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***Hot Spots:* NICB’s Annual Report on Vehicle Theft**

***How Hot is Vehicle Theft in Your Area?***

Des Plaines, IL—The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) reported today that 2011 is on track (final numbers will be published in the fall) as yet another consecutive year of declining vehicle thefts. Four of the top 10 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) reported more thefts in 2011 (+925 collectively) while the remaining six posted fewer (-2,017 collectively).

It is important to note the *Hot Spots* report is a reflection of vehicle thefts on a per capita basis. An area with a much smaller population and a moderate number of thefts can—and often does—have a higher theft rate than an area with a much more significant vehicle theft problem *and* a larger population to absorb it.

For 2011, the 10 MSAs with the highest vehicle theft rates were:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **2011 Ranking** | | **2010 Ranking** |
| 1. | Fresno, Calif. | 1 |
| 2. | Modesto, Calif. | 2 |
| 3. | Bakersfield-Delano, Calif. | 3 |
| 4. | Spokane, Wash. | 4 |
| 5. | Yakima, Wash. | 10 |
| 6. | San Francisco/Oakland/Fremont, Calif. | 9 |
| 7. | Stockton, Calif. | 7 |
| 8. | Anderson, S.C. | 33 |
| 9. | Vallejo-Fairfield, Calif. | 5 |
| 10. | Visalia-Porterville, Calif. | 8 |

NICB’s *Hot Spots* report examines vehicle theft data obtained from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) for each of the nation’s MSAs. MSAs are designated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and often include areas much larger than the cities for which they are named. For example, the Fresno, Calif., MSA includes all thefts within the entire *county* of Fresno, not just the city of Fresno.

The FBI’s preliminary 2011 crime statistics released last week indicate a 3.3 percent drop in vehicle thefts from the 2010 number of 737,142. Contributing to this decline was the significant drop in the rankings of the Laredo, Texas MSA—from Number 1 in 2009 to 53 in 2011. Within two years, Laredo’s thefts were down 53 percent, from 1,792 in 2009 to 849 in 2011.

Watch this [video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4UPffwRRS4) to see how the Laredo Police Department’s efforts to reduce thefts have paid off.

The full *Hot Spots* report is available at [www.nicb.org](http://www.nicb.org).

Although national vehicle thefts continue to decline, NICB still recommends that drivers follow our four “[layers of protection](https://www.nicb.org/File%20Library/Theft%20and%20Fraud%20Prevention/Fact%20Sheets/Public/layeredanti-theftdevicespublic.pdf)” to guard against vehicle theft:

**Common Sense** — The common sense approach to protection is the easiest and most cost-effective way to thwart would-be thieves. 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 devices include:

* Audible alarms
* Steering column collars
* Steering wheel/brake pedal lock
* Brake locks
* Wheel locks
* 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. Some examples are:

* 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.

Anyone with information concerning vehicle theft can report it anonymously by calling toll-free

1-800-TEL-NICB (1-800-835-6422), texting keyword “fraud” to TIP411 (847411) or by visiting our website at [www.nicb.org](http://www.nicb.org). Or, iPhone or iPad users can download the [NICB Fraud Tips app](http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/nicb-fraud-tips/id492578733?mt=8) to make it easy to quickly send a tip and get a response.

About the National Insurance Crime Bureau:  headquartered in Des Plaines, Ill., the NICB is the nation’s leading not-for-profit organization exclusively dedicated to preventing, detecting and defeating insurance fraud and vehicle theft through data analytics, investigations, training, legislative advocacy and public awareness. The NICB is supported by more than 1,100 property and casualty insurance companies and self-insured organizations. NICB member companies wrote over $339 billion in insurance premiums in 2011, or approximately 80 percent of the nation’s property/casualty insurance. That includes more than 94 percent ($156 billion) of the nation’s personal auto insurance. To learn more visit [www.nicb.org](http://www.nicb.org).

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