

# **A Profile of the State and Local Auto Theft Enforcement Program (SLATE)**

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*Prepared for*

**the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council**

**Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor  
Larry G. Trent, Chairman**

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**Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority**

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**ILLINOIS MOTOR VEHICLE  
THEFT PREVENTION COUNCIL**

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## Introduction

Created under the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council, the State and Local Auto Theft Enforcement Program (SLATE) Task Force serves Peoria County. Peoria County is located of 620 square miles. Peoria County is among Illinois' 30 urban counties. According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates, Peoria County had a 2003 population of 182,335.<sup>1</sup> According to the Illinois Secretary of State's Office, there were 178,079 passenger vehicles and trucks registered in Peoria County in 2003.<sup>2</sup>

This profile provides a general overview of the vehicle theft problem in Peoria County, as well as the activities of the task force to reduce the identified vehicle theft problems. The statistics in this report look at Peoria County. The data is based on the Illinois State Police Uniform Crime Reports and the monthly data reports submitted by staff of SLATE.



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<sup>1</sup> United States Bureau of the Census, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> State of Illinois, Office of the Secretary of State. 2004.

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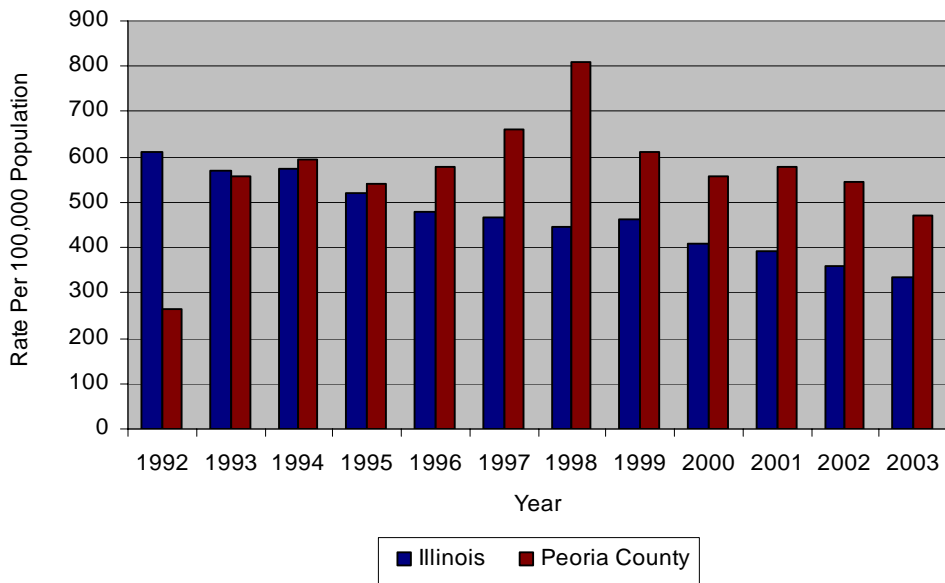
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## Motor Vehicle Theft in the Peoria County Area

According to the Illinois State Police, the number of motor vehicle thefts reported in the area covered by the State and Local Auto Theft Enforcement Program (SLATE) increased 75 percent between 1992 and 2003, from 488 thefts to 855 thefts. During this time, motor vehicle thefts reached a high of 1,492 thefts in 1998. 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 SLATE slightly decreased, the motor vehicle theft rate in the region increased 77 percent, from 265 to 469 offenses per 100,000 population. The statewide motor vehicle theft rate, however, decreased from 609 to 334 offenses per 100,000 population. Figure 1 shows the motor vehicle theft rates in Illinois and the SLATE area during this time period.

**Figure 1**  
**Peoria County Motor Vehicle Theft Rate**  
**1992-2003**



Data Source: Illinois Uniform Crime Reports

## Program Summary

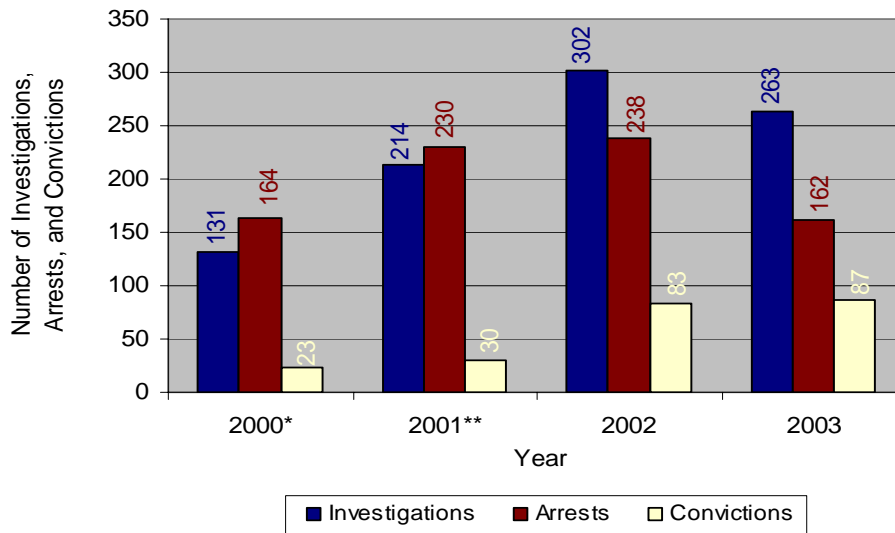
The SLATE Task Force combats auto theft in Peoria County by combining the expertise and resources of multiple law enforcement agencies. Operating since 2000, the task force links the efforts of the Illinois State Police, the Illinois Secretary of State Police, the Peoria County Sheriff's Office, and the Peoria Police Department. The task force's multijurisdictional and cooperative approach improves its ability to investigate and prosecute auto theft throughout the area. The services of the task force are available to all law enforcement agencies within Peoria County.

Data reports from the SLATE Task Force describe several vehicle theft problems in the area. The task force focuses on the identification and arrest of street gang members and motorcycle gang members operating in the area. SLATE also encounters cases of insurance fraud, chop shops, re-tagging operations, and false vehicle theft reporting. The task force has also established partnerships with law enforcement agencies in surrounding counties. The coordination and joint effort helps all of the participating agencies target street gangs involved in vehicle theft that continually cross between county borders.

## Program Activity

Beginning in 2001, investigations were reported separately as either “initiated,” meaning initiated by the State and Local Auto Theft Enforcement Program (SLATE), or as “assisted,” meaning the task force assisted another agency in the investigation. Since the program began in 2000 through December 2003, SLATE conducted 910 self-initiated and assisted investigations, resulting in 794 arrests and 223 convictions. Of the 779 investigations in which SLATE participated between 2001, when assisted and initiated investigations were initially recorded separately, and 2003, SLATE initiated 588 and assisted in 191. Figure 2 shows the number of motor vehicle theft investigations, arrests, and convictions for each program year.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 2**  
**State and Local Auto Theft Enforcement Program**  
**Investigations, Arrests, and Convictions**  
**2000-2003**



\*The 200 data covers the period from February 2000 through December 2000.

\*\*Beginning in 2001, investigations were reported separately as “initiated” or “assisted,” however, the yearly totals in this graph represent the number of initiated and assisted investigations combined.

Data Source: SLATE monthly data reports

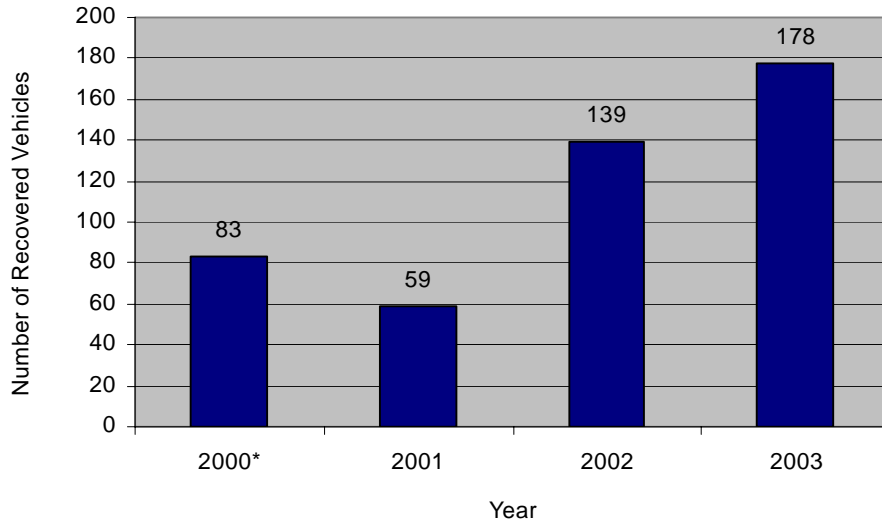
<sup>3</sup> Due to the time lapse between an arrest and subsequent prosecution, the number of prosecutions and convictions during a year does not directly reflect the number of arrests during the same year.

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From 2000 through 2003, the task force has recovered 459 vehicles worth an estimated \$3 million. Figure 3 shows the number of vehicle recoveries made by the task force for each year.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 3**

**State and Local Auto Theft Enforcement Program  
Motor Vehicle Recoveries  
2000-2003**



\*The 2000 data covers the period from February 2000 through December 2000.  
Data Source: SLATE monthly data reports.

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<sup>4</sup> SLATE 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 Peoria County.

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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>5</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 \$6 million is collected each year.

The State and Local Auto Theft Enforcement Task Force is funded by the Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Trust Fund. Table 1 lists the amounts granted to and expended by the task force for each program year.

**Table 1**  
State and Local Area Theft Enforcement (SLATE)  
Funding by Program Year

<b>Year</b>	<b>Grant Amount</b>	<b>Expenditures</b>
2000	\$189,075	\$95,311
2001	\$101,093	\$86,687
2002	\$157,098	\$128,559
2003	\$246,431	\$218,252
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$693,697</b>	<b>\$528,810</b>

Note: Unexpended grant funds are returned to the Council.

Figure 4 summarizes the task force’s expenditures 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.

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<sup>5</sup> Chapter 20 Illinois Compiled Statutes 4005/2.

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**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.

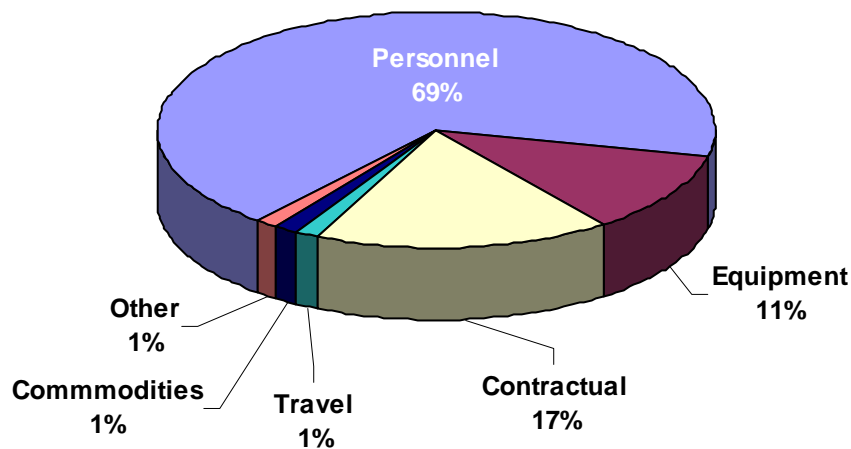
**Contractual**—includes facility costs, utilities, telephone service, equipment rentals, and wages for hourly personnel.

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

**Figure 4**

**State and Local Auto Theft Enforcement Program**

Percentage of Expenditures by Category  
2000-2003



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

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## Conclusion

Since the State and Local Auto Theft Enforcement Program (SLATE) began operation in 2000, vehicle thefts have declined within the task force's jurisdiction. From 2000 to 2003, the motor vehicle theft rate decreased 16 percent, from 558 to 469 offenses per 100,000. During this same time period, motor vehicle thefts in Peoria County decreased 16 percent from 1,023 thefts to 855 thefts. Table 2 depicts the change in the number of motor vehicle thefts from year to year since SLATE has been in operation.

**Table 2**

**State and Local Auto Theft Enforcement Program**

Change in Number of Auto Thefts From Previous Year  
2000-2003

Year	Change From Previous Year*
2000	- 105
2001	+ 31
2002	- 58
2003	- 141

\*The difference between the number of auto thefts each year compared to the number that occurred the previous year.

+ Indicates more thefts than the previous  
- Indicates fewer thefts than the previous year

The FBI estimates that the average value of a vehicle stolen in the United States in 2002 was \$6,701.<sup>6</sup> Based on this figure, the decrease in auto thefts in Peoria County between 2002 and 2003 amounts to a savings of nearly \$950,000. Based on the varying values of stolen motor vehicles from year to year during the time SLATE has been in operation, the decrease in motor vehicle thefts in Peoria County resulted in an overall savings of \$2,035,109.

SLATE has received a total of \$693,697 in funding from the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Trust Fund, and has recovered an estimated \$3 million in stolen vehicles. Combining the recovery value with the savings from reduced auto theft, the task force has produced a 'return rate' of approximately \$7 for every \$1 of funding.

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<sup>6</sup> This is the most recent estimate available; the value for 2002 was used to calculate the total savings for 2003. *Crime in the United States – 2002: Uniform Crime Reports*. Federal Bureau of Investigation. 2004.





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