

HOUSING

The Portland Observer

Mayor Vera Katz Appoints 'Strike Force' To Fight Automobile Theft

Citing a 39% year-to-date increase in automobile theft, Portland Mayor Vera Katz announced the appointment of an Automobile Theft Strike Force to "help get a handle on the skyrocketing incidence of local car theft"

According to autotheft statistics compiled by the Portland Police Bureau, as of May 22, 1993:

1992 Year-To-Date Reported Autothefts: 2434

1993 year-To-Date Reported Autothefts: 3397

Year-To-Date increase 1992 compared to 1993: +39%

"Our current rate of autothefts translates into one auto being stolen every hour of every day, this is intolerable. Clearly, we have to do better, we have to try some new approaches, we have to get more people working together to focus energy on this problem and we have to use our existing resources in a more effective manner," said Katz.

"That is why I have appointed this Strike Force consisting of regional law enforcement officials, prosecutors, the auto insurance industry, auto advocacy groups and community crime prevention specialists and told

them to recommend improvements to our approach on fighting this crime," said Katz.

"Creating a community-based Strike Force is consistent with my philosophy of community policing," said Katz. "By involving members from both the public and private sectors, this group will have the capability to create and implement new deterrents against automobile theft."

Katz said that among other proposals, the Strike Force will be evaluating solutions implemented by cities nationwide including the use of Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) etchings on windows, special reflective decals which would prohibit the use of the vehicle between certain hours, and other anti-theft tracking devices.

The Strike Force will focus its efforts on three areas: education and prevention programs; tougher city and county codes and state sanctions; and, options to increase the investigation, prosecution and conviction of auto thieves. The Strike Force's overall goal is to create a series of short and long term proposals which will involve the private and public sectors along with community

groups in reducing the rate of stolen automobiles.

The Mayor has asked members of the Strike Force, which is already meeting on a bi-weekly basis, to provide her with their initial recommendations by August.

The Strike Force is being Co-Chaired by Ron Bonner of Allstate Insurance Company and Deputy Chief Chuck Karl from the Portland Police Bureau.

Members of the Strike Force are Lieutenant Mark Parsi, Portland Police Bureau; Jo'ey Gardelius, Multnomah County district Attorney's Office; Jerry Gould, Farmers Insurance Group; Bill Atkins, North Pacific Insurance; Detective Ron Budge, Multnomah County Sheriff's Office; Captain Jack Cunningham, Gresham Police Department; Tom Hauser, Metropolitan Life; Jordis Jensen, N/NE Neighborhood Crime Prevention; Dave McCarron, Allstate Insurance; Captain Dan Noelle, Portland Police Bureau; Gene Rappe, Safeco; Gary Redell, National Insurance Crime Bureau; Scott Thompson, AAA of Oregon; Val Wiethorn, State Farm; and Detective Joe Zink, Portland Police Bureau.

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Eye doctors recommend that children receive vision screenings and vision examinations annually in order to assure proper development of

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