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NEWS RELEASE

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NICB's 2015 Hot Spots Vehicle Theft Report

Eight California Metro Areas Place in Top 10

Des Plaines, Ill.—California's Modesto Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) had the nation's highest per capita vehicle theft rate in 2015, according to the National Insurance Crime Bureau's (NICB) latest *Hot Spots* report. Moreover, California owned eight of the top 10 hot spots for vehicle theft in 2015.

NICB's *Hot Spots* report examines vehicle theft data obtained from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) for each of the nation's MSAs. MSAs are designated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and often include areas much larger than the cities for which they are named. For example, the number one spot, the Modesto, Calif. MSA, includes all thefts within the entire *county* of Stanislaus, not just the city of Modesto.

Moreover, as a population-based survey, an area with a much smaller population and a moderate number of thefts can—and often does—have a higher theft rate than an area with a much more significant vehicle theft problem *and* a larger population to absorb it.

For 2015, the 10 MSAs with the highest vehicle theft rates were: (thefts in parentheses)

2015 Ranking

1. Modesto, Calif. (4,072)
2. Albuquerque, N.M. (6,657)
3. Bakersfield, Calif. (6,000)
4. Salinas, Calif. (2,934)
5. San Francisco-Oakland
-Hayward, Calif. (30,554)
6. Stockton-Lodi, Calif. (4,656)
7. Pueblo, Colo. (983)
8. Merced, Calif. (1,605)
9. Riverside-San Bernar-
dino-Ontario, Calif. (25,001)
10. Vallejo-Fairfield, Calif. (2,352)

2014 Ranking

- 5 (3,047)
- 12 (4,754)
- 2 (5,211)
- 11 (2,270)
- 1 (29,093)
- 3 (4,245)
- 24 (654)
- 21 (1,132)
- 14 (21,264)
- 7 (2,414)

When the FBI released preliminary, January-June 2015 crime data earlier this year, vehicle theft was up one percent across the nation. That increase is reflected in today's *Hot Spots* report and the trend may hold when the final FBI 2015 crime data is published in the fall.

Notwithstanding these occasional increases, vehicle thefts are down dramatically around the nation over the last several years. Nonetheless, the reasons vehicles are stolen remain the same. Older vehicles are stolen primarily for their parts value while newer, high-end vehicles are often shipped overseas or, after some disguising, sold to an innocent buyer locally.

The full *Hot Spots* report is available at www.nicb.org. See the *Hot Spots* video [here](#).

NICB recommends that drivers follow our four "[layers of protection](#)" to guard against vehicle theft:

Common Sense — the common sense approach to protection is the easiest and most cost-effective way to thwart would-be thieves. You should always:

- Remove your keys from the ignition
- Lock your doors /close your windows
- Park in a well-lit area

Warning Device — the second layer of protection is a visible or audible device which alerts thieves that your vehicle is protected. Popular devices include:

- Audible alarms
- Steering column collars
- Steering wheel/brake pedal lock
- Brake locks
- Wheel locks
- Theft deterrent decals
- Identification markers in or on vehicle
- VIN etching
- Micro dot marking

Immobilizing Device — the third layer of protection is a device which prevents thieves from bypassing your ignition and hot-wiring the vehicle. Some electronic devices have computer chips in ignition keys. Other devices inhibit the flow of electricity or fuel to the engine until a hidden switch or button is activated. Some examples are:

- Smart keys
- Fuse cut-offs
- Kill switches
- Starter, ignition, and fuel pump disablers
- Wireless ignition authentication

Tracking Device — the final layer of protection is a tracking device which emits a signal to police or a monitoring station when the vehicle is stolen. Tracking devices are very effective in helping authorities recover stolen vehicles. Some systems employ "telematics" which combine GPS and wireless technologies to allow remote monitoring of a vehicle. If the vehicle is moved, the system will alert the owner and the vehicle can be tracked via computer.



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Anyone with information concerning insurance fraud or vehicle theft can report it anonymously by calling toll-free 800-TEL-NICB (800-835-6422), texting keyword "fraud" to TIP411 (847411) or submitting a [form](#) on our website. Or, download the [NICB Fraud Tips app](#) on your iPhone or Android device.

About the National Insurance Crime Bureau:

Headquartered in Des Plaines, Ill., the NICB is the nation's leading not-for-profit organization exclusively dedicated to preventing, detecting and defeating

insurance fraud and vehicle theft through data analytics, investigations, training, legislative advocacy and public awareness. The NICB is supported by more than 1,100 property and casualty insurance companies and self-insured organizations. NICB member companies wrote over \$413 billion in insurance premiums in 2015, or more than 79 percent of the nation's property/casualty insurance. That includes more than 94 percent (\$187 billion) of the nation's personal auto insurance. To learn more visit www.nicb.org.

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