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## Car Thieves Take the Bait

*Modesto, CA Records Dramatic Vehicle Theft Reduction; Las Vegas, NV Now Ranks as Country's Number One Metro Area With Highest Theft Rate*

Des Plaines, IL—The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) reported today that after three consecutive years as the area with the worst per capita vehicle theft rate in the nation, Modesto, CA has fallen into the number five position—a dramatic improvement. Taking over the “Number One Hot Spot” is Las Vegas, NV.

As in 2005, the western United States still ranks as the area of the country with the highest auto theft rates. All of the nation's top ten areas are in the west with five of them in California.

For 2006, the ten metropolitan statistical areas with the highest vehicle theft rates are:

1. Las Vegas/Paradise, NV
2. Stockton, CA
3. Visalia/Porterville, CA
4. Phoenix/Mesa/Scottsdale, AZ
5. Modesto, CA
6. Seattle/Tacoma/Bellevue, WA
7. Sacramento/Arden-Arcade/Roseville, CA
8. Fresno, CA
9. Yakima, WA
10. Tucson, AZ

According to *Hot Spots*, its annual report on auto theft rates, NICB reviewed data supplied by the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) for each of the nation's 361 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). MSAs are designated by the Office of Management and Budget and may include areas surrounding a specific city.

The rate is determined by the number of vehicle theft offenses per 100,000 inhabitants using the 2005 U.S. Census Population Estimates, the most current figures available.

Preliminary FBI data shows a 2.3% decrease in motor vehicle thefts during January-June, 2006, when compared with the same period in 2005. Nationally, this is the third straight year of decreases in vehicle theft.

“People can take any number of precautions to protect themselves from vehicle theft and, in most cases, those are sufficient to prevent a theft,” said NICB President and Chief Executive Officer Robert M. Bryant. “But a determined thief, a serial vehicle thief, is someone for whom there is no absolute deterrent—except prison.

“NICB, through the support of its member companies, has pursued an aggressive “Bait Vehicle” and License Plate Reader Program around the nation. These cutting-edge enforcement tools offer law enforcement the latest in high-tech crime fighting, and are partly responsible for the absolutely outstanding results achieved in Modesto. When used in conjunction with comprehensive legislation and aggressive prosecution, police on the street can have a tremendous impact on vehicle theft and other crimes.” added Bryant.

NICB recommends the following actions under its “layered approach” to protection that automobile owners can take to minimize their risk and prevent their car from becoming the next statistic:

**Common Sense**--An unlocked vehicle with a key in the ignition is an open invitation to any thief, regardless of which anti-theft device you use. The common sense approach to protection is the simplest and most cost-effective way to thwart would-be thieves. Secure your vehicle even if parking for brief periods. You should always:

- Remove your keys from the ignition
- Lock your doors /close your windows
- Park in a well-lit area

**Warning Device**--The second layer of protection is a visible or audible device which alerts thieves that your vehicle is protected. Popular second layer devices include:

- Audible alarms
- Steering column collars
- Steering wheel/brake pedal lock
- Brake locks
- Wheel locks
- Tire locks/tire deflators
- Theft deterrent decals
- Identification markers in or on vehicle
- VIN etching
- Micro dot marking

**Immobilizing Device**--The third layer of protection is a device which prevents thieves from bypassing your ignition and hot-wiring the vehicle. Some electronic devices have computer chips in ignition keys. Other devices inhibit the flow of electricity or fuel

to the engine until a hidden switch or button is activated. Popular third layer devices include:

- Smart keys
- Fuse cut-offs
- Kill switches
- Starter, ignition, and fuel pump disablers
- Wireless ignition authentication

**Tracking Device**--The final layer of protection is a tracking device which emits a signal to police or a monitoring station when the vehicle is stolen. Tracking devices are very effective in helping authorities recover stolen vehicles. Some systems employ "telematics" which combine GPS and wireless technologies to allow remote monitoring of a vehicle. If the vehicle is moved the system will alert the owner and the vehicle can be tracked via computer.

The National Insurance Crime Bureau is the nation's leading non-profit organization exclusively dedicated to preventing, detecting and defeating insurance fraud and vehicle theft through information analysis, investigations, training and public awareness.

Anyone with information concerning auto theft and insurance fraud can report it anonymously by calling toll-free 1-800-TEL-NICB (1-800-835-6422) or by visiting our web site.

For the complete information on *Hot Spots 2006*, please visit [www.nicb.org](http://www.nicb.org).

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