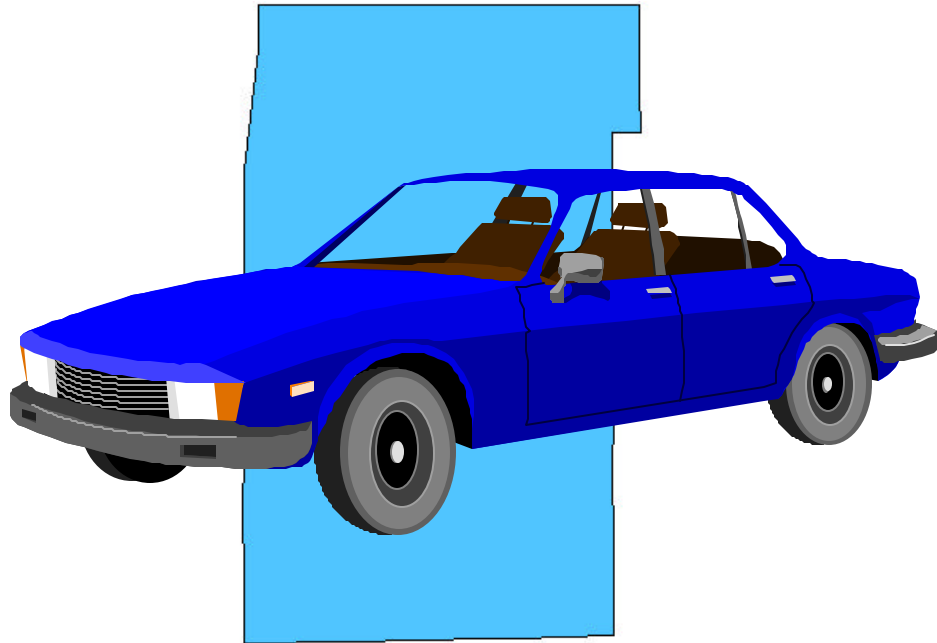


# A Profile of the Kane County Auto Theft Task Force (KCAT)

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*Prepared for*  
the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council

George Ryan, Governor  
Sam Nolen, Chairman

October, 2000



**ILLINOIS MOTOR VEHICLE  
THEFT PREVENTION COUNCIL**

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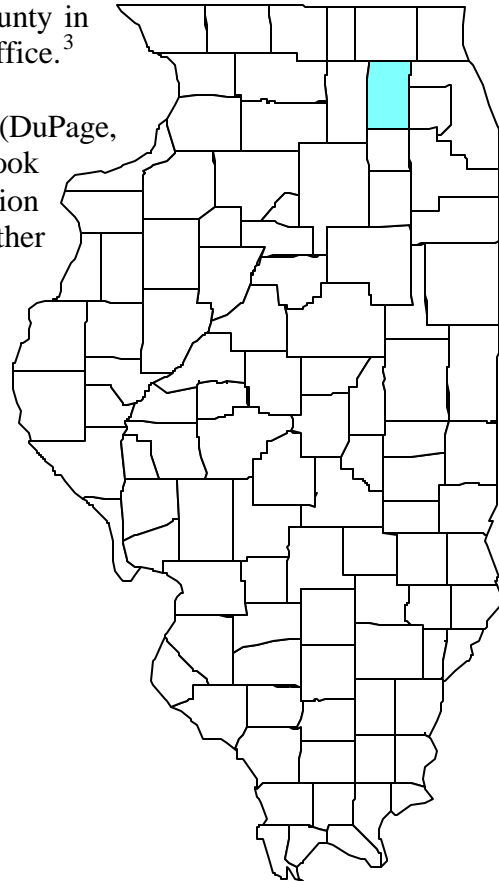
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## Introduction

The Kane County Auto Theft Task Force (KCAT) serves the County of Kane, a rapidly growing county located in Northeastern Illinois.<sup>1</sup> Covering an area of 520 square miles, Kane County ranks fifth among Illinois counties in population, land area, and number of registered vehicles. According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates, Kane County had a 1999 population of 402,622.<sup>2</sup>

There were 336,841 vehicles registered in Kane County in 1999, according to the Illinois Secretary of State's Office.<sup>3</sup>

Kane County is one of the five collar counties (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will) which border Cook County. To provide useful comparisons, information specific to Kane County will be compared to other collar counties.



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<sup>1</sup> Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission. 2000. *Toward 2020: Population, Household and Employment Forecasts For Counties and Municipalities in Northeastern Illinois.*

<sup>2</sup> United States Bureau of the Census. 1998. *USA Counties 1998: Kane, IL General Profile.*

<sup>3</sup> State of Illinois, Office of the Secretary of State. 2000. *County Statistical Report for Motor Vehicle License Units and Transactions Received for 1999.*

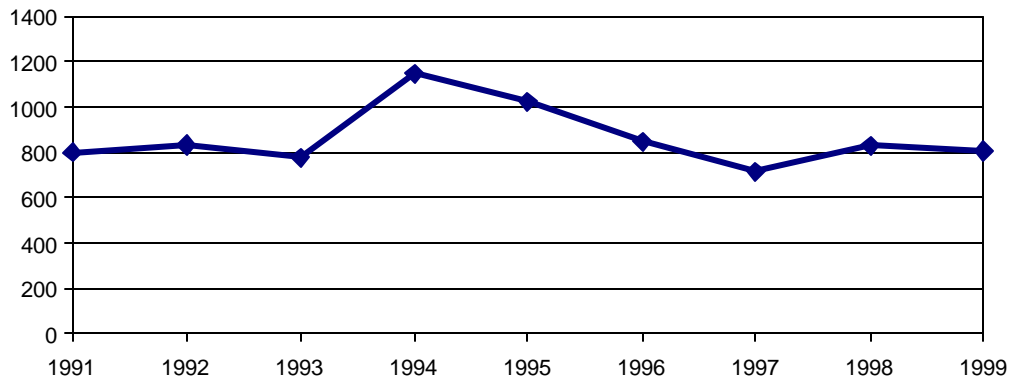
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## Motor Vehicle Theft in Kane County

From 1991 to 1999, the number of motor vehicle thefts in Kane County averaged just over 800 per year. In 1994, the number of thefts rose sharply to 1,148 stolen vehicles, a 48 percent increase over the previous year. The other collar counties (DuPage, Lake, McHenry, and Will) saw only a 17 percent increase in motor vehicle thefts in 1994. Since 1994, the number of motor vehicle thefts in Kane County has decreased back to the level of approximately 800 per year (see Figure 1 below). Monthly data reports from KCAT indicate that a significant portion of the motor vehicle theft problem in Kane County is linked to street gang activity and illegal drug use.

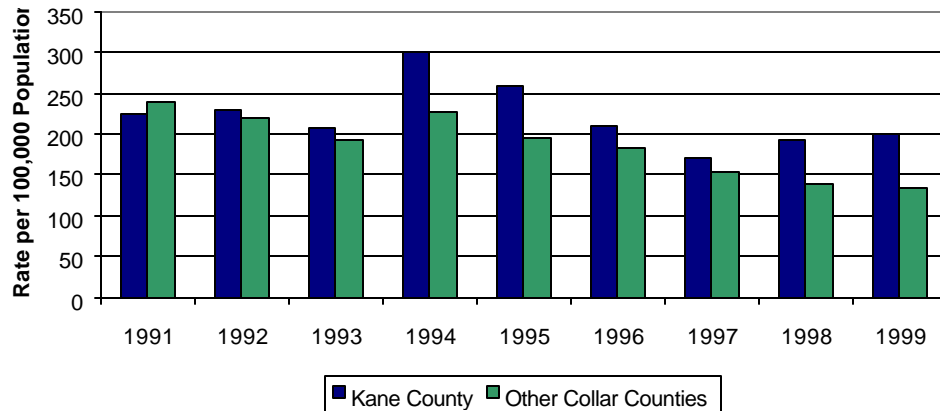
**Figure 1**  
**Motor Vehicle Thefts in Kane County, 1991-1999**



Source: Illinois State Police *Uniform Crime Reports*.

Figure 2 below shows the motor vehicle theft rates in Kane County compared to the other collar counties from 1991 to 1999.

**Figure 2**  
**Motor Vehicle Theft Rates in Kane and Other Collar Counties, 1991-1999**



Sources: Illinois State Police *Uniform Crime Reports* and U.S. Census Bureau

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## **Program Summary**

The Kane County Auto Theft Task Force (KCAT) combats auto theft in Kane County by combining the expertise and resources of multiple law enforcement agencies. Operating since 1992, KCAT links the efforts of the Illinois State Police, the Kane County Sheriff's Department, the Elgin Police Department, the Aurora Police Department, and the Kane County State's Attorney's Office. KCAT's multi-jurisdictional, cooperative approach maximizes its ability to investigate and prosecute auto theft in Kane County. Implemented by the Elgin Police Department, KCAT's services are available to all law enforcement agencies within Kane County and the northeastern metropolitan area of Chicago.

Primarily, KCAT provides field investigators who are specially trained in auto theft investigations and who have statewide authority to pursue those investigations. KCAT investigators coordinate the resources of the participating agencies and focus these resources on their investigations. Intelligence gathering, surveillance, and monitoring areas prone to thefts are central to the unit's activities. A Kane County assistant state's attorney is available at all times to assist in the investigation and prosecution of KCAT's cases.

KCAT is the only Council-funded auto theft investigative unit within Kane County. KCAT works cooperatively with other IMVTPC-funded programs, such as the Secretary of State Special Audit Teams.

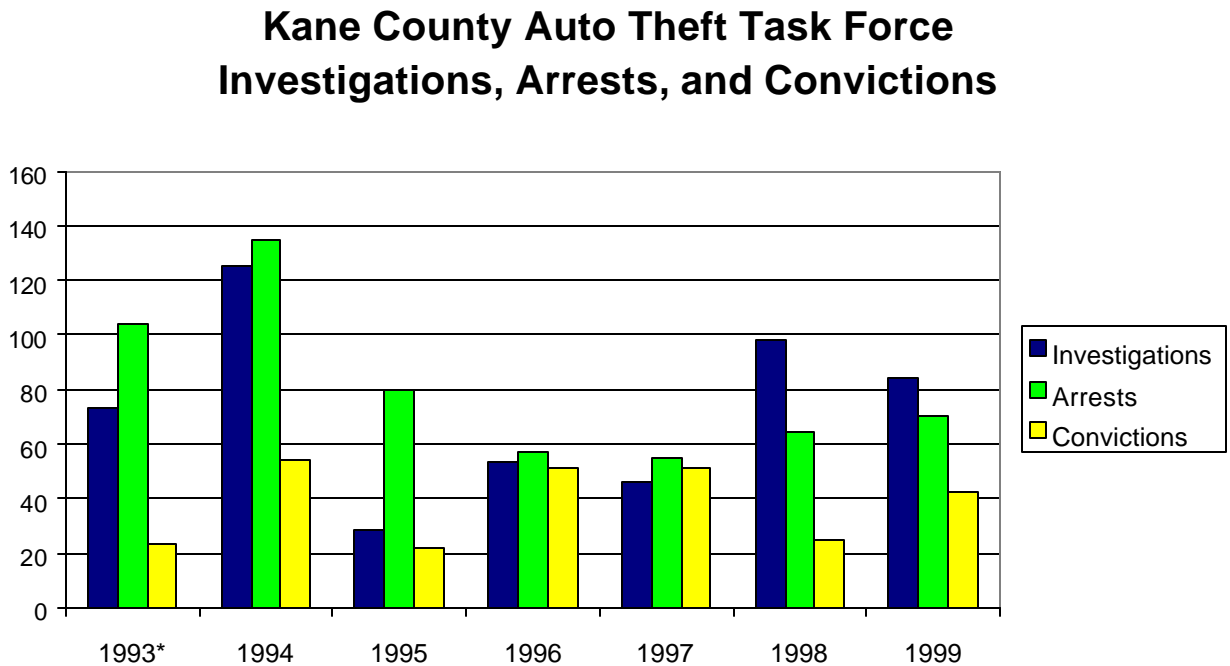
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## Program Activity

Since it began in 1992, through May 2000, the Kane County Auto Theft Task Force (KCAT) has conducted 452 investigations, resulting in 383 arrests and 81 convictions. Figure 3 below indicates the number of investigations, arrests, and convictions for each KCAT program year. The reduced activity during 1995-1996 reflects a decrease in the number of KCAT investigators—the program was short one investigator for six months of 1995 and five months of 1996.

Figure 3



\* Includes data from KCAT program inception in 8/92 through 12/93.

Source: KCAT Monthly Performance Reports

Since 1992, KCAT has recovered 717 vehicles worth an estimated \$5.7 million, including 524 cars, 92 trucks/buses, 14 motorcycles, and 2 pieces of construction equipment. In addition, the task force has recovered 84 vehicle parts with a total estimated value of \$6,000.

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## **Conclusion**

The Kane County Auto Theft Task Force (KCAT) has played an important role in the reduction of vehicle theft in Kane County. The county's auto theft rate has remained low, despite a rising population and reported increases in gang- and drug-related activity. The task force has received a total of \$2.5 million in funding from the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Trust Fund, and has recovered an estimated \$5.7 million in stolen vehicles and parts. Comparing the total funding amount to the total value of recovered vehicles and parts yields more than a 200 percent "return" on the program funding.

These statistics, however, do not tell the whole story. KCAT often prevents the payout of fraudulent insurance claims, or recovers vehicles before they are reported stolen to the insurer. In 1999, for example, 89 percent of KCAT vehicle recoveries occurred before the insurance claim had been paid. In many of these cases, no criminal prosecutions can be pursued, and so these KCAT activities do not always generate the arrest and conviction statistics that are the usual measure of police effectiveness.

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## Funding Summary

The Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Act that took effect on January 1, 1991 created the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council. The Council has the statutory responsibility to “prevent, combat, and reduce motor vehicle theft in Illinois.”<sup>4</sup>

The Act established the Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Trust Fund, a special trust fund in the State Treasury, from which the Council makes grants to eligible applicants for programs that address the problem of motor vehicle theft in Illinois. The Act requires all insurance companies licensed to write private passenger motor vehicle physical damage coverage in Illinois to pay annually into this trust fund an amount equal to \$1 for each earned car year of exposure for physical damage insurance coverage during the previous calendar year. About \$5.6 million is collected each year.

The Kane County Auto Theft Task Force is funded by the Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Trust Fund. The table below lists the amounts granted to and expended by the task force for each program year (Figure 4).

**Figure 4**  
**Kane County Auto Theft Task Force**  
**Funding by Program Year**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Grant Amount</b>	<b>Expenditures</b>
1993	\$156,000	\$155,850
1994	\$222,135	\$220,487
1995	\$365,766	\$295,389
1996	\$329,190	\$297,697
1997	\$332,498	\$249,853
1998	\$334,293	\$288,641
1999	\$352,187	\$309,438
2000	\$365,979	\$75,376*
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,458,048</b>	<b>\$1,817,355</b>

\*January 2000 through June 2000.

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<sup>4</sup> Chapter 20 Illinois Compiled Statutes 4005/2.

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