
A Profile of the Kane-Cook Auto Theft Task Force (KCAT)



Prepared for

the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council

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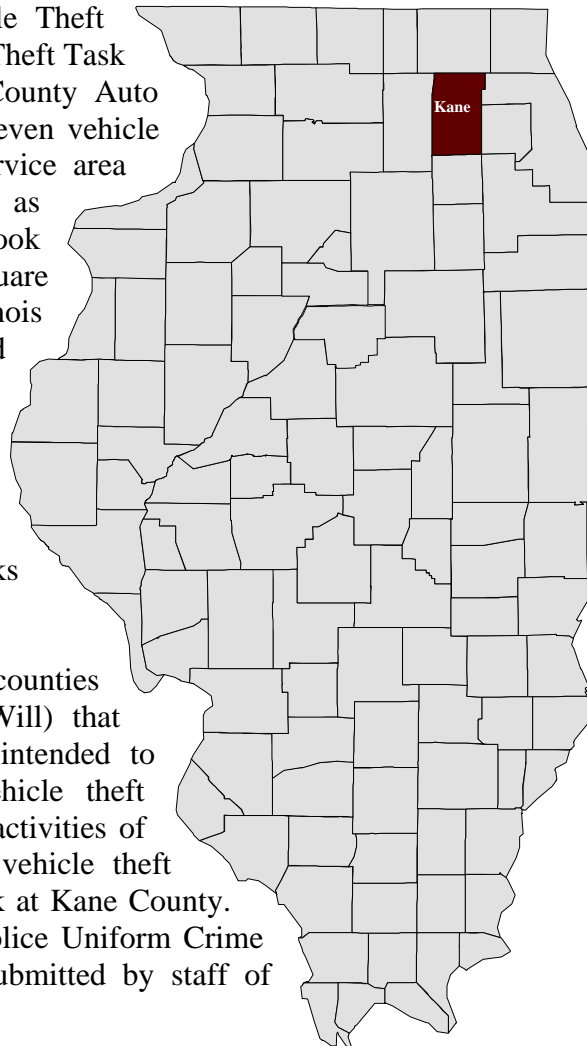


**ILLINOIS MOTOR VEHICLE
THEFT PREVENTION COUNCIL**

Introduction

Created under the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council, the Kane-Cook Auto Theft Task Force (KCAT), formerly named Kane County Auto Theft Task Force, serves as one of the seven vehicle theft task forces in Illinois. KCAT's service area extends through Kane County, as well as small portions of Lake, McHenry, and Cook counties. 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 2003 population of 457,122.¹ According to the Illinois Secretary of State's Office there were 377,641 passenger vehicles and trucks registered in Kane County in 2003.²

Kane County is one of the five collar counties (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will) that border Cook County. This profile is intended to provide a general overview of the vehicle theft problem in Kane County, as well as the activities of the task force to reduce the identified vehicle theft problems. The statistics in this report look at Kane County. The data is based on the Illinois State Police Uniform Crime Reports and the monthly data reports submitted by staff of KCAT.



¹ United States Bureau of the Census, 2004.

² State of Illinois, Office of the Secretary of State. 2004.

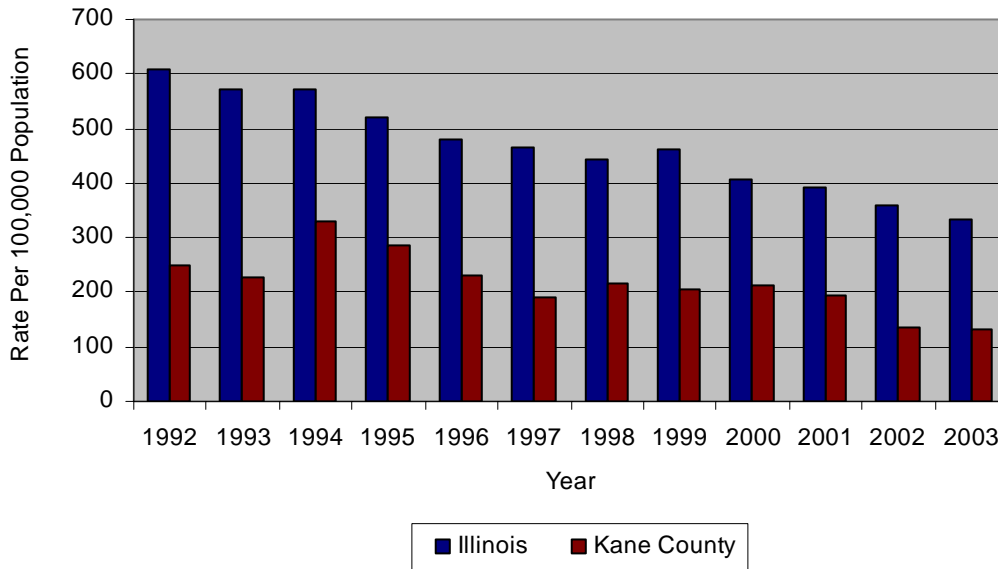
Motor Vehicle Theft in Kane County

According to the Illinois State Police, the number of motor vehicle thefts reported in the area covered by the Kane County Auto Theft Task Force decreased 28 percent between 1992 and 2003, from 833 thefts to 601 thefts. Motor vehicle thefts decreased 41 percent statewide during the same period.

Between 1992 and 2003, a time when the population in the area covered by KCAT was growing, the motor vehicle theft rate in the region decreased 48 percent, from 251 to 132 offenses per 100,000 population. The statewide motor vehicle theft rate similarly decreased, from 609 to 334 offenses per 100,000 population. Figure 1 shows the motor vehicle theft rates in Illinois and the KCAT area during this time period.

Figure 1

**Kane County Motor Vehicle Theft Rate
1992-2003**



Data Source: Illinois Uniform Crime Reports

Program Summary

The Kane-Cook Auto Theft Task Force (KCAT) primarily 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 Lake County Sheriff's Office, the Kane County State's Attorney's Office, the Lake County State's Attorney's Office, the Aurora Police Department, the Elgin Police Department, and the South Barrington Police Department. KCAT's multi-jurisdictional, cooperative approach increases its ability to investigate and prosecute auto theft throughout the counties of Kane, Lake, and McHenry, as well as the northwestern corner of Cook 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. KCAT collaborates with other Council-funded programs, as well as various state and federal law enforcement agencies.

KCAT's primary service is to field investigators who are specially trained in auto theft investigations and who have statewide authority to pursue those investigations. KCAT's main focus is to combat auto theft and insurance fraud operations in their area. When requested, the program also provides assistance to other law enforcement agencies regarding auto theft and insurance fraud investigations. KCAT investigators coordinate the resources of the participating agencies and focus these resources on their investigations. A Kane County assistant state's attorney works with the officers to provide assistance in the investigation and prosecution of vehicle theft related cases.

In 2003, data reports from the Kane-Cook Auto Theft Task Force describe the following motor vehicle theft problems in the area:

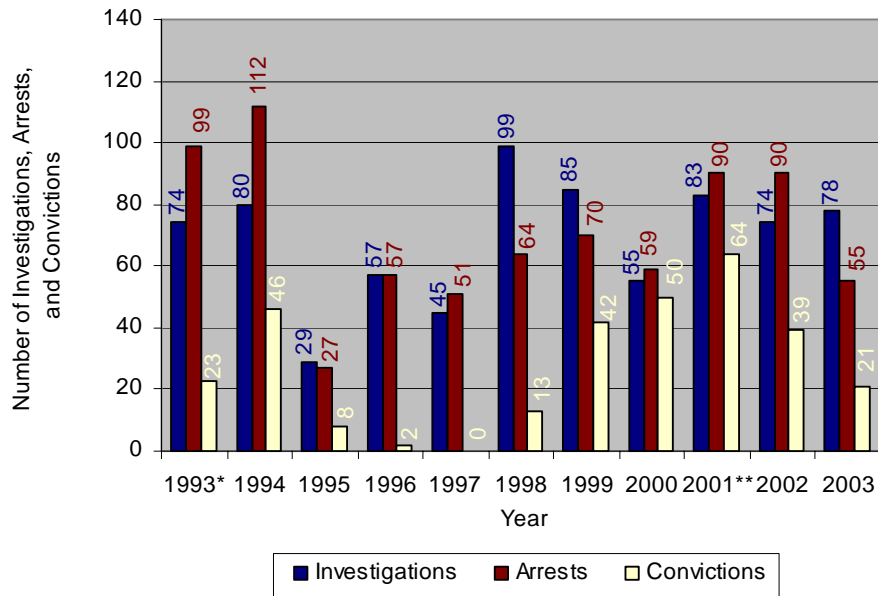
- Vehicle retagging operations,
- Vehicle cloning,
- Gang-related vehicle thefts,
- Auto insurance fraud,
- False vehicle theft reports,
- Businesses that purchase stolen vehicles and vehicle parts,
- Identity fraud, and
- Construction equipment theft.

Program Activity

Since the program began in September 1992, through December 2003, the Kane-Cook Auto Theft Task Force (KCAT) has conducted 759 self-initiated and assisted investigations, resulting in 774 arrests and 308 convictions. Figure 2 shows the number of motor vehicle theft investigations, arrests, and convictions for each program year.³

From November 1992 through 2003, the task force has recovered 972 vehicles worth an estimated \$9 million. Figure 3 shows the number of vehicle recoveries made by the task force for each year.⁴

Figure 2
Kane-Cook Auto Theft Task Force
Investigations, Arrests, and Convictions
1993-2003



*The 1993 data covers the period from September 1992 thru December 1993.

**Beginning in 2001, Investigations were recorded as either Initiated (by the unit) or Assisted (assists to other agencies) Investigations. These yearly totals represent the combination of both.

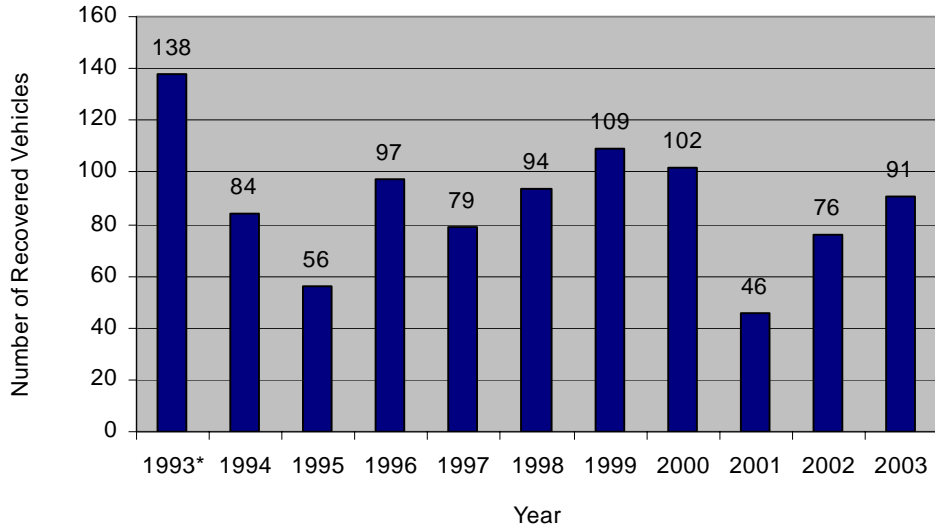
Data Source: KCAT monthly data reports

³ Due to the time lapse between an arrest and subsequent prosecution, the number of prosecutions and convictions during a year does not directly reflect the number of arrests during the same year.

⁴ KCAT reports the total estimated value of all the vehicles that it recovers each month. However, this includes only cases handled by the task force, not all vehicle thefts within Kane County.

Figure 3

**Kane-Cook Auto Theft Task Force
Motor Vehicle Recoveries
1993-2003**



*The 1993 data covers the period from December 1992 to December 1993.
Data Source: KCAT monthly data reports

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.”⁵

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. Approximately \$6 million is collected each year.

The Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Trust Fund funds the Kane-Cook Auto Theft Task Force. Table 1 lists the amounts granted to and expended by the task force for each program year.

⁵ Chapter 20 Illinois Compiled Statutes 4005/2.

Table 1

Kane-Cook Auto Theft Task Force (KCAT)
Funding by Program Year

Year	Grant Amount	Expenditures
1993	\$156,000	\$155,850
1994	\$222,135	\$220,487
1995	\$365,766	\$292,390
1996	\$329,190	\$297,698
1997	\$342,109	\$249,853
1998	\$334,293	\$288,642
1999	\$352,187	\$309,439
2000	\$365,979	\$294,869
2001	\$377,043	\$324,781
2002	\$388,875	\$376,187
2003	\$398,383	\$371,898
TOTAL	\$3,631,960	\$3,182,095

Note: Unexpended grant funds are returned to the Council.

Figure 4 summarizes the task force's expenditures from 1992 through 2003. Expenditures are divided into six categories:

Personnel—includes salaries, social security, and fringe benefits for program staff.

Equipment—includes computers, communication devices, and other equipment with a cost greater than \$50.

Commodities—includes consumable supplies (such as office supplies) and equipment costing less than \$50.

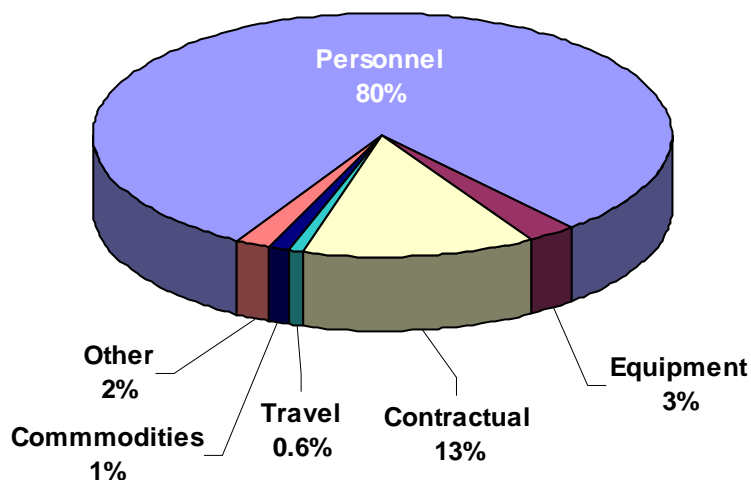
Travel—includes lodging, food, and transportation expenses incurred by program staff while conducting official program-related business.

Contractual—includes facility costs, utilities, telephone service, equipment rentals, and wages for hourly personnel.

Other—includes any costs not covered by the above categories.

Figure 4

Kane-Cook Auto Theft Task Force
Percentage of Expenditures by Category
1993-2003



*Due to rounding, the category percentages may not total 100 percent.

Conclusion

Since the Kane-Cook Auto Theft Task Force began operation, vehicle thefts have declined within the task force's jurisdiction. From 1992 to 2003, motor vehicle thefts in Kane County decreased 28 percent, from 833 to 601. During this same time the vehicle theft rate has also decreased by 48 percent, from 251 to 132 offenses per 100,000 population.

The FBI estimates that the average value of a vehicle stolen in the United States in 2002 was \$6,701.⁶ Based on this figure, the decrease in auto thefts in Kane County amounts to a savings of \$2 million.

KCAT has received a total of \$3.6 million in funding from the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Trust Fund, and has recovered an estimated \$9.4 million in stolen vehicles. Combining the recovery value with the savings from reduced auto theft, the task force has produced a 'return rate' of more than \$3 for every \$1 of funding.

⁶ This is the most recent estimate available. *Crime in the United States – 2002: Uniform Crime Reports*. Federal Bureau of Investigation. 2004.

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