2006 to 732 in 2008.

"Las Vegas Metro's Vehicle Investigations Project for Enforcement and Recovery (VIPER) bait car program has not only helped put auto thieves behind bars, but has also deterred would-be thieves," said Sheriff Doug Gillespie. "I am very proud of the work they have done to reduce auto thefts here and want to commend them for their hard work. I also want to thank the NICB and the Nevada Insurance Council for their contributions to the VIPER bait car program. By working together, we have made Las Vegas a safer place for our citizens and visitors, and a less friendly place for car thieves."

Michael Geeser, president of the Nevada Insurance Council (NIC), said, "Auto theft has been hot a button issue for the entire insurance industry in Nevada. Working together with VIPER, the National Insurance Crime Bureau and Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, we have made great strides in fighting this problem in our community. We realize there is more work to be done, but working together we feel as if we are on the right track."

"Las Vegas Metro's VIPER bait car program has been very effective, and we are proud to have contributed to that program," Geeser added. "By making and publicizing arrests, Metro has sent a clear message that auto thieves have a good chance of landing behind bars if they don't find another line of work."

The Nevada Insurance Council provided financial support for the VIPER (Vehicle Investigations Project for Enforcement and Recovery) program last year.

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Insurers and Metro also teamed up as members of Governor Jim Gibbons' Auto Theft and Insurance Fraud Task Force. The Task Force completed its work in 2008 and the state legislature is considering some of its recommendations.

The Nevada Insurance Council is a non-profit, non-lobbying organization representing the property and casualty insurance industry in Nevada. NIC is dedicated to informing consumers and the media about the insurance business, automotive safety, homeowners insurance and related topics.

NOTE: Permission is granted to use the attached chart.

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