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Harrowing High-speed Chase & Carjacking: Auto Theft is a Dangerous, Gateway Crime

Rush-Hour Wild Chase is a Wake-up Call for Colorado

Denver, Colo. (March 12, 2014) — Watching this morning's heart stopping chase unfold is a terrifying reminder that auto theft is literally a vehicle for other serious crimes often involving dangerous and violent behavior. Coloradans Against Auto Theft, a statewide coalition of law enforcement, auto theft task forces, insurance and community partners dedicated to the prevention of auto theft, cautions citizens that car theft while often viewed as a victimless, property crime, is in reality, a gateway crime leading to tragic events like the kidnapping, carjackings and deadly driving that played out before our eyes during a busy commute that spanned from Longmont to Douglas County.

"This morning's high-speed chase, kidnapping and carjackings all started with a stolen car," says Carole Walker, Co-Chair of Coloradans Against Auto Theft. "It's a terrifying reminder that auto theft is on the rise in Colorado, and in many cases, involves dangerous driving and serious violent crimes." Walker, also Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association, warns this is also a wake-up call that optional comprehensive insurance covers your car when it is stolen.

A motor vehicle is stolen in the United States every 44 seconds and nearly half of these thefts are due to driver error like leaving keys in the ignition or leaving doors unlocked (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration). In 2013, 11,304 vehicles were reported stolen in Colorado (Auto Theft Intelligence Coordination Center). Coloradans Against Auto Theft urges citizens to do their part in preventing auto theft:

What can the public do?

- Never leave your car running unattended.
- Always lock your car.
- Never leave any keys in the car, even a spare set.
- Never leave valuables in plain sight.
- Always park in well-lit, high-traffic areas.
- Get windows, doors and fenders etched with the VIN.
- Consider installing a tracking and recovery device.
- Check out www.lockdownyourcar.org for more prevention tips, local statistics and a Hot Spot map with geolocator tool allowing users to search auto theft in their area.

CAAT Coalition Partners

- Beat Auto Theft Through Law Enforcement (BATTLE)
- Metropolitan Auto Theft Task Force (MATT)
- Southern Colorado Motor Vehicle Theft Task Force
- Western Colorado Auto Theft Task Force (WCATT)
- East Metro Auto Theft Team (EMATT)
- Commerce City/Thornton/Adams County Auto Theft Prevention Program
- Attorney General's Auto Theft Prosecution Initiative
- Colorado Auto Theft Investigators (CATI)
- Coloradans Against Auto Theft (CAAT)
- Auto Theft Intelligence Coordination Center (ATICC)
- San Luis Valley

About Coloradans Against Auto Theft (CAAT):

Coloradans Against Auto Theft (CAAT) is a statewide auto theft prevention initiative to raise awareness about the problem and educate the public on what they can do to reduce their chances of falling victim to auto theft. CAAT is a coalition of law enforcement agencies, the Colorado State Patrol, insurance partners, LoJack and AAA Colorado. CAAT and the state auto theft task force efforts are funded in part by the Colorado Auto Theft Prevention Authority (CATPA). ###