

Phoenix area No. 4 in auto thefts

by *azcentral.com*

The area of Phoenix, Scottsdale and Mesa has the nation's fourth highest auto-theft rate, according to a recent National Insurance Crime Bureau report.

Of the 54,849 vehicles that were stolen in Arizona in 2006, nearly 40,000 of them were snatched from those three cities, according to the Hot Wheels report, a supplement to an annual report that details national auto theft rates.

The No. 4 ranking is the third straight year for Arizona. Las Vegas is No. 1. Enrique Cantu, executive director of the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority, said the Phoenix area is among the most popular targets because of its proximity to the Mexico border.

"Most cars are stolen between midnight and 5 a.m.," Cantu said. "When people wake up and their car is gone, it's already easily into Mexico."

The report says thieves stole the 1992 Honda Accord from Arizonans more than any other vehicle last year. The second hottest theft in the state - the 1995 Honda Civic - was the most stolen car in the United States.

Authorities say older-model vehicles are more vulnerable because they have fewer security features.

Cantu said people can take simple precautions to deter carjackers, including using steering-wheel locks, hiding valuables and parking in well-lit areas.

"People don't take some of the easiest precautions," he said. "Locking doors, not leaving keys in the car - they make a big difference, and we can do a good job at reducing theft in this state."

Despite the state's high ranking, some area cities are making progress. Gilbert, Chandler, Tempe and Mesa are reporting a lower number of car thefts this year.

Tempe experienced the most significant shift, a 25 percent decrease through August compared to 2006. Chandler's rate is 22.5 percent lower and Mesa's dropped 13 percent during the same period.

Tempe police Sgt. Mike Horn said a combination of efforts has helped lower the thefts. He pointed to special task forces, increased officer awareness and providing prevention tips to residents.

If you are in the market for auto insurance or would like to get an auto insurance quote, visit [FREE Auto Insurance Quotes](#). Here, you can evaluate multiple rates from best-in-class car insurance providers, saving you time and money on your car insurance.

Copyright © 2007, [azcentral.com](#). All rights reserved.

Presented by [InsuranceHeadlines.com](#)

Phoenix area No. 4 in auto thefts by azcentral.com