

REPORT

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HEAT PROGRAM | VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE

ANNUAL

25

Report From the Superintendent	03
HEAT Program Personnel	04
HEAT Advisory Committee	05
HEAT Rewards	06
Teaching and Instructing	07
Training Grant	08
Equipment Reimbursement	09
National Conferences	10
Regional Meetings	11
Media Appearances	12
HEAT Award Presentations	13
Community Outreach	14
Specialty Vehicle Fleet	15
VIN Etching Program	16
Advertising Campaign	17
HEAT Program Stats	18
Annual Budget Summary	19



TABLE OF CONTENTS

REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



**Colonel
Jeffrey S. Katz**
Superintendent
Virginia State Police



**First Sergeant
Peter W. Lazear**
Statewide Program
Coordinator

Last year, more than 10,500 vehicles were stolen in Virginia, causing citizens stress, fear and the loss of over 150 million of their hard-earned dollars.

That's why the Virginia State Police is so committed to stopping car thieves. Since 1992, our Help Eliminate Auto Theft program has educated both citizens and law enforcement agencies alike about the theft of vehicles and their parts – so that everyone across the Commonwealth can do their part to help stop these costly crimes.

In 2025, the HEAT program made great strides.

We provided hundreds of hours of training and instruction, both at our own events, and at regional and national auto theft conferences. We helped 124 separate law enforcement agencies purchase equipment they needed to combat auto theft in Virginia. We got our message out to the public with a highly visible advertising campaign, as well as direct interactions with everyday folks at over 50 community events.

And the results speak for themselves:

103 auto theft cases opened
17 agencies assisted by HEAT with their investigations
346 stolen vehicles recovered
252 arrests made
\$24,000+ in reward money paid for tips leading directly to those arrests

It's been a terrific year for the HEAT program, and a terrible one for car thieves. Together, we can continue to help eliminate auto theft in Virginia!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey S. Katz". The signature is stylized and includes a large loop at the end.

Colonel Jeffrey S. Katz

HEAT PROGRAM PERSONNEL

Our people are what make all our success possible. The HEAT program is fortunate to employ a talented and hardworking team, including:

- 1 Statewide Program Coordinator
- 2 Full-time Special Agents assigned to SPHQ
- 7 HEAT Special Agents assigned across the state
- 1 Program Support Technician
- 1 Intelligence Analyst



HEAT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Nobody can eliminate auto theft on their own. The HEAT program works with an Advisory Committee filled with representatives from outside law enforcement agencies, insurance company providers, the National Insurance Crime Bureau and the Commonwealth of Virginia. This group, appointed by the Superintendent in accordance with VA Code Section 38.2-414, meets annually to oversee the HEAT program's budget, grants and reward tip payments.



The 2025 HEAT Advisory Committee

Sheriff Lee Bailey – New Kent County Sheriff's Office

Mrs. Erin Barr – Commonwealth's Attorney, Chesterfield County

Mr. Michael Burton – SIU Investigator, Arch Insurance

Deputy Chief Robby Cottrell – William & Mary Police Department

Mr. Joseph Hill – Assistant Commissioner, Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles

Mr. Chad Moore – SIU Field Supervisor, GEICO Insurance

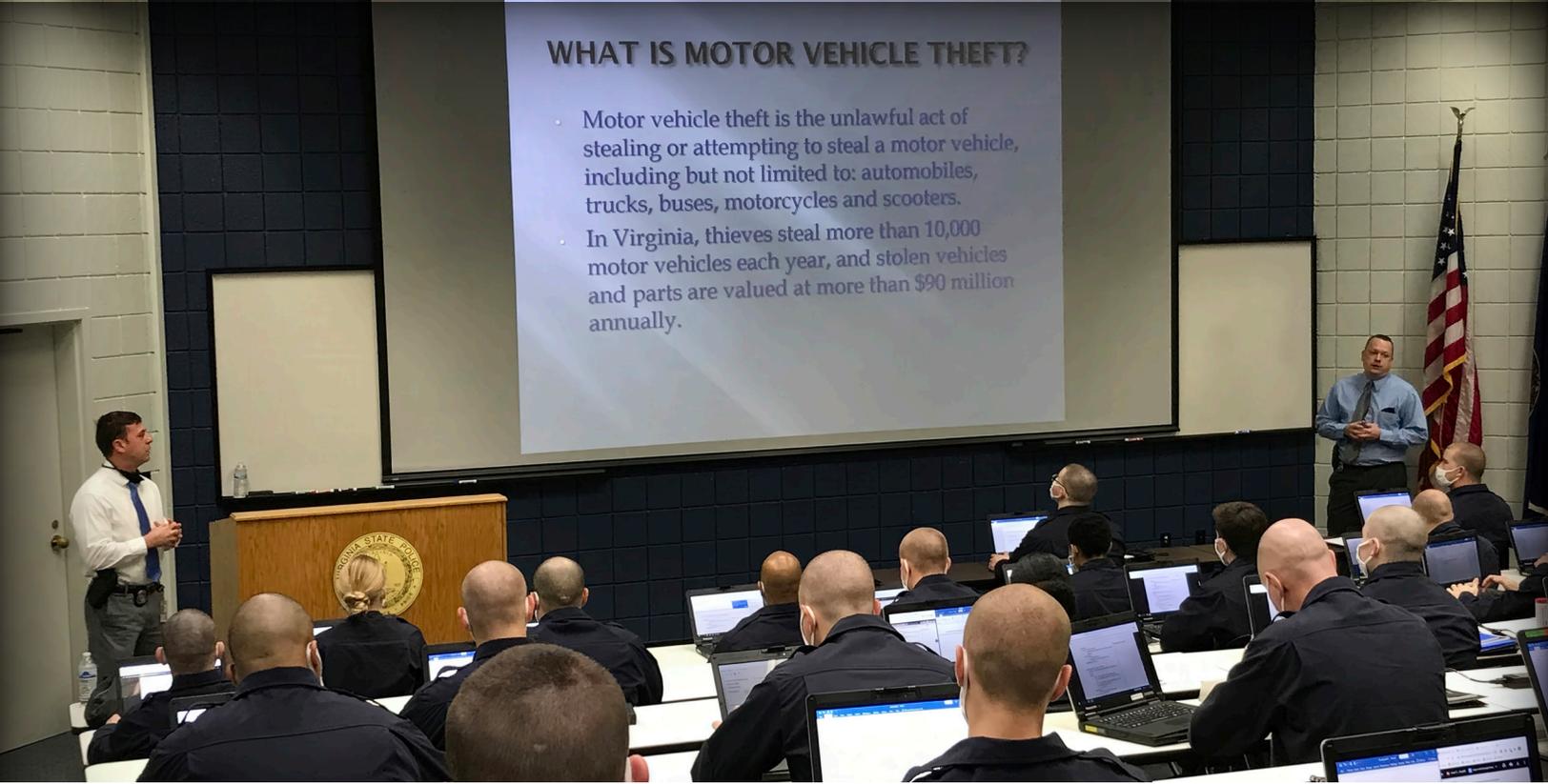
Mr. Bill Woolf – Director of Field Operations, National Insurance Crime Bureau



HEAT REWARDS

Because auto theft affects everybody in Virginia, we want everybody's help in stopping it. That's why the HEAT program offers ordinary citizens rewards of up to \$25,000 for information leading to the arrest of auto thieves all across the Commonwealth.

In 2025, the HEAT program received three valuable tips that earned their reporters a total of \$24,225 in rewards. These tips resulted in multiple arrests, the recovery of stolen vehicles and parts, and the dismantling of a major auto theft ring and chop shop!



WHAT IS MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT?

- Motor vehicle theft is the unlawful act of stealing or attempting to steal a motor vehicle, including but not limited to: automobiles, trucks, buses, motorcycles and scooters.
- In Virginia, thieves steal more than 10,000 motor vehicles each year, and stolen vehicles and parts are valued at more than \$90 million annually.

TEACHING AND INSTRUCTING

Last year, HEAT personnel provided over 141 hours of training and instruction on over 20 separate occasions. This included:

- Training for VSP Personnel
- Basic School Sessions
- First Pathway to Trooper Program
- VACP Women in Law Enforcement Conference
- FBINAA Virginia Chapter Annual Conference
- Virginia Chiefs of Police Conference
- Virginia Sheriffs' Association Conference
- Multiple High School Group Sessions
- Fire Marshal Basic Academy
- Regional and International Conferences
- DCJS Crime Prevention Basic Schools
- Training on Newly Purchased ABRITE VIN Readers for State Police Troopers

The HEAT program also hosted a first-ever regional training event for 100 local officers and deputies in Fredericksburg with the National Insurance Crime Bureau and the Department of Motor Vehicles.



TRAINING GRANT

The HEAT program does more than just develop auto theft education and training sessions. We help pay for them too.

Our training grant helps law enforcement agencies throughout Virginia pay for the ongoing education they need to effectively combat auto theft.

Last year, the HEAT program provided \$200,000 to 40 law enforcement agencies throughout Virginia, allowing them to send 105 members to the SEIAATI conference in Nashville, Tennessee.



EQUIPMENT REIMBURSEMENT

They say that workers are only as good as their tools. That's why the HEAT program makes sure the people working to eliminate auto theft have all the tools they need.

In 2025, we allocated \$1.5 million for the purpose of purchasing equipment to combat auto theft in Virginia, which benefitted 124 separate law enforcement agencies throughout the Commonwealth.





NATIONAL CONFERENCES

The HEAT program maintained and expanded its leadership position within the auto theft prevention industry in 2025.

First Sergeant Peter Lazear is an active member of the Auto Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA), one of twelve nationwide members of the Recycled Materials Association (ReMA) Law Enforcement Advisory Council, and the first-ever representative from the Virginia State Police to serve as president of the Southeast Chapter of the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators (SEIAATI). He attended the ReMA annual meeting in San Diego, California, and he oversaw the development of SEIAATI's 2025 Vehicle Crimes Conference in Nashville, Tennessee.

The HEAT program secured an emerald sponsorship for that SEIAATI conference, with Special Agent Rick Richens and Senior Special Agent Shannon M. Pinto serving as state delegates.

In addition, HEAT personnel attended the National Technical Investigators' Association (NATIA) Conference in Wisconsin, and the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) Fraud Investigation Academy online vehicle fraud and crime course.

REGIONAL MEETINGS

The HEAT program oversees and facilitates several regional auto theft investigation meetings throughout the state each year. These meetings allow investigators from law enforcement, insurance companies, federal agencies, NICB and the DMV to come together and share information about auto theft trends, cases, suspects and prevention strategies.

Meetings are held monthly in Richmond (RATI) and Chesapeake (HRATI), every other month in Northern Virginia and Culpeper (NVATI), and quarterly in Roanoke (RVATI).





MEDIA APPEARANCES

The HEAT program's success got the media's attention last year, as we were asked to share our auto theft prevention expertise with news audiences on numerous occasions.

Special Agent Craig Hudson participated in an on-camera interview with WDBJ-7.

First Sergeant Peter Lazear had on-camera interviews with WWBT-12, WTVR-6, WSET-13 and WAVY-10.



HEAT AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Catching car thieves is something to celebrate. So we do exactly that, with HEAT Awards presentations every year.

These awards recognize the outstanding efforts made by law enforcement agencies and individuals in combating auto theft. The 2025 awards were presented at both the Virginia Chiefs of Police & Foundation Conference and the Virginia Sheriffs' Association Conference.

Agency and Individual Winners Included:

- Department of Motor Vehicles
- City of Salem Police Department
- Henrico County Police Division
- Chesterfield County Police Department
- Culpeper Police Department
- Roanoke City Police Department
- Appomattox County Sheriff's Office
- New Kent County Sheriff's Office
- Spotsylvania County Sheriff's Office
- Newport News Police Department
- Several Virginia State Police Troopers



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The simplest way to reduce the damage caused by auto theft is to prevent cars from being stolen in the first place. This is why the HEAT program works to educate the public on ways they can prevent auto theft.

Our agents met people face to face at over 50 community events throughout the state last year, increasing awareness of the problem, sharing tips for keeping vehicles safe, spreading the HEAT mission, and handing out promotional items carrying our message.

Events reached people at:

- College campuses
- The VA War Memorial
- Auto shows
- Conferences
- NASCAR races
- Parades
- A plane pull
- The South Boston Speedway and Larry King Law's Langley Speedway, where the HEAT program served as an official sponsor



SPECIALTY VEHICLE FLEET

To attract extra attention at community and recruitment events, the HEAT program rolls out its cool, custom-wrapped cars and trucks and puts them on display. These irresistible rides are always an effective way to start conversations about auto theft, and are often requested by other law enforcement agencies to attend their public outreach events.

The HEAT display fleet includes:

- The HEAT Corvette
- The HEAT Ford F250 with Ghosted Graphics
- Two HEAT Ford F550s

VIN ETCHING PROGRAM

Our Vehicle Identification Number etching program makes it *easier* for vehicle owners to make it *harder* for thieves to steal their cars.

It involves permanently etching a unique vehicle identification number onto each piece of glass in your car. This is a big deterrent, since would-be auto thieves would have to replace all that glass in order to conceal their crime.

While dealerships may charge a fee for VIN etching, the HEAT program offers this service to the public for free! Last year, we partnered with other law enforcement agencies to provide VIN etchings for 197 vehicles at 14 events throughout the Commonwealth.



DON'T GIVE CAR THIEVES A JOY RIDE

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HEATreward.com



DON'T HELP THIEVES WRECK YOUR WHEELS

Make it harder for car thieves to do their job. Protect yourself from auto theft and report suspicious activity for rewards of up to \$25,000 at [HEATreward.com](https://www.heatreward.com).

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DON'T LET THIEVES TAKE YOUR CAR FOR A SPIN

VIRGINIA STATE POLICE
HEAT
HELP ELIMINATE AUTO THEFT

ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

To make sure our vehicle theft prevention message reached as many people as possible this past year, we launched a new statewide advertising campaign for the HEAT program.

The ads played with the idea that driving your car can be really fun – even for the thieves who steal it! Images and headlines showed people some of the bad things that could happen to your ride if you don't take commonsense steps to keep it safe. And of course, audiences were invited to visit [HEATreward.com](https://www.heatreward.com) to learn more, and to submit tips for rewards of up to \$25,000!

2025 HEAT PROGRAM STATS

346

Stolen vehicles recovered by VSP

103

Cases opened

252

Arrests made

17

Agencies assisted by HEAT program with auto theft investigations

197

VIN etchings by HEAT program partners

18

ANNUAL BUDGET SUMMARY

January – December 2025

Balance	January 1, 2025	\$4,682,043.20
Fund Proceeds & Transfers		
	SCC – Received July 2025	\$4,210,603.15
	Interest Earned	–
	Internal Cash Transfers In	–
	Cash Reversions	–
	Internal Cash Transfers Out	–
Total Proceeds		\$4,210,603.15
Fund Disbursements		
	Accruals – Accounts Payable	(\$32,225.04)
	Personnel Services (Salaries & Fringes)	\$1,840,820.05
	Contractual Services (Postage, Telecommunications, Vehicle Repairs, Travel)	\$1,792,796.61
	Supplies & Materials (Apparel, Office Supplies, Gasoline, Law Enforcement Supplies)	\$4,900.35
	Transfer Payments (Rewards, Training, Grants)	\$1,486,981.48
	Continuous Charges (Insurances, Office Rent)	\$57,509.00
	Equipment (Computers, Electronic, Vehicles, Office Furniture, Law Enforcement Equipment)	\$9,157.52
	Plant and Improvements	–
Total Disbursements		\$5,159,939.97
Balance	December 31, 2025	\$3,732,706.38

VIRGINIA STATE POLICE

HEAT



HELP ELIMINATE AUTO THEFT